Media Convergence: the Realization of Monopoly and Oligopoly in Indonesia"

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the evolution of media convergence in Indonesia, focusing on Kompas Gramedia as a leading media entity that has undergone rapid development. Its business expansion has surged, particularly in the realm of digital media, significantly broadening its market share in Indonesia. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach and utilizing a case study method centered on Kompas Gramedia and its subsidiaries, this research gathers data from credible sources. Through comparative and correlational analyses, it highlights the changing landscape of media convergence within Kompas Gramedia.

Initially established as a print-based medium, Kompas Gramedia has undergone a transformation towards digital media and digital television. This transformation signifies the prevalence of monopolistic and oligopolistic practices in the Indonesian media industry, thriving through media convergence strategies. The findings underscore the dynamic shift from traditional print to digital platforms, showcasing how media entities adapt and monopolize within an evolving technological landscape.

This study sheds light on the intricate relationship between media evolution, market dominance, and the strategic maneuvers employed by major media players like Kompas Gramedia in Indonesia's ever-expanding digital ecosystem.

Keyword: Media Convergence, Monopoly, Oligopoly, Media Industry

INTRODUCTION

Based on a survey on internet usage in Indonesia from 2018 to 2020 conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), the statistics revealed a notable surge. In 2019, internet users in Indonesia accounted for 64.8 percent, totaling 171 million individuals (Bayu, 2020). This figure escalated significantly in 2020, reaching 73.7 percent with a total of 196.7 million users, representing an increase of approximately 8.9 percent or around 25.5 million individuals. These data underscore the
remarkably high internet penetration in Indonesia. The prevalence of gadgets as ubiquitous tools in daily life further accentuates this trend, owing to their ease of use and portability. Consequently, individuals gain access to the latest information by harnessing the internet through these devices. Such a scenario amplifies the societal appetite for consuming diverse information via digital media, spanning news, entertainment, education, and political insights. This phenomenon notably catalyzes the growth of the media industry and propels the digital transformation forward. Nevertheless, this digital transformation presents a dual-edged sword. On one hand, it accelerates the transmission of messages across various business domains, disregarding temporal and spatial boundaries. Yet, on the other hand, it also fosters the possibility of media convergence.

The Kompas Gramedia Group (KG Group) stands as a colossal conglomerate enterprise encompassing diverse subsidiary ventures operating within Indonesia. This corporation commands authority across mass media, retail, and publishing domains. Beyond these spheres, the KG Group extends its business network into various sectors delineated as the 8 primary pillars encompassing Hospitality, Education, Retail, Manufacture and Printing and Publishing, and MICE. These pillars signify the group's diversified presence and activities in multifaceted industries: 1) Media (KG Media): Kompas Daily, Kompas.com, KompasTV, Kompasiana, Grid Network (GridOto, BolaSport, National Geographic Indonesia), Tribun Newspaper, Sonora Radio, Tribunnews.com, Warta Kota; 2) Retail and Publishing: Gramedia Book Store, Elex Media Komputindo, Grasindo, BIP, Gramedia.com, Penerbit Buku Kompas (PBK), Gramedia Penerbit Buku Utama (GPU); 3) Hospitality: Amaris, Kampi, Santika Premiere, Santika, Anvaya, Samaya, Kayana; 4) Education: Universitas Multimedia Nusantara (UMN), Gramedia Academy, Santika Training Center, Diginusa, ELTI; 5) Manufacture: Gramedia Printing, Metaform/Uniflex (Flexible & Duplex Packaging); 6) Event and Venue: ICE BSD, Dyandra Media Promosindo; 7) Property: Medialand, Translingkar Kita Jaya and 8) Digital: Skystar Capital (Venture Capital), Bhisma (eCommerce Enabler), Gramedia Digital (e-Reading App), StratX (Brand Agency & Consultancy), KGXpress (3PL Logistics)

Established on August 17, 1963, the Kompas Gramedia Group traces its origins to the inception of Intisari Magazine by P.K. Ojong and Jakob Oetama. Since its inception, the KG Group has continually expanded its business operations to cater to the diverse needs of the Indonesian market (Gramedia, 2023).

In the realm of Media Political Economy, the expansion of media businesses across various sectors and commodities can potentially trigger monopolistic and oligopolistic practices. Through mass media, corporations can perpetuate their influence over society through diverse business endeavors and media programs. One frequently employed strategy is media convergence. Unchecked convergence may lead to more intricate societal challenges.

According to Cananga, mass media serves as a conduit for transmitting messages from sources to audiences through mechanical communication tools such as newspapers, films, radio, and television (Lubis, 2018). Mass media constitutes an environmental factor that influences audience behavior through classical conditioning, operant conditioning, or the process of imitation (social learning). Artha (2016) suggests two primary functions of mass media: fulfilling the needs for both fantasy and information. Media functions as a tool for disseminating information to society, ensuring its awareness among the populace. Mass media as a vital conduit for delivering messages from sources to audiences via mechanical communication tools. It further delves into the transformative role of mass media within the social environment, elucidating its impact on audience behavior through mechanisms like classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and social learning.
Moreover, Artha’s delineation of the dual functionality of mass media as a provider of both imaginative content and factual information is examined. The paper also delineates the diverse array of media types, encompassing print media, television, radio, and online platforms, highlighting their collective role in disseminating information throughout society (Artha, 2016). The media encompasses various types, including print media (newspapers, magazines), television, radio, and online platforms.

The term "convergence" originates from the English word 'convergence.' In the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), it is described as the state of moving towards a central meeting point. Briggs and Burke define media convergence as the amalgamation or integration of existing media for use and direction toward a specific endpoint (Asy’ari & Luthfi, 2018). Meanwhile, Flew views convergence as the process of merging three elements within the media industry: computing and information technology, communication networks, and digitized media and information content (Pratopo & Kusajibrata, 2018). Broadly, media convergence signifies the union of mass media with digital technology. The objective of this convergence lies in business interests—to enable companies to expand their media ventures into broader markets. Another aim is to facilitate easier access to the latest information for the public, ensuring they encounter no difficulty in obtaining desired information.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
This research employs a qualitative descriptive research approach along with a case study method. The study focuses on Kompas Gramedia as a prominent media company in Indonesia, encompassing various subsidiaries and business units. The company is an intriguing subject for examination due to its substantial potential in implementing media convergence. According to Nazir, the descriptive method involves investigating the status of a group of individuals, an object, a condition, a system of thought, or an event in the current period. The primary objective of descriptive research is to systematically, factually, and accurately create descriptions, representations, or depictions of the facts, characteristics, and relationships among the phenomena under investigation (Prihartono, 2016).

As stated by Sugiyono (2005), the descriptive methodology denotes a modality utilized for delineating or scrutinizing research outcomes, albeit refraining from extrapolating to overarching conclusions. The issues under examination through this qualitative descriptive study pertain to quantitative studies, comparative analyses, and establishing correlational relationships among different elements. The data collected in this research will undergo qualitative analysis. Qualitative research involves a methodology generating descriptive data in the form of written or oral expressions from individuals or observed behaviors (Moleong, 2001: 103). This study adopts qualitative methods to explore and analyze the intricate interrelations between various elements, employing qualitative data analysis techniques to derive comprehensive insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The approach aligns with established qualitative research methodologies, focusing on descriptive narratives and observed behaviors as the primary sources of data collection and analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The rapid advancement of technology has driven media convergence in Indonesia. Companies engaging in media convergence exhibit distinct characteristics, notably the shift from traditional print media to digital or online platforms. This transformation responds to the public's increasing reliance on online sources for quick access to the latest information. One prominent example of this convergence is observed in Kompas...
Gramedia. Historically reliant on print media, Kompas Gramedia faced declining readership, prompting the closure of several print businesses and a pivot toward online media. The following delineates various media entities under the Kompas Media umbrella that have embraced media convergence.

The acceleration of technological progress has precipitated a convergence within the Indonesian media landscape. An identifiable trait among companies undergoing this convergence is their transition from conventional print media to digital or online platforms. This shift is driven by the populace's inclination towards online mediums as primary sources for immediate and up-to-date information. Kompas Gramedia, a notable entity, exemplifies this convergence by historically relying on print media, only to witness a decline in its readership. Consequently, Kompas Gramedia had to shutter various print media businesses, redirecting their efforts towards online platforms. The subsequent section outlines specific media entities under Kompas Media's purview that have actively embraced this convergence. Drawing from the source (Simamora, 2016), the study examines the specialization and media conglomerates within the Kompas Gramedia group.

1. **Kompas Daily**

   The mentioned entity stands as one of the earliest newspapers in Indonesia, continuing its existence within the realm of print media, now boasting a legacy of 56 years. The nomenclature 'Kompas' was bestowed following a proposition by President Soekarno. The inaugural issue of the daily, Kompas, emerged on the 28th of June, 1965, comprising 20 pages and distributing a total of 4,828 copies. The initial price for a subscription to the Kompas Daily was Rp 500 per month. The headline of its primary news piece read "Second Asia-Africa Conference Postponed by Four Months". Notably, the Kompas Daily upholds the motto "The Mandate of the People's Conscience". The evolution of media in Indonesia has been significantly influenced by the transition to digital technology. This transformation is exemplified by Kompas, which launched its website, initially named Kompas Online, on September 14, 1995, subsequently rebranded as Kompas.com. This shift marked a pioneering milestone in Indonesia's online media landscape, introducing a new paradigm of digital accessibility through the internet.

   During its inception, Kompas.com emerged as one of Indonesia's earliest online media platforms, heralding a novel era of digital media accessibility. Concurrently, the traditional print version, Harian Kompas, persisted alongside this digital transition. However, there has been a notable decline in its readership, attributed to the societal preference for digital media channels for accessing the latest information. Despite this shift, Harian Kompas maintains a dedicated readership owing to its detailed and credible content dissemination. The fidelity and depth of information provided by the print version have sustained public interest. Kompas's innovative trajectory, originating from print media, has expanded steadily into online platforms and television, exemplifying the convergence and evolution of media channels. This transition underscores the adaptability and dynamism required in contemporary media landscapes to cater to diverse audience preferences and consumption habits.

   The migration to digital platforms has undeniably influenced consumer behavior, favoring digital mediums for instantaneous information access. Nonetheless, the enduring appeal of traditional media formats, such as Harian Kompas, highlights the importance of comprehensive and reliable content dissemination in the evolving media landscape. Kompas's multifaceted approach, integrating print, online, and television media, showcases a strategic response to the convergence of media platforms, affirming its continued relevance and influence in Indonesia's media sphere.
2. Kompas TV
The Kompas media group expanded its business into the television industry. On September 9, 2011, Kompas TV was officially launched, focusing primarily on news broadcasting. It stands out as one of the most updated television channels in delivering news, characterized by its ability to broadcast live coverage for extended durations during significant events. Kompas TV embarked on media convergence initially confined to television viewership. However, with the evolving times, it is now accessible through various digital platforms such as the website https://www.kompas.tv, YouTube channel of Kompas TV, and the Kompas TV mobile application. This expansion into digital media enables the public to watch Kompas TV live or catch glimpses of its content through the digital platforms provided by Kompas TV. This initiative aims to cater to audiences unable to access Kompas TV via traditional television by offering accessibility through gadgets. Consequently, viewers can now watch Kompas TV content anytime, anywhere.

3. Tribun Network
A regional newspaper group under the umbrella of Kompas Gramedia, originating in 1987, was initiated by the Minister of Information of the Republic of Indonesia to assist national newspapers in areas hindered by the lack of Publishing Permit for Press Businesses (SIUPP). This initiative led to the establishment of the Regional Press Group (Persda). On March 22, 2021, Persda rebranded itself as Tribun Network. Tribun Network publishes 29 local newspapers across 24 cities and regencies in Indonesia. Additionally, Tribun Network operates an online media platform named Tribunnews.com. Within these 24 regions, individual online media are consolidated under the domain of Tribunnews.com. The objective of integrating digital media is to foster media advancement and offer readers the choice between print and online media.

4. Tabloid Bola
The publication in question is a magazine that extensively covers domestic and international football. Founded in 1984, Tabloid Bola was issued every Friday, comprising 56 colorful pages. Its distinctiveness lay in presenting posters featuring renowned football players alongside match schedules, which significantly appealed to football enthusiasts, prompting subscriptions. However, the shift in media orientation from print to digital platforms in contemporary times adversely affected Tabloid Bola's sales. Consequently, on October 19, 2018, it released its final edition. Subsequently, the magazine transitioned into an online medium, rebranding itself as bolasport.com.

5. Majalah Hai
The magazine covers discussions on films, music, education, lifestyle, fashion, and the latest information pertaining to young adults. Its engaging approach in presenting these topics, tailored for a youthful audience, has made 'Hai' magazine immensely popular among teenagers. Initially introduced on January 5, 1977, with a comic-themed content to appeal to the prevalent teenage comic enthusiasts, the magazine evolved over time. It transitioned from its original 36-page format to an expanded 80-page full-color edition to adapt to changing times. However, with the shift towards digital information consumption, 'Hai' magazine ceased regular print editions in June 2017, after a 40-year run—a considerable duration for a youth-oriented publication.

Facing the digital era, 'Hai' magazine pivoted towards online platforms to align with contemporary trends. Presently, the digital version of 'Hai' is accessible via the hai.grid.id
website, maintaining its core content discussing youth-centric themes but with an enhanced web interface.

6. Radio

Kompas Gramedia operates radio media businesses in several regions across Indonesia. For instance, Sanora Network spans 15 major cities, Motion Radio covers 5 significant cities, Radio Raka is in Bandung, Radio Ria in Solo, DB098 FM in Cirebon, Bali FM in Bali, among others. Some of these radios have transitioned to streaming through websites or audio applications, enabling their audience to listen without relying on traditional radio frequencies. Furthermore, several print media outlets under the Kompas Gramedia umbrella have ceased operations, such as Soccer tabloid, Girls magazine, Signal tabloid, Kawanku magazine, and Chip magazine. Many of these have shifted to online platforms to keep up with media developments.

One of the benefits of media convergence is the advantage it brings in advertising. Advertising serves as a significant revenue stream for media companies, and owning a diverse range of media outlets translates to increased advertising revenue. In today's era, ad placements can be made through online channels like websites, social media, or YouTube. According to Maulana Adieb (2021) in the article "Online Advertising vs Offline Advertising: Which is More Effective?" he highlights that online advertising not only tends to be more cost-effective compared to print media but also offers a wider reach as people increasingly rely on the internet for information. Establishing a presence on YouTube by media companies can captivate the public's interest, considering that people now tend to consume more content on YouTube than on traditional television. This trend can be observed through the high viewership on YouTube. Additionally, content uploaded on YouTube can generate additional revenue through YouTube AdSense due to the display of advertisements within each YouTube content.

Convergence as Manifestation of Monopoly and Oligopoly

The concept of Monopoly (Karman, 2014) refers to a situation where a company dominates various sectors and holds control. Characteristics of a monopolistic company include:

1. Several subsidiary companies operating under the umbrella of a large corporation.
2. Engaging in mergers with other companies.
3. Acquiring other companies to become part of their corporate group.

This phenomenon is observed in the Indonesian media business, encompassing various media types such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and online platforms spread across different regions in Indonesia. However, they remain under the same corporate entity.

In accordance with the Indonesian Great Dictionary, oligopoly signifies a market condition where a limited number of producers or suppliers control the supply of goods, allowing them or an individual among them to impact market prices. According to Rusdi (Arsam, 2014), the concept of an oligopoly market represents an interaction between supply and demand where multiple sellers or producers dominate the entire market demand. Its characteristics are outlined as follows:
1. Presence of several sellers/producers controlling the market.
2. The goods traded can be either homogeneous or exhibit varying characteristics.
3. Entry barriers exist, posing significant challenges for external firms attempting market entry.
4. Within the oligopoly, there exists a price leader, typically the seller with the largest market share. This entity wields substantial power to set prices, compelling other sellers to often follow suit.

According to Diah Hayu Rahmitasari (Arsam, 2014), it has become common knowledge that media in Indonesia tends to be cross-owned, where one corporation owns various types and quantities of media outlets.

One of the companies that falls under the Monopoly and Oligopoly category is Kompas Gramedia. This company has engaged in media convergence with the aim of expanding its media business. Originally focused on print media, it has expanded into television, radio, and online media. This shift is a response to the demand for media to evolve in line with societal changes and preferences. Failure to evolve could lead to closure, as seen with Tabloid Bola, Majalah Hai, Majalah Soccer, and several print media under Kompas Gramedia that closed and transitioned into digital platforms.

Here is a list of media under the Kompas Group umbrella (source: https://www.kompasgramedia.com/business/media):

1. Majalah Intisari
2. Harian Kompas
3. Kompas.com
4. Kompas TV
5. Tribunnews.com
6. Majalah Bobo
7. Artikel Kontan
8. Sajiansedap.com
9. Tabloid Nova
10. Radio Sonora
11. Tabloid Otomotif
12. Koran Harian Warta Kota
13. Tabloid Kontan
14. Kompasiana.com
15. KTV
16. Pressrelease.id
17. Kompaskarir.com
18. TribunJakarta.com
19. Pijaru
20. Harian Pagi Surya
21. Serambi Indonesia
22. Banjarmasin Post
23. Sriwijaya Post
24. Harian Pagi Pos Belitung
25. Haruan Pagi Bangka Pos
26. Tribun Medan
Based on data from the Kompas Gramedia website, the company operates around 150 media firms across various regions in Indonesia. Some of these entities have embraced media convergence. In the print media realm, Kompas Gramedia owns a local newspaper called Tribunnews, widely distributed in different Indonesian regions. This dominance places other local newspapers in those areas at a competitive disadvantage in the business landscape. With Tribunnews operating under the reputable Kompas Gramedia umbrella, public trust tends to favor it over other local newspapers. Tribun News also operates an online platform, Tribunnews.com, in each region where its newspaper is circulated, employing a media convergence strategy. The failure of local newspapers to engage in media convergence contributes to their competitiveness decline, resulting in a scenario akin to business monopolies and oligopolies, given Kompas Gramedia's substantial dominance in the print media business across Indonesia's diverse regions. This dominance significantly challenges local print media firms in the realm of media business competition.

The intensified competition driven by financial prowess and technological advancements has distinctly favored media conglomerates with substantial capital, particularly evident in the remarkable growth of Kompas Gramedia. The convergence of various media platforms under their control has amplified their market influence and competitive edge. However, this consolidation has concurrently erected barriers for emerging enterprises, hindering their ability to penetrate and succeed in broader markets due to the formidable dominance of these established corporations.
CONCLUSION

Kompas Gramedia stands as a pivotal media entity in Indonesia, pioneering the convergence of various media platforms to bolster its media enterprise. This strategic shift, aimed at enhancing business prospects across multiple media domains, signifies a departure from its roots as a print-centric organization. The expansion encompasses diverse media outlets, including television, radio, and online platforms, aligning with the dynamic landscape of Indonesian media. The primary objective is to adapt to the evolving media landscape and facilitate easier access to information for the public. The impetus for this transformation stems from the relentless march of internet and digital technologies. Kompas Gramedia, like other media enterprises, perceives the imperative to embrace convergence to remain pertinent. Despite necessitating substantial financial investments to converge across various media channels, the benefits are manifold. In cases where certain media segments witness a decline in sales, the shift towards burgeoning online platforms helps mitigate these setbacks. This proactive approach not only ensures the stability of the media conglomerate but also signifies resilience in navigating the undulating tides of the industry.

Expanding its media business across diverse regions augments Kompas Gramedia's overall standing. This approach caters to the public's choice of accessing information through both local and national media avenues. However, this evolution also raises concerns regarding monopolistic and oligopolistic tendencies within the industry. The dominance of a single corporation across multiple media sectors tends to eclipse the competitive edge of local media, thus accentuating the imbalance spurred by the media convergence led by major entities like Kompas Gramedia.

In conclusion, Kompas Gramedia's proactive embrace of digital transformation and convergence media strategy signifies a strategic response to the evolving media landscape in Indonesia. While fostering stability and adaptability within the conglomerate, this shift also engenders disparities and competitive challenges, necessitating careful consideration and regulation to ensure a balanced media ecosystem.

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