

# *Civic Skill Formation Through Mass Media Literacy*

*(A Case Study of Hoax in Mass Media on Civic Education Students of Pattimura University)*

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**Abstract**— This paper was based on researcher anxiety of the spread of hoax in mass media in one last decade in Indonesia and in fact, the citizen had been accustomed from a long time to receive hoax presented by journalists to mass media. To prevent the trap of hoax, then civic skill is needed which is formed through mass media literacy as the effective way for each citizen. This study was aimed to study mass media literacy as the basis for civic skill formation in students of civic education in Pattimura University. Mass media literacy becomes the main asset for civic education students to lead various opinions in mass media so saving their common sense.

**Keywords**— Civic Education, Civic Skill, Mass Media Literacy

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development in media convergence makes information spread very fast and cannot be stopped by a citizen. On one side, the growth of media is beneficial because the citizen is able to know the information about development in many parts of the world, but on the other side, the citizen who does not possess knowledge about media literacy certainly easily consumes hoax. No effort to enhance media literacy means letting the tyranny and the dumbing down occurred in front of us [1]. Literacy equips each citizen to think critically, see and differentiate what is good and what is bad for media [2]. Media literacy is learning effort for media public to become public who are able to live in the midst of the world which is called saturated- media [3].

A fatal mistake is when someone feels right with wrong thinking. In the other word, believing information without confirming is a mistaken thing. Therefore, knowledge about media literacy must be absolutely possessed by each citizen. So many news about hoax today are caused by mass media integrity which is increasingly decreased. Media integrity in Indonesia is as if being tied by a string of very brittle rope. The decrease of media integrity certainly effects on the roles played by the media itself.

The research conducted by [4] confirmed that condition that mass media in Indonesia is not reflecting reality, but representing the reality. Because not reflecting the reality, then media in Indonesia easily becomes the instrument to formulate market interest as thought by the powerful people, and not as experienced by a citizen in general. The result of a study conducted by [5] showed that "... the role of mass media had been contaminated by political interest and double standard so only the news which is profitable for certain people which have a big portion in its reporting."

Ref [1] stated that media position in public is as a consumer and not as a citizen because the main goal of media is to give profit to its stakeholder and shareholder, and not to drive in developing active citizen. The effect of no public contribution in setting the agenda of media makes media become a disaster [1]. The worse thing is the condition of mass media in Indonesia resembles the flight with turbulence, an indication of chaos situation with a random movement which is not stable make the situation become chaos and unpredictable.

Another crucial thing such as the level of citizen trust on media institution in 2016 tends to decline if compared to in 2015. Based on survey result of Edelman Trust Barometer, it shows that the level of citizen trust on media is in the figure of 63 percent from earlier that is 68 percent. It is a pity if media which is considered as credible information source experience is less trusted by a citizen. Undoubtedly, this survey result is correlated with citizen judgment toward the role of mass media in one last decade to produce a hoax, has low quality, makes propaganda instrument, and even sometimes breaks the law, even though its spread is faster. Reflecting on these various problems, then it is necessary to equip each citizen with knowledge about media literacy.

Mass media literacy not only becomes the focus in developing contemporary citizen but should be implemented comprehensively along with civic skill. The author chooses civic education students as the subject of study due to their encountering with media to contain certain learning degree

about civic issues. Civic Education students are thought as an important element of the young generation. It is on young generation that the life future of the nation is stake [6]. Therefore, it is necessary to equip each young generation with knowledge of media literacy. Due to the intensity of bad news in mass media which is increasingly increased, but less compensated by understanding that each media message contains manifest and latent function, and then they only become passive media consumer.

## II. METHOD

The approach used in this study was qualitative by using case study method. The reason to choose this approach was to analyze deeply and comprehensively civic skill formation through mass media literacy. It means that researcher wanted to analyze deeply and completely about the matters which become the object of study based on the facts obtained in the field in accord with data analysis result of the study conducted.

Ref [7] suggested that case study is research strategy in which the researcher investigates a program, activity, process or a group of individuals thoroughly. Ref [8] stated that case study is empirical investigation toward contemporary phenomena in the context of real life, particularly when the boundary between phenomena and context is not quite clear. This approach strongly emphasizes data authentic explain what is become the focus of study. This assertion is reasonable because researcher conducted the study about Civic Skill Formation through Mass Media (Case Study of Hoax in Mass Media on Civic Education Students of Pattimura University).

Regarding with that, the researcher uses technologies such as in-depth interview, observation, and documentation study in the form of data collection or documentation related to this study. Researcher held an interview with Civic Education students to find out civic skill formation through mass media literacy. To obtain clear and qualified informant in answering the problem of study, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique to determine subject or object of study in accord with the goal of this study itself, by using personal consideration of the researcher himself in accord with the topic of each problem which wants to be answered. Data were collected by using observation, interview, and documentation study was done by a researcher at Civic Education students of University of Pattimura, Ambon.

Categorization and data grouping process was done in a stage based on information from an informant and then was interpreted in a theoretical framework and conceptual perspective in the description.

### 1) *Data reduction*

Data reduction is analysis process to narrow, categorize, and orient the study result by focusing on the things which are considered important for the researcher, in the other word, data reduction is aimed to obtain understanding about data which had been collected from result of field note by summarizing, and clarifying based on problem and the aspects of problem being studied.

### 2) *Data display*

Data display is a collection of information arranged which will give a description of study completion, in the other word displaying data in detail and arranging it by searching its relation pattern. Data display which is arranged briefly, clearly and in detail but completely will make easier to understand the descriptions of aspects studied both completely and part by part. Data display next is presented in the form of essay or report in accord with data of study result obtained.

### 3) *Conclusion and Verification*

Conclusion drawing or verification is the effort to search the meaning and explanation toward the data which had been analyzed by searching the important things. This conclusion is arranged in the form of easy and brief statement by referring to the aim of study. These are procedures the researcher do in conducting this study. By doing this stages, it is expected that the study done can obtain data which fulfill the criteria of a study, namely reliable and accountable.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. *The Process of Civic Skill Formation in Civic Education Students Through Mass Media Literacy*

Each citizen should enhance intellectual skill through mass media literacy [9]. Furthermore, [10] asserted that intellectual skill is the most important part to create a citizen who is knowledgeable, effective, and responsible such as critical thinking skill. In addition, to participate effectively and responsibly in public affairs, it need to possess a set of knowledge and intellectual skill and effective and responsible participation skill need to be enhanced further through dispositions development which enhances individual ability to play role and in the health political process [11].

Media literacy has inseparable relation to civic skill, complete each other like one coin with two different faces. Media literacy will form and support student intellectual and participation skill of Civic Education students in understanding various information and give a contribution to decision making. The study result found that Civic Education students who possess intellectual skill are able to differentiate the true news and hoax in mass media. They refer carefully to news sources which are credible and have legality in Indonesia, such as Metro TV, TV One, Kompas TV, Net TV, Detik.com, and Ambon Express and Kabar Timur as local print media in Maluku Province. Doing crosscheck toward the credible news source is the right and a wise step which is done by each media individual.

According to [12], thinking ability aspect is the skill to: (1) determine the credibility of a source, (2) differentiate between the relevant and the irrelevant, (3) differentiate the fact from judgment, (4) identify and evaluate unspoken assumption, (5) identify the existing bias, (6) identify a viewpoint, (7) evaluate the evidence offered to support confession. "Furthermore, they can differentiate the true news and untrue news (hoax) in mass media by referring to the fact, data, place and time of the event, and the actors involved in that event as the news reported by mass media to the public. Correspondence theory asserts that if a statement does not accord with or refer to the valid fact, then this statement is a lie [13]. This theory should become preference to each student of Civic Education when confirming news.

Meanwhile, active participation of civic education students in living the life of nation and state is seen from their wise step in posing the question directly through interactive telephone,

short message sending, and send a message through email to mass media staff. There are some who visit the web and use

social media, such as Facebook or Twitter to contact the persons who report that news in mass media. Their skill to pose a question to mass media not only limited in a direct way. The other alternative they use is to pose the question indirectly concerning news presented by mass media to them. The question they pose then is answered by themselves based on analysis result of news in mass media. Interacting is responding to another citizen. Interaction means asking, answer, and negotiating politely [14].

Furthermore, Civic Education students have been skillful in communicating with mass media, they often communicate directly with mass media through telephone, email, social media, visiting web/site of that mass media, even meet directly the journalist who cover the news to do check and recheck about the truth of news. Besides, there are some Civic Education students who choose to communicate with mass media indirectly. They always pose the questions, and then they use the news in mass media to answer various questions they pose. They asked about the truth of a news by using question words such as what, where, when, who, why and how. Bearing in mind that information in media mass today give direct effect to public opinions, such as spiral of silence theory which is proposed by [15] that mass media has a very strong effect on public opinion.

The categorization of literacy according to National Leadership Conference on Media Education in communication level is someone is able to communicate the message received from media in various forms to the other persons [16]. This step had been practiced by civic education students in which they had explained the news vividly to the other persons.

### *B. The Importance of Mass Media Literacy for Civic Education Students*

As if that the management staff of mass media in Indonesia is more responsible to media owner which invest the capital in media business than the citizen who becomes mass media public. Some mass media is controlled by influential companies. It can strongly determine the choice of news, the means to deliver it, and the amount of coverage. In general, these companies aim to get the profit. Because of this reason, the news which is unprofitable for media owner usually will not be covered.

Therefore, the activities should be prepared to educate media public to become a citizen who is literate to the various news in mass media. Citizen literacy toward various news in mass media becomes the main asset to save their common sense. Basically, this media literacy is learning effort for media audience so become audience who is able in the midst of the world called media-saturated [3]. In addition, the important thing is that media literacy can equip each citizen to be able to reject and control each danger of bad news presented by mass media to public. The citizens who receive the news in mass media always takes a lesson.

According to [17] the main point of agenda-setting theory related to learning function of mass media. The assumption of this theory that public not only learns reporting issues but also learn how big the importance is given to an issue or topic

based on the way of mass media giving emphasis on that issue or topic. The things which are considered important by media then are considered important by the public. In the other word, media agenda then become public agenda.

Students who possess knowledge about media literacy certainly know agenda of mass media, including hoax presented by mass media. The study result found that media literacy is very important for education students as a young generation because they are easier to understand the various message from mass media, filter each news, not consume hoax, think critically and can differentiate hoax and true news. One important aspect of media literacy is a change of viewpoint toward mass media [18].

One important aspect of this mass media is a change of viewpoint toward hoax which had been spread in mass media which must be stopped by each student of civic education in order not to spread to other persons which will invoke a negative response by them who are still lack of knowledge about media literacy. The way to stop the hoax is by discussing with other people to open their mind to the truth of a story and encourage them not to spread it to others.

Another step is done by civic education students contacting mass media to clarify the bad news they present on "screen". Therefore. Media literacy reinforcement is needed in order that there is no more hoax which is like "snowball" which finally will give large effect in human life aspects. Mass media, both electronic and print has educative and educative function depend on the message content of information conveyed [19]. Media literacy becomes the main asset for civic education students in digesting each message content of information from mass media.

Media is believed to have very big power to form opinion and trust, change lifestyle, and form the attitude based on control of public themselves [20]. More than this, the slogan "back to the big power of mass media" and critical theory which admits that media has legitimacy power and control and effected on capitalist and bureaucracy interest [21].

Reflected from various concepts of mass media above, thus civic education students need to have control as a mass media customer. One of right action from them toward various news in mass media is by doing control. This action enables them to prevent the trap of hoax which will impair their reason, due to the massive intensity of bad news in some decades in our country. Control toward various news presented by mass media is the wise and right step for each mass media customer.

In addition, they need to oversee the news in order to lead the true opinion in mass media, but maintaining the truth of news, and prevent the spread of bad news. Because the journalist is also human, they can make error unintentionally. Misspelling and grammar error can change the meaning of a sentence. The certain facts maybe not checked in advance. Because being hurried by the deadline for publication or printing, they also can-do error in typing the number.

A public ability which needs to be developed in this case is reinforcement in understanding the media message (literacy). Media literacy in consumption pattern of popular culture is a

necessity. Public needs to develop their literacy ability as a bargaining position to demand quality mass media. If media literacy had been deeply rooted in the mind of Civic Education students. Then it will become reinforcement medium for them to contribute to media agenda, the content of coverage, and regulation related to media.

The aim of media literacy is to give public control more than only interpret media text [22]. Media literacy is not categorization but a series of integration. Knowledge and skill in media literacy need to be learned and developed. With the multimedia approach, learning tool can be made since an early age. Media literacy can be integrated into the educational curriculum.

#### *C. Hoax is Digested by Civic Education Students Without Verification*

Speaking about tax, today hoax becomes a hot issue for mass media and social media because it is considered make public anxious due to information which cannot be assured. The hoax is not a new thing. Similar to good news, hate news, even “mystical” news, the hoax has existed since people are found to send news. This hobby is rooted in the human exclusive ability to speak [6].

Now, hoax always becomes a trending topic in various mass media and social media because it is considered as one instrument which can break the unity both among nations and among religious believers in Indonesia. Hoaxes grow and become rampant in all Indonesian people. The result is public are increasingly made confused and ambiguous on how to identify the true news or not hoax. The rapid of communication tool development make public are easier to acquire various information and news as much as possible only in short time. But behind this ease, there is much false information spread and some people believe it to the truth.

The hoax had become stowaway in reporting in mass media. However, in its history, hoax had become “stowaway” of democracy [6]. Multiple verifications can prevent people from the trap of hoax. Unfortunately, each media consumer does not use multiple verifications when watching news which had become the main appetite for them in choosing the need for information. Inevitable, unconsciously they had become passive media consumer.

The study result found that Civic Education students as media consumer sometimes are tempted by hoax in mass media, and unconsciously had drowned them into the flow of hoax. They like the news they choose because the news is interesting, give a lesson, and suited with their hobby. Each student of Civic Education should be more active to filter and assure that each information stored in their mind is not hoaxed. In addition, Civic education students digest the news without confirmation because of the assumption that the news is derived from the credible source and supported by facts, but sometimes they do not confirm the television station which issue that news, even some believe that the television which issue that news is a credible one.

It is a big fool if one felling true with wrong thinking, believing information without confirming is a wrong thing,

due to the integrity of mass media in some decade in our country is increasingly declined, so we often can witness mass media which had been made to become an instrument of propaganda by certain actors.

Frequently, public perception is formed by mass media message, the reality description displayed by the news, advertisement and film then form a perception of some people on how they view the real world. According to [23] that we never conscious of what most happened in our brain, even though this activity often influences our conscious mind, this is not directly influenced another cognitive process. Our conscious is an act to oversee this cognitive activity at the highest level but only give limited and direct control.

#### *D. Critical Thinking Skill Formation of Civic Education Students Through Mass Media Literacy*

Possessing critical thinking skill is the main asset for each citizen to lead various opinions in mass media, so the news consumed are really valid, not contain religious, racial and tribal issue and intergroup issue even though hoax can divide the elements of the nation. Ref [24] stated that globalization challenge in 21<sup>st</sup> century demand each citizen to have characteristic, one of them is critical and systematical thinking ability. Possessing critical thinking or skillful thinking ability can build a democratic individual. For example, not getting used to being open mind is potential will invoke the conflict with other people. People who are trained with good thinking ability will consider themselves as having best thinking, and consider that other people have bad thinking. Be careful, a fatal accident is feeling right with wrong thinking [25].

According [26] that:

Critical thinking is the process of searching, obtaining, evaluating, analyzing, synthesizing and conceptualizing information as a guide for developing one’s thinking with self-awareness, and the ability to use this information by adding creativity and taking the risk.

In addition, [27] expressed that critical thinking is thinking activity through complex thinking to analyze statement or argument and generalization toward special meaning and interpretation, through logical reasoning pattern and assumption understanding.

According to [28], someone who thinks critically will be able to identify the problem, ask something, give answer/argument, and find another information. Skill in interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating news to become an important indicator for civic education students to see deeper about the truth of news in mass media. The study result found that mass media literacy can make civic education students think critically various news in mass media. When watching the news, they always refer to credible news sources in Indonesia such as TV One, Kompas TV, I-News TV, detik.com which have legality and its news always refer to fact and data which are the true news source.

Civic education students who are smart and careful always doing check, recheck, and crosscheck. The true news certainly is tested even confirmed by another source. Then they

compare the title and content of each news from these various media. This effort also can be done by seeing whether or not that media has valid legality, usually, stand out under CE or PT which has been registered in Ministry of Law and Human Rights.

The lie is indeed anxious even can harm the public interest, because hoax can result in slander. As proverb say that slander is crueller than murder. Therefore, a person who makes and spread hoax is the one who has bad behavior. Furthermore, a true news source always reports its news in detail, such as cover the fact, data, the place of the event, time and had based on confirmation result which has valid information. The credible source news reports the news with a certain condition, so the information is deserved as a news. These conditions are: news should be fact, the news is a current event (had not occurred), news should be balanced, should be complete (contain all elements of news), should be interesting and beneficial and arranged systematically.

Civic education students view that the topic of true news has clear fact, data and source. In addition, the topic of true news does not push aside someone into awkward position even though it should report a murder case of someone. The news which perceives reader response contains a humane value such as not contains negative sentence and multi-interpretation. Meanwhile, civic education students think that the content of true news should contain fact and data, besides clear news source. The content of true news is the news containing fact, data, and not idea containing fake fact and data.

Furthermore, mass media literacy can enhance the skill of analyzing to investigate the truth of the news presented by mass media. They always compare the news sources in another mass media. They seek another news source which has a similar theme. Usually, the actual and factual news is available in some credible print media and portals. In addition, civic education students' judgment toward a true news in mass media is that this news should contain fact, its source should be credible and accountable. Interestingly, there are some students who stated that press is a public representative, so when the news conveyed is wrong then it becomes "bitter medicine" for the public. If the news conveyed by mass media is true, then it will become "fresh wind" for the public who consume it.

Public response to news is important to measure the effectiveness of message conveyed by mass media to the public. Furthermore, civic education students conclude news in mass media as having fact, data and clear news source. They more refer to fact and data collected from a mass media source to find out which is concrete and which is not and not based on certain interest so they can consume it. Meanwhile, some informants more emphasize on topic and content which is more related to the fact in the field. This step is in accord with [30] that the ability to analyze it will enable someone to differentiate between fact and opinion and between means an end.

It is important to shift the focus and to manage and evaluate the conveying of media content in information so critical thinking toward media content will be created [30]. A

citizen can be said think critically if she or he is able to test his/her experience, evaluate knowledge, ideas and consider the argument before obtaining justification (Fisher, in [31]).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on study result and discussion which had been explained above, then the researcher draws conclusions as follow:

1. The process of civic skill formation of students of Pattimura University through mass media literacy is effective to develop two components of civic skill namely intellectual skill and participatory skill, so civic education students who have intellectual skill are able to differentiate the true news with untrue news or hoax, able to clarify news. And respond wisely the true news and hoax in mass media. In addition, the participatory skill of civic education students is very clearly seen in which they choose to communicate with mass media to assure the truth of the news, and explain the true news in mass media to other people who had not understand it comprehensively.
2. Mass media literacy is important for civic education students as the main asset for them to prevent the trap of hoax which sometimes inserted behind the news reporting in mass media, to stop media catastrophe, and as control instrument toward various messages in mass media.
3. The hoax is digested by civic education students without verification because they had believed that this news comes from the credible source. However, they like, satisfied and happy with the news they choose with the reason that the news is actual, give knowledge, and meet their need of information so the news is deserved to be consumed by them.
4. Mass media literacy can form critical thinking skill of Civic Education students. This skill has become the main asset for them to bring various opinions in mass media. This is seen from the skills possessed by Civic Education students in interpreting, analyzing, evaluating a news in a right way started from the topic, content until the conclusion, so it can save their commonsense from the news containing tribal, racial and religious issues and among classes as well as a hoax in mass media.

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