

The Use of Internet By Ambonese Women

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Abstract: *The network of internet technology has been active in Indonesia since 1990, and its use has grown rapidly to the present time. However the use of the internet is still unevenly distributed due to difficulty of access, with preference given to urban areas with good resources and where the inhabitants have a working knowledge of internet technology. The rural areas, however, do not have sufficient internet access to allow its full use, and there is a gender gap with men frequently having better access to technology than do women. Technology is uncommon for women but more common for the domain of men, for example, in the work-related areas of engineering, weapons, or technology. The town of Batu Merah in Ambon City is one of the most populated towns in Indonesia, with more than 113 thousand people living there since the end of the Ambon conflict. The study looks into the use of the internet by women in the village of Batu Merah. It was carried out according to Mediatization and Gender theories, using a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. The study showed that Ambonese women generally have smart phones with full access to the internet. The women use social media to communicate with other parties*

Keywords: *gender, women, Batu Merah Village Ambon, Internet Media*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the globalization era the Internet has become an often used communication

tool because it is fast and effective. Therefore, a communication media that cannot be left out of everyday life [1]. According to Marleen Wynants and Jan Cornelis, the internet information technology massively has decentralized work for the first time in the mankind history. Furthermore, Wynants and Cornelis state that the internet is: a unique tool that has irreversibly changed our personal and professional communication and information research. Intellectual property, on the other hand, is a legal instrument that has become a

symbol of the exact opposite of what it was developed for: the protection of the creative process. As a result, thousands of free-thinking programmers, scientists, artists, designers, engineers and scholars are daily trying to come up with new ways of creating and sharing knowledge”.

The internet technology network has entered into Indonesia since 1990. With the passage of time it has grown fast. However, the use is still uneven as it is limited to some regions. These are generally urban areas with adequate resources. The inhabitants have sufficient knowledge of internet technology. While rural areas do not have internet access widely and easily so that the uses are not yet maximized.

Instead limited access, the uneven use of information technology frequently occurs due to gender differences. Gender theory generally distinguishes men and women. It is considered that men are a group of superior human beings while women are marginal group. This gender division states that when compared to men, women have limited freedom. The limited freedom is seen as something uncommon for women but common for men. For example, work in relation to engineering, weapons or technology, it is believed to become "the domain of men".

According to Arief Budiman, sexual division of labor has been established since ancient societies when changing from nomadic lifestyle to agricultural system [2]. In women's nature, they are a figure who contains and gives birth to children. Moreover, women are assigned to domestic domain while men are in public domain. This sexual division of labor has broad implications for the marginalization of women's groups.

Ambon City is the capital city of Maluku Province with total land area of 359.45 square kilometer, total sea area of 17.55 square kilometer and total coastline length of 98 kilometers. Ambon City consists of five sub-districts, 30 villages or called *negeri* (country) and 20 village administration units. A *negeri* that become a village administration unit in Ambon City is Negeri Batu Merah. It is located in Sirimau District, Ambon City. Negeri Batu Merah is 2.2 km from the Capital City of Maluku Province and

becomes the center of Muslim inhabitants in Sirimau sub-district, Ambon.

At present Batu Merah Village is one of the most densely populated villages in Indonesia. There are more than 113 thousand people who inhabit the village after the end of the Ambon conflict. Therefore, it is interesting to see how the uses of internet media among village women in Batu Merah Village.

II. THEORIES USED IN THE RESEARCH

The first theory used in this research is Mediatization Theory. According to Stig Hjarvard, the concept of mediatization is the importance of media for culture and society. The term mediatization has been used in a series of contexts in relation to the influence of the media on various phenomena.

Moreover, Winfried Schulz identifies four kinds of media processes that change human communication and interaction. Firstly, media improves human communication skills in the aspect of time and distance. Secondly with the presence of internet, the media replaces social activities that are usually carried out in a kind of face to face interaction. For example, internet banking has changed physical meeting between banks and their clients. Thirdly, media mediate a series of activities; face-to-face interaction combined with media. Finally, actors in various fields of activities have to adjust their behavior so that they accommodate the form of media. For example, politicians express themselves in front of some reporters. Krotz has stated it in the same source that mediatization is "an ongoing process that is the media change of human relations and behavior and thus change society and culture [3]

The second theory used in the research is Gender Theory. Gender theory is basically a theory that discusses social attributes that are attached to gender on the basis of culture and local context. In many situations in everyday life, men are described as superior and active in the public domain. Otherwise, women are placed in the private domain with attributes as inferior figures.

Generally the role given to men can be said to be more pleasant because it gives the possibility for men to develop themselves.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using qualitative research methods particularly phenomenology approach. Michael Quinn Patton [4] stated that phenomenology method tries to find the nature of a phenomenon. It looks for what causes the phenomenon to occur. According to Patton the method explains how human beings

realize, describe, judge, remember an experience and how they talk with other human beings. When to get and collect data the researcher must conduct in-depth interview with people who directly experience the phenomenon they want to study.

The phenomenon being studied in the research was the use of internet media among village women in Batu Merah Village, Ambon City. According to Bagong and Sutinah, the qualitative research is applied if it wants to describe the complex background and interactions of participants and understand the limited number of circumstances with a deep and detailed focus [5]. In this matter researchers chose the qualitative approach because they wanted to see how the use of internet access among village women in Batu Merah Village had access to information technology.

According to Strauss and Corbin in the book of Mohammad Nazir, qualitative research is a type of research that is used to examine social life, history, behavior, the function of organization, social activities and others [6].

Moreover, Rosadi Ruslan states that qualitative research methods are research methods that produce abstract or unmeasured data and explain them in words (2004). Qualitative research aims at interpreting social phenomena.

Data collection techniques carried out in this study was conducted using in-depth interviews with informants in Batu Merah Village and making observation as well.

IV. DISCUSSION

Batu Merah Village is located in Sirimau Sub-District, Ambon City, Maluku Province. Total population amounts to 113,143 people. Women outnumber men. It amounts to 53,714 men and 59,429 women consecutively. Total male-headed households reach 12,436 and total female-headed households amount to 788 women. There are 12,479 Muslims and 1,664 Christians. There are 42 mosques and one church in Batu Merah Village. There are 20 elementary schools, 5 junior high schools and three senior high school as well three colleges consecutively [7]

The digital literacy movement for women's groups is very important. From the context of GSMA internet data usage: it shows that 1.7 billion women in the world do not have smart phones. There are only 250 million women who access information technology on the network or online and there are only 33% of women who use the internet for work [7]

The key informant in this study was Hilda Rolobessy (46 years) who lived in Gadihu Indah Housing in Ahuru Village, Batu Merah Village. Hilda is a female activist who serves as Deputy Director of Tifa Damai Institute in Maluku.

Other informants were Rosna (high school graduate, 33 years old), Nurini (high school graduate, 41 years old), Nurani Widodo (Bachelor S1 from STIA Trinitas 43 years old), Rahmadani (High School, 40 years old), Rumadai (High School graduate, 16 years old), Nurjanah (High School, 46 years old), Etty (Bachelor S1, 48 years old, an activist of Social Welfare Participation Forum). Instead of Rahmadani and Nurjanah, all informants answered that they had smartphones. However, Nurjanah and Rahmadani could borrow smart phones from their children for their easy to operate smart phones.

For other respondents there are some benefits of using smart phones:

- a. Rosna used for private social media, i.e. WhatsApp, email and Facebook.
- b. Rumadai used for Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram (126 followers) and email.
- c. Nurani Widodo used for WhatsApp, Facebook and email.
- d. Nurini used for sending SMS.
- e. Etty used for WhatsApp, email, SMS.
- f. Hilda Rolobessy used for WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram (total 519 followers) and email.

Costs incurred per month for communication via smart phones were: a. Rosna spent 100,000 IDR per month b. Rumadai issued 200,000 IDR per month c. Nurani Widodo spent 400,000 IDR per month d. Nurini spent 100,000 IDR per month e. Etty issued 400,000 IDR per month to subscribe for IndiHome f. Hilda issued 100,000 per month

They all said that they generally used smart phones for one to two hours per day. It was in line with the opinion of Winfried Schulz who said there were four forms of media processes that changed human communication and interaction, i.e.

1. Media increases human communication skills both in the aspect of time and distance.
2. With the Internet access, the media changes social activities from face to face interaction generally.
3. The media becomes mediation from a combination of face-to-face activities with the media.
4. Actors have to adjust their behavior so that they can accommodate the media form.

When normally surfing the Internet two hours every day, the village women in Batu Merah Village increased their communication skills both in the aspect of time and distance. It seemed that

the women who were actively in public domain activities occurred for the informants in this study. Almost all informants were relatively active in Batu Merah Village. And significantly there was no obstacle from their husbands to do these activities. The informants' husbands generally commented on time use their wives when they used smart phones. According to Rosna, her husband felt jealous and asked her to take care of their children more than his smartphone. Otherwise, Nurini's husband frequently insinuated her by saying "The smart phone keeps ringing!" Other informants said that they never got reprimanded from their husbands concerning smart phone uses.

V. SUMMARY

Based on the interview with the informants, it had been found that a group of women in Batu Merah Village almost entirely gained access to smart phones and internet. Despite, some informants did not have their own smart phones but they could borrow them from their children. The group of women generally used internet through Facebook and Instagram for communication and sending information. The existing internet access did not have significant barriers.

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