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CONTENT ANALYSIS OF READERS' COMMENTS ON MEDIA AGGREGATOR AS FEEDBACK AND FORM OF PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

In the development of communication industry, mass media have evolved and brought the existence of a news aggregator. In Indonesia, a Japanese-based instant messaging apps company has expanded its platform to news aggregator named LINE Today. LINE Today allow their users to share their feedback regarding to the presented news as comments, and narrowed feedback can create the public opinion. In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic the news outlet is currently tinged with news about it. This research would like to explore how the public opinion of Indonesians about Covid-19 through the news comments in LINE Today. With quantitative content analysis method, the most commented news about Covid-19 in LINE Today constructed with three kinds of feedback trigger and three determinants of public opinion. The result has shown that the Covid-19 news comments in LINE Today are mostly triggered by the relationship between the commentator and the news

subject. Indonesian public opinions in LINE Today Indonesia are mostly regarding to the news about Covid-19 determined by their belief not by fact.

INTRODUCTION

Current development of technology in this new era has developed into what is called new media. New media means broadcast media such as radio, television, the internet, and print media have been distributed via different and well-distinguished platforms (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2015). “Every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms” said Jenkins (2008) in (Meikle & Young, 2012).

The new media then converge into one digital platform so that there is also a change in audience behavior. The “ability to deliver different media channels via one digital platform” can be identified as what is called convergence McPhillips & Merlo (2008) in (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2015). Convergence is “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost everywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want” Jenkins (2008) in (Meikle & Young, 2012). “All forms of media content now converge in this space” (Meikle & Young, 2012).

Times has changed the human communication system in this digital era. Christian (2019) stated that “digitization has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on journalism worldwide”. The essay titled “*Uses and Gratifications of Social Media: Media Use Among University Students in Jakarta*”, found the research respondents access news with cellular phone or laptop at least once per two days with duration one to two hours. The most read topic is public life, then it became discussion material with in real life (Wardhani et al., 2019).

An advantage of media digitalization is interactivity in the communication process. Online media not only provides the information, but also a comment section is provided as a place for public to interact about the news. So, readers can share their opinion, perception, and thoughts as the feedback to publisher of the content.

Clementson said that “comment sections are extremely powerful”. He pointed a research “How Web Comments Affect Perceptions of Political Interviews and Journalistic Control” in 2019 found out that people will echo the sentiments expressed by anonymous strangers and share opinions and attitudes about politicians and journalists in accordance with comments expressed by strangers. “The study shows that this is a frontier of extreme influence that isn’t getting as much attention as fake news and fake tweets,” said Clementson. “If your goal is to influence opinions, it’s a lot more time efficient, and perhaps more impactful, to post a comment than create a website or fake social media account” (Freeman, 2020, par. 2-5).

Through the readers’ comments, the dialogue occurs, and it can enhance accountability to users. Accountability to readers is an obligation in 1996 ethics code of The Society of Professional Journalists in United States which includes the sub-obligation to “clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct. Reader comments are part of a long tradition in journalism of inviting reader feedback (Babcock & Freivogel, 2015).

There is social-scientific evidence from experiments suggesting that readers make inferences based on comments about public support for their own and other’s positions, about the news articles they accompany, and even about the underlying issues. If comments influence reader’s views, some may wish to treat them more carefully, though it is of course difficult to draw ethical lines about what is inappropriate influence on user’s views. Allowing a varied selection of comments can go far advance the ethical goal of journalistic accountability while the reader experience also enhancing (Babcock & Freivogel, 2015).

Another innovation and challenge for media in this era according to Christian (2019) is aggregation. “News Aggregator is a service that combines many different news outlets into a single, condensed source” (Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012). Content aggregator was rise on 2015. Many publishers perceived syndication as a sin, but Google News, Yahoo! News and AOL remains a choice. They don't want to

be a free news search for aggregator such as Huffington Post, Buzz Feed, Vine, Gawker, BuzzFeed & BuzzFeed News, Daylife, Drudge Report, Farks, Zero Hedge, Daily Beast, Newslookup, Newsvine, Newser, Topix, etc (Sharma, 2017).

In their researches, "The Rise of Online News Aggregators: Consumption and Competition", Lee and Chyi (2015) found out the presence of news aggregator is an important phenomenon in the contemporary media landscape. Online news aggregators, such as Yahoo! News, Google News, and the Huffington Post, have outperformed the traditional media and are the main news sources for American (Lee & Chyi, 2015).

According to Digital News Report 2019 by Reuters Institute, one of newer platform products and services, mobile aggregator is starting to make an impact (Newman et al., 2019). Here are some other examples of media aggregator developing in Indonesia:

Besides all of those developing news aggregator, similar like Yahoo, which expanded its platform as an email web service provider to news aggregator, LINE Today from a popular instant messaging service provider based in Japan, has expanded its platform LINE as a news provider in Indonesia by taking the initiative to build partnerships with trusted news outlet partners in order to tracking the current hoax news (Yusuf, 2017). Line Today has now become one of the popular media aggregators for the smartphone user community. In addition to collecting selected news, LINE Today also provides comment section following the news where readers can comment on the news. Or sometimes they can comment on previous comments.

Current mass media around the world as well as curated by LINE Today are haunted by health issues that have become a global problem, this is about Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. It is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans (Organization, 2020).

Table 1. Media Aggregator Developing in Indonesia (processed by researchers)

BaBe (Baca Berita)	There are more than 30 news categories in BaBe which available in Video Format with many kinds of in-app interaction (likes, comment, share, survey & opinion). User could customize the channel order based on their preference from many kind of news. BaBe is a news app with Hoax Filter technology, and installed in more than 30 million users in all across Indonesia (Play, n.d.-a).
Kurio	A news and information aggregator application provide hundreds of topics (Kurio, n.d.). Kurio was founded on 2013. Kurio highlights content that matters for the user, reducing information overload for an enjoyable reading experience on a single platform. Enabling readers to bring the pleasure of reading by selecting and showing only the most relevant and interesting Indonesian-language materials (Play, n.d.-b).
BaCa	A start-up media founded by three persons from China and Indonesia in 2015. BaCa have launched in Brazil and Indonesia, has been downloaded more than twelve million times, and planned to be launched in more than twenty countries. BaCa have phenomenal growth especially in Brazil, harnessing more than six million downloads in just five short months (<i>Digital Baca Nusantara</i> , n.d.).
Beritagar.id	Founded in 2015, is a combination of the public curation site, Lintas.me (2011), with the curation site Beritagar.com (2012). Beritagar.id doesn't just make a list of links, editors at Beritagar have the role of editing and retelling it to the readers (<i>Tentang Kami</i> , n.d.).
UC News	A brand-new application launched by Chinese technology company UCWeb Inc., on 2016 and became popular through a mobile browser application called UC Browser. The UC News application is a news aggregator with several categories of news (Setyanti, 2016).
Shortir	A start-up news aggregator with aims to curate news from a number of news sites. Shortir was founded by four Indonesian youth in September 2016 and has been downloaded two thousands times. Shortir curate news from various sources and cut it into one paragraph containing in average of 60 words to suit the character of young people in Indonesia. Shortir presents 60-100 articles in a day to pursues the accuracy of the news over the quantity (Wardani, 2017).

On 2 March 2020, Indonesia confirmed the first Coronavirus case in territory, after two women from Depok, West Java were diagnosed. In Indonesia, there are still many citizen who do not comply the government appeals to tackle the Coronavirus

pandemic, it caused by a systematic error in thinking that affects people's decisions and judgments founded on a research of “Analysis of Indonesian's Behavior in Facing the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19) and Tips to Maintain Mental Health” (Riksa Buana, 2020).

Coronavirus has become a big issue in the global community, and various news related to Coronavirus is outspreading through digital communication channels. A research of “Analysis of Covid-19 Hoax News on Social Media in Indonesia” (Rahayu, 2020) found that from fifty findings of the search results, three news topics were obtained; Corona Virus outbreak, treatment, social behaviour in dealing with the virus. The site <https://www.kominfo.go.id/> gives the most warnings to public about the Corona Virus hoax, while DKI Jakarta is the most mentioned area in hoax reporting, and the most widely disseminated hoax news on March 24, 2020 which is ten times bigger.

Study of “Hoax News in Online Media Reviewed from News Construction and Netizen Response” shown that the more netizens arise, the more deceitful news will be broader and more liars without reference to journalism (Adhiarso et al., 2018). With the dataset of 750 user comments from guardian online, the daily telegraph online, and times online, (Neurauter-Kessels, 2011) in her research of “Im/polite reader responses on British online news sites” found that the users are invited to debate, criticize, and disagree the news topics too. Users move beyond those netiquette boundaries to attack journalists a more personally in those comment sections.

LINE Today is a popular global news service that provides a variety of the latest news in one place that released on 30 June 2016. LINE provides the actual news from various trusted newspaper media partners (LINE Corporation, 2016). An article entitled “LINE Users in Indonesia Reach 90 million, Dominated by Youth” showed that in Indonesia, LINE is one of the most popular instant messaging apps. Revie Sylviana, Strategic Partnership Director LINE Indonesia, said that LINE users in Indonesia has reached ninety million, and 80 percent of it are youth, so they should be keep on trend (Fikrie, 2018).

Besides from LINE apps as a messenger service, news content from LINE Today also can be accessed on <http://today.line.me>. Disclaimer from LINE Corporation stated that content in LINE Today made by the media partners and curated by editorial team of LINE Today to maintain the balance and neutrality (LINE Corporation, n.d.). The articles in LINE Today can be shared with friends via other social media platforms. Users can also comment and "like" to see other people's opinions regarding the articles in LINE Today (LINE Corporation, 2016). That is the advantage of online media, interactivity.

According to (Carroll, 2016) Feedback is information about something said by a source that is returned to the source or originator. In communication contexts, feedback is reaction to the sender and its messages as the receiver's views of the sender or the messages or actions.

Basic kinds of feedback according to (Carroll, 2016) are negative and positive feedback. Negative feedback revealing that something is wrong and must be corrected. Positive feedback indicating that all is well and is going well so that the system can grow.

Comments are a form of feedback that can create a public opinion. In LINE Today comments sections, public can make a survey or poll session in the comments section toward the news, and it can accelerate the existence of public opinion.

Therefore, this research would like to explore how is the reader comments about Covid-19 through news aggregator LINE Today consider as feedback and public opinion of Indonesian readers. This study aims to measure the views of Indonesian readers over the Covid-19 pandemic, so that the result can be a guideline to overcome this pandemic problem in Indonesia.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Technological Determinism; Media Convergence

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan contributes to these twentieth century views with his attempt to interpret many aspects of experience as shaped by technologies of communication by demonstrates the media laws and trained awareness to make sense of complex systems (Dunand, 2017). A technology, any technology, any medium, for McLuhan is something that extends one or more of our five physical senses. The book is a form of print, is a form of writing, is a visual form of the voice giving expression to ideas, which is where the chain of media working in pairs ends (Gordon, 2017).

According to McLuhan (1994) in (Sugihartati, 2017), when media technology is expanding, from verbal communication to print communication, from print to broadcasting, then the emerge of internet, digital media, and media convergence, so then the global village emerges and enables people to communicate beyond the previous media. Media technology has changed the culture of the people who depend on it, so the media have a role in creating and managing culture.

Convergent communications make the networks possible to function and to sustainable at larger scales and sizes than before. This offers flexibility and adaptability, enabling networks to capitalize on disadvantages of centralized bureaucracies or vertically structured cooperation Castells, (2000) in (Meikle & Young, 2012).

The imperative natures of media convergence are synergy, simplification, information abundancy, participation, availability, and multimodality. Then, multimedia companies exploiting the combined transmission of images, texts, and sounds to offer better and cheaper products and services that facilitate the existence of active and participating users (Peil & Sparviero, 2017).

News and Media Aggregator

Media aggregation and reuse ventures are big business. Both have the ideal production modes in the era of internet. It also exploit the fundamentals of digital information which underpin internet communications, like the ability to make and circulate near-perfect copies of web pages or other files at zero cost Lessig, (2008) in (Zion & Craig, 2014).

According to (Harvey, 2013) Aggregators typically eschew the traditional news schedule, releasing material as it is collected or created. This draws users regularly as the pages include a much larger range of regularly updated information than a single news source. Harvey (2013) mentioned that news aggregator has clear appeal to its readers, such as: Provide quick access to a large amount of information that has confirmation from multiple sources; Nonlinearity is a major advantage for users can access different news stories at random outside the narrative context of traditional news that might provide occasions for advertising.

Aggregators used in media industry such as news outlets, collect materials from a number of news sources, providing direct links to the original material and could provide the brief summary of content from some sources. The interfaces by aggregator Web sites allow its users to access refined and indexed information rapidly. Every news aggregator has its own methods of refinement and indexing the materials. An aggregator might rewrite the headlines to emphasize the argument perspective to serve its market segment better (Harvey, 2013).

News or information is the integrity of journalistic work, but in journalistic creation, not all news or information can be used as the essence of journalism. In its development, mass media has become as an industry which sometimes oriented only to profit and the essence of news does not become important anymore. Though, in journalistic work, news and information as the essence must be in its position to improve the quality of public life (Syahputra, 2013).

News values influence the version of events constructed as well as determining what makes a good story in the first place. One of the criticisms of attempts to develop universal sets of news values is that it can gloss over potentially significant differences between one and another news outlet that affect the selection and construction of stories (Hodkinson, 2016).

Readers Feedback as form Public Opinion

In modern practices of journalism, audience feedback is the one with the longest unbroken tradition (Reader, 2015). According to Stone & Heen (2015) feedback givers are abundant and there are three feedback triggers: first it is a Truth Triggers, set off by the substance of the feedback itself. It is somehow off, unhelpful, or simply untrue. Then it is a Relationship Triggers, tripped by the particular person who is giving the gift of feedback. The reactions can be based on the belief about the feedback giver. And last, it is an Identity Triggers, focus neither on the feedback nor on the giver. Whether the feedback is right or wrong, wise or witless, it has caused by the receiver's identity. Feedback triggers are obstacle, information, a kind of map, to help the source of feedback cause to know the trouble, know to manage the reactions, and engage conversations with skill.

Today, commenting is a standard feature of news sites. Landert (2014) had present and discuss about kinds of audience feedback and interaction in online news sites, which are: (Indirect feedback) Online news sites provide a range of ways in which feedback from the behavior of the audience. The sites can figure the visitor number to the site, and even figure the reading habits of the audience, includes the article accessed, the time that is spent on specific pages, what additional material is accessed, and the navigation paths users follow.; (User comments), The most prominent form of direct feedback and central to the personalization of the audience. Readers appear individually represented by name and their location. User comments provide an opportunity for readers to discuss the news topic. Community of active readers who comment and debate on the online news site regularly are identified. Community with such a high degree of involvement develops among

readers constitutes one of the most powerful ways to develop a personal connection in online news site.; (Opinion polls), The feedback is restricted to selecting one of several predefined answers, usually expressing agreement or disagreement with a statement. It is not clear who selected which answer, but still contribute to personalization. News provider can also provide a way of integrating the audience in the news report as a component of the news article; (Contact details and profiles) The publication of contact details enables interaction through different forms of communication. Contact details can mostly be found for the journalists who are identified as the authors of the news article, but in some cases they are also available for readers who submit user comments. User comments seem to be the most important feature on all sites, but all of those allow (even encourage) the readers to contact them directly and to send in content (Landert, 2014).

Public opinion is formed in democratic society, where people are free to have an opinion (Tosepu, 2018). Opinion is someone's idea or thought about a certain thing that is concrete or even abstract (Tosepu, 2018, p.1). Opinion is the manifestation of attitudes in words or writing which are latent, it can't be directly observed. A standard definition of public is a group that has something in common (Erikson & Tedin, (2019).

According to Clawson & Oxley (2016) there are three often have evaluative content that can help individual to determine specific opinion toward a related entity: (1) Beliefs: cognitive components of attitudes. Beliefs are the thought or information regarding an attitude object, often regarding to what the person thinks to be true about the object; (2) Values: specific types of beliefs. "A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct (instrumental value) or end-state of existence (terminal value) is personally socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence". Values also assumed to be quite stable over time for individuals, "by values we mean general and enduring standards"; (3) Emotions: affective component of attitudes. Emotions are feelings toward the attitude

object and often more consequential than belief in attitude formation. Emotions are especially common to evaluating political persons. Emotional reactions can influence opinions toward political issues or public policies.

METHODOLOGY

The research method is quantitative content analysis with the data collected through document study. Content analysis is a technique to describe the actual contents of communication objectively, systematically, and quantitatively (Prasad, 2019). Content analysis is used to obtain information from communication content declared in the form of symbols (Rakhmat, 1991).

In content analysis, the validity of the method and its results highly depend on the categories. As mention above, content analysis is no better than its categories. For that reason, a widespread research is done to determine proper categories for analysis of news and editorial content which will allow accurate coding on one hand and possible accurate comparison of results on the other.

Analysis Measurement

The measurement of analysis in this research is comments in each news item. Comment is a feedback that being presented and discussed relating to the news or information in online news about Covid-19 in LINE Today among Indonesian readers.

Analyst Unit

Unit analyst for this research is a top five comments from thirty most commented news about Covid-19 from March 2 until March 31, 2021 in Line Today or one month period after outbreak. Researchers ignore if there is repetition of news on the different days. Researchers consistently take five different news stories with the most comments on a daily basis. From above calculation, the result is 150 comments.

Construction of Category

Categorical construction is a set of variables to measure the research objects. A complex object of research is classified in such way that would match the objectives of the research. In this research, the construction of categories are: According to Stone & Heen (2015), there are three feedback triggers, such as Truth Triggers, Relationship Triggers, and Identity Triggers.; Narrowed feedback will create the public opinion. According to (Clawson & Oxley, 2016) there are three times evaluative content that can help individual to determine specific opinion toward a related entity, such as Beliefs, Values, and Emotions.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

LINE Today as a news aggregator allows the users to share their opinion, perception, and thoughts as the feedback towards the news content through comments. Narrowed feedback will become a public opinion, and comments summarize the construction of public understanding toward the news issue.

Based on 150 comments from the most commented news about Covid-19 in LINE Today Indonesia, the comments are categorized in the three feedback triggers and the three determinants of opinion public.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Comments based on Feedback Triggers

Feedback Trigger	Frequency	Percentage
Truth	36	24%
Relationship	58	39%
Identity	56	37%

This research has shown that relationship trigger has the biggest percentage, which means many feedbacks triggered by LINE Today's users who are used to give comment on the news presented in LINE Today before. The more often feedback giver gives their comment, the more his or her name recognized by LINE Today reader especially by whose often give their comments too.

The result also shown that public of LINE Today in Indonesia is divided into those who pro-government and those who oppose to the government in facing the pandemic of Covid-19. Because the second biggest trigger percentage is identity trigger with only two number of frequency difference with the relationship trigger. These are comments which polarized between resistance and supporter for the government policy. Both public who against the government shows their contrast identity which is in opposite with the government and vice versa.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage comments based on Opinion Public

Opinion Public	Frequency	Percentage
Belief	75	50%
Values	57	38%
Emotions	18	12%

The lowest score is on emotions category which means public or LINE Today readers in Indonesia doesn't really share their feelings toward the Covid-19 issue. Meanwhile, between the three determinants of public opinion toward the news about Covid-19, belief factor got the highest score. It means that Indonesian LINE Today readers tend not to be objective in giving their comments. They are critical enough to give comments in the news that is considered to be true based on what their belief about Covid-19 issue.

Relating to the various policies made by the Indonesian government in facing the Covid-19 pandemic, such as self-isolation, prohibition of going to home town, prohibition of gathering, social distancing, regional quarantine, large-scale social borders, and others, the researched comments had shown that public opinion which tends to be negative shows that there is a problem in conveying the handling of Covid-19 by Indonesian government to its public. In facing the Covid-19 issue, public is not fully convinced by the consistency of government policy. Even so, the

comments from public who oppose to government tend to attack the president personally, not the regulations, while the government policy requires consistent.

Table 4. Cross Tabulation of Feedback Trigger and Public Opinion

		Public Opinion						Total
		Belief		Value		Emotion		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	
Feedback Triggers	Truth	18	12%	16	11%	2	1%	36
	Relationship	19	13%	26	17%	13	9%	58
	Identity	38	25%	15	10%	3	2%	56
Total		75		57		18		150

The result from the cross tabulation above shown that the cross between the belief category in the public opinion with the identity category in the feedback trigger obtained the highest percentage which is 25%. It means the public or LINE Today users in Indonesia share their thought toward the news about Covid-19 based on what they believe to be true and it is corresponding with those who have the same identity. In other words, some news might be true for people in a pro government group, but it is lie for people in the opposite group.

The lowest score from the result of cross tabulation is between truth feedback triggers and emotion determinant for public opinion which only obtain 1%. It means public of LINE Today in Indonesia very rarely share a truth feedback trigger with their emotional feeling toward the news about Covid-19 issue.

CONCLUSION

The research finding shows Public of LINE Today in Indonesia is divided into two groups of polarization, such as group of people who support government and group of people who oppose them. Public is not fully convinced by the government in

facing the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a problem in delivering the messages about the development of Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia by the government to its public.

Based on the comments by the Indonesian LINE users, Indonesian readers are mostly tend to be triggered by the relationship between the person who comment or commentator and the subject on the news about Covid-19 as mention from concept from (Stone & Heen, 2015) above. It means that they are still siding their side to their stronghold in government or vice versa.

The comments tend not to be objective. Second factor of feedback that creates the Indonesian public opinion regarding to the news about Covid-19 in LINE Today Indonesia is not determined by cognitive components but by their belief. The comments are mostly based on what they belief to be true about the object in the news regarding Covid-19, and it is also determine how the Indonesian public opinion about it.

The public opinion determined by belief got the biggest crossed point by the feedback with identity trigger from the LINE Today users. The determinant of belief only applies to users with the same identity. The result of the research shows the similarity with Indonesia political situation condition nowadays which are public is divided during election campaign by using identity rather rationality.

The research findings are in line with the results of research conducted by previous research about hate speech in presidential election (Liza Diniarizky Putri, Annisarizki, 2020) which stated that the events of the campaign and the 2019 Presidential Election became the culmination of the interaction of conflicts that occurred between the two camps. The opposite meaning of the two camps of subjects has brought them into their ideological boxes and attitudes.

Facing the global health issue about pandemic Covid-19 in Indonesia, news producers and government especially should avoid the topic that can trigger the Indonesian online citizen into polarization. Government must consider the belief,

emotion, and value factor towards an issue. News producer also must aware their comment section can trigger public opinion by its truth, relationship, or identity. Study show comments on media can influence the other readers and create a public opinion. Meanwhile this country is still dealing with a crisis situation Covid-19 pandemic. So, the government need to take action guided by the principle of government crisis communications which one of them is unity.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study tries to see how comments on news can lead to public opinion on media aggregators. Public opinion is something that must be considered by the government. Future research can investigate how the impact of news about covid 19 on public anxiety not only about community health but also on political situation.

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