

**Motives that Influence Participatory Culture Internet Meme  
(A Case Study of Social Media Path Audience of Postgraduate Communication Students  
University of Indonesia)<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

This Thesis discusses about motives that influence audiences to participate in internet meme social media Path. This study employs motives from Uses and Gratifications theory as a main theory, also using the concept about Participatory Culture. Uses and Gratifications theory was selected because this theory has frequently explained about new media and the new kind of content from the audience point of view. Meanwhile the concept of Participatory Culture of Henry Jenkins has emerged and thrive in this digital era. This research uses positivistic paradigm with quantitative explanatory approach. For data collection, this study used survey as a research method. The conclusion for this research shows that motive on entertainment and self-expression influence audience to participate in internet meme social media Path. Meanwhile socializing and community building motives do not have significant influence to internet meme participation, but this motive still has a connection with internet meme participation. While another motive, informativeness, doesn't have any connection nor influence to internet meme participation.

**Key Words:** Entertainment motive, informativeness motive, meme, participatory culture, self-expression motive, socializing and community building motive.

**INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of digital technology enabling a new perspective of communication process, collaboration, and new idea circulation. Now consumer not only consume or choose the media and the content, nor only for the producer and media entrepreneur that have access to create a message and disseminate it. Digital technology gives an opportunity for media consumer to create their own content even create their own media. An access for consumers to create their own content is due to the technological advances that make in-depth knowledge of computer programming

will no longer be a paramount requirement (Jenkins, 2006).

With this digital technology development comes a new term, the term is meme or internet meme. Knobel & Lankshear (2007) stated that meme as unit of cultural information can spread from person to person and evolved gradually into social phenomena. Although meme proliferate in micro base, meme can have an impact on macro base; meme can create mindsets, form behavior and action within social group (Shifman, 2013). Internet meme need a host or pool to grow and proliferate. In Indonesia, there is a host or pool for internet meme to grow, proliferate and reach the popularity,

that pool is social media Path. Social media practitioner Nukman Lutfie on an interview with Berita Satu said that Social Media Path, are the place to share a funny picture accompanied by funny word. This thing possible because when someone in the closed group then one can do anything freely. All those local memes will be “Repath” and then will also proliferate in Facebook and Twitter (Youtube.com /Beritasatu /LunchTalk).

Meme as new media technology are not yet well understood, whereas meme is a popular culture that thrives in the public of digital era and has special relevance to analyze the contemporary digital culture. There is a theory often used to analyze new media and content, which is Uses and Gratifications Theory. Uses and Gratifications theory can show audience culture in the era of public digital communications especially a culture in internet meme. One of the things that discuss by Uses and Gratifications theory is about Motive/Motivation that encourage audience when using media and content. As well as marketing, when a company want to see their consumer culture they will see consumer behavior while they buy and use product. This Behavior to buy some product encourage by motive or motivation.

This study gives an insight about internet meme in social media Path and give an insight about motives that influence audience to participate in internet meme social media Path.

## **THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

### **New Media Uses and Gratifications**

Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch (1974) stated there are five basic assumption of uses and gratifications theory, i.e.: (a) The audience is active and its media use is goal oriented. (b) The initiative in linking need gratification to a specific medium choice rests with the audience member. (c) The

media compete with other resources for needs of satisfaction. (d) People have enough self-awareness of their media use, interests, and motives to be able to provide researchers with an accurate picture of that use. (e) Value judgments of media content can only be assessed by the audience.

The strength of uses and gratifications theory are the capability to apply in every media context. With plentiful context and interest, a study about uses and gratifications share a same structural analysis that observe about motives, social and psychological antecedents, cognitive, attitude and behavior consequences (Papacharissi, 2008). Even though there is still a little reconciliation changes with the basic assumption of uses and gratifications theory because the emergence of new media, Rubin et al (2003) explained that “(a) media behavior is purposive, goal-directed and motivated, (b) people select media content to satisfy their needs or desires, (c) social and psychological dispositions mediate that behavior and (d) the ‘media compete with other forms of communication—or functional alternatives—such as interpersonal interaction for selection, attention, and use’ (Haridakis, 2009).

To reconcile with the latest uses and gratifications theory, new media audience often be called as users. Modern media extend human interaction with media and content. While a simple dial characterized of user interactions with a traditional radio receiver and a remote-control device channeled our interactions with a television set, current-day media technologies (e.g., computer, smartphones) offer a wide variety of action possibilities for the user—the keyboard invites us to type, the mouse to point, the hyperlink to click, the joystick to navigate, the haptic sensors to scroll, and so on (Sundar, 2013) for example creating meme.

## Participatory Culture

Henry Jenkins (2006) describes participatory culture as low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others, some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. Participatory culture also a culture where members believe that their contributions matter, and members feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created).

Henry Jenkins (2006) also describes participatory culture as a culture in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content. Participation refers to the form of audience engagement that are shaped by cultural and social protocols rather than by technology itself (Jenkins, 2006). There are 3 way of engagement That adapted from Shao (2009) work about how individual dealing with new media, first there are consuming refers to the individuals who only watch, read, or view but never take part. Second are take part includes both user-to-user interaction and user-to-content interaction (such as ranking the content, adding to playlists, sharing with others, posting comments, etc.). It does not include one's actual production. The third producing encompasses creation and publication of one's personal contents such as text, images, audio, and video.

## Internet meme

Originate from Richard Dawkins in "The Selfish Gene", memetics and meme term was born (Börzsei, 2013: 2). Dawkins translate "meme" as a noun which is an idea from cultural transmission unit or as a replication. The word *meme* is a shortening (modeled on *gene*) of *mimeme* (from Ancient Greek pronounced *mīmēma*,

"imitated thing", from *mimeisthai*, "to imitate", from "mime"). Some example of meme i.e tone, ide, popular word, mode, ways of making pot or building structure. Similar as gene, meme also do proliferate oneself at gene pool leap from one brain to another brain in a process that well known as imitation.

Before meme became a term that is well known in digital technology, this term has been well known in biology and medical study. Now this term became popular and better known by public because of internet. With the emergence of internet, the term of meme also applied for content that spread from user to another online user. Borrowing Dawkins biology analogy, so was born "internet" meme concept. Internet meme concept initiated by Limor Shifman, this term refers to a group of digital item that share common content, form and stance characteristic, which is created with consciousness between one person to the another, and then circulate, imitation, and transformation by the internet from a lot of user (Shifman, 2014). Internet meme can spread rapid enough from person to person through internet for instance E-mail, blog, forum, social network site, short message service, and video hosting like YouTube.

## Motive

To explain about motive, this study will take two main notion from Papacharissi and Little John. Papacharissi stated, motive represent general disposition that influence people's action taken to fulfillment of need or want and behavior (Papacharissi, 2008). Little John (2009) stated that people have reasons for the way they behave. Operating off assumptions about others, interpretations of situations, and the desire to fulfill their own needs, people make choices about their communication.

From these two notions, it can be concluded that motive refers to reason that

encouraged by need, wants, and audience believe to behave in certain way. In this case behavior shown when audience participate in internet meme social media path. In this study, the term of motive and motivation will not be distinguished because this term very closely similar.

### **Informativeness Motive**

Informativeness or information seeking, the desire for knowledge, is one of Rubin's (1986) five basic needs clusters. Whereas this study will utilize a statement from Shao Gousong (2009) that informativeness or information seeking refers to Information seeking is driven by people's desire to increase awareness and knowledge of one's self, others, and the world. One of study that similar with this research that is thesis belongs to Carrie Margaret Moore put informativeness as a motive that influence participation (Moore, 2015).

Informativeness or information seeking encouraged by a people's desire to increase awareness and knowledge of one's self, other and the world will drive audience to participate in internet meme social media Path. For instance, person that open a news site will seeking for information like about the bomb blasting at Sarinah Thamrin, or like searching some other information that consider as important for that person.

### **Entertainment motive**

Entertainment as a motivating factor is defined by Rubin (1986) as the need for pleasure, emotional and aesthetic experiences. For C.S. Lee (2014) Entertainment refers to the way social media serves as a means for entertaining and escaping pressure. From both of this notion entertainment motive refers to a people needs to pleasure oneself through emotional, escaping from problem, relaxation, pleasure, and spend time. Limor Shifman on her

journal explained that from 30 samples, 25 samples of Youtube meme exhibit humor as the most pertinent aspect from internet meme (Shifman, 2012). The latest study from Carrie Margaret Moore also find that entertainment motive influence audience to participate in Reddit (Moore, 2015).

Entertainment as a need of someone to pleasure oneself emotionally, escaping from problem, relaxation, pleasure, and spend time will encourage audience to participate in internet meme social media Path.

### **Motif Socializing and Community Building**

Social integration or belonging is among Rubin's (1986) basic clusters of needs addressed by media consumption. When it comes to internet and social media use, prior studies have found socialization and community seeking was strong motivations among users (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Lee et al., 2011; Park et al., 2009; LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Lee et al., 2010). Valentine (2011) Socialization and Community Building encompasses several reasons including identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging; finding a basis for conversation and social interaction stated that connecting with family, friends, and society; and gaining insight into the circumstances of others. It is also corresponding with Insu Cho (2014) Statement that socializing is defined as the desire to maintain and create relationships.

From this notion socializing and community building refers to a need to identify oneself with another people and gaining acceptance; finding something to talk about and social interaction. The latest study from Carrie Margaret Moore also find positive effect that socializing and community building motive influence participation (Moore, 2015). This need will

encourage audience to participate in internet meme social media Path.

### **Self-Expression Motive**

In a simple way, self-expression can be defined as expression of someone thoughts or feeling through artistic activities (such as painting, text, dance, etc.) (Merriam-Webster dictionary). Shao Gousong (2009) mentioned that self-expression refers to the expression of one's own identity, especially one's individuality. Build upon from both of definition can be concluded that self-expression as a form of expression from someone identity based upon thought and a feeling that embodied by certain way.

Self-expression became a variable that be use in this study because scholars found that social media users are capable to express them self (Valentine, 2011). A research from Insu Cho (2014) about status update base on Facebook location also find that self-expression influence the uses. Study from Hunt et al (2012) also shows that self-expression correlate positively and significance with the uses of interactive feature on Facebook.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs positivistic explanatory paradigm to explain about the influence of four independent variables which is informativeness motive, entertainment motive, socializing and community building motive and self-expression motive toward dependent variable internet meme participation. The subject of this study will be Postgraduate Communication Students 2014-2015 University of Indonesia that possess social media Path account. 102 students will be respondents from 138 total students that possess social media Path account with a margin of error 5%. Techniques of data

collection through surveys with multiple regression analysis.

### **RESULTS**

From 102 respondents 71 respondents are female, or 69,2% meanwhile 31 respondents are male, or 30,4%. 46 respondents are married or 45,1%, whilst 56 or 54,9% are single. The age between 21-25 aggregate 32 respondents or 31,4%, age between 26-30 aggregate 33 respondents or 32,4%, age 31-35 aggregate 24 respondents or 23,5%, age 36-40 aggregate 11 respondents or 10,8%, and the age more than 40 aggregate 2 respondents or 1,9%. For profession category, private sector 44 respondents or 43,1%, government employees 26 respondents or 22,5%, entrepreneur 3 respondent or 2,9% and state-owned enterprises 3 respondents or 2,9%.

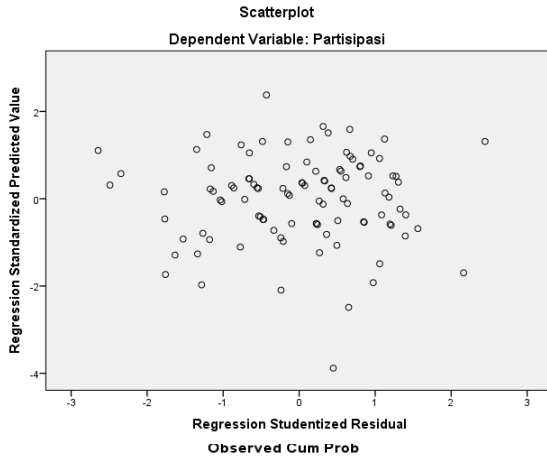
### **Validity and Reliability**

Sixteen indicators of independent variable are declared valid because  $r_{xy \text{ value}} > r_{\text{tabel value}} (0,193)$ . Meanwhile 7 indicators of dependent variable also declared as valid because  $r_{xy \text{ value}} > r_{\text{tabel value}} (0,193)$ . Reliability test also reveal that the all of 4 independent variables and 1 dependent variable are reliable because  $\alpha > 0,40$ .

### **Classical Test**

Multicollinearity test reveal that informativeness variable possess VIF value 1,289 with tolerance value 0,776. Entertainment variable possess VIF value 1,244 with tolerance value 0,804. Socializing and community building possess VIF value 1,726 with tolerance value 0,579. Meanwhile self-expression variable possesses 1,568 with tolerance value 0,638. If VIF value are under 10 and tolerance value close to 1, it means no multicollinearity in this regression model.

For Heterodacity and normality test can be seen as follow:



The above pictures reveal the dots in scatterplot graphic doesn't have a clear pattern and those dots spread below and above 0 on axis Y. This graphic show that no heterodacity on regression model.

Meanwhile for normality test reveal that probability plot graphic shows normal pattern. This is indicated from the dots that spread around a normal axis, the dots are propagation around diagonal line and the propagation still following diagonal line, so this model can be proceed for a further analysis because fulfilling assumption of normality.

### T test

P value in informativeness variable are  $0,482 > 0,05$  with significance level 95% ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ). On the basis of that H0 are accepted and H1 are rejected, or that mean informativeness variable doesn't have significance influence toward participation internet meme variable.

P value in entertainment variable are  $0,003 < 0,05$  with significance level 95% ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ). On the basis of that H0 are rejected and H1 are accepted, or that mean entertainment variable have significance influence toward participation internet meme variable.

P value in socializing and community building variable are  $0,998 > 0,05$  with significance level 95% ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ). Based on that H0 are accepted and H1 are rejected, or that mean informativeness variable doesn't have significance influence toward participation internet meme variable.

P value in self-expression variable are  $0,010 < 0,05$  with significance level 95% ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ). On the basis of that H0 are rejected and H1 are accepted, or that mean self-expression variable have significance influence toward participation internet meme variable.

### Correlation Test

Two variables indicate they don't have enough significance level, so we decided to see if there is still had correlation between the four independent variables with dependent variable. The first results between informativeness and internet meme participations variable reveal correlations at significance level 0,05 are 0,280 or  $0,280 > 0,05$  with the correlation coefficient 0,108 it means both variable doesn't correlate.

The second result between entertainment and internet meme participations variable reveal correlations at significance level 0,05 are 0,000 or  $0,000 < 0,05$  with coefficient correlation 0,397 it means the correlation between variable are significance with quite strong correlation. The third result between socializing and community building and internet meme participations variable reveal correlations at significance level 0,05 are 0,013 or  $0,013 < 0,05$  with coefficient correlation 0,245 it means both have correlation with weak correlation.

The last result between self-expression internet meme participations variable reveal correlations at significance level 0,05 are 0,000 or  $0,000 < 0,05$  with coefficient correlation 0,390 it means the

correlation between variable are significance with quite strong correlation.

### **F test**

Simulant Test or F test reveal the F value are 7.217. While the P value are 0,000 with significance level 95% ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ) or  $0,000 < 0,05$ . Based on that, it means  $H_0$  are rejected or informativeness, entertainment, socializing and community building, and self-expression variable together possess significance influence toward internet meme participations variable.

### **Coefficient of Determination**

Coefficient of determination reveal R square value are 0,229. This R square value indicate if variation of independent variable that used in this model between informativeness, entertainment, socializing and community building, self-expression can explain 22,9% variation of dependent variable internet meme participations.

### **Multiple Regression Analysis**

This multiple regression analysis utilizes standardized Coefficients Beta. Therefore, based on the results of data processing with SPSS obtained multiple linear regression equation as follows:

$$Y = 9.096 - (0.071 X_1) + (0.308 X_2) + (0.000 X_3) + (0.294 X_4)$$

In this model, there is a value that does not affect the participation of internet memes, so we use stepwise method which only utilize variables that influence and the results obtained in equation:

$$Y = 8.163 + 0.291X_2 + 0.280X_4$$

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Informativeness motive influence toward internet meme participation social media Path**

The data and results above do not conform in accordance with previous studies of the media, both old media and new media where the informativeness had positively associate with participation in the internet and social media. Meanwhile Thesis Carrie Margaret Moore put motif informativeness as the motive which is influence participation (Moore, 2015).

There are several causes why audience do not have a motive to get information from the internet meme in social media path. When this study conducted, Path does not have some sort of feature to link content with news websites whereas different from other social media, like Facebook that allows audience to post content in a wide variety of news and any other information, then another example like Twitter which is very accommodating for audience to linking their tweet with the news portals. Furthermore, related with the audience perception that not see meme as an effective tool to disseminate or getting information. Meme can have carried an informational content but for audience if they want to get an information that will use another rich source information websites.

### **Entertainment motive influence toward internet meme participation social media Path**

This study reveals similar result as a Limor Shifman Study on journal about An Anatomy of Youtube Meme (2012), her finding indicate humor as a key feature in internet meme, her study shows from 30 sample tests of Youtube meme, 25 of it consists with humor, it means humor are pertinent aspect of internet meme (Shifman, 2012). Thesis of Carrie Margaret Moore also put entertainment motive as a motive that have a positive and significant relation and influence toward participation (Moore, 2015).



Since the emergence of internet meme, literally meme often be used as an entertainment tools, even the word meme very adhesive with humor or entertainment. Sometimes we can see meme have a serious content, but since meme are replication or mutation so the results show that meme will mutate became something funny, for example like Haji Lulung meme, or a meme about Sarinah Bombing, that mutate became a joke for audience.

### **Socializing and community building motive influence toward internet meme participation social media Path**

The data and results is not in accordance with prior research that found socializing and community building motive as a strong motivation when using internet and social media (Moore, 2015). The other social media user like Facebook (Park et al., 2009) a knowledge building community like Wikipedia (Rafaeli et al., 2007) found that socializing and community building as a salient motivation from those site users.

In the Uses and Gratifications research not dismissing if every research has abundant typology motive, and a same motive typology have different results between one research to another research. This is because uses and gratifications theory trying to explain as close as possible with audience experience about the media and content. For example, a socializing and community building motive in a few researches show if this motive do not have a significance influence toward media or content uses. These results can be seen in Liu, L. B., Cheung, M. K., & Lee, K. O. (2010) about Understanding Twitter usage: What drives people to continue to tweet. And then that socializing and community building also do not have a significant influence toward needs to revisiting social media in Yoo, C. Y. (2011) research about modeling audience interactivity as the

gratification-seeking process in online newspapers.

There is a basic difference between correlation and causality. Causality taken place when X variable influence Y variable. If both variable be treated symmetrically (a measurement value between variables will be the same if exchanged) then even though both variables have a correlation doesn't mean must have a causality correlation (Jonathansarwono.info). Therefore, from this explanation, socializing and community building with internet meme participation yet have correlation but unfortunately doesn't have a significance influence.

If we draw back to the histories and the development of social media Path, this social media doesn't specifically design for internet meme interaction. But internet meme yet been used as a tool to socialize in social media Path, it just does not have influence to increase internet meme participations. A Path Talk feature also not commonly used by audience. So, to socialize by internet meme among the others, audience tend to use another platform.

### **Self-expression motive influence toward internet meme participation social media Path**

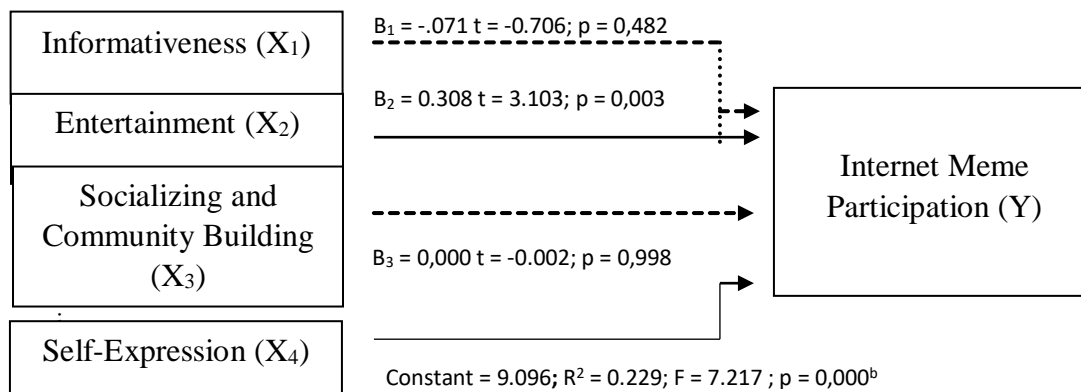
This Study result corresponds with another research, because a few researches has found that social media audience capable to express them self by online personality (Hunt, 2012). A research from Insu Cho (2014) about status update base on Facebook location, found that self-expression have an influence. A research from Hunt et al, on 2012 also show that self-expression have a positive and significance correlation toward Facebook interactive feature. This interactive feature for example, status update, profile picture update, post a picture, using like, comment another post, sending a message, chatting etc.



### F test Results

F test results establish that informativeness, entertainment, socializing and community building, and self-expression variables have a significance influence simultaneously toward internet meme participation, it means that this model are acceptable.

Based on the explanation above if presented in framework form, the regression results from each independent variable informativeness, entertainment, socializing and community building and self-expression toward dependent variable internet meme participation are as follows:



### SUMMARY

Built upon multiple regression analysis, can be seen that the most influence toward participation internet meme are entertainment variable. Because of that audience will participate in internet meme social media Path spurred by the reason to get an entertainment.

The second most influential motive are self-expression which is when audience decided to participate in internet meme social media Path because spurred by a want to express mind and feeling of oneself. This is shown if internet meme can be a tool for audience so that not only as a tool to express mind and feeling, but also responded by another audience.

But unfortunately socializing and community building motive do not have a significance influence toward internet meme participation. Even though this motive yet have correlation with internet meme participations. This suggests that instead of internet memes cannot be an effective means of communication, with the development of social media Path, in the future this motive still can be used and have as significant influence toward participation internet meme.

The last one is informativeness motive that doesn't have influence nor correlation with internet meme participation.

This is related with audience perception about internet meme. A post about a news or information still not yet considered as meme. Beside that internet meme also not yet considered can be use as media to disseminate information or news, from this explanation information motive do not became a reason for audience to participate.

Meanwhile from the F test that the four variables can be explained that informativeness (X<sub>1</sub>), entertainment (X<sub>2</sub>), socializing and community building (X<sub>3</sub>), and self-expression (X<sub>4</sub>) simultaneously influence dependent variable participation internet meme (Y) that mean this model still can be used for the further research.

The result of coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) are 0,229, this mean 22,9 % of variable changes can be explained by informativeness, entertainment, socializing and community building, and self-expression variable meanwhile the rest of it 78,1% can be explained by another variable than not be included in this study.

## RECOMMENDATION

From this study, there is necessary to do another research from the other kind of social media for example Facebook, Reddit, 1cak, 9gag, Pinterest etc., also from the internet. Another concept of uses and gratifications for example gratification sought and gratification obtain, can be used in the next research to see if there any differences between before and after audience do participation in internet meme, moreover there is also a concept about dependency, this concept can be used to see do dependencies have correlation or influence toward internet meme participations. There is plenteous typology from uses and gratifications, these plenteous typologies can be used as factors that influence participations.

From research methodology aspect, the study of uses and gratifications sometimes using two step research. According E.M Griffin a research that utilize uses and gratifications theory are not only for quantitative or pure positivistic studies but this theory also can utilize qualitative research for example to extend an indicators or variables.

Two step research of uses and gratifications can be conducted by doing qualitative study first, this step started by focus group discussion, or in-depth interview to bring out all the factor that spurred participation that cannot be seen only from literature. And then those results became an indicator, these indicators been

selected and became a new variable. Next this indicator or variables will be submitted as a variable in quantitative research to a large audience or respondent. From these two steps, we will can see which one has a bigger influence and can be continued in the next research.

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<sup>1</sup> The paper was presented at the 2016 International Conference on Corporate and Marketing Communication (ICCOMAC) conducted by the School of Communication, Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia in October 2016 and won Best Paper Award – Media Communication Category.