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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MIGRATION DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES:

Case of Indonesian Student in University of Groningen

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aims to explain the impact of social media on the migration decision-making process of Indonesian student migrants in University of Groningen who used a social media account. In detail, this research will consider the role of social media in the migration decision-making process of students who emigrated from Indonesia and how they uses social media in the context of the migration decision-making process. **Methods:** The data collected included qualitative data from in-depth interviews and supported by study literatures. An interview guide was formulated to facilitate the indepth interviews and generate a better understanding of migration behavior. **Expectation:** Social media help Indonesian student migrants on migration decision making process and they use social media for searching information about destination area. **Result:** Student migrant in University of Groningen use their social media to gain information before they choose that university for study. They use Facebook to making contact with their friends and collagues in the destination country. Student group on Facebook help Indonesian student to get information about school and daily life.

Keyword: *international migration, student, decision-making process, social media*

1. INTRODUCTION

Differences in demographic, social, and economic circumstances between countries are strong reasons for people to migrate. The advances in communications technology have opened up opportunities for people to migrate. Technology has made it easier for migrants to foster links with their next destination through internet media. Interactions within social networks make migration easier by reducing the costs and risks of moving. Patterns in social networks are formed based on similarity of local origin, kinship, neighborhoods and friendship.

In 1990-2014 there has been an increase in the number of internet users from one million users to more than two billion users (Kende, 2014). With the social media, communication and interaction in the virtual world becomes more interactive. Thus, social media is a broad term encompassing web logs (blogs), collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), content communities (e.g. YouTube), virtual social worlds (e.g.

SecondLife) and virtual gaming worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft) (McGregor and Siegel, 2013). Facebook offers users the possibility to share thoughts, comment on each other, share photos and videos to record. On the other hand, blogs emerged as a new way to share information and stories and reader can share comments. The development of internet technology has minimized geographical boundaries from country to country and sensitized people to move.

Most migrants move to a country where they have family or friends who are already well established; this formed a network of migration. Network formation has encouraged migration in various ways. The social media speed up the process of network formation and migration. Migrants communicate with more modern internet technology. Thanks to this communication, migrants will better understand the prospective destination so as to prepare for the migration process more carefully.

The migrants, both in developed and developing countries, dominated by youth. This situation also occurred in Indonesia, which is indicated by about 50 per cent of the migrant population in the age group 15-39 years (BPS, 2011). High flow of mobility of youth related to their life events, such as continuing education to higher level, working for the first time, or married (Pardede and Muhidi, 2006).

The number of student migrant from Indonesia increase by their mobility culture (Findlay, 2006). The motivations, aspirations and behaviour of student migrants encourage them to study abroad. Their motivations of study abroad is to secure their job in their future. Many of student believe their experienced in study abroad can be help their life course, included personal, social, and career enhancement (Brooks and Waters, 2010).

1.1. OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research try to explain the role of social media on the migration decision-making process. Social media can act as a tool, facilitating the migration. Migrants mostly use social media to build and establish a connection with the people in the destination places. Social media also can be the factors in the choice of locations. The social media establish new relationship between migrant and their next destination communities, especially to assist in finding housing or employment (Hiller and Franz, 2004). Explanations in this study are to understand international migration in the era of globalization and to explain the impact of social media on the migration decision making process. The objective above leads to the main research question: what is the role of social media on the migration process of Indonesian student migrants in University of Groningen? And there are two sub-questions: 1). What is the role of social media in the migration decision-making process of students who emigrated from Indonesia? 2). How do Indonesian student migrant use social media in the context of migration decision-making process? The data used is qualitative studies with indepth interviews and supported by literature review.

1.2. MIGRATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Today, social media is not only a personal communication tool, but has become the source of information. The revolution in communication technology is important for migrants and non-migrants which has separated geographically from the area of origin. Social media make it possible to access a wider range of individuals to whom we are weakly tied, if at all (Haythornthwaite, 2002). Social media can serve to bridge activities. The migrants still have connection with their family left behind in transnational networks (Mahler, 2001). Through internet and social media

technology, physical distance is becomes smaller. This media has lowered the cost and risk of migration (Cairncross, 1997).

In the migration process, social media is a tool to maintain social ties of migrant. Social media is not only a communication channels, but also facilities the process of migration. Dekker and Engberson (2012) argue that new communication channels opened by social media can transform migrant networks and thus facilitate migration through four key functions: (1) by strengthening strong ties with family and friends; (2) by creating weak ties to individuals that can assist in the process of migration (and integration); (3) by creating a network of latent ties; and (4) by creating a rich source of 'insider knowledge' on migration. Information from social media have an advantage because there are certain of various parties.

Migrants prefer migrate to the place where they already had contact and information. Migration network might become reason why people continue to migrate. In the literature of migration, the social media network is a strong ties (Granovetter, 1973) based on kinship, friendship or shared community origin, linking migrants and non-migrants (Massey et al. 1998). Social media can facilitate retained connections between migrants and their home (Diminescu, 2008). Migrant can use Facebook, as social media, to build connections with people they have met offline, and are less likely to use social media to establish new connections in their new destination (McGregor and Siegel, 2013). Informal networks help migrants to finance their travel, to find a job or accommodation (Haug, 2008).

International migration is not a new phenomenon in Indonesia. Spontaneous as well as arranged labor migration has been an ongoing practice since the Dutch Colonial and Japanese occupation in Indonesia. Working abroad entails many processes beginning with pre-employment through to employment until post-employment. One crucial process that takes place during the pre-employment period is the decision making about leaving within the prospective migrant.

The increase of high skilled migrant from Indonesia, including student and youth migrants, is not new phenomena. in 2011, there are about 43,000 students study in the OECD countries (https://data.oecd.org). in their process of migration, they used social media to gain information about the countries of destination. Social media is used to establish long distance friendship. Friendship network were significant factor of educational mobility of student migrant (Brooks and Waters, 2010). The friendship connection rarely in a direct way, so social media facilitated this connection. Friends of the student migrant, mostly in destination countries, provides information of countries and institution or university. This can minimize student migrant's fear of their destination countries. They can prepare for themselves for the migration process.

Based from Statista Inc. , one of the statistic company on the internet, the number of social media user in Indonesia are around 84.5 million users in 2016. Most of Indonesian people use Facebook as social media. The number of Facebook users in Indonesia until 2014 has reached 69 millions users. These increases in Facebook use may be driven by the return of lapsed users as much as by new account sign-ups, but Facebook will still be pleased with growth of close to ten additional active accounts every second.

In years, migration in Indonesia has been impacted by social media technologies. Technology has made migrant life easier and better because most of them have access in social media. Anyone can get information or sending something to the others. The migration decision making can be build by social media impact. Many researchers conceptualize the relationship between social media and migration process by considering how it facilities ties between individuals (Haythornthwaite, 2002; Komito, 2012; Dekker and Engberson, 2012). The

communication channels by social media can transform migrant networks and process.

1.3. MIGRATION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF STUDENT MIGRANT

Migration of youth and student migrants for the purpose of education is a respond to the limited accessibility of the qualified education institution, especially at higher education level (Crivello, 2011). It is also stated by Eacott and Sonn (2006), the decision of youth to migrate for study conducted by limited educational facilities in their hometown, as well as of youth to gain knowledge and wider opportunities. On particular, youth migration for educational purpose have characteristic such as "liquid migration". Liquid migration is temporary mobility in the beginning and have a great potential to be permanent migration in the end, the migrant is individual and the first generation in the family, and we can not predict the intentions of their movement (Drbohlav, nd).

Elder et al. (1996) present three determinants of the migration decision-making process of youth with education reason. There are social context, social choice, and social cohesion. The social context refers to socio-economic and demographic factors, social selection is related to the migrant selectivity issues, and social cohesion refers to cultural and environment factors among youth. The determinant of social context included gender and migration experiences. Indonesian student migrant is dominated by men (BPS, 2011), but there is a tendency of increasing the female migrant, including student migrant. Magnan et al. (2007) stated the young women have greater opportunities than men to migrate. Meanwhile, Chiang et al (2012) in his research found there was no significant differences between the proportion of young women and men who migrate to higher education reason. Furthermore, the youth migrant with life time migrant status or have parents with migrant status have greater tendency to migrate compared with youth who do not have a migration experience at all (Easthope & Gabriel, 2008, Ivles & King 2012).

Selectivity migrant issues is an important determinant related to social choice that determine the decision of migration of student to continue their education to higher level. Elder et al. (1996) and Crivello (2011) found that youth with excellent academic achievement have great opportunities for mobility for educational purposes. Excellent academic achievement in their hometown can extend the capabilities of youth to compete in higher education at their destination.

Last determinant in the decision making process of migration is social bonding. Social bonding described as the attachment of youth with families and neighborhood in the area of origin, related to the norms and values of local culture (Elder et al. 1996). The communities in the area of origin has a greater appreciation to their members with the status of migrants. This condition constructed by the mindset of people who think that only youth with brightest academic achievement can migrate to other places or abroad, compared with their peer who did not migrate. For the youngsters, migration is something that they must do to meet the expectation, as well as to obtain higher social status in their hometown (Easthope & Gabriel, 2008).

1.4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Normally, people in the area of origin will move in another places when they have push factor from their home such as lack of education facilities. Differences in demographic, social and economy condition between countries are reason for people to migrate. Based on Lee's theory, push and pull model determined by positive and negative factors in areas of origin and destination, intervening variables, and also personal factors. Factors in the form of push and pull consist of a variety of variables (see figure 1). The push factors ame from the origin country

condition and drive student's decision to undertake study abroad such as the scholarship, future career prospectus, experiencing western culture, family and media influences. ull factors is condition in destination country that relatively attract international students. Pull factors in this research are knowledge and awareness of the host country, social ties, cost and characteristic of destination country. The personal factors of migrant, such as level of education, experiences and youth characteristic, is the most influential factor in migration decision-making process.

Migrants move to a new place where they have information or family/friends who are already well establish in destination. Migrant gain information from their network using social media. Information, technology, and communication speed up the process of network formation and migration. Social media helps migrant to understand the prospective destination and created better migration process.
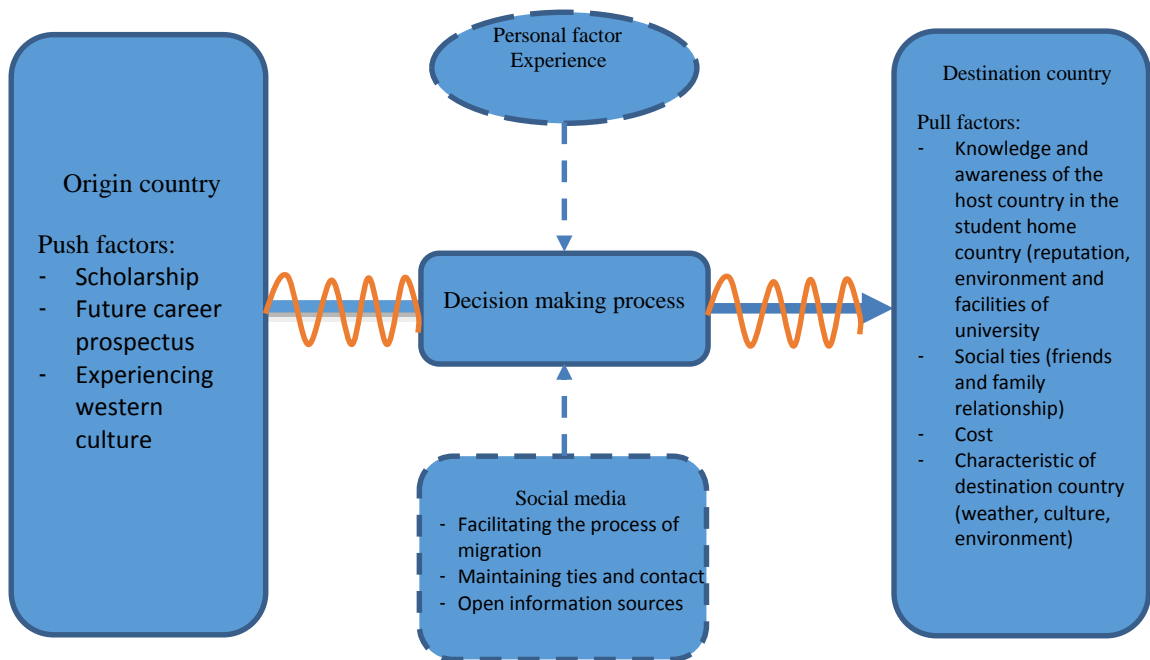
Development of migration network has been progressing rapidly. One of the facilities increasing the network of migration is technology communication. Advances in technology has given users a chance, in this case the migrant, to organize and contribute to the data and information in their networks.

1.5. DEFINITION

- *Social media*: websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. In this research use Facebook that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.

- *Youth*: student, as those persons between the ages of 17 and 30 years

- *Migration*: the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary.

- *Decision making process*: the process of making choices by setting goals, gathering information, and assessing alternative occupations.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Personal factor
Experience

Origin country

Push factors:
- Scholarship
- Future career prospectus
- Experiencing western culture

Decision making process

Destination country

Pull factors:
- Knowledge and awareness of the host country in the student home country (reputation, environment and facilities of university
- Social ties (friends and family relationship)
- Cost
- Characteristic of destination country (weather, culture, environment)

Social media
- Facilitating the process of migration
- Maintaining ties and contact
- Open information sources

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used primary data to explore the objection and research questions. Qualitative approaches with descriptive method were used for this study, in order to understand the issues related to migration decision making process and social media. Descriptive methods is a research method that is trying to find a proper explanation of activities, object and people. Descriptive research methods associated with the process of collection of fact, identify and predict relationship within and between variables. With qualitative research methods we can relates idea, perceptions, opinions and belief of research object who will be examined and all of them can not be measured with numbers. Primary data collection will use in-depth interview. An interview guide was formulated to facilitate the in-depth interviews and generate a better understanding of migration behavior.

2. RESULT OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

2.1. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The informant of this research is the Indonesian student in Groningen. Meanwhile, the object of this research is the role of social media on migration decision making process. Participant recruitment is the first stage process of selecting individual from the population to participate in research study population (Hennink, 2011). The participant in qualitative research are chosen because they have experience and understand with the research phenomena. In this research, I used purposive recruitment for the flexibility process.

My strategy for participant recruitment is used informal network. Indonesian student in Groningen has active student association and also database of student in Groningen. The data collection process started with gaining information about distribution of Indonesian student in University of Groningen. After gain information about distribution and demographic characteristic of Indonesian student (sex, age and study), this study was decided to use 15 participants from various faculty background. This number already represent Indonesian student in Groningen. Determination of the participants in this research using purposive sampling. The method of determining the informant set intentionally on the basis of specific criteria or considerations. The participant recruit through my personal network who fitted my criteria. The main requirement of the participant is Indonesian student migrant in Groningen who have social media (Facebook).

The participant of this research is Indonesian student migrant in Groningen, boys and girls. The target participants is first segmented into group of faculty in University of Groningen. To anonymize profiles of the 15 participants are below initial name, age, sex, degree and faculty. All the respondent is a master student.

2.2. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE MIGRATION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Migration is one of the major demographic phenomenon in many countries, both in developed countries and in developing countries. Study of contemporary migration increasingly with the complexity of the process of migration in the era of globalization. The phenomenon of globalization, characterized by the opening of the population access to technological progress and information, enabling an increase in the intensity of the interaction between the regions, so that the phenomenon can not only facilitate the internal rate of population mobility and the potential to improve the flow of international mobility.

We can explain the flow of student migrant based on push and pull concept. This concept similiar with Lee (1966), but more focus on student international

migration process. Push factors came from the origin country condition and drive student's decision to undertake study abroad. Pull factors is condition in destination country that relatively attract international students. Traditionally, a lack of access and quality in origin country has been a key driver of the student flow.

In migration theory raised by Lee (1966), a prohibitive factor (intervening obstacles), such as distance, cost, regulatory or network become important determinants that can obstruct individual decisions to migrate. However, as the development of the phenomenon of globalization, a prohibitive factor in the rate of migration of the population began to disappear or diminish. With the loss of or reduction factor between the migration process, it certainly will have implications on the dynamics of migration, migration both incoming and outgoing, in various regions of the world, including in Indonesia.

Based on indepth interview, the decision to migrate of student migrant fully committed by their individual level, even tough the decision making is a multifaceted process with interaction of diverse component that contribute to an individual's decision. They chooses alternative that give maximum advantage for them. With their rationality, an individual would embrace economy and another principle such as psychological on making decision at minimum cost and risk (Gpldthrope, 1996).

In the international student migration context, rational choice and decision to migrate based on benefit evaluation according to the cost and benefits of migrations. The cost may include separate with parents and family, and also the problems in setting in new place and new society. Student migrant always has high expectation from their decision, including educational benefit and others benefit such as new culture experience. The cost of migration always estimated before, and the

efforts of their decision are taken into account as investment as well.

Social media, in this context is Facebook, helps their decision making process to choose school and migrate. All of my informant use internet to gain information about University of Groningen and general information about daily life in Groningen, the Netherland. To gain more information, they use Facebook to making contact with the university and their collagues in the destination country. My participants's comment are broadly of these naratives:

"I knew everything about Groningen from friends's post on Facebook." (E, Medical Science).

"I lived in Jakarta, I love going to see different countries. And I saw my friend's posting in Facebook about Groningen. She lives there. Then I just browsing and contact his Facebook account." (A, Economic and business).

"Just add RUG Facebook page, you will have all information about it!" (K, Arts).

There are some uses of Facebook as social media in facilitating the process of migration, particularly international migration. The first makes communication faster and more efficient, and inexpensive. Through this communication means that migrant can share information with colleagues and family. Social media has managed to cut the distance geographically. Even the possible migration flows will be even greater in the future if it is supported by advances in communication through social media. Naratives of my participants suggest social media were important in their decision making process of migration. Facebook is making overseas differences almost irrelevant.

"I have a friend who is a year above who went to Groningen. I saw his posting about campus and daily life on Facebook. Well.. before that I already want to study Law in RUG. But after saw his amazing life in

Groningen, I am sure my next destination is study in RUG. And I make it! This all because of Facebook, and Path also.. hahaha.. " (M, Law).

The friendship connection rarely in a direct way, so social media facilitated this connection. Friends of the student migrant, mostly in destination countries, provides information of countries and institution or university. This can minimize student migrant's fear of their destination countries. They can preparing themselves for the migration process. Social media is a tool to consolidate the relationship between the migrant to the area of origin and destination. Today through social media can be obtained complete information, rich and accurate for instance on the labor market, legal conditions, and practical issues concerning migration. Social media allow the migrant to build network with destinations that are rich in resources (Wellman, 1999).

Decision making process at the level of the individual in relation between migration and social media it can be seen from two main components. First, the reasons/ motivations underlying the choice / decision made, including the reason for choosing the destination of migration. To gain a deeper understanding of the reason / motivation (rationality), the component 'subjective norm' and 'perceived behavioral control' was also the subject of study. Studies on 'subjective norm' look at the influence of expectations (or experience) of others towards the understanding of decision makers actors; whether it is also a consideration actor before making a decision; whereas the discussion about 'perceived behavioral control' is the actor's perception of the ownership of the asset and the presence / absence of experience to perform the migration. Second, the decision-making mechanism of discussion include the actor's decision-makers; sources of information acquisition; and decision-making time.

Social media is a tool to consolidate the relationship between the migrant to the area of origin and destination. Today through social media can be obtained complete information, rich and accurate for instance on the labor market, legal conditions, and practical issues concerning migration. Social media allow the migrant to build a network with destinations that are rich in resources (Wellman, 1999). Social media has an open nature and is not bound by certain rules. This makes social media have the advantage of disclosure when compared with the others official media. Through social media, migrants can obtain information informally even illegal information. It can be seen as a form of democratization of knowledge for migrants and also as a form of resistance against the regime of strict immigration (Scott, 1990).
"I knew everything about Groningen a year before.. by stalking her Facebook. I knew how to find Indomie and kecap before arrive in Groningen..".(G, Mathematic and natural sciences).

"I use Facebook group for searching housing. This is better than SSH from the university. I joined Indonesin student assosiation, PPI in Groningen." (F, Medical Sciences).

"My Facebook friend really help me. He is so kind. We never meet before. I just randomly add Fcebook student account in Groningen.". (O, Spatial sciences).

Social media is not just a channel of communication in the network migration, but a virtual infrastructure, sync contacts, and relatively open so as to facilitate the migration properly. Relationships between users that are created in the social media network of the migrant is able to reduce the cost and risk of migration through the exchange of information, resources and support. Migration network theory assumes that people are going to go to places where they have had contact.

A study which was conducted by McGregor and Siegel (2013) investigates

the potential role of social media in helping migrant families overcome feelings of isolation when they first arrive in a country by 1) making information available to new migrants (often in their own language); 2) allowing the exploration of migrants' own cultural heritage as well as the cultural practices of the destination country; 3) providing learning and training opportunities particularly in the area of language acquisition; and 4) promoting integration into schools for young immigrants by providing inroads into social networks and promoting language acquisition (Redecker, Hache, & Centeno,2010). Communication technologies can also be used by migrants seeking financial support from the government for cultural activities (Tammsaar,Sousa, and Laanpere, 2011).

3. CONCLUSION

The process of globalization will continue to bring significant implications on the upward trend in international migration. Globalization is often interpreted by the depletion process of national borders, because the world is getting connected and interdependence among countries is increasing. This process occurs as a result of a rapid increase in information technology, communication and transportation service which are getting better and affordable. Distribution of international migrants in the global era is expanding into many countries. (*spread across the borders*) and migrant communities, in general, form bonds to more than one country (destination and origin) that is sometimes referred to as transnational migrants.

The motivations for migration are affected by push and pull factors. Push factors always exist at the point of origin and pull factors in the destination. Migration can only occur if the reason to migrate is remedied by the corresponding pull at destination. In the context of student

migration, pull factor of their ability to migrate are compromised of four elements: student's family and personal history, experience of mobility, experienced of adaptation to another culture and their own personality. Student migrant who have family with overseas education are subject to higher expectation to study abroad. Traveling experienced also have positive contributed to push study abroad.Indonesian student migrant in University of Groningen use their social media to gain information before they choose that university for study. They use Facebook to making contact with their friends and collagues in the destination country. Student group on Facebook help Indonesian student to get information about school and daily life.

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