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International seminar on knowledge partnership

“The Readiness of ASEAN Countries
in Facing CAFTA”



Universitas Ahmad Dahlan



University of Nueva Caceres

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“The Readiness of ASEAN Countries in Facing CAFTA”

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INDONESIAN MASS MEDIA AND CAFTA FREE TRADE

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the problem of Indonesian mass media's role in the CAFTA free trade. This article uses descriptive methods. The background of this article is the study of communication science, which states that mass media has the ability to form perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. Fields that gain benefit from the existence of the mass media are very broad and vary, including marketing communications. In this field, the media can be used to form and to prepare the market. Therefore, in free trade, communication plays a very important role. With its strength, media can lead the market in certain products and avoid other ones although with lower price. Such strength should be utilized to strengthen Indonesia's position in the free trade agreement between China and ASEAN countries (CAFTA). Unfortunately, the Indonesian mass media were busier to highlight political issues, rather than to participate for the country's market development in order to strengthen Indonesian products toward import products from other countries. If this stay happens, the resilience of the domestic market will be eroded, replaced by an orientation of overseas products. This situation will cause domestic products lose their market. The orientation of the product can make Indonesia's foreign trade deficit, or even the worse, collapse. The conclusion of this article is that the Indonesian government needs to set back the mass media to strengthen the national market products.

Keywords: Mass Media, Marketing Communications, Free Trade CAFTA

PRELIMINARY

It has long been recognized that the presence and role of mass media is very important in society. Media has the ability to shape perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Various studies concluded that mass media has affected public in all aspects (Jallaluddin Rachmat, 1999).

Many fields can get benefit from the presence of media, including economics and marketing. In this field, media can be used to shape, prepare and drive the market. Therefore, in the CAFTA free trade, communication plays the most important role. In this free trade, the mass media power can lead the market in certain products and avoid another, though products prices are cheaper. Such strengths should be utilized to strengthen Indonesia's position in the CAFTA free trade.

Unfortunately, the current mass media in Indonesia was busy highlighting political issues, instead of conditioning the market in order to choose national products in the country to face the onslaught of powerful products from other countries. As known, the current premises were flooded with a variety of products from overseas, including from China as a consequence of Indonesia's participation in free trade.

The entrance of foreign products in huge quantities was influential in the domestic industries. Moreover, the product overseas is cheaper than domestic products, so price-sensitive market would prefer overseas product than local products. On the other hand, the Indonesian people and upper middle class who have many overseas minded attitude will puts foreign products as a favorite choice. They assume that overseas products have better quality. In addition, buying, possessing and using of imported products are often considered to enhance self-confidence.

If this situation is continues, then the resilience of the domestic market will be increasingly eroded, replace with the public's orientation of overseas products. These circumstances will make domestic products lose its market. Whereas Indonesian market is very potential, so the market orientation of foreign products can make Indonesia experienced a huge trade deficit, or worse: it will collapse.

DISCUSSION

Media is a channel, facility, or tool used to convey messages (Stanley J Baren & Dennis K. Davis, 2000). It's called mass media because the target audience of these media is large numbers (mass), so the communication that occurs in the mass media is called mass communication (channels of mass communication). The mass media has a few characters: namely communicator institutionalized, have a very large heterogeneous, public & anonymous audiences. Also, the messages that deliver by the mass media spread simultaneously and publicly.

Other attribute of mass media is, the communicators can choose the message they want to be conveyed to the audience. Selection of the message is sometimes different from what happened and wanted by the people. This attribute are called by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw written by Stanley J Baren and Dennis K. Davis (2000), as the media agenda. That is, the media is not only to purvey information and opinions, but rather to determine the audience thinking. In the end, the media become decisive on public agenda, which is something considered and deemed necessary by audience. More often, the information reported by the media, will be considered more important by the public. Conversely, the less information reported by the media, will not considered as an important information by the public. And unfortunately, people always think that information in the media is regarded as a society reflection.

From the situation described above, media editor occupies a very strategic position. Through them, media is determined contents. Shoemaker and Reesse (1996) wrote that the content of media messages is influenced by individual factors. The factors are gender, ethnicity, sex orientation, experience, professional background and education, behavior, values and beliefs, professional conduct and ethics adopted by the individual (Shoemaker and Reesse, 1996). If media editors have a strong nationalism ideology, they will convey the information that supports their nation.

On the other hand, the existence of mass media in society has a number of functions. According to Charles Wright (1999), there are four functions of media: information, education, persuasion, and entertainment. The functions of information, education and persuasion are important aspects related to CAFTA. Amid the onslaught of foreign products, especially from China, educating and persuading people to love domestic products become something important to do.

Educating and persuading people to love domestic products should be accompanied by the provision of adequate information and support. Of course, the information must raise the pride of the domestic product. With that goal, then the selectivity is inevitable and becomes imperative. Information that does not support the pride of domestic products, must be removed or minimized.

For this purpose, the trend of Indonesian mass media needs to be changed. No doubt that the current Indonesian mass media gives bigger portion of politics and entertainment. The political aspect is more on the political noise, including corruption, collusion and abuse of power. Such stories are dominant enough, so it causes boredom, despair, and anger.

In line with the rise of political news, today's entertainment aspects are also prominent in Indonesia's mass media. Entertainment news that prominent is like an escape from the wrath of the rise of political news. Unfortunately, the entertainment materials led to the commercial interests of the mass media itself, and not to encourage people to love the domestic product. Commercial orientation that visible in Kompas poll in December 2009, puts commercial interests in the first rank (57.3%), while public interest is only 39.3% (Kompas, 2009). This data prove that the media is more concern with its own business rather than promote the social responsibility: to put the interests of society at large portions. Ideally, media should put interests of the community in greater position. In addition, ideally the media not only publicize the problem, but also contribute to preventing problems.

According to Harold D Lasswell, the mass media has a function as social surveillance, especially in the political elite and state executives. But unfortunately, this function is too dominant so it neglected other aspects. Excessive attention to the problem of political noise (<http://www.waspada.co.id>) and cases of moral and legal did not merely raise the public ire, but also maintain a feeling of inferiority that has long existed due to colonization.

The influence of mass media on attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors has been shown in many studies that are formulated into theories of media effects (see: Jallaluddin Rakhmat, 1999; Griffin, EM., 2000; Baren & Davis, 2000). Most of these media effects theories have something in common: media influences are very large. Therefore, mass media should be regulated again. The law on mass media, especially the Law of the Press and the Low of the Broadcasting, media should be based on the spirit of nationalism in order to spread their news.

The settings are urgently needed, because the CAFTA free trade (China-Asean Trade Area) has been signed and agreed to become effective on January 1, 2010. CAFTA has been approved in eight deals that no longer allow a country to protect them self from foreign products in politics and law. Efforts to protect the domestic market can only be done by educating and persuading people to use domestic products. Thus, mass media need to be reminded that his business was to take place because it is supported by the public and state patronage. Therefore morally, media maintains and upholds interest of the society and the state. Through media, the domestic market remains preserved from the onslaught of foreign products, in particular by promoting and creating community pride in local products.

Loving local products in the country should be published into everyday lifestyle. Campaigns use of batik is one that can be emulated. Can't be ignored, media plays an important role in batik campaign. Today, batik has been widely used in various levels of Indonesian society. The campaign to increase society love on domestic products should be carried out intensively.

Establishment of the media need to be rearranged among others by requiring the mass media managers to have a strong spirit of nationalism in his country, not only a moral and good journalistic skills. In the spirit of nationalism, media are expected to defend state interests above their own business interests.

CONCLUSION

The media has a crucial role in the CAFTA free trade era. The media can reach a wide audience and foster the attitudes, perceptions and specific behaviors. With such influence, mass media can be directed to foster a love of domestic product. These efforts need to be done by rearranging the mass media presence in the country, it not only requires journalism ability and good moral, but also requires the spirit of nationalism in their news.

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