

Waspada's Mass Media Strategy for Surviving in The Digital Age

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Abstract

Rapid technological advancement brings civilization to the mass media industry. The presence of new media in the community has created communication dynamics in the transmission of information. Traditional media must be able to align with transformation and innovation. Despite the flood of digital media, daily alert's main product remains newspapers. The constructivism paradigm and descriptive qualitative research methods were used in this study. In-depth interviews, observation, and documentation were used to collect data in this study. According to the findings of this study, mass media alert has a strategy to keep the newspaper alive in the digital era, an innovation strategy, a human resource management strategy, and a recognition of obstacles and solutions in order to stay alive in the digital era.

Keywords: mass media alert, strategy, digital age, harian waspada

1. Introduction

In new media, technology has played an important role in the birth of civilization. The presence of new media provides convenience and opportunities for information discovery. Technological advancements help to create media diversity. According to McNamus, one of the characteristics of the new media environment is a shift from the availability of previously scarce media with limited access to abundant media. According to John Vivian, the existence of new media such as the internet can go beyond traditional media messaging patterns; the internet's nature can blur geographical boundaries, interaction capacity, and, most importantly, can be done in real time (Vivian, 2008).

The presence of new media transforms communication activities by utilizing the internet network, causing built-in interactions to become digital. As a result, the presence of new media causes significant changes in communication activities, including the execution of journalistic tasks. The print media is currently experiencing a sharp decline as a result of the digitalization system's onslaught. Many media outlets have gone out of business or have been permanently closed. People are abandoning newspapers in favor of digital information consumption (Panuju, 2018).

According to the Nielsen Consumer Media & View (CMV) survey conducted in 11 cities in Indonesia in 2017, penetration was still led by television (96%), outdoor media (53%), internet (44%), radio (37%), newspapers (7%), tabloids and magazines (3%). (Media Indonesia, 2022). According to surveys, readers of print media such as newspapers, tabloids, and magazines have lower penetration rates than readers of other media. Meanwhile, generational differences are one of the factors driving the increased popularity and demand for digital media. According to a Nielsen Media & View (CMV) survey conducted in 11 cities in Indonesia in the second quarter of 2016, only 9 percent of Generation Z still read newspapers, magazines, or tabloids in print, while the rest prefer to access information through television and the internet (Komala, 2017).

The presence of new media causes a cultural shift in society in terms of information transmission. This shift is caused by the increased mobility of information. Everyone requires information to stay up to date on current events. Because

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of rapid technological advancements, the communication process is now faster, making information more easily obtained.

Because of the presence of new media, traditional mass media is being transformed into digital media. This phenomenon begs the question of whether traditional mass media will be supplanted by digital media. In 2012, the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism's Center for the Digital Future predicted that major newspapers would survive the next five years. Rupert Murdoch predicts that major newspapers will cease to exist within the next ten years (Azizah, 2021).

In Indonesia, the impact of digital technology and these predictions occurred. Sinar Harapan, which has been around since 1965, has decided to stop publishing in January 2016. Furthermore, several publications published by Kompas Gramedia have done the same thing (Komala, 2017). Aside from this phenomenon, the Indonesian media industry has transformed in an effort to maintain its existence in the digital era.

In the midst of a print media business that is no longer profitable due to a rapid decline in circulation income. Harian Waspada, on the other hand, continues to publish printed newspapers as its primary product. Harian Waspada attempts to balance life by presenting online media in an effort to extend it. It did not stop there; additional efforts were made to assist in continuing to carry out its press function in the community and in the face of competition in the mass media industry.

Based on the problem's background, the formulation of the problem in this study is 1) What is the Alert mass media's strategy for maintaining its existence in the digital era? 2) What are the challenges and solutions for Alert mass media in surviving in the digital age?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Mass Communication

According to Bittner, mass communication is a message that is communicated to a large number of people via mass media (Khomsahrial, 2016). According to John Vivian, mass communication is the transmission of messages to a large number of people at widely separated points. Mass communication is only possible through the use of technology, such as a printing press, broadcast transmitter, or internet server. The size of the audience is a distinguishing feature of mass communication (Panuju, 2018).

According to this definition, mass communication is the process of delivering messages to the general public. Mass communication requires media to be able to transmit messages using print, electronic, or digital media in its delivery.

2.2. Mass Media

According to McQuail, mass media is a source of power, a means of social control, management, and innovation that can be used in place of power or other resources. McQuail divides the media's role into six perspectives (Mc Quail, 2011):

- a) The media as a lens through which to view events and experiences. The media is viewed as a window through which the audience can see what is going on outside, or as a means of learning about various events.
- b) The media is regarded as a mirror of societal and global events, implying a faithful reflection. The media is viewed as a reflection of various events in society and the world, reflecting what is.
- c) The role of the media as a filter or gatekeeper. Based on their management standards, the media always selects issues, information, or forms of content that deserve to be known and received attention by the audience.
- d) The media is viewed as a guide or translator who translates or gives instructions on various uncertainties or alternatives.
- e) The media as a forum for communicating various information and ideas to the public, allowing for responses and feedback.

- f) The mass media, as an interlocutor, serves not only as a conduit for information, but also as a communication partner that allows for interactive communication.

2.3. *Print Media*

Print media is the oldest form of mass media, having emerged around the 15th century in Germany after Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press. This discovery enabled the rapid printing of written material, resulting in an information explosion in Renaissance Europe (Komala, 2017). Print media is a type of visual media that is presented in the form of letters and created through a printing process (Susilana & Riyana, 2008). The presence of the press and newspapers is propelling the growth of print media in Indonesia.

Everyone can get their news from a newspaper. In most cities, no other source of news can compete with the breadth and depth of news coverage provided by a newspaper. This increases the newspaper's popularity and influence. Newspapers are vital to human life, and as a medium, they adapt to a constantly changing lifestyle. Newspapers entered the internet world in the 1990s by launching news websites. Newspapers are gradually selling online space to advertisers who may have also received print editions. Because the heyday of ink and paper was coming to an end, the newspaper industry began to consider electronic delivery for the twenty-first century (Vivian, 2008).

2.4. *Strategy*

The term strategy is derived from the Greek word “strategos,” which is a combination of the words “stratos” (soldiers) and “agein” (leader). At the most basic level, the term “strategos” refers to the commander of an army. Thus, the strategy in question is defined as a military concept known to generals as the art of war (The Art of General), or the best design for winning the war. There is a principle in the strategy that states, “there is nothing meaningful about everything except knowing what the enemy will do before they do it” (Cangara, 2013).

Strategy is the fundamental concept or scheme used to achieve goals that are on target. As a result, pioneers or strategists generate ideas and concepts that are developed. According to Anthony, strategy is the formulation of an organization's mission and goals, as well as an action plan to achieve these goals, while explicitly considering competitive conditions and the influences of external forces (Anggia, 2018). Strategy is defined as the process of developing a plan for top leaders that focuses on the organization's long-term goals, as well as the preparation of a method or effort to achieve these goals (Rangkuti, 2014).

3. **Methodology**

The constructivism paradigm is used in this study. The antithesis and observation of objectivity in viewing a phenomenon or reality is known as a paradigm. According to Constructivism theory, people interpret and act based on the conceptual categories in their heads (Yusuf, 2014). A paradigm is a window through which researchers can objectively understand and interpret certain concepts, assumptions, and categories. Despite studying the same phenomenon, different conclusions will be reached (Ardial, 2014).

The research method used is qualitative and descriptive. Qualitative research is an inquiry strategy that emphasizes the search for meaning, understanding concepts, characteristics, symptoms of symbols, and descriptions of a phenomenon; a multimethod focus, natural and holistic; and a focus on quality through the use of a variety of methods and narrative presentations. In simple terms, qualitative research is used to find answers to phenomena or questions by employing scientific procedures in a systematic manner (Yusuf, 2014).

In this study, data was gathered through interviews, observation, and documentation. Interaction with informants is one of the research data collection techniques used in interviews. In-depth interviews are the method used. In-depth interviews are designed to gather complex information in order to strengthen the study's data. Observation is a data collection method that involves observing the object of study. Documentation, on the other hand, aims to collect reports containing data or information to complete the research.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Daily Strategy Alert to Keep Newspapers Alive in the Digital Age

Death threats against print newspapers have long been heard. Newspapers, which once reigned supreme, are now under attack as a result of the rise of digital media. The changes in communication dynamics have shifted the labor force for the traditional mass media industry, requiring it to continue to innovate in order to survive. This situation must have an impact on *Harian Waspada*, which cannot be avoided (Azizah, 2021). Despite the fact that the print media business is no longer profitable, the *Waspada Daily* continues to publish newspapers as its primary product. Newspapers are superior because they are more reliable than online media. The news is more complete and in-depth, and the data is more accurate. *Harian Waspada* is steeped in history and significance. The *Waspada daily* was a fighter newspaper that served as the state's mouthpiece in order to counteract the negative influence of the Dutch Colonial at the time. From a historical standpoint, the *Waspada Daily* has been embedded in the community; additionally, the superiority of the newspaper itself provides an opportunity for the *Waspada Daily* to continue producing newspapers in order to maintain its existence.

These benefits do not guarantee that the *Harian Waspada* newspaper will always be in demand; there are other strategies in place to keep people subscribed and reading the newspaper. *Harian Waspada* always prioritizes readers' interests by providing a wealth of information, so that the content presented is the most important concern. The *Waspada Daily* newspaper publishes a wide range of news, including politics, economics, sports, education, and criminal matters. Paying attention to issue selection and placement, emphasizing local news, and maintaining circulation are the strategies for sustaining the existence of newspapers in the digital era (Azizah, 2021).

As of now, the *Waspada daily* newspaper is distributed in 33 districts/cities in North Sumatra and Aceh. *Harian Waspada* believes that the reader's interests should always come first. Naturally, news in the circulation base is prioritized. The emphasis on local news is an attempt to maintain reader trust so that readers remain loyal to reading the news presented in the *Waspada Daily* newspaper. So that the *Waspada Daily* newspaper does not lose readers or customers. Furthermore, the suppression of local news is an indirect attempt to suppress the decline in circulation itself. According to Mary Junck in John Vivian's Theory of Mass Communication, the emphasis on local news is the key to the success of newspapers in the twenty-first century (Vivian, 2008). Statements about this phenomenon occur and are currently being used by the *Waspada Daily* newspaper to keep the newspaper alive in the digital era. Local news, on the other hand, is the most anticipated. Local news is important to the general public because it keeps them up to date on events in the city and surrounding area. Local news becomes a special need for certain parties, such as government agencies, educational institutions, legal institutions, and businesses, as a form of accountability to the public. For example, if a court rules in favor of an auction, the auction statement must be published as a form of accountability that the public must be aware of. The evidence becomes more compelling when it is published in print media, specifically newspapers. The value of the newspaper itself is what keeps newspapers alive today.

In today's digital age, efforts to increase circulation have become a contentious topic. People demand information quickly as a result of the communication dynamics that occur. This means that flipping through newspaper pages is more difficult than typing with two thumbs. Responding to current circulation income is no longer about increasing it, but rather about maintaining it. The newspaper's life in the community can be extended by keeping it. In order to maintain circulation, the *Waspada Daily* newspaper makes small changes to ensure that it is always in demand in the community (Komala, 2017). From the selection of issues to the presentation of content to the production, these efforts are inseparable. These efforts are also inextricably linked to *Waspada's* management. Given the current state of circulation, *Harian Waspada* newspaper began it wisely by reducing the amount of paper produced. As a result, it is not redundant because it is proportional to the number of customer orders. Furthermore, advertisements in newspapers have an effect on circulation, albeit not as much as previously. Certain groups, such as government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, and offices, currently dominate *Waspada Daily* newspaper advertisers. As a result, circulation income can continue to rotate, allowing newspaper production to continue.

4.2. Mass Media Innovation Strategy Alert for Survival in the Digital Age

The alert mass media did not turn a blind eye to this in the midst of the digital system's onslaught. The intense competition in the mass media industry necessitates Alert's ability to compete in order to continue performing its press

function. Waspada's online media outlets include Waspada.id, Waspada.co.id (WOL), Waspada TV, and Waspada News TV. The researcher discovered that the four of them were managed differently (Erisman & Azhar, 2015).

PT. Alert Medan has been in charge of Waspada.id since October 24, 2019. Waspada.id is presented as an attempt to supplement the news in the Waspada Daily newspaper with an electronic newspaper that includes news rubrics. For example, Medan, North Sumatra, Aceh, Health, Economy, Nusantara, International, Sports, and so on. Waspada.id exists to keep the circulation of the Waspada Daily newspaper balanced. As a result, the results have an impact on the Waspada Daily newspaper in order to keep its readers. As a result, readers can get reliable information from anywhere, including newspapers and the internet (Azizah, 2021).

Waspada.co.id is operated by PT Waspada Online, which was established on January 11, 1997. Waspada.co.id is a purely online media outlet that publishes its news digitally. Medan, North Sumatra, Aceh, West Java, News, Sports, Variety, Entertainment, Latest, WOL Video, and other news categories are available on Waspada.co.id.

Waspada TV, part of the Medan Waspada Daily, is an audio-visual platform that was founded on June 16, 2021. TV Alert is presented on the basis of television's important role in everyday life in the digital era. Meanwhile, PT publishes Waspada News TV. Be wary of Bahana Eriasafa, another audio visual platform. The researcher discovered that both have the same function, which is to present news content in audio and visual formats, but they are managed by different management because they both have a vision and mission based on their respective internals.

It did not stop there; Waspada mass media innovated by using social media to disseminate news. Be cautious when interacting with social media apps such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Alert can also be found in audio-visual applications such as YouTube, TikTok, and Snack Video. The presence of Alert on these applications reflects the changing tastes of the times. In this case, innovation is presented as an effort to pamper its readers by being present in every currently used application. This innovation is part of a larger strategy to increase Alert readers (Anggia, 2018).

4.3. Human Resource Management Strategy of Harian Waspada

Human resources are critical in ensuring a company's long-term viability. Human resources take on the role of captain and driving force in carrying out their responsibilities and functions in order to achieve the company's vision and mission. Waspada, according to the researcher, provides a space for people who have the potential to be given duties and responsibilities, particularly journalists. Waspada's human resources are unquestionably qualified journalists; they meet the requirements and are qualified. This means that Waspada journalists are filled with professionals who carry out their duties professionally, resulting in the fulfillment of credible and quality news. Furthermore, Waspada educates outstanding journalists to participate in training and development in order to improve the quality of these human resources. Training and development aims to improve work effectiveness in order to achieve the desired work results (Erisman & Azhar, 2015)

4.4. Mass Media Problems and Solutions

Newspapers, in general, still have a chance to exist in the community. Despite the fact that digital technology has altered people's information-gathering habits, newspapers have different values than online media. This opportunity cannot be separated from Waspada management in order for the Waspada Daily newspaper to continue publication. The fierce competition in the mass media industry has created a number of challenges for Waspada in carrying out its functions. These impediments are typically caused by both internal and external factors.

Waspada's human resources are of professional journalistic quality, according to internal sources. It's just that when mass media transformation occurs on a large scale, the Alert human resource's work ecosystem is slightly disrupted. Alert human resources are needed to work quickly and nimbly so that the information obtained can be published as soon as possible. Alert human resources who work in the online media section must have broadcasting capabilities. The researcher discovered that Waspada human resources who manage online media are quite capable of doing their job, but they are still not given enough space to hone their broadcasting skills such as graphic design, video editing, and so on. It will increase the level of human resource capabilities by providing training and development in the field of broadcasting. Of course, Alert must continue to improve its response to simple things that have a significant impact on the company's long-term viability. Given the fierce competition in the digital era, readers will pay more attention to the packaging of quality news content.

Furthermore, the researcher discovered that the obstacles encountered were very vocal in the internal management section. Such issues are common in any business, including Waspada. Management thinking can become obstructed, which can stymie ideas, criticism, and suggestions. As a result, efforts to achieve new innovations are difficult to achieve. The annual career path assessment and evaluation is still poorly managed. This frequently raises the question of whether the achievement of these HR has increased or decreased. A clear administration will undoubtedly be able to identify human resources who have the potential to be given space in holding important positions, allowing for gradual regeneration within the company. Thus, in the future, these human resources can guide companies in the development of corporate values that connect them in decision making. According to Arnoldo C. Hax and Nicholas S. Majluk's book "Strategic Management," strategic management is a method that guides a company toward its main goal of developing corporate values, managerial capabilities, organizational responsibility, and administrative systems that link decision making. Strategic and operational actions at all levels of hierarchy, as well as across all lines of business and corporate authority functions (Erisman & Azhar, 2015).

Waspada human resources sometimes struggle to obtain coverage from outside sources. This difficulty is common for all journalists, including Waspada. Many factors contribute to the difficulty of obtaining this information, including location, resource person, time, and so on. Alert undoubtedly has a strategy in place to mitigate these difficulties and maintain performance. By presenting contributors in each region, which is the main basis, Alert will be able to distribute information more easily. Furthermore, journalistic guidelines and ethics serve as guidelines for human resources working in the field; even if news sources are difficult to reach, they will still be published.

5. Conclusion

In order to keep the newspaper running, Harian Waspada always prioritizes the interests of its readers by providing a wealth of information. Harian Waspada pays attention to the selection of current issues and strategically places these issues to attract the attention of readers. Maintaining reader loyalty requires a focus on local news, especially in circulation-based areas. Newspaper advertising revenue also supports circulation, allowing Harian Waspada to continue publication. Waspada mass media presents online media, such as Waspada.id, Waspada.co.id (WOL), Waspada TV, and Waspada News TV, as a form of innovation in the face of digitalization. Waspada also disseminates news through social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, as well as audio-visual platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Snack Videos. Alert also allows exceptional HR to participate in training and development in order to improve the quality of human resource capabilities. Although obstacles arise from both internal and external sources, Waspada strives to focus on small changes that have a significant impact on the company's long-term viability. One of them is that attention must be paid to internal management in order for innovation efforts to be properly realized.

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