Transfer of communications knowledge: Literacy of media conglomeration in high school students

Transfer ilmu komunikasi: Literasi konglomerasi media pada siswa SMA

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ABSTRACT

Information and communication technology innovations encourage mass media business by giant media ruler groups present the phenomenon of media conglomeration with various opportunities and impacts. The objective of this community service, organized by Bunda Mulia University in collaboration with Tarakanita 2 High School, through the implementation of a media study class entitled "Media Conglomerate" for 18 students in grades 10, 11, and 12 from across the majors to show the media conglomeration phenomenon and introducing media conglomerates in Indonesia. Activities were held online through Google Meet using interaction, case studies method, and sharing video material presentations to strengthen participants' understanding of related topics. The participants stated that this activity was profoundly educative, objective, accountable, and transparent so that the material presented was able to increase knowledge and prepare their social skills in the mass communication industry. Media literacy skills are needed, especially for high school students, as the nation's future generation to be able to see, accept, and understand the content of mass media products wisely. Participants can sort out news objectively because they understand the subjectivity of the mass media, so they are not easily influenced and ensure that the information received is to avoid provocation, conflict, and misinformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology innovations have contributed to the development of the mass media industry. One of its linear phenomena is the convergence of media that combines various services and information and communication technologies (ICTS-Information and Communication Technology and Services). Mass media, based on their physical properties, comprises print media (e.g.,

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newspapers, magazines, books), electronic media (e.g., television, radio, film, video, audio recordings), and digital media (e.g., internet facilities, DVD, CD-ROM) (Nadie, 2018).

Sulistyo et al. (2020) state that the media helps determine the value of identity, integrity, diversity of information, and freedom of speech for the community so that the two are inseparable integral parts. Integrity, especially in the realm of communication, according to Marta (2018), can be observed from the figure of an institutional leader who is expected to be a role model in life and whose personality is in line with the appearance in the media. The appropriate media management could prioritize public interest. This makes the media appear in the form of business commodities. The mass media business includes a significant competition that requires socio-economic strength, so it tends to encourage media consolidation, which gives rise to media conglomeration as a form of concentration of the mass media owner group as the dominant player (Rohandi, 2017; Pembayun, 2015). The various factors and urgencies that demand media literacy skills are the basis for the realization of this community service activity.

In the current era of media convergence, the power and influence of the media are often used by certain parties to influence the public to gain and maintain power. Furthermore, this media convergence can be linked to democracy (Sasongko & Marta, 2018). The public is directed by various programs and content produced by the media to support the ideology of their respective media owners. In this regard, the media itself can actually kill democracy itself. This is caused by propaganda and manipulation for the interests and power of the media owners. This also indicates that the mass media, which were supposed to be a forum for the public to channel their opinions, have disappeared (Erawun et al., 2021; Khumairoh, 2021). This is something that has not been realized by many people and is also an interesting and important issue and a scourge to be discussed by communication practitioners.

The media itself is basically an object that is quite often discussed in the realm of communication, especially mass communication. Mass communication is a communication activity in which messages and information are given to the broader community, which consists of various components, namely media, regulations, filters, audiences, and feedback (Romli, 2016; Kraft & Seely, 2015). One of the characteristics of mass communication, namely competitiveness, illustrates that various individuals with goals and interests seek to do various ways to attract public interest and encourage communicators, which are the mass media actors, to send messages (Sari et al., 2021; Silvia et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, twelve major media groups control various mass media channels. These media include print media, broadcast media, and online media. These media are the Media Group, MNC Group, CT Group, Kompas Gramedia Group, Jawa Pos Group, Mahaka Media, BeritaSatu Media Holdings, Femina Group, MRA Media, Tempo Inti Media, Elang Mahkota Teknologi, and Visi Media Asia (Harsanto, 2015).

The urgency of education regarding media literacy also arises because the mass media has a large share and influence on society. The public is exposed to various mass media products in the form of print media, electronic media, and also online media even since starting their activities in the morning (Wardi & Elfia, 2021). Information and events from various regions and even abroad can be spread quickly through the mass media. Some developed countries even use the mass media to distribute their ideology for political and commercial interests that help expand their power in the world (Silvia et al., 2021; Sirait & Sanjaya, 2021).

The importance of media literacy includes various human activities, such as financial situations where the development of digital technology drives human lifestyles. The drive for lifestyle consumption becomes a digital problem when managing finances that has the potential to bring down the individual or group (Hermawan et al., 2021). Maydiantoro et al. (2021) also found the urgency of media literacy in moving the Indonesian economy forward during the COVID-19 pandemic. MSMEs that are still running during the pandemic need an understanding of the use of digital media to maintain their business and improve their competence in entrepreneurship.

The public needs to have media literacy as a skill to think critically and develop skepticism towards healthy mass media construction. Saputra & Marta (2020) added that there are needs to deal with the rush of information in the mass media. Media literacy helps the community to control the media so that it plays a role and functions as it should in society and also helps people absorb information from the mass media to sort out messages that are necessary or unnecessary to receive. Therefore, academics, communication experts, and international bodies such as UNESCO have declared the importance of media education or media literacy in order to help people who are exposed to various media products to become more critical (Afifah & Sari, 2019; Zaher & Elfiandri, 2019).

Bunda Mulia University, under its slogan of "Bridging Education to The Real World," seeks to reflect these values in various activities, one of which is through community service activities (Abdimas) which are carried out in collaboration with Tarakanita 2 High School to hold a media literacy study session titled media conglomerate (Putra et al., 2021).

Tarakanita 2 High School students are categorized as the youth category. In this sophisticated and instant era, teenagers receive various information from the mass media either through television, radio, books, posters, games, or online media. Teenagers show a dynamic nature when dealing with the media (Briandana et al., 2022). This, in turn, could have a negative impact if the information received is not selected objectively. If provocative information is taken for granted, it will open up opportunities for conflict. The ability of media literacy by recognizing the phenomenon of media conglomeration in Indonesia is an insight needed by students at SMA Tarkanita 2 amid the onslaught of information they receive as teenagers who live in metropolitan cities and should be a generation that is being critical of the media. In addition, students of Tarakanita 2 High School also need materials related to the field of communication, especially media literacy, which is specifically not included in the subjects taught at school.

This activity indirectly also provides opportunities for high school students to experience college. This is obtained by studying materials related to the communication science study program, which specifically discusses the mass media industry. Journalism certainly provides a representation of the reality of media communication. The broadcasted reality will construct new meaning for audiences who receive journalism information (Putri et al., 2020). This experience can also help them find the interests of each individual student in a particular field of study so that from an early age, they can help determine the major to be chosen when entering higher education later on.

This activity aims to provide Tarakanita 2 High School students with an overview of the phenomenon of media conglomeration. In addition, they will also be introduced to the media conglomerates in Indonesia that oversee mass media companies in Indonesia. Media communication reflects the flow of conglomerates that sort and process information for the public. Reflection of information using mass media will show Indonesia's identity as a multicultural country (Marta, 2017). This activity also directs students to see the potential, threats, and consequences of mass media content so that participants can see media from an objective, independent, and selective point of view with their media literacy skills.

2.   METHODS

This community service activity is packaged in the form of socialization, ensuring students have media literacy skills, especially in receiving and understanding the information they receive from the mass media, and have individual social skills, especially in the mass communication industry.

This online class was attended by 18 Tarakanita 2 High School students who had registered previously. Participants are a combination of grades 10, 11, and 12 from across the majors. The online

activity is conducted as the best alternative in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic situation to minimize the spread of the Covid-19 in the educational environment, especially in schools (Sasa et al., 2021). Therefore, this activity takes place using a video conference application of Google Meet so that participants and presenters can continue to hold face-to-face activities, despite using the online medium.

This activity will be held on Thursday, November 18, 2021, from 14.30 to 16.00 local time (UTC +7). Table 1 below presents a series of events during the activity.

Table 1. Schedule of activities

Time	Duration (minutes)	Activity conducted
14.00-14.15	15'	Internal committee and presenter preparations
14.15-14.30	15'	The virtual room being opened to participants
14.30-14.35	5'	Opening session by MC
14.35-15.15	40'	Main material deliverance
15.15-15.30	15'	Q&A session
15.30-16.00	30'	Marketing Department session and closing

The speaker involved one of the Communication Studies students at Bunda Mulia University in this activity. Quoted from a similar activity carried out by Iskandar et al. (2020), the involvement of students is essential in providing space for their actualization in society. The presenters used the interaction method when starting the presentation of the material to increase enthusiasm and get the participants' attention. The presenters also conducted an interaction activity, a reciprocal activity that describes interconnected activities that influence one another (Inah, 2015), when discussing the material with the participants to ensure that they followed and understood the material presented.

The material prepared by the presenters is made according to the theme of the community service activities and arranged in the form of slides shared through the share screen feature available in the Google Meet application. In providing an explanation, the presenter also delivered material by showing several videos relevant to the discussion on the YouTube application through the Google Meet share screen feature, which presented audio and visual data.

Furthermore, the presenters also utilize the case study method to facilitate the description of an actual event that departs from social processes and experiences that attract attention (Prihatsanti et al., 2018). Therefore, the presenters invited the participants to think critically by asking them questions to relate the material to cases in the field, and they saw and experienced firsthand the phenomenon of media conglomeration. This is done so that the material presented is not only understood theoretically but also has relevance to the participants' actual experiences so that the implementation of the understanding received can be valid.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Participants are invited to first recognize the definition of media conglomeration before relating it to social phenomena and realities in the mass media that they can see and find in their daily activities. Media conglomerates that are being discussed here are the media companies with various business branches that concentrate on the mass media industry (Fernando et al., 2020; Romeltea, 2018). Most of

the appointed participants could correctly deduce the definition of a conglomerate in general (Septiarysa et al., 2021).

Shortly, after confirming that the participants understood the definition of the media conglomerate, the presenter explained the media conglomerate group, including the various media companies they manage, so that participants know the classification map of media conglomerates in Indonesia. Next, the speaker explained the media conglomeration's potential, threats, and consequences. Media conglomeration can be seen as a double-edged sword: On one hand, it has a positive impact in terms of the efficiency of thought, energy, and material, but on the other hand, it can have a negative impact because the managed information is based on the interests of the media owner, so that it can lead to the artificially-formed public opinion, especially if there is information that is excessively constructed and ignores the facts for the sake of media discourse which ends up being unobjective. It is hoped that participants will understand this so that they become more selective and wiser in receiving various information that reaches them through mass media.

The wisdom of managing information from several mass media exposures needs to be studied based on a certain frame or perspective presented by the news. (Novarisa et al., 2019; Sya & Marta, 2019; Fernando & Marta, 2018). Various media in certain conglomerate groups, according to Kurniasari & Aji (2018), tend to distribute news through the same and uniform angle or point of view so that people who receive information will receive biased and doubtfully objective "truth" (Harry et al., 2021; Aziz, 2018).
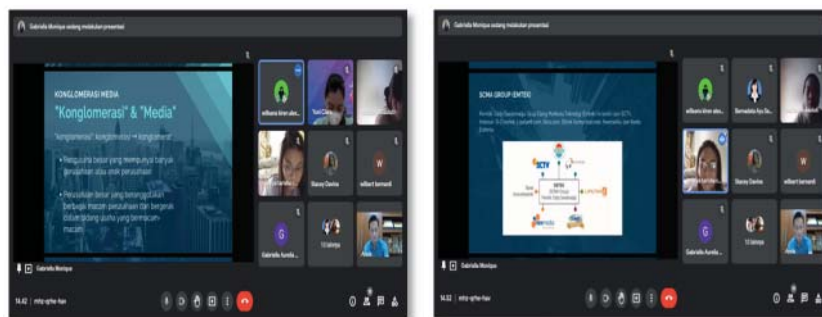

Figure 1. The elaboration of the definition of media conglomeration
Figure 2. Presentation of the Classification Map of Media Conglomerates in Indonesia

Participants were also actively involved by the presenters by asking questions about what television programs they usually watch on certain television stations, which indicated an element of agenda-setting as an integral and inseparable part of the practice of media conglomeration. The agenda-setting basically refers to the theory discovered by McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. Beattie (2021) stated that this theory explains that the public agenda can be influenced by the media, which plays a role in transferring various issues so that people think that the issue is important as an important issue. News content in the media goes through various processes carried out by media actors who cannot be separated from the interests of their owners (Marta & Sierjames, 2018; Rosalia, 2014).

Participants gave examples as answers to questions from presenters about how the same content on different television stations under one media umbrella has its own characteristics. One example of the case being discussed is a soap opera or FTV program broadcasted on SCTV and Indosiar television channels. The participants had previously explained that SCTV and Indosiar are under the same media umbrella, the Emtek Group. However, if examined more deeply, the content of soap operas aired on SCTV and Indosiar have their own characteristics, whereas SCTV more often raises themes of love stories

and teenage life. In contrast, Indosiar more often raises stories of upheavals in domestic life such as through the "Voice of the Wife's Heart" show or the ambiance of religious doom and punishment (Marta et al., 2020). The presenters intend to show that even though they are under the same umbrella whose media content tends to be the same (producing soap operas programs), as a business company aims for profit, they indeed have a different target audience for their programs so the effectiveness could be seen under one media umbrella with the same program format.

The speaker also conveyed the consequences that could arise from this media conglomeration phenomenon. Habsari (2012), in his research, explains that media conglomeration can become an arena for hegemony because people accept the mass media version of reality due to agenda-setting and framing that occurred inside it, which leads to homogenization. In addition to the agenda-setting explained through a case study directly by the speaker to the participants, the speaker also explains homogenization and cultural hegemony. Homogenization causes programs or forms of impressions on mass media to be similar and uniform. The public will experience difficulties seeing an issue or news from a different perspective from what is presented by the media that are under the auspices of the same media company. Furthermore, cultural hegemony is a form of domination or control by a group over other groups in society. Mass media plays an important role in constructing the meaning of existing cultures.

Pembayun (2015) states that this media conglomeration can erode people's need for truth. This is clearly due to the agenda-setting and framing executed by the owners of these media. The pseudo-facts that are accepted through the construction process by the mass media then indirectly indicate the practice of hegemony by the mass media over society. The method of framing during the construction process is explained by Mutiarahmi & Mustafa (2019) as a point of view or perspective used by the media in conveying news.

The speaker also reminded the participants that society is now in a "flood of information," where the rapid development of communication and information technology enables the information being broadcasted from various media, especially the mass media, with the unproven and unconfirmed truth. In fact, society in the future will be referred to as the information society. People are now living in a media-saturated era which indicates a situation and condition of life that is "media overcrowded." Mass media in the form of television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, recordings, films, and the internet produce a wide variety of content and have rapid movements. Therefore, from an early age, students need to acquire media literacy skills to be able to think critically about the content they receive (Garbe et al., 2020; Zaher & Elfiandri, 2019).

Furthermore, to help participants understand the material properly, the presenters showed several videos from various YouTube channels, which indicated the news content containing elements of agenda-setting. Khamim & Sabri (2019) stated that media conglomerates could represent their political image through their media by influencing news production. This can lead to people's mindsets, perceptions, attitudes, and behavior.

One example of the case raised by the speaker was by playing a news video entitled "MNC Group Wins the Heroes of Media Conglomerate Award in The Pandemic Era" on the YouTube channel of Seputar iNews, and has also been broadcasted on the RCTI television channel. After the video is shown, the presenter invites the participants to discuss it. These media are clearly under the media umbrella of the MNC Group, so news of the MNC Group winning the award is also used as the content of its news broadcasts to indirectly show the public about the achievements achieved by the MNC Group in order to improve the image of the MNC Group. When examined further, the news also shows Jessica Tanoesoedibjo as the Chairperson of MNC Peduli (CSR department of the MNC Group) and the daughter

of Hary Tanoesoedbijo, the owner of the MNC Group. In addition, Liliana Tanoesoedibjo, wife of Hary Tanoesoedibjo, was seen with Miss Indonesia 2020, Carla Yules, who was providing compensation to the people. The presenter tried to invite the participants to look further, that Liliana Tanoesoedibjo herself, apart from being the wife of Hary Tanoesoedibjo, is also the Chairperson of the Miss Indonesia Foundation, so that she can undoubtedly involve Miss Indonesia in various events related to the MNC Group. The illustration emphasizes how the wheels of conglomeration rotate and are interconnected in a giant media company. This news about the MNC Group is then deemed not to be broadcasted on other stations such as Metro TV news channel because Metro TV is under the auspices of a different conglomerate and has its own interests.

The following case study given by the presenter was to show a video entitled "Mobile Vaccination of NasDem Peduli Are Present in Two Locations" from the Metro TV News YouTube channel. Then, the presenters discussed with the participants by explaining that the NasDem Party (National Democrat) is a political party founded by Surya Paloh, who also serves as General Chair and owner of the Media Group that oversees Metro TV. Therefore, the news indirectly indicates how the Nasdem Party shows its concern for the current Covid-19 pandemic situation by holding mobile vaccinations conducted by the CSR department of the party (NasDem Peduli) so that people will have the perception that the NasDem Party has concern for the community.

One of the videos shown was a video entitled "Still Trusting the Media?" uploaded by the Remotivi YouTube channel. This video discusses how the media plays a significant role in the general election in Indonesia, especially in the 2014 election. This video opens the minds of students that the mass media has a vast and influential role, primarily when it is used as a vehicle by media owners for their respective interests, especially in the political field.
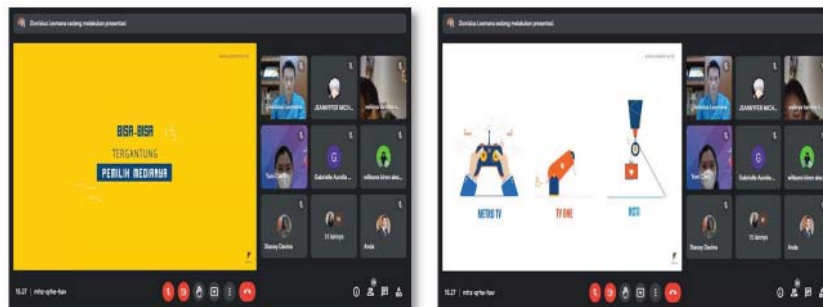

Figure 3. Viewing videos 1 and 2

The video content also stated that the news on television runs linearly with the political movement of the owner. The presenters also use the content in this video as case study material. It is hoped that this case study can help participants relate the material about media conglomeration that has been conveyed, the elements of the agenda-setting, and the facts that occur in the mass media.

Afterward, the presenter played the following video from the Data Fakta YouTube channel, entitled "King of Indonesian Media! These are 7 Conglomerates and Media Rulers in Indonesia". The video explains the media conglomerates in Indonesia and the media they cover.

The presenters played the videos that were shown with the aim of helping participants visualize the material presented. It is hoped that this activity would help participants get to know Indonesian media conglomerates more clearly and their media companies (Kusumasari, 2014). The following pictures show several prominent media conglomerates, namely Surya Paloh as the leader of the Media Group and

Hary Tanoesoedibjo as the owner of the MNC Group. The video content is also explained again about what media fields are managed by the media conglomerates, which are not only print media but also television media, online media, and others under the umbrella of mass media companies (Gunawibawa & Oktiani, 2020). This information will help the participants to broaden their horizons because it is believed that more or less of the participants do not necessarily know that some of the mass media that they know and have seen so far are actually under the same umbrella, with the same owner.
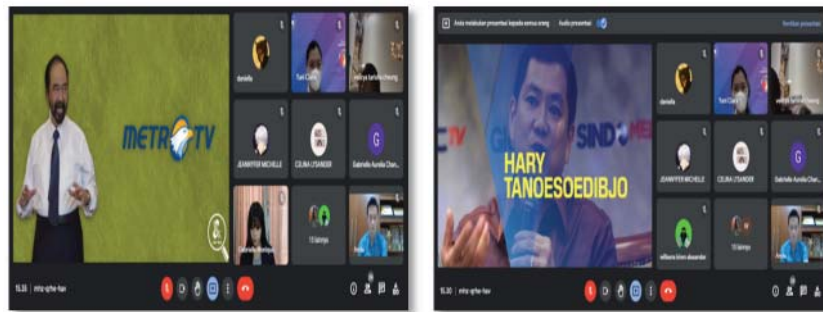

Figure 4. Video viewing 3 and 4

Representatives from the Marketing Department of Bunda Mulia University distributed attendance and feedback forms for participants to be filled. The representative also conveyed some information about Bunda Mulia University. Furthermore, the teachers from Tarakanita 2 High School gave closing remarks. They said this class activity was joyful because the students were actively involved through the questions the presenters gave, and the material presented was beneficial for the participants. Then, the presenters also closed the event by wrapping it through a message that, after receiving the meeting material, the students are expected to be more critical, objective, and selective in receiving various messages and information from the mass media. Through this activity, the presenters indirectly helped the participants hone their media literacy skills and the information literacy received through these mass media. Darmayanti (2016) states that information literacy shows the ability of individuals to find, collect, assess, interpret, use, and convey the information they receive from various sources appropriately. Furthermore, the organizers and all participants took a group photo as a memento. After confirming that the participants had filled out the attendance and feedback forms provided by the organizers, this activity officially ended by closing the Google Meet room.

Figure 5. Group photo of the committee and participants

To measure the success of this activity, a calculation is made on the feedback form that the participants have filled out. Feedback, according to Viona et al. (2021), has become an effective way to improve quality and add value to competitiveness. In addition, it is essential to understand the exchange of messages without having to interact directly but through a special communication medium (Karolina et al., 2020).

Discussion

Based on the evaluation of the material and resource persons, it appears that of the participants in this activity, as many as 55.55% agreed, and 38.89% strongly agreed that this activity was beneficial and answered the needs of participants (educational), while only 5.56% of participants disagreed. The following evaluation shows that 38.89% of participants agree, and 55.55% of participants strongly agree that the material presented is in accordance with the conditions and problems faced by participants (objective). In comparison, only 5.56% of participants disagree. Reviewing the activity conducted, 61.11% of participants agreed, and 38.89% of participants strongly agreed that the material presented was clear and understandable (accountable). Then, 50% of participants agreed, and 44.44% of participants strongly agreed that they were actively involved in the implementation of activities (transparent), while only 5.56% of participants disagreed.

The evaluation carried out refers to the material presented and the presenters as resource persons in this activity. The evaluation broadly includes four indicators: educative, objective, accountable, and transparent. The following is the result of the evaluation calculation in question, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation of Materials and Resource Persons

Community Service Activity Evaluation Indicators	Disagree	Not enough Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Educational (Abdimas activities are useful and answer the needs of participants)	5.56%	0%	55.55%	38.89%
Objective (Material is delivered according to the conditions and problems faced by participants)	5.56%	0%	38.89%	55.55%
Accountable (Material is presented clearly and can be understood)	0%	0%	61.11%	38.89%
Transparent (Participants are actively involved in the implementation of activities)	5.56%	0%	50%	44.44%

Participants also stated that, in addition to the material provided relevant to the current situation and conditions, the material could improve their knowledge. The material deliverance method conducted in the activity is deemed very interesting. This, of course, has been designed and prepared by the presenters considering that this topic is less common for high school students. The activity review shows that besides clear material deliverance, the activity's ambiance was also conducted conducive and interactive so that the participants could understand how far their knowledge of mass media products' concepts and content they consumed through delivering opinions based on the presenter's directions.

Video viewing also helps participants strengthen their understanding of the material presented so that the activity becomes effective. The presenter is indeed choosing videos whose content discusses phenomena regarding media conglomerates and conglomerates in Indonesia. The video used also contains related elements, such as an indication of the agenda-setting seen in it.

Through the case studies provided, the participants can see how each mass media has an interest that is influenced by the owner of the media. This is able to make them more selective and objective in receiving information through mass media products. A piece of information that is being received is not simply believed to be a valid source, but it must be recognized that there are biases that need to be ensured for accuracy and objectivity.

In the various media literacy activities that have been carried out, the majority of Abdimas activists have focused on digital media literacy as the topic of the activities carried out. Digital media literacy made the participants realize that knowledge of digital media is important, especially in disseminating information, opening mindsets, increasing knowledge, providing motivation, and being a benchmark for digital media literacy itself (Prasanti & Indriani, 2016). Digital media literacy, especially on social media, in addition to increasing knowledge of social media, is also to recognize, find out, and overcome the impact of fake news circulating on social media (Rahmawan et al., 2018).

Apart from the many activities that focus on digital media literacy, this community service activity is carried out as the primary form of prevention because many mass media have also enlivened existence in digital media, especially social media. This shows that students should first understand the essence of mass media literacy starting from the phenomenon of media conglomeration, which is thickly felt in it, as has been done through this activity. Participants were also invited to get to know the mass media conglomerates' opportunities, impacts, and threats, then analyze cases that occurred.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Society has an integral and inseparable relationship with the mass media industry. Various mass media products reach the public in their daily activities. This can be seen as a challenge for the community to select information more wisely.

Eighteen cross-major students of Tarakanita 2 High School took the media literacy class on the topic of this media conglomerate properly. The participants of the activity received an introduction, description, and illustration of the media conglomeration phenomenon in Indonesia. They have understood that media conglomeration is a phenomenon that arises because of the interests of media conglomerates or owners of giant media groups with their respective discourses, which can be classified into twelve major groups of media owners. They have also understood that media conglomeration has the potential to, among other things, bring about opportunities through the efficiency of thought, energy, and time. However, on the other hand, it can bring threats and consequences because the content produced can be influenced by the interests of the media owner so that the media content becomes less or even not objective. Through case studies presented by presenters and responses from participants, they were able to explain that a mass media presents content with a certain theme that is different from other mass media, which, when viewed further, is an indicator of the practice of mass media conglomeration. The participants were able to understand critical media exposure through media literacy skills that should be given from an early age, even from high school.

Community service activities carried out online certainly have their own challenges, where the limited face-to-face attendance can affect the delivery of information and understanding of the material presented. The presenters attempted to summarize activities that could involve the participation of the

participants as well as help participants to understand the material presented through alternative media. Overall, it can be concluded that the participants are enthusiastic. However, to overcome the existing obstacles and at the same time develop the quality of similar activities in the future, the implementation of this activity can be carried out face-to-face by implementing Covid-19 Health Protocols so that communication and interaction during the activity can be better established and participants can better receive and understand the material appropriately. Further activity can also be executed by inviting resource persons in the form of media experts or representatives from the mass media in Indonesia to provide their point of view regarding the discussion being presented.

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