



Exploring Journalism Convergence: A Qualitative Analysis on Journalism Convergence in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media

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A B S T R A C T

The development and practice of journalism are mainly determined by the availability of information and communication technology. Internet-based technology has transformed all lines of journalism. Journalism convergence is not only a trend, but also a necessity in the contemporary media industry. There are three types of journalism convergence, namely newsroom, newsgathering, and content. In newsroom convergence, journalists from different platforms work together in one news production room and carry out their tasks in accordance with their media. Newsgathering convergence requires journalists to multitask, while content convergence or news content means that news is displayed in the form of multimedia content that combines texts, images, audio and others. This study aims to describe and analyze the practice of journalism convergence in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers conduct observation, interview, and literature review as data collection techniques. This study finds that Media Group Network and Mahaka Media have already applied



these three journalism convergence models (newsroom, newsgathering, and content). Media Group Network and Mahaka Media have been continuously and consistently applying those three aspects of journalism convergence. However, there are some differences in the journalism convergence process in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media, namely the code of ethics and training for journalists. Another difference is that Mahaka Media provides *print on demand* for its readers, while Media Group Network has broad coverage on journalism convergence through *free to air television*, Metro TV.

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INTRODUCTION

The presence of the internet has led to a new development of journalism. The Internet also popularizes a new jargon of media in the journalism industry. It has made two basic changes in this industry, which include the journalism process and the form of media organization. This fundamental change is called media convergence. Convergence cannot be accomplished without a radical change by integrating printed media and online newsrooms (Khadziq, 2016).

New media ecosystem has challenged journalism practice, ethics, and regulation to the new level. New media characters change journalism in many aspects, such as commentary, accuracy, and media management (Nurlatifah, 2018).

The changing of journalism pattern and organization has led to a journalism crisis marked by five indicators, namely falling media circulation, decreasing in advertising revenue, diffusion of attention, crisis of authority, and inability or unwillingness of journalism to question power structure (Siapera, 2012). Meanwhile, the change in the form of media organization brings media convergence (Storsul, 2007). Media convergence in portraiture (Fidler, 2003; Jenkins, 2006) was an idea from Ithiel de Sola Pool in 1983 about *Technology Freedom*. Burnett

and Marshall (2003) defines convergence as incorporation of media industry, telecommunication and computer into a unified form and functions as digital communication media.

Due to both changes, journalism is radically transformed. The Internet has pushed journalism to mainly focus on two things: speed and space; and diversity, interaction and participation (Allen, 2010). The World Association of Newspapers (WNA) has taken note of a few points of the changes in journalism. (Obijiofo, 2011).

1. Increase in the number of participatory journalism/ community journalism that is well known as *citizen journalism*.
2. Increase in the number of research on news consumers (public/audience/reader) regarding the models of media usage.
3. Disseminated information originates from or is self-made. Online news or information is disseminated through smartphones.
4. Organizing and refreshing the newsroom to focus on producing news for the public/audience/reader.
5. Narrative about storytelling techniques (producing news, for



example) has been developed to find new forms that are suitable for public consumption, with new or non-existent channels.

6. Media should focus on finding and drawing a head on new public/audience/reader for adjusting news content and multimedia (instrument/tools).

Pavlik (2001) adds that along with journalism digitalization, there are several regional changes which include 1) collecting and reporting News, 2) collecting, indexing and developing information, especially multimedia content, 3) production and editorial processes, 4) distribution and publishing, and 5) appearance, layouting and access.

In contemporary realities, there is no independent media. Editorial process can not be separated from the variety of interests that influence the process. Editorial decision can not be made without involving the voices from founder, owner, or stakeholders, or audience. In contemporary journalism, particularly business-economy and political-power news, it is impossible to explicitly and implicitly ignore their interests. Moreover, if the founder, owner or stakeholders has a business or political background. This shift is not a bad thing, but it is a necessity to make sociocultural

changes that encompass or outside the realm of journalism at a macro level.

The internet that focuses on speed and acceleration of production affects the quality of traditional journalism. The production of news is increasing, but the quality is decreasing. Furthermore, the tendency of media conglomeration has threatened the quality of news produced by the media. In the context of the acceleration of news production, a journalist profession is actually a colonized profession. News is dictated by the power of capitalization. The result is information manipulation for the benefits of capitalists, not only in financial benefits, but also hidden benefits (Haryanto, 2014). According to Fuller (2010), independence and the absence of conflict of interest is a myth in today's media reality.

Media conglomeration is increasingly hegemonic, and it has its momentum along with the infiltration of capitalism ideology in journalism. Piliang (2011) suggests four main elements of global capitalism, which are time, space, money and speed. Acceleration and speed in journalism drag it into the global competition. This means capitalism has destroyed the great value of journalism. News as the main element or core of journalism has become a commodity. (Schechter, 2007).

Generally there are lots of studies about media convergence conducted in Indonesia. Firdausi et al. (2022) wrote about the implication



of media convergence in Banten; Amal (2022) in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam; Wahyuningsih & Zulhazmi (2020) in Yogyakarta; Fadillah et al. (2022) in Jawa Barat. Souisa (2017) specifically examined the regulation of media convergence in Indonesia. In micro convergence scale, Yoedtadi et al., (2021) studied the television convergence and social media in Indosiar (electronic media). Soegiharto (2021) specifically examined the convergence of printed media, while Prestianta (2022) wrote about mobile journalism implemented by Kompas.com.

Simultaneously from abroad, the study of journalism convergence was conducted by Domingo et al., who wrote about four dimensions of journalism convergence in Spain. While multiplatform journalism and (de) convergence in Portugal were examined by Telma Sueli Pinto Johnson. (Johnson, 2018). From the Philippines, media convergence was analyzed by Arceo (2017). The study of Prestianta, (2022) revealed the practices of media convergence in India, and the last the study of media convergence in Italia presented by Bettiga et al., (2013).

There are very few specific studies on journalism convergence. The study comparing journalism convergence in some media companies is rarely conducted. Related to the previous study, the study of journalism convergence in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media has got its momentum because there is no study about the process of

journalism convergence in these two media groups.

This study examined the process of journalism in media convergence in two groups, Media Grup Network and Mahaka Media. The study of these two media groups is interesting since these two groups are owned by two politicians who are currently active. Media convergence is frequently a problem for the practice of journalism as it has several requirements including the adequacy of information and communication technology, multi skills journalists, and reorientation from traditional journalism culture.

Media Grup Network is one of the giants of the media industry in Indonesia. Media Grup Network started from Media Indonesia daily newspaper which is a national newspaper. Media Indonesia newspaper has been published since January 19, 1970. In 1987, the founder of Media Indonesia, Teuku Yousli Syah, incorporated with the former leader of Prioritas Newspaper, Surya Paloh. Prioritas was bended by the New Order Regime because it was considered a threat to their authority and power. (Media Group Network, 2023).

Following the development of Business in media, Surya Paloh established a television station named Metro TV on October 25, 1999. Metro TV is one of the first news television stations in Indonesia. On November 25, 2000, Metro TV legally and officially aired for the first



time. (Iskandar, 2018). Meanwhile, in the online sector, mediaindonesia.com and metrotvnews.com are completing Media Grup Network's pace in the media industry, beside Lampung Post and some other media. Apart from scientific debates, Media Grup Network has pioneered a new path, that a public frequency-based television (Metro TV) can be used for political interest practices, specially political parties and the winning of president-vice president in 2014 and 2019.

Prior to having Media Group Network, The involvement of Surya Paloh in the media industry started when he had Prioritas Daily that were later banned by the New Order regime because it was considered contrary to and endangered the stability of the authorities (Atmakusuma, 2009). "The Newspaper often published false and unfactual information, it was cynical, directed and tendentious." That is one of the sentences in the letter of banning for Prioritas. (Hill, 2011).

The involvement of Surya Paloh in practical politics through National Democrat Party- Partai Nasdem- (he formerly was active in GOLKAR Party) has an implication in the media that he owns. The Media Grup became one of the partisans in the campaign of presidential elections in 2014 and 2019. As Atmakusuma, (2009) said that in the journalists' political pragmatism behavior, he will

lose his independence. Code of ethics has to be sacrificed due to many reasons starting from the interests of the journalists to the shareholders. The prejudice of journalists towards news sources ultimately closes opportunities for the public to obtain the source of qualified information. It means abusing and immolating the journalistic code of ethics.

Mahaka Media bought Republika in 2001. In 2002 Mahaka Media established an outdoor media company, Mahaka Advertising. Then, it launched Jak TV in 2007. Mahaka Media introduced radio 98.7 Gen FM and 101 Jak FM. Mahaka Media has recently had many business units including newspaper, magazines, book publishers, television station, radio station, outdoor media and digital media. Mahaka Media has Republika Daily, Golf Digest Indonesia Magazines, Jak TV and Gen FM. Mahaka Media is the media owner who bought Republika Grup business unit, which was formerly known as Republika Newspaper. (<https://www.mahakax.com/>).

Republika newspaper has grown and improved with some business units, republika.co.id, Republika tv, republika.id and others. Republika Daily firstly published on January 4, 1993. It was a daily newspaper. Since January 1, 2023 Republika Daily was not published in printed form, it has transformed into digital form (e-paper). Apart from the modern segment, Republika has



already positioned itself as a media for muslim community. It is related to the existence of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectual (ICMI) that took initiative in the birth of Republika. Since 1995, a news website born to be the first news site www.republika.co.id

The former president and vice president, Burhanudin Jusuf Habibie, at that time has served as the chairman of ICMI and positioned as

the chairman of board of trustees “Abdi Bangsa Foundation.” This foundation that was established on August 17, 1992 has three programs, which are building an Islamic Center, developing a Center of Information and Development Studies (CIDES), and publishing Republika general daily. There are forty eight (48) officials who become the founder of Abdi Bangsa Foundation (Yayasan Abdi Bangsa).

Tabel 1. Differences of Media Convergence between Media Group Network and Mahaka Media

No	Media Group Network	Mahaka Media
1.	Started from personal capital of Teuku Yousli Syah and Surya Paloh	Started from Institusi Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals - Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia (ICMI) (shares on behalf of PT Abdi Bangsa)
2.	Changed ownership before reformation era 1998	Changed ownership after reformation era 1998
3.	Owned by the chairman of political party (Nasdem)	Owned by politician (The Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises /BUMN)

Source: Processed by the Authors (2023)



Due to the broadness coverage of media convergence in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media, this study specifically focuses on the process of journalism, and the object of this study is the process of journalism in Media Indonesia newspaper, medcom.id, Metro TV (Media Group Network) and e-paper Republika, republika.co.id (Mahaka Media).

Based on the description above, the object or the focus of this study is the process of journalism convergence that consists of three types, which are newsroom convergence, newsgathering convergence, and news content convergence in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media. Thus, the research problem in this study is how is the implementation of newsroom convergence, newsgathering convergence, and news content convergence in Media Grup Network and Mahaka Media.

METHODOLOGY

The study of the journalism process in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media uses qualitative methods, and the data collection techniques are observation and interview. This qualitative research approach is based on the basic assumption that humans are free, independent and creative creatures who can create their own reality. They can determine themselves. From this freedom and creativity essence, it becomes the core of qualitative. (Mulyana, 2010)

Observations were made by looking for the same reporting patterns

with different formats. This study observes the focus, model, or trend of journalistic convergence carried out by the two media groups as shown in the results and discussions.

While interviews were conducted to several people and policy makers that were directly involved in the process of journalism in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media, they are Abdul Kohar (Editorial Board Media Group) and Nurhasan Murtaji (Editorial Board Mahaka Media). The focus of the interview relates to all aspects of media convergence.

There are five distinctive characters in qualitative study, they are the study focusing on the essence of life which is below the surface or invisible, being a representative of publics point of view or perspective, having contextual background, providing opportunities for the emergence of new concept that describes human behavior, and using various sources to gain truthfulness and trust (Yin, 2019).

This approach used to look for and find definitions or understanding of phenomena in a specific context, which are the process of journalism in Media Group Network and Mahaka Media. (Yin, 2011). Hence, qualitative research is the study to get an understanding of reality through the process of inductive thinking (particular to general reasoning models). It is contrary to quantitative research that uses logic. (Basrowi dan Sukidin, 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

There are three models of journalism convergence. (Grant, 2009).



They are newsroom convergence, newsgathering convergence and content convergence. In newsroom convergence journalists from different platforms work together in one news production room and do their tasks in accordance with their media. The second model, newsgathering convergence, journalists should perform multitasking jobs, for instance, newspaper journalists should be able to make other media news, and so do journalists from other media, they should do the same. The third media is content convergence or news content. News is presented in the form of multimedia which is a combination of texts, images, audio and others.

Those three models of journalism convergence have been performed by Media Group Network and Mahaka Media. "Journalism convergence is a necessity. We, Mahaka Media, especially from News Section (e-paper *Republika* presented in republika.id, and news site republika.co.id), have been performing these activities for years," said The Deputy Editorial-in-chief of *Republika* Newspaper (republika.id), Nurhasan Murtaji.

While senior journalist at Media Group Network, Abdul Kohar, agrees with Nurhasan Murtaji, media companies that are separated between editorial and business are out of date. Media convergence is the answer for the development of media today. "Media convergence is not a trend, it is a necessity if journalism is willing to live and survive," said Abdul Kohar.

1. Newsroom Convergence

Traditionally media is divided into two sections, which are editorial (that produces various programs, especially news) and non-editorial (frequently called business section). Between both sections there is an "unlawful" separated wall that can not be passed. This wall is invisible. All media circles call this wall a firewall. This partition is made to avoid the mixing of news and business interests which often trigger conflicts with advertising/business. Those sections of the organization only meet the general leader. This is meant in media convergence: all structural systems, cultures and parts of media work together side by side, flowing across boundaries (Jenkins, 2006).

In this context, there is a change in organizational structure, for example, in the editorial section (news production). There is a unification of various types of traditional media (television, radio, sites and printed media) in one roof of organization (Erdal, 2008). Today in this era of media convergence, the firewall is almost extinct, even considered disappeared, although in several media it is still being maintained. With the development of the era, media organization is becoming modern. Professionalism is a demand that can not be avoided. The management of media organizations is changing drastically and dramatically. Now the positions of editorial and non-editorial are equal. (Indrati I et al., 2018) (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008)



“At Media Group Network there is no more static and rigid firewall like in traditional media. There is no longer a clear and firm line between editorial and non editorial, all parties are mingled for the benefits of the company,” mentioned Abdul Kohar.

He continues that now the rigid firewall has been replaced with flexible and dynamic partitions that are related to the needs of the company. It can be opened and closed, depending on the needs in the good process of journalism and for the business progress of the company.

“Media convergence at Media Group Network requires some changes in the process of content creation and news distribution, and also encourages arrangement of organization in media and editorial room management. The turning point also relates to the way of journalists’ work, they should multitask in various ways,” explained Abdul Kohar.

Similar to Media Group Network, Mahaka Media editorial and business merger also applied. According to Nurhasan Murtaji, a slight difference in Mahaka Media is that there is Republika Group that has Abdi Bangsa shares. Therefore, Republika can finance itself, and there is no foreign capital from other groups in Mahaka Media platform.

At Media Group Network, specifically in finance, mutual assistance among group members is applied. “During the pandemic Covid-19 Media Indonesia newspaper that experienced lack of funds was assisted by other companies which were healthier from a

financial point of view,” said Abdul Kohar.

The process of journalism convergence particularly in the newsroom both at Media Group Network and Mahaka Media started with the division of news coverage tasks that were done at offline and online editorial meetings, depending on the situation and condition. All parts of the editorial desk or compartment have social media networks like whatsapp or telegram, so that news coordination, communication and tasks can be promptly distributed. (Gambarato & Alzamora, 2018); (Pantic & Cvetkovic, 2020); (Newman et al., 2012)

“Social networking groups are very helpful in distribution of information on editorial needs. There is a whatsapp group for all editors, also a telegram group that consists of specific information for each helpful desk and others,” said Nurhasan Murtaji.

Abdul Kohar explained that at Media Group Network there is a basket of news gained from the field. All editors were allowed to freely take the news as needed. The basket of news contains all kinds of news from various journalistic platforms. In this basket there are news, images, recordings and audio visuals. (Gambarato & Alzamora, 2018). All editors or news producers process news from raw materials in the field to be produced as journalistic products that are ready to be published for the public. Zhang (2008) found that media convergence is beneficial for the development of media, in particular journalistic production.



Tabel 2. Comparative Differences of Newsroom between Media Group Network and Mahaka Media

No	Media Group Network	Mahaka Media
1	Metro TV	Republika.id
2	Metrotv.news.com	Republika.co.id
3	Koran Media Indonesia	Republika TV
4	Medcom.id	Ihram.republika.co.id
5	Lampung Post	Repjabar.republika.co.id
6	Inibaru.id	Repyogya.republika.co.id

Source: Processed by the Authors (2023)

2. Newsgathering Convergence

Media convergence requires the presence of multitasking journalists; journalists who can operate all tools for all journalism platforms.(Spyridou & Veglis, 2016); (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). This is absolutely different from traditional journalists who can only do one job for one particular media. “In the beginning it is difficult, but eventually, multitasking journalists at Media Group Network become normal,” added Abdul Kohar.

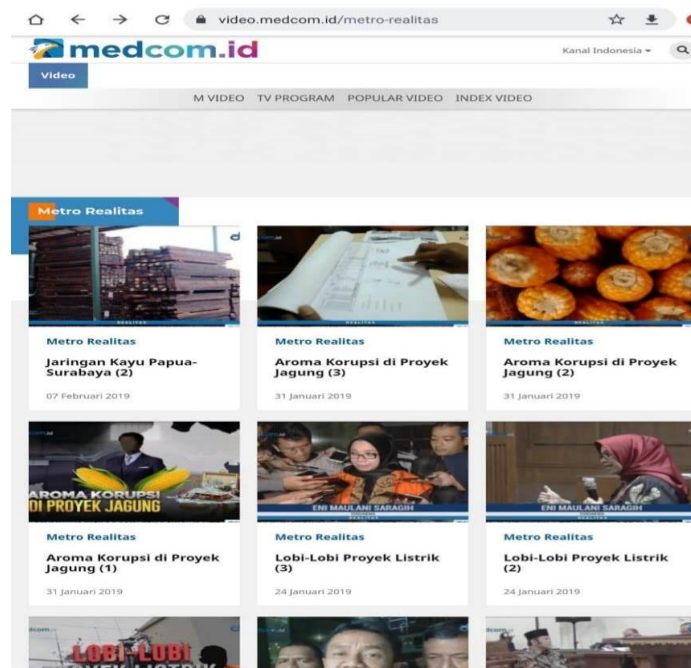
Factually the convergence of news collection, said Abdul Kohar, has been applied for a long time at Media Group Network. Since Metro TV in 2001, until now Media Group Network has already carried out journalistic work together in multi platform repository.

“The Metro Reality Program is a collaboration of journalists from various media platforms under Media Group Network to produce qualified journalistic content. The collaboration of news collection involves all journalists from various media platforms existing under Media Group Network (newspaper, television and news sites).” said Abdul Kohar.

The head of news coverage is also alternated, sometimes from newspaper, and other time from Metro TV, depending on the themes and news coverage suggestion proposed and will be presented in the Metro Reality Program. Consequently, the convergence of news collections is the power for contemporary journalism. “The power of news coverage will be different between the result from each journalist and the result from the collaboration of journalists from various different journalism platforms,” Abdul Kohar insisted.



Figure 1 Metro Reality Program aired by Metro TV is available at medcom.id in the form of images and texts.



Source : medcom.id (2023)

Meanwhile at Mahaka Media, according to Nurhasan Murtaji, there are training programs for journalists in order to generate multitasking journalists. Multitasking journalists are not instant products that happen right away, they should be trained intensively and continuously. (Quinn & Quinn-Allan, 2005)

Issues of in-depth news coverage can be from many resources, for instance from an event covered and reported in republika.co.id. Based on the result of editorial meetings of all media platforms at Mahaka Media, if the themes are very interesting, they must be deepened with continued coverage by republika.id. The result of this news coverage will be reported in epaper Republika.

“Thus the needs of multitasking journalists should be in accordance with

their respective jobs, for example, news coverage that requires fast action so the news can immediately be published to the public, printed media is more sufficient. However, if audio visuals to present more interesting news is more needed, editors will fulfill the needs,” said Nurhasan Murtaji.

Newsgathering convergence (also news content convergence) is one idea with *tactical convergence* (cooperation and sharing information among media) and *information gathering convergence* (collecting, processing and presenting data among media), and *storytelling or presentation convergence* (packaging data –set of data- according to different media). (Quinn & Quinn-Allan, 2005)

3. Newscontent Convergence



On the other hand, Nurhasan Murtaji continued, at Mahaka Media there is a special code of ethics for multitasking journalists. The regulations and code of ethics are different from traditional journalism code of ethics (Gambarato & Alzamora, 2018), such as regarding the production of one news article or originating from one event it can be alternated or reproduced for another journalism platform. Hence Republika.co.id site is specialized for tracking the speed and actuality of the events. It is based on traffic and clickbait of the readers. While in-depth and special news for news format is available in di republika.id. Since it stopped being manually published on January 1, 2023,

e-paper Republika provides *print on demand*. (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2016). Its readers can reserve Republika.id for the printed edition that they want to have.

“Generally all news that goes into editorial office can be used by all groups under Mahaka Media, relying upon the necessity point of view, for example, if there is an exclusive news and it needs to be deepened with investigation, therefore the editor will decide to form a team to find more extensive and depth information. (Gambarato & Alzamora, 2018) Serial news will be presented in republika.id or e-paper Republika, while breaking news will be presented in republika.co.id,” explained Nurhasan Murtaji.

Figure 2 The left figure is news from Republika, edition on Monday, 28 November 2022 page 12. The right one is news from Republika.co.id, edition on Sunday November 2022.



Alike Mahaka Media, at Media Group Network, Abdul Kohar explained that news produced on the field could be shared to all members of editorial groups with its own angles and enrichment so that one journalism platform would be

different from other platforms even though the news comes from the same event. (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2016)

“Metro TV, for example, is a collaboration of various media platforms under Media Group Network to produce quality journalism content.(Gambarato &



Alzamora, 2018). It is presented in Media Indonesia newspaper and also aired by Metro TV. It actually can be published in news sites under Media Group Network,” said Abdul Kohar.

News content coverage implied by Franklin (2005) is that in this convergence there is an exchange among

all media that has different characteristics and platforms. Computers offer new forms to radio and television, and also social media gives a new form of journalism to other platforms like newspaper, radio, television and news sites.

Tabel 3. Comparison of Differences on Journalism Convergence between Media Group Network and Mahaka Media

No	Media Group Network	Mahaka Media
1	It has traditional printed media/ Media Indonesia newspaper	It doesn't have traditional printed media (newspaper), It only has digital newspaper or E-paper Republika
2	It has <i>free to air</i> (Metro TV)	It doesn't have <i>free to air television</i> . It only has Republika TV
3	Fully guided by the Press Council Code of Ethics	It has its own journalistic code of ethics in convergence as derivative of the Pers Council of Journalistics code of ethics
4	There is no special training for journalists in journalism convergence	Conducting special training to produce multitasking journalists.

Source: Processed by the Authors (2023)

Indeed the three models of journalistic convergence discussed above (Media Group Network and Mahaka Media) can be distinguished, but it is difficult to be separated. It means that in all the process of journalism between newsroom, news gathering and news content always crisscrossed, intertwined, and completed each other. It is normal for several others of journalistic experts to choose the process of convergence (including journalistic) with different names and terms.

Rich Gordon (Quinn & Quinn-Allan, 2005), divided convergence into five dimensions, they are *ownership convergence* (convergence leading to common ownership), *tactical convergence* (cooperation and sharing information among media), *structural convergence* (division labour and organization in the organizational structure), *information gathering convergence* (collecting, processing and presentation of data among fellow media), and *storytelling or presentation convergence* (data packaging according to different media). Beside



ownership convergence (convergence related to joint ownership), other four convergence related to journalistics convergence.

Meanwhile in the theory of media convergence versus Dailey, L., Demo, L., & Spillman, (2010) the process of journalism convergence covers *Cloning, Coopetition, Content sharing, and full convergence*. Whereas the latter convergence is business convergence, which is *cross-promotion* convergence.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the research and discussion, there are some interesting points found in this study. First, Media Group Network and Mahaka Media have successfully applied three models of journalism convergence (*newsroom, news gathering, and content*) in their own styles and format. Second, Few differences in the process of journalism convergence in those two institutions are code of ethics and training of the journalists. Third, Mahaka Media provides *Print on demand* for its readers who are eager to have it; meanwhile Media Group Network has broad coverage on journalism convergence through *free to air* television, Metro TV.

This study theoretically adds to the repertoire of the development of

other relationships with other people or organizations related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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communication science, especially in journalism, specifically journalistic convergence in Indonesia. The fast and rapid changing of the dynamics of contemporary journalism demands continuous adjustment in journalism theories and practices. In a practical context, this study contributes journalism practices not only to Media Group Network and Mahaka Media, but also to all journalism stakeholders in Indonesia.

This study focuses on analyzing the process of journalism in two media groups, therefore, future research should broaden its scope both in the number of media companies and types of convergence, for instance business convergence and public involvement in all media companies in Indonesia.

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Dudi Iskandar: Conceptual Draft, Draft Compilation, Investigation, and Methodology. Liliyana: Data Curation, Supervision, and Editing. Indah Suryawati: Reviewing and Translating.

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