

“IN-GOOD-NEWS-IA”: THE ROLE OF GOOD NEWS FROM INDONESIA (GNFI) IN HELPING TO ENGENDER SENSE OF NATIONHOOD

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ABSTRACT

The bad news seemed to have become a daily dish in a variety of Indonesian media today. Meanwhile, positive news and impressive achievements of Indonesia are often masked, or only displayed in a tiny part of the whole story. It also dismisses the sense of concern for a nation because the audience is fed up. News reporting has the possibility to influence public opinion and audience behaviour. Furthermore, the effects may have an impact on the sense of nationhood. The matters about a country are reflecting on how the media plays the role as news platform in creating the values of nationalism in the content. This essay examines the roles of Good News From Indonesia (GNFI) news platform and social media movement in Indonesia in helping to engender a sense of nationhood. This research uses qualitative methods, including media observation, in-depth interview, and also completed with literature review to acquire data to support the analysis. The essay focuses on three primary roles of GNFI, which are fulfilling the needs of useful information, restoring the optimism of Indonesia, and rebuilding confidence and citizen's optimism.

INTRODUCTION

“Bad news is good news. The good news about bad news is - it sells.” - Roy Greenslade.

The bad news seemed to have become a daily dish in a variety of Indonesian media today. Consciously or not, the day we become more familiar with the negative news presenting system to a significant portion and dominate. Positive news and impressive achievements as a nation are often masked, or if not, only a tiny part of the whole story. They are barely getting a proper place. Mostly, the daily news we see and hear is desperately negative and replete with protests to the government, crime, ethnic issues, disasters, corruption, terrorism, and scandals. Does the media set a certain agenda of negative news? Why? Does it respond to the audience's preference for bad news over the good news? Or is it just because it sells more?

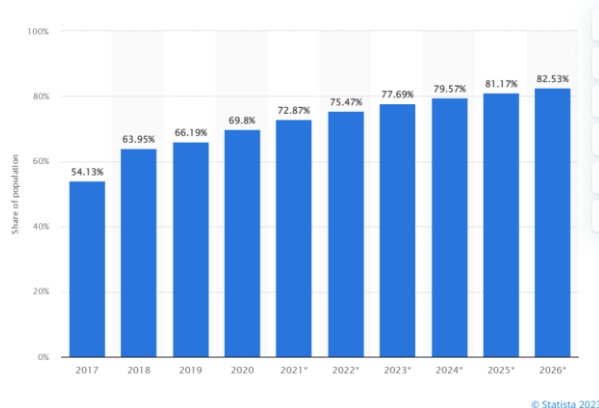
The situation of a nation is sometimes referring to the way of news reporting through its channel. Basically, the news program in printed, electronic, and online media has a similar pattern which is airing the ‘worst’ news as the highlight of the day and continuing with good news in the end. It is positive that negative news attracts more public attention. On the contrary, it also dismisses the sense of concern for a nation because the audience is fed up. News reporting has the possibility to influence public opinion and audience behavior. Furthermore, the effects may have an impact on the sense of nationhood. The matters about a country are reflecting on how the media plays the role as news platform in creating the values of nationalism in the content.

This research examines the roles of Good News From Indonesia (GNFI) as a growing and influential news platform and social media

movement in helping to engender a sense of nationhood. The essay focuses on three primary roles of GNFI, which are fulfilling the needs of useful information, restoring the optimism of Indonesia, and rebuilding confidence. To some extent, this case study discusses the impact of the media and journalists choosing to demonstrate the news stories, the role of nationalism and citizen's optimism circulated in the social media in producing counter-narratives against the protest.

Indonesia is the social media capital of the world, one of the markets worth notice (Cosseboom, 2014). Based on some statistics portals, from the 278,268,685 population Indonesian population, as many 212,354,070 million people are Internet users Internet users as of July 2022 (internetworldstat, 2022).

Image 1. Internet penetration rate in Indonesia from 2017 to 2020 with forecasts until 2026



Among those netizens, as many 202,2 million people are Facebook subscribers as of July 2022. In 2026, the estimation is that there will be around 82.53% internet penetration rate in Indonesia (statista.com, 2023). From the data collected regarding social media in Indonesia, some key facts of social media statistics are that Indonesia is the 3rd most active Facebook user, the world's most active users of Twitter that post 2.4% of the 10.6 billion tweets worldwide and 1.3 million Indonesian are LinkedIn users.

Indonesia is a developing country that adopts everything new quickly, especially when it comes to mobile. Among 30 countries surveyed, Indonesia is the most that spend nine hours per day using electronic or mobile devices on average, based on statistics released by

marketing research agency Millward Brown. A range of Indonesian opinion formers is active on social media and highly productive creating inspired writings of Indonesia as a stable country and progressing in various fields. Those scripts need a platform in order to be seen and reach as many readers as possible. This case is related to the notion that the role of social media platforms is offering online space for people to declare their viewpoints and engage in a variation of activities. Accordingly, people are also able to post their own thoughts and opinions (Smith, 2009).

Good News From Indonesia (GNFI)

Initially, GNFI was formed from a movement to provide positive news to the people of Indonesia. In 2008, Akhyari Hananto and 300 volunteers surveyed 4000 Indonesian youths about what they think about the future of the Indonesian nation. The survey results stated that Indonesian youth feel pessimistic about the future of their own country, with a comprehensive survey of 83.61%. The lack of positive news/information about the country has impacted youth pessimism in Indonesia.

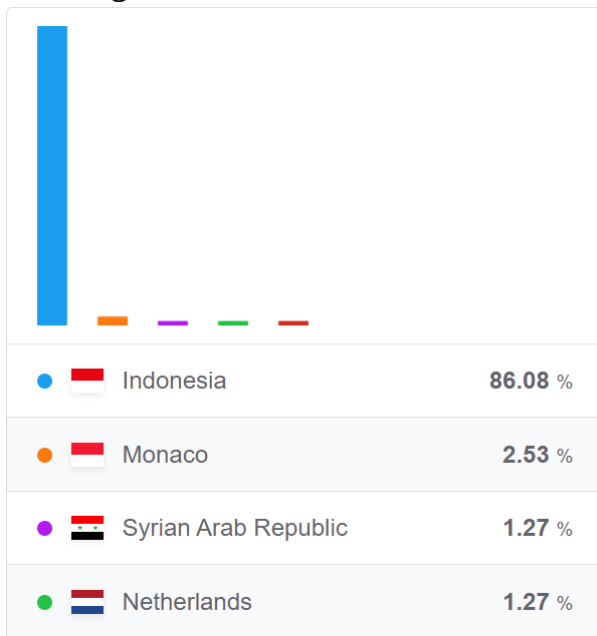
In 2009, Akhyari Hananto, the initiator and the founder of GNFI, created a domain in the form of a blog launched to spread the good news. The content source is good news and information from various sectors collected apart from the mainstream media. However, the sector that was mainly focused was the economic sector, tourism, and education. During its development in 2015, GNFI established a plan to make GNFI a company under the name PT Garuda Nyala Fajar Indonesia (PT GNFI), supported by PT Media Citra Solusi Communication (Media Citra) and Technopreneur Indonesia. Both companies are engaged in public relations, journalism, multimedia, and technopreneurship.

The vision of Good News From Indonesia (GNFI) is "Restoring Optimism, Rebuilding Confidence." While the missions of GNFI are to create content and spread it widely, to conduct good organizational conditions to work, grow, and perform well, also maintain program initiatives, movements, and other favorable

products. GNFI continues to develop and innovate to become a team that engages in the news and various development projects and collaborates with diverse communities and institutions in its business activities. During the development process company, of course, many obstacles are faced, such as external or readers at GNFI who have low interest in reading, so it is necessary to carry out innovation activities and deep convergence content creation. The advantages of GNFI also have content information in the form of compelling infographics and interaction videos in connection with the good news in Indonesia. Because of that also, spirit optimization in vision developed.

On the overview of GNFI's audience demography, an analytic report the percentage for key statistic of audience engagement. As many as 86.08% of the followers that engaged with GNFI regularly are from Indonesia, followed by Monaco at 2.53% and Syrian Arab Republic at 1.27%. In summary, the top 5 countries of GNFI's posts engager are coming from Indonesia, Monaco, Syrian Arab Republic, Netherlands, Denmark (starnage, n.d.).

Image 2. Audience Countries of GNFI



METHOD

To better understand the role of media in boosting the sense of nationhood, especially in this case study of Good News From Indonesia,

the author explored the qualitative approach. This research uses several methods, including media observation on Good News From Indonesia across social media channels, in-depth interview with the Good News From Indonesia (GNFI) media team and audiences, and also completed with literature review to acquire data to support the analysis.

The first section of this essay is describing the overview of Indonesian social media users as the opportunities for news platform development. Secondly, this article is discussing the recent phenomena in Indonesian media and emphasizes the impact of bad news. The discussion is followed by the third section which is the existence of Good News From Indonesia (GNFI) as a source of Indonesian good news and illustrating its roles for Indonesian betterment. The last section is a conclusion part, containing how GNFI has transformed so rapidly with nationalism-based news coverage that creates remarkable viewers and followers, apart from the fact that Indonesia is still facing a lot of issues.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bad news

"It's better to be shown the hard truth than sugarcoat it with lies."

Major news sources in Indonesia tend to show the harsh reality. The news has fulfilled their role in explaining the truth and portrait of real events happening. Once, there was a debate over whether the government should filter some sites that considered bringing objectionable contents. Almost every aspect in politics, education, social, economy, and culture are presented in such an ill-favored way.

The negative facts are affecting people's behavior, especially Indonesian who used to be a tolerant society and respectful but now are becoming pessimistic and radical. They allow themselves to be twisted by the message of hate and anger instead of fulfilling the mind with peace and compassion from positive news.

Recently, Indonesian media is exposing mostly blasphemous content which is the controversy of incumbent Christian governor of Jakarta,

Basuki Tjahja Purnama, known as Ahok. All about Islamist-led protests against an ethnic Chinese Ahok to step down. The religious tensions have overshadowed The Jakarta election by calls for voters to choose a Muslim leader, Anies Baswedan, former education minister to become governor of Indonesia's capital. Subjectivity aside, this issue displays how disrespectful most extreme right-wing religious people are to the law and governance of Indonesia.

Because of political conspiracies masterminded by a handful of politicians to gain power, Indonesian people are easily swayed by what the news reveals.

On the other hand, the voluntary organization in Jakarta known as Teman Ahok (Friends of Ahok) praises his work as governor and seeks to have him re-elected in 2017. This social movement collected over one million copies of locals' identification cards to express how many supporters of Ahok ran as an independent candidate. The rise of social activism and protests against particular events has brought about a new turn in the practice of contentious society. In particular, new media are increasingly playing a central role in connecting activists, diffusing information, and making claims that challenge the prevailing power structure (Jeffrey, 2005). This controversy seems endless and becomes massive as the news share about blasphemy is going viral in almost every social media.

Good News

The influence of Good News From Indonesia in enhancing competencies and sense of nationalism has been identified further on a case study Hananto (2016).

The products' diversification strategy has led GNFI towards reaching bigger and wider audiences, which is significant for promoting values in order to create positive image and perception about Indonesia. From the research, Hananto concluded that diversification successfully achieves the objective point: the significant increase of audiences from diverse demographics. Besides, the diversification could

raise the attachment and pride towards their homeland, Indonesia. The main reason contributing to such triumph is the diversification result of GNFI as digital, visual-based information, which is more practical and easily understood by the younger generation. The ubiquitous influence of social media, including instant messaging tools amongst youngsters, is another factor why GNFI outcomes could quickly be disseminated among the audiences, indirectly becoming digital viral information. That case encouraged Akhyari Hananto to raise the site in 2009. He was well aware that the power of social media in Indonesia is one of the largest in the world. Through this medium, he creates a bridge between the public and the various good news sources and increases public awareness of the importance of national pride of Indonesia, both for the present and the future. He single-handedly started the work spreading the good news of Indonesia, with the aim of improving the reflection of Indonesia in the eyes of the world, that Indonesia is a nation that has many advantages.

GNFI is an independent news site platform for positive information and all about good news in Indonesia, which has a foundation that, "good news is good news". The site contains the entire good news about Indonesia, from various areas whether economic, cultural, political, social, environmental and various kinds of good news which is inscribed by the Indonesian. GNFI also recruits content writers and contributors from different countries. GNFI aims to be the primary source of all sorts of good news from Indonesia that is reliable for Indonesians. GNFI vision is clearly defined in "Good News", without the intervention of political interests, religious or personal, that might shake its visions, which are restoring optimism and rebuilding confidence. Now, there are two main offices of GNFI in Surabaya, East Java and Jakarta, Indonesia. In 2011, GNFI's twitter account was awarded as The Most Influential Accounts by The Marketeers.

GNFI builds a partnership as the content supplier for Indonesian TV channels. GNFI presents news in various channels such as website, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and

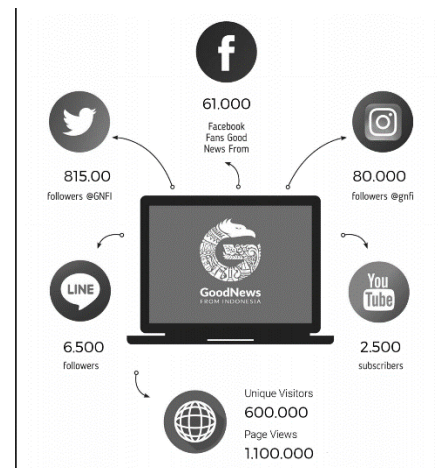
monthly digital magazine (G-Magz). Besides media platforms, GNFI also organizes movement through community gathering as a youth forum of communication in different areas of Indonesia. This forum aims to share inspiration, as well as encourage the realization of collaboration among communities to give the best contribution for the country. GNFI is open for service as well as cooperation with various partners or clients who have the same passion for producing positive content in the field of media management, event management, campaigns, advertising, etc. Not only present in the products of creative writing and visual graphics digital, but GNFI also provides official merchandise with unique and exciting themes could be the collection boasts about Kawan GNFI (GNFI Fellow).

Shao (2009) predicted that use of social media for news and political information would further facilitate, rather than undermine, Internet users' engagement in political expression, given the information and opinion sharing function of social media. Hananto (2013) was well aware that the power of social media in Indonesia is one of the largest in the world. He hopes through this medium to become a bridge between the public and the various issues and conservation, and build a public awareness of the importance of diversity in Indonesia, both for the present and the future.

Hananto discussed the trend of social media usage seems to be continuing as it significantly increases. Not only providing information about public affairs but also contributing to the heterogeneity of discussion networks and activities in civic life (Kim et al., 2013). Extraversion and openness to experiences of Indonesian are helping to moderate the influence of social media on discussion network heterogeneity and civic participation, as well as engaging for introverted and less open individuals.

Image 4.

GNFI audiences in numbers (in 2017)



Based on Chriss Atton's alternative journalism concept (2002), GNFI was reaching a milestone for start-up media to become mainstream media and adjust to the media trend. Atton (2008) showed an alternative journalism example, individuals can write news about themselves or other ordinary citizens, not about prominent people, influential figures, or political officials, which is valuable for GNFI, to showcase inspirational Indonesian profiles. Moreover, in terms of GNFI as an alternative journalism practice, Adrian (2018) examined the continuity of its business model canvas. It showed that there are many factors that made GNFI could thrive as a sustainable media, for example independent income, clear vision and mission, and most importantly, the use of social media channels.

As we can see from Image 4, GNFI has accomplished in maintaining every platform and social media channels to reach plenty of audience, especially Indonesian netizens in the past few years. Being independent and away from the influence of government, keep holding on its media policy, as news channels with "good news" as the quintessence in the content, have brought GNFI to success. GNFI has proved its significant role to shape the character of netizens, specifically Indonesian youth. In line with the notion that Sabir (2011) illustrated, that consequently media policy affects its effect in society very much.

CONCLUSIONS

Lee (2015) analyzes the use of new media as a method of designing "legitimate" narratives and regulating contentious dialogues, invoking

familiar social norms and concepts at the level of micro-practices of citizenship. Here, this research examined how GNFI—both social media and news sources - can be used as platforms for Indonesia to produce dialogues against possible dissent around national events. The paper suggested that news platforms like GNFI and its social media can also be used as channels for the nation to create and communicate counter-narratives against collective actions, thus challenging the prevalent progressive bias of new media in the social movement literature.

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