

Description of the Networked Individualistic Tendency Level of Young Adults in Jabodetabek

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Abstract: Development of information and communication technology has created dramatic changes for society and individuals. The biggest impact people can obtain includes facilitation to communicate without barriers of time and space. This facility opens opportunities for individuals to connect and to create social relationships with anyone. This opportunity, on the other side, may reduce individual's emphasize on their small groups such as families or communities, which generally allow more direct face to face interaction. The phenomena of this decreasing emphasize is called networked individualism. A person who is highly networked individualistic manages his/her social network based on their own needs and motivation, which is established through various communication channels. This study aims to view description of the networked individualism level of young adults in Jabodetabek, based on variations of the network structure and interaction patterns. Based from the analysis, it was revealed that the level of the networked individualistic tendency of young adults is largely governed by its interaction or contact patterns.

1 INTRODUCTION

Technology has assisted human with such various facilities that people has begun to integrate it into their daily life. Not only does technology help workers, but it also assists people to meet their needs of information, their business and socialization. The presence of technology facilitates us to access various kinds of information and to make direct communication so that building and maintaining relationship today has been easier than in the era of the previous generation. Because of technology, the way humans interact in this era has started to change compared to their predecessor.

As a social creature, humans interact each other through various channels, either verbal or non-verbal. The interaction results in a social relationship between two individuals which is called social network. According to Christakis and Fowler (Christakis and Fowler, 2009), humans deliberately construct their own social network, in which they associate themselves with people who have something in common. Social network is very similar to a group, which is a collection of individuals who share common characteristics and features. However, social network is more

specifically directed towards person-to-person relationships within the group (Christakis and Fowler, 2009). The argument denotes that social network focuses more on the personal relationship between individuals than individuals' relations to the group as merely a collection of individuals with similar traits and characteristics without considering a person-to-person relationship within it.

Because access to technology facilitates us to communicate either through short messages or video calling, people's social lives is getting easier and people are completely autonomous to select social bond (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). Furthermore, Rainie and Wellman (2012) have suggested that this may decline individuals' limitations and emphasize on small groups such families, community groups and so forth. This decreasing emphasizes and group limitations leads individuals to have more autonomy to create social bonds based on their preference, and such phenomenon is called networked individualism (Rainie and Wellman, 2012).

1.1 Networked Individualism

Networked individualism refers to a social operating system, characterized by decreasing individuals' limitations and emphasizes on small group such as

families, community groups and so forth (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). The social operating system, as Rainie and Wellman (2012) mentioned, is a term which describes the process of which individuals interact and communicate and exchange information one another. The existence of tools which can facilitate people to manage their own social networks has a profound impact on their social operating system, because technologies such as the Internet and mobile devices are a prerequisite for networked individualism.

In networked individualism the focus lies on person-to-person relationships instead of person-to-group. A group as defined by Christakis and Fowler (2009) is a collection of individuals within population who share common attributes and characteristics, such as students in a particular class, a religious group, a family and so forth. Meanwhile, social network involves specific person-to-person relationship within the group. This argumentation can be interpreted that it is the content which becomes the focus of the relationship, without taking personal affiliation toward a group into account.

Networked individualism has some social operating system features (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). These features involve:

- a. *Personal* – The individual is totally autonomous and powerful to their own social network. Individual's autonomy to socialize and to customize lists of friends of whom he/she will engage more tightly in a relationship can be seen from how the individual categorize their networks which serve as social supports or another support without group limitations.
- b. *Multiuser* – The individual are interacting with people from various backgrounds. This indicates that the individual can communicate with another person diverse group and the individual's network will expand through connecting to the network of the person he/she is interacting, the network has never made a direct contact.
- c. *Multitasking* – The individual performs a variety of activities. Technology facilitates people to arrange their daily activities so at one day, people can carry out and adjust their activities.
- d. *Multithreaded* – The individual carries out all or some of their activities simultaneously.

Networked individuals involves people with networked individualism characteristics. To get clear on how individuals can be called as a networked individual, some characteristics or aspects must be met. The followings are the characteristics and aspects of networked individualistic.

Hogan (2009) suggests two aspects of networked individualism, namely variations in the network structure and variations in interaction patterns. Variations in the network structure indicate the form of the network. Description of structure for each role of each owned network can illustrate how tight and close a group is. Thus, when ties between individual is not really tight, the network is likely more fragmented. Meanwhile, variations by interaction patterns refer to strategies and channels which are used to interact with each network.

1.2 Variations in Network Structure

Variations in network structure (VNS) show the form of a particular network. Description of the role structures of each owned network reflects how dense or close the group is, so the less dense network presumably indicates a fragmented network (Hogan, 2009). A network with clear roles and structures can be categorized as strong ties, while that with no explicit role and structure is not classified as a group, but a fragmented network (Hogan, 2009). In the other words, a small group such as families and colleagues has strong ties, while the isolated and fragmented ties of the small group is called weak ties, or weakest alters. Following a definition by Rainie and Wellman (Rainie and Wellman, 2012) on networked individualism, the focus of networked individualism lies on the weak ties of network.

Network structure of networked individualism is also focused on network selection. To a networked individual, network is selectively found by the individual, not because of merely affiliating in the same group or living in the same environment. Hence, it is also crucial to see how the network is originally formed on individual basis, whether it is given or personal choice. This can be seen also from the aims of the SNS use. In the networking dimension and an item of relieving stress dimension of a study conducted by Kim, Shim, and Ahn (Kim, Shim and Ahn, 2011), individual's motives to use SNS include to maintain or to create new networks. This assertion is consistent with the understanding of the aspect of network selection, i.e., individuals nowadays are not tied to a group or association due to living in the same space or at the same time. Instead, they select their own network (Hogan, 2009).

1.3 Variations in Interaction Patterns

Variations in interaction patterns (VIP) refer to the strategies and channels which are used to interact

with their respective network (Hogan, 2009). Variations simply the existence of a new medium which facilitates individuals to interact with their respective network, allowing easier access for person-to-person interaction than for place-to-place interactions (Hogan, 2009). Variations in interaction patterns are divided into two aspects, namely multichannel and online interaction.

The multichannel sub aspect is related to the number of communication channels used, such as phone, chat, video call, email, and SMS. Multichannel is classified as a sub-aspect of interaction pattern variations in this study because it adapts Park *et al* (2014), where they measured the number of communication channels as an indicator for networked individualism measurement. This measure is similar to Hogan's explanation on the interaction pattern variations.

Online interaction, meanwhile, measure to what extent the individuals tend to interact with his/her weak ties in the internet. This measure was adapted from Park, *et al* (2014), where they employed interaction with weak ties and an indicator for networked individualism.

The phenomenon of networked individualism can not be separated from the development of information communication technology (ICT). The development of ICT, according to Rainie and Wellman (2012), gave birth to three revolutions that became the platform for network individualism, i.e., the social network revolution, the internet revolution and the mobile revolution. The rapid development of ICT made it easier for people to expand their networks or social relationship and have more freedom to socialize, without any limitation in space and time. Moreover, the development of ICT also gave more access to a more effective communication and an ease to collect various kind of information. People have the convenience not just to use information, but also to create and share their own content. Lastly, the development of ICT, especially the development of any kind of mobile gadget, gave people ability to reach out and to be reach out by others easily. So, because of the development of ICT, especially the social medias, everyone could make dan change their own network by ease.

Networked individualism put the individual user as the center his/her own universe. That is why network individualistic person more rely on his/her personal network, not just on family or colleagues from school/work. Willard (2009) mention that social media enable individuals to maintain and develop connections with other people, and by

linking together all his/her networks on all social medias, each individuals could learn about new ideas and social movements as their friends and colleagues become involved in them. It means, network individualistic person learns from the network, especially via social media, more than from his/her traditional groups.

Kemp (2017) showed that internet use in Southeast Asia reached 339 million people, or more than 50% of its population. Internet users in Southeast Asia increased by 31% (+80 million) since January 2016. In Indonesia alone, the increase was 51% (+45 million). If the number of Indonesian population compared with the number of its internet users, then the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 51% (Kemp, 2017), or we can say that more than half of the population of Indonesia is already using the internet. In 2018, Kemp (2018) in his report shows that internet users in Indonesia spent more than 8 hours per day for using the internet via any device. In case of social media, the growth of social media users in Indonesia reach 23% per year (Kemp, 2018). Considering the condition of internet penetration and its development in Indonesia, there is a suspicion that the phenomenon of network individualism has also occurred in Indonesia. That suspicion is raised as the main research problem for present study: What is the description of the networked individualistic tendency level of young adults in Jabodetabek?

2 RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive study conducted using a quantitative approach. The present study is non-experimental because it did not manipulate variables but describes indicator of networked individualism behaviour.

The level of the networked individualistic tendency was measured by looking at variations in network structure and interaction patterns. The aspects of network structure variations were measured by the weak ties sub aspect and network selection, while those of interaction pattern variations were measured by multichannel sub aspect and online interaction. The measurement which was used in this study involved a motivational measurement tool adapted from Kim, Shim, and Ahn (2011) and Park *et al* (2014). The measurement for the SNS motives by Kim, Shim, and Ahn (2011) consists of 13 items which covers four main motives of the SNS usage: networking, collecting information, relieving stress, and recording one's

history. The primary motives of networking and collecting information is categorized as external motivation, while stress relieving and recording one's history is classified as intrinsic motivation (Kim, Shim and Ahn, 2011).

Measurement of network structure variations

Variations in the network structure are measured based on the interaction between two sub-aspects, namely the weak ties and the individual network selection. Weak ties refer to the number of less involved networks or relationships individuals have. Internal motivation is measured to evaluate individuals' motives to use the SNS. To measure weak ties, this study adapted the measurement tool by Park *et al* (2014). They measured weak ties by evaluating the number of less involved networks individuals have. To do this they calculate the number of networks participants' have, and then reduce it with the number of less involved networks they have. This study measures the number of participants' networks by asking participants to calculate the number of their networks within their SNS.

Measurement of network selection was adapted from Kim, Shim, and Ahn (2011). The instrument measures participants' motives for the SNS use, which is divided into external and intrinsic motives. This study focused on networking dimensions and an item of relieving stress dimension, which is about finding a new network. After measuring these two sub aspects, the two were combined to measure variations in network structure. The mean from total score of both weak ties and network selection was calculated to subsequently classify participants into three categories, including: low, moderate, and high. Afterwards, the total score of the two sub-aspects were multiplied to find out appropriate category for respondents' variation level, i.e., no variation, low variation, moderate variation, and high variation.

Measurement of interaction pattern variations

Variations in interaction patterns were measured using interaction between two aspects, which is multichannel and online interactions. Multi channel, as previously described, represent the number of individual's channel of communication with their respective networks. While multichannel is about the types of channels that are being used for communication, online interaction defines the intensity of an individual's interaction with their networks through an online channel. The measurement that has been used in this study is by adapting Park *et al* (2014) research regarding the

frequency of the participants usage of their various channel of communications. There are six types of communications used for the study; face-to-face, phone call, email, video call, chatting, and text messaging.

These two aspects were combined to calculate variations of the interaction pattern. This was conducted by calculating mean of the scores obtained from both the multichannel and online interaction questionnaire to classify the participants into three categories: low, medium, and high. Then, the total score of each two sub-aspects were multiplied to determine category of participants' variation level, namely: no variation, low variation, moderate variation, and high variation.

Data analysis using crosstabulation were performed to determine the tendency of individual networks towards network structure and interaction pattern variation. The cut-off scores for both aspects of network structure and interaction pattern variation are: no variation ($.394 > X$), moderate variation ($.394 \leq X < 2.7$), and high variation ($X \geq 2.7$).

3 RESULT

Participants of this study involve community residents of Jabodetabek which consist of a group of 19-27 years-old adults living in Jabodetabek. Most of participants are university students, although some reported as permanent employees. Participants' profile showed that most percentage of participants in this study aged 22 years-old with 21 participants (40%).

Table 1: Networked individual tendency.

	Frequency	Percentage
Low	3	5.7%
Moderate	18	34%
High	32	60.4%
Total	53	100%

Table 2: Description of the NIT according to VNS and VIP.

				Level of networked individualistic tendency (NIT)			Total
				Low	Moderate	High	
VNS	No variation (NV)	VIP	NV	0	0	0	16
			LV	0	0	0	
			MV	2	0	0	
			HV	0	14	0	
	Low variation (LV)	VIP	NV	0	0	0	0
			LV	0	0	0	
			MV	0	0	0	
			HV	0	0	0	
	Moderate variation (MV)	VIP	NV	1	0	0	33
			LV	0	0	0	
			MV	0	4	0	
			HV	0	0	28	
	High variation (HV)	VIP	NV	0	0	0	4
			LV	0	0	0	
			MV	0	0	0	
			HV	0	0	4	
Total				3	18	32	

The result of networked individual shows that the participants of this study can be divided into two groups, a group with moderate level of the networked individual tendency (NIT) and another group with the high level of tendency.

Based on the table 2, the interaction between *Variations in Interaction Patterns* (VIP) and *Variations in Network Structure* (VNS) shows that most participants are in the moderate VNS with 33 participants. Furthermore, the data shows that the participants are more dominant in high NIT with a total of 32 participants.

However, when analyzing the VIP, the data indicates that 46 participants are classified in high variation. Therefore, if participants have high VIP and high or moderate VNS, they will have high NIT because the table indicated that 4 participants have high VIP and high VNS, while 28 participants have high NIT although their VIP are high, their VNS are moderate. Moderate NIT was indicated for 18 participants, and 14 participants have high VIP but no variation of VNS. Furthermore, only 4 participants have moderate NIT with moderate VNS and VIP. There are 3 participants who have the low NIT, two of whom have moderate VIP and no

variation of VNS, while the other one participants show no variation of VIP and moderate VNS.

4 DISCUSSION

From the result above, young adults living in Jabodetabek have high networked individualistic tendency, with emphasize on some aspects that need to be seen including variations in network structure and interaction pattern. When individuals' variations in interaction patterns are high, the study found that the networked individual tendency is also high. This illustration is similar to the variations in network structure, i.e., when the network structure variation is high, the networked individualistic tendency is also high.

The result of interaction between interaction pattern and network structure variations on the networked individualistic tendency showed that the level of variations in interaction patterns have a significant effect on determining the level of networked individualistic tendency. Individuals' interaction patterns are an indicator to see networked individualistic tendency because the individuals are

able to communicate to interact with others, independent of the group. Rainie dan Wellman (2012) argued that an individual has power to regulate how they will interact with another from each network. Thus, the interaction between interaction pattern variations and networked individualistic tendency indicated that the individuals' ability to interact with their network can be a valid measurement to evaluate individuals' power because a networked individual is a person who has power to their network without dependency on their group.

These findings can have significant impacts on how to change people to learn about any issues. Young adults in Jabodetabek learn more from their online peers, than their traditional groups, either family nor school/work's colleagues. They can have topics that may not have been discussed or even not opened to discuss on their traditional groups. Meanwhile, networked individualism give opportunity for everyone to have the same knowledge, so high networked individualistic tendency means that the opportunity for equality for everyone in every area is something that can be reached.

5 CONCLUSION

The variations in network structure based on interaction between weak ties and network selection showed that young adults in Jabodetabek have high weak ties. Individuals who have moderate network selection have moderate network structure, while those with low network selection showed no variations in their network structure.

The variations in interaction patterns, based on interaction between multichannel and online interaction, showed that young adults in Jabodetabek have more specific interaction strategies. They actively use more than a single communication channel and they have high interaction patterns. Both sub aspect of interaction pattern variations, which is multichannel and online interaction, showed that both aspects are predominantly high. Therefore, the aspect of variations in interaction patterns needs high scores for both sub aspects.

From the analysis, it can be concluded that most of the young adults in Jabodetabek area have a high networked individual tendency. And, the networked individual's level is determined by the level of variations in interaction patterns.

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