

Digital Literacy Movement by Former Migrant Workers in Wonosobo, Central Java

Wiwik Novianti, S. Bekti Istiyanto

Universitas Jenderal Soedirman

wiwik.novianti@unsoed.ac.id; wiwiknovianti27@gmail.com

The digital literacy movement is mostly centered in big cities even though internet users in rural areas are also very high. In Tracap Village, Wonosobo District, there is a community of former migrant workers who care about digital literacy. Living in a remote area does not mean that the people there are backward but it makes them more creative. This paper would like to describe the digital literacy movement carried out by former migrant workers in Wonosobo Regency, the goals to be achieved and their strategies in conducting digital literacy.

The research method used in this study is qualitative. Data collection is done by in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis.

The study found that the experience of being a migrant worker who had difficulty communicating with families in the village was the main driver for former migrant workers in Wonosobo to share their knowledge about internet use with villagers. The goal is that communication between family members continues to exist even though one of his family is abroad.

The strategies carried out to provide knowledge and skills in using the internet started from subscribing to the internet which can be accessed free of charge by citizens to open internet classes for migrant workers' children. The internet which was originally only used as a medium of communication with families abroad developed into something productive, namely to help with school or work assignments, sell online and make games.

Keywords: literacy, digital, migrant workers, internet, Wonosobo

Introduction

From the survey report of the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2016, in that year (2016) the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 132.7 million out of 256.2 million people in Indonesia. This means that 51.8 percent of Indonesia's population are internet users. Internet users are dominated by groups of workers / entrepreneurs as much as 62% or 82.2 million people followed by housewives as many as 22 million people or 16.6%. In the

third rank, there were groups of students with a total of 10.3 million (7.8%) and student groups totaling 8.3 million (6.3%).

APJII also reports that social media is the most dominant content accessed. 97.4% or 129.2 million internet users access social media. The next most accessed content is entertainment as much as 96.8% or 128.4 million people. In the third rank, news content is the most accessed with a percentage that is not much different from entertainment content, which is 96.4% or 127.9 million. This was followed by educational content (93.8% or 124.4 million people), commercial content (93.1% or 123.5 million people) and public services (91.6% or 121.5 million people).

The large number of Internet users in Indonesia, as well as the high frequency of accessing information content and social media, does not guarantee that Indonesians are mature in using the Internet. Lots of internet abuse cases are found, ranging from addiction, violation of privacy and the number of hoaxes. This shows that the digital literacy of the Indonesian people is still low.

Various efforts have been made by a number of parties to improve the digital literacy of the community. But it still hasn't touched all levels of society. This is because the main drivers of digital literacy activities are still dominated by universities. Community groups or communities that are actors of digital literacy activities are still very limited (Kurnia & Astuti, 2017). Digital literacy activities are still centered in urban areas, even though internet usage is very widespread in rural areas.

In Wonosobo Regency, there is an interesting phenomenon of digital literacy activities in which the main actors of the activity are former migrant workers. After returning to Indonesia, the former migrant worker was called to provide education about internet use for residents around him. The Secretariat of the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union in Wonosobo Tracap Village is a gathering place for citizens to be able to access the internet while increasing their digital literacy. The digital literacy movement which is usually driven by circles with higher education, in this remote village is actually activated by a group of former migrant workers. This made the writer interested in studying it, how the community of former migrant workers together with the surrounding community tried to improve their digital literacy skills.

Literacy means the ability to read and write. In accordance with the context, literacy as 'literacy' developed into various types of literacy, such as political literacy, financial literacy, legal literacy, including media literacy, information literacy and digital literacy ((Kurnia & Astuti, 2017).

According to Potter, experts initially defined media literacy as "the ability to access and process information from any form of transmission". The definition was then detailed into "... the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts (Livingstone, 2003). Following the dynamism of the community and the rapid development of information and communication technology, media literacy alone is not enough to answer the complexity of existing problems so that the concept of digital literacy emerges.

The concept of digital literacy was presented by Paul Gilster for the first time in 1997 in a book called *Digital Literacy*. Gilster defines it simply as 'literacy in the digital age', or the ability to understand and use information through a variety of digital sources (Bowden in Lankshear & Knobel, 2008: 18). In its development, digital literacy or precisely digital literacies is defined as "practices of communicating, relating, thinking and" being 'associated with digital media "(Jones & Hafner, 2012: 13).

Digital literacy is very important to be developed not only because of concerns about the negative impact of media exposure, but also has several other important factors, namely First, the important role of information in the democratic process. Second, the important role of cultural participation and citizenship. Third, the development of popular culture makes children and teenagers more and more access to digital media (Koltay, 2011).

Research on the use of digital media has been carried out by Widyastuti, Nuswantoro and Sidhi in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The research was then outlined in an article published in the 2016 *ASPIKOM Journal* entitled "Digital Literacy in Productive Business Women in Yogyakarta". One of the findings of the study was internet access to increase the sustainability of women's economy. In the research the writer will do is how the community of former migrant workers conduct digital literacy activities and together with the community around realizing an intelligent Indonesian society in using digital media.

Methods

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. In conducting research, data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation and analysis of related documents such as mass media, archives and so on. This study involved 17 informants consisting of migrant worker activists, internet class teachers, and residents who benefited from this digital literacy activity.

Result and Discussion

Working overseas is still in great demand by the people of Indonesia. In the period January to June 2018, as many as 128,544 Indonesian migrant workers departed abroad.¹

From 2016 to 2018, on average there are 20 thousands of workers departing each month. The number of Indonesian migrant workers abroad is around 6 million and gives Rp. 70 trillion to state finance.²

Indonesian migrant workers come from various provinces in Indonesia. The three provinces that contributed the most migrant workers were East Java, Central Java and West Java. Cilacap, Kendal, Brebes, Banyumas, Wonosobo and Grobogan are enclaves of migrant workers in Central Java..³

Wonosobo is one of the Regencies that sends the largest migrant workers in Central Java. Based on data in BNP2TKI, the number of migrant workers from year to year has decreased, meaning that many former migrant workers returned home. The return of migrant workers to the area of origin brings a positive impact on the equitable distribution of skills in using information and communication technology. Former migrant workers are relatively able to use information and communication technology to meet their needs. This capability is the main capital to be able to provide knowledge and skills to use information and communication technology to other villagers.

¹ <http://www.bnp2tki.go.id/read/13374/BNP2TKI:-Penempatan-PMI-Januari-Sampai-Juni-2018-Sebanyak-128.544-Orang-.html> last accessed November 1, 2018

² <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20180530183040-92-302325/pekerja-migran-indonesia-alirkan-devisa-negara-rp70-triliun> last accessed October 31, 2018

³ <https://www.suaramerdeka.com/smcetak/baca/78642/pengiriman-tki-pati-nomor-tujuh-se-jateng> last accessed November 1, 2018

Maizidah Salas, a former migrant worker belonging to the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union in Wonosobo Regency, has an initiative to subscribe to the internet at her home which also functions as the SBMI Wonosobo secretariat. The internet can be accessed by residents within a 20 meter radius for free.

Salas shared that his background provided free access because based on his experience as a migrant worker he felt how difficult it was to communicate with family in his hometown. When Salas became a migrant worker in Taiwan, he felt very homesick for his children, husband and parents. He could not contact his family because even though in Taiwan he could access the internet but his family in the village could not. Upon returning to their homeland, the experience as a migrant worker who had difficulty communicating with his family encouraged Salas to install a wifi network at his home. The wifi network in the SBI Wonosobo secretariat can be accessed free of charge for 24 hours by local residents.

It's not easy to introduce the internet to villagers. Salas admitted that at first there were many who did not like the free internet access for fear that children and teenagers would access pornographic content. Salas then tried to convince them that pornographic sites had been blocked so that they would not be accessible to children and teenagers there.

In order for citizens to be interested in using the internet facilities provided, it is often held watching together soccer or MotoGP live at the SBMI secretariat in Wonosobo. In addition, during the month of Ramadan, from 15:00 - 22:00 the wifi will be turned off so as not to interfere with the schedule of reciting and worshipping citizens. Salas said that at this time there were also many elderly people in his village who began learning to use the internet

"In fact, now many old people who start using IT come with smartphone and ask how to use WhatsApp. Then I explained. I also said that I installed the Al-Quran application also from the internet. "⁴

The internet which was initially only used as a medium to establish communication with families outside the country was then also used as a medium of learning for citizens, both learning to recite and to fulfill school assignments.

⁴ Maizidah Salas, July 21, 2018

It didn't stop there, Salas and activists from SBMI Wonosobo then sought to make the internet more productive, such as developing online marketing of products produced by former migrant workers in Wonosobo. To realize this dream, Salas along with activists from SBMI Wonosobo made an internet class.

The internet class held by SBMI Wonosobo aims to enable children of migrant workers to be literate in IT and use the internet for something productive. “We really want to educate children of migrant workers to know the world of IT, can have the skills to process the internet properly, can make money”.⁵ By mastering IT skills, it is expected that migrant workers' children do not follow in the footsteps of their families who are migrant workers abroad.

The internet class was then opened at the end of August 2016 with around 12 children of migrant workers in Tracap Village. There are 2 teachers who provide material in the internet class. The material provided starts from zero, which is how the children can use computers, write to finally be able to manage the website. The ultimate goal of the internet class is to produce children of migrant workers who are able to manage the website because SBMI Wonosobo dreams of having a buying and selling website as an online media to market products produced by former migrant workers.

The implementation of the internet class is also inseparable from the support of migrant workers. Computers used by internet class students are obtained from donations of migrant workers in Macau. Funds used for internet class operations also use SBMI Wonosobo cash funds.

Unfortunately the internet class only lasted 5 months even though the children of trained migrant workers did not get the expertise they expected. Salas explained that the cessation of internet classes because teachers who train often do not come so that the children's enthusiasm becomes slack.

“Now the problem is sometimes the children have left and the instructor comes late. Then the next week the children have gathered here and the ones who teach are not coming. Mostly, I can only give petrol money to the instructor, maybe that is not enough or what. But what was said was "sorry to be busy, sorry to be busy", so my friends just stuck there”.⁶

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*

When the FGD was conducted (September 10, 2018), researchers had asked Ahmad Khanafi as the teacher who gave internet training, Khanafi replied that at that time he was indeed busy. He also felt that he lacked the ability to provide internet class material because basically he did not have a scientific background about managing websites. He only taught himself. For this reason, Khanafi suggested that SBMI Wonosobo establish cooperation with more competent parties.

Even though the internet class is not running, free wifi is still available. When the FGD was conducted, there were 15 people who often access the wifi network. Most who access wifi are students and students who use wifi facilities to assist them in completing their school assignments. There are also PAUD teachers who use the wifi to find teaching materials for their students. Some even try to make games using the free wifi.

From the research conducted, it appears that SBMI Wonosobo and the children of migrant workers who have participated in internet classes still hope that the internet class which is currently stagnant can be continued. For that they need people who have internet expertise and want to share with them. They realize that remote village locations make people reluctant to come but the desire to create a website that contains online buying and selling continues to be the vision they will create.

Conclusion

Former migrant workers returning to their villages have great potential as actors of community change to reduce the mastery gap in information technology and communication between modern society and traditional communities. The digital literacy movement carried out by former migrant workers is motivated by their experience as migrant workers who are very difficult to establish communication with family and relatives in their hometowns. From the beginning only to meet communication needs, former migrant workers later realized that the internet could be productive, therefore efforts were made to improve their abilities and those around them to use the internet as a medium that can improve quality. their life.

References

- APJII. 2016. Infografis Penetrasi dan Perilaku Pengguna Internet di Indonesia Survey 2016. Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia.
- Jones, Rodney H. & Hafner, Christoph A. 2012. “*Understanding Digital Literacies: A practical introduction*”. Oxford: Routledge.
- Koltay, Tibor. (2011). “The media and the literacies: media literacy, information literacy, digital literacy”. *Media, Culture, & Society*. 33(2). 211-221
- Kurnia, N & Astuti, SA. 2017. 'Peta Gerakan Literasi Digital di Indonesia: Studi Tentang Pelaku, Ragam Kegiatan, Kelompok Sasaran dan Mitra yang dilakukan oleh JAPELIDI'. Paper dipresentasikan pada Konferensi Literasi Digital. Yogyakarta: Universitas Yogyakarta. 12 September.
- Lankshear, Colin & Knobel, Michelle. (2008). “Digital Literacies: concepts, policies and practices”. New York: Peter Lang.
- Widyastuti, Nuswantoro & Sidhi. 2016. Literasi Digital pada Perempuan Pelaku Usaha Produktif di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. *Jurnal ASPIKOM*, Vol.3 No.1, Juli 2016 p.1-15. jurnalaspikom.org/index.php/aspikom/article/view/95/91