Selecting relationship and uploads: mediatisation studies on Indonesian migrant worker's media engagement

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Abstract Indonesian migrant workers use social media for various needs. Workers' engagement on social media is usually related to their hometown and socio-culture abroad. This study draws on Couldry and Hepp's idea of mediatisation to examine the interrelation of communication practices and media use to socio-cultural dynamics. The author argues that media engagement is related to socio-cultural context, especially workers' socio-cultural group. Applying virtual ethnography, the author analysed media types, actor constellations, communication themes, and practices. The findings show that workers select relationships, posts, and types of social media, and their social media engagement is strongly related to their hometown socio-culture. Workers use Facebook to present hardworking, collectively, and homely self-images, WhatsApp to connect to intimate relationships or close family, while young workers choose, and Instagram to construct a modern, successful, and expressive self-image. Additionally, workers join local group accounts to update news and maintain a sense of belonging to the hometown.

Keywords: Indonesian migrant worker; social media; mediatisation; Tulungagung

INTRODUCTION

Studies in the 1990s put the media as a fragmented institution of society (Flew, 2017; Motta, 2005). The media is considered a separate or an independent institution from society (Hjarvard, 2008). At that time, social studies examined media and society in two oppositional approaches: *socio-centric* (Hall, 1996; William, 1974) and *mediacentric* (McLuhan, 1964; Meyrowitz, 2009). The socio-centric approach conceives the needs, resources, and social situations as factors to initiate the development or the use of media (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). In other words, the socio-centric approach argues that the media

reflects people's lives (Postill & Pink, 2012). Some studies applied a socio-centric approach, such as observing pandemic situations that increase media use (Fuch, 2020) or explaining political constellations in Indonesia that trigger conflict and hate speech in the media (Lim, 2017).

Meanwhile, mediacentric is an approach that places the media as the dominant aspect of societal change (Latzer, 2013; Paredes, 2017; Ruotsalainen & Heinonen, 2015). Mediacentric became a trend in the 1960s and the rapid development of media technology (Motta, 2005). The argument related to the mediacentric approach states that each new media has a significant impact on society (Meyrowitz, 2009). Several examples of studies using a mediacentric examine the influence of mass media authority on health policy in Romania (Baba, Chereches & Moşteanu, 2007), the influence of mass media content on people's attention, knowledge, and participation (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002), or the impact of mass media convergence on the creative industry (Latzer, 2013).

The fragmentation of mediacentric and socio-centric has no longer been debated in the last 20 years (Jakubowicz & Sükösd, 2008). Scholars argue that all aspects of people's lives have taken advantage of the abundance and sophistication of media (Hjarvard, 2008; Livingstone, 2009), as media always plays a role in social change (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Social studies no longer see society or the media in a separate and dominating relationship. However, both media and social life have an interrelation in shaping social dynamics. The shift in those theoretical views has made scholars no longer use a mediacentric or socio-centric point of view. Scholars are instead interested in exploring the interplay between society and the media.

Scholars then use the concept of *mediatisation* to understand the interrelation of society and the media (Couldry, 2012; Lundby, 2009; Krotz & Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2008), such as Hammelburg's research (2021) about the experience of enjoying festivals that can no longer be detached from the practice of using social media, Young's (2021) research in Cambodia on the relationship between citizen photography on social media and activism movements, or Setianto's (2015) research on religious practices articulated by Indonesian diaspora in the US through various media.

In terms of studies on migrant workers, the Philippines is one of the largest migrant exporter countries in Asia (Straiton et al., 2017) also shows the strong relationship of workers' lives with communication and media practices. Overseas Filipino Migrants (OFW) learn about working abroad from the media (Paragas, 2006). Meanwhile, Bautista & Tamayo (2020) study shows that one of the problems of Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) is communication, as they do not master foreign languages. Another problem experienced by women OFW is overcoming the sense of belonging, as they have multiple roles as workers, wives, mothers, and daughters (Straiton et

al., 2017). However, they use social media and video calls to overcome this distress to stay connected and perform those multiple social roles.

Those studies show that rather than placing the media in a separate relationship from society, socio-culture change is strongly interrelated with media development and communication practices (Hepp, 2014). The interdependence between the media and society indicates that the socio-cultural situation encourages the use of media; and vice versa, media usage also communication practices can frame and shape community activities (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2008; Lilleker, 2006), especially in communication practice and media engagement.

Agreeing with this concept of mediatisation, Takahashi (2010) defines *media engagement* as a communication activity and complex and varied media because it is related to socio-cultural situations. Therefore, people's communication practices or media use will differ according to their needs, satisfaction, or circumstances. Hepp, Breiter, & Hasebrink (2013) then suggest a *communicative figuration* as a framework to conceptualise mediatisation in research. *Communicative figuration* elaborates the *Theory of Figuration* (Elias, 1978), which explains the relationship between individuals and social aspects, such as media, culture, economy, or politics. Elias (1978) defined figuration as a conceptual tool to understand social phenomena in a model of personal networks that interplay with the surrounding environment. A family is an example of figuration because it has specific values that make its members relate in distinctive ways.

Couldry & Hepp (2013) then uses the perspective of communication to parse the peculiarities of the figuration in the four elements. The first element is the *media type/ensemble* that shows the user's function, need, and meaning. For example, someone who likes to write prefers Facebook because it can post much writing in large quantities. However, others may use Instagram because it has many features to edit photos. Second, *the actor constellation* explains the ways and roles of each person in a relationship. Individuals may have competitive, collaborative, or mutually dominating relationships. Third, the *communication theme* finds out the relationship's involvement, orientation, or purposes, such as involvement in a business conversation, hobby, or scientific discussion. Fourth, *communication practice* to understand the use or benefits of media. This element indicates that each user has a certain engagement with the media. As someone uses a car radio to get a traffic report, others may need it to get the latest news or enjoy a song to keep them from falling asleep while driving (Miller, 2017).

Hjarvard & Petersen (2013) said that these four elements change individual relations to the media at a different level. It means that the four of them detail the development of the function of the media, from merely being a transmitter for messages to becoming *actors* capable of offering and directing public discourse (Lilleker, 2006).

This study aims to understand the interrelation between society, media, and socio-cultural context using the mediatisation concept. The researcher is interested in examining the media engagement of Indonesian migrant workers, given that their lives are in two socio-cultural dimensions, namely adjustment to a foreign environment and the embodiment of experiences or values from their hometown. This study selects workers who come from Tulungagung Regency for several reasons. First, data from the National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers (BNP2TKI) noted that starting 2017, the most significant number of Indonesian workers abroad came from East Java Province (Figure 1). Tulungagung itself ranks in the top five in East Java as the area of origin of workers. Related to the concept of mediatisation, a study shows migrant remittances allude to Tulungagung workers using the media to maintain kinship (Romdiati, 2012).
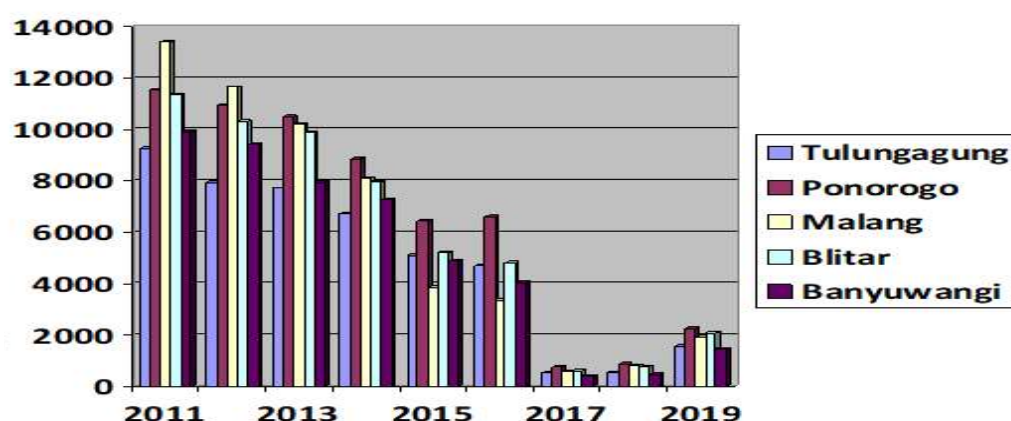
Figure 1. District / City Rank of Indonesian Migrant Workers from East Java
Source: National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers
(BNP2TKI, 2011-2019)

Second, Tulungagung, as a rural area, has a high need for communication tools (Ardiyanti, 2019), as statistics show that communication equipment use is above 50% (Table 1). This data contradicts Purbo's research (2017) which states that rural Indonesia still has an underdeveloped media infrastructure. Likewise, internet provider Biznet, a free national hotspot program -Connecting Indonesia- since 2000, stated that it only penetrated Tulungagung in January 2018 (Sujarwoko, 2018). Until 2020, Tulungagung only has eleven free hotspots from Biznet. This number is less than Kediri, the Regency / City which borders Tulungagung with 27 hotspots. The researcher is interested in the need for Tulungagung people's communication practices as they are attracted by this contradiction, where the lagging media infrastructure is inversely proportional to their socio-cultural needs.

Table 1. Use of Communication Equipment in 2019-2020

Sex	2019		2020	
	Phone & Computer	Internet	Phone & Computer	Internet
Male	79,53 %	55,12 %	79,49 %	59,68 %
Female	71,09 %	49,82 %	74,74 %	58,8 %

Source: Statistics Kab. Tulungagung 2019/2020

Previous studies stated that there was a negative impact on the families of Tulungagung migrant workers in a socio-cultural manner (Latifah, 2015). However, this impact can be minimised by intensive communication using various media, especially mobile phones. Regarding the need for communication tools, the local government released data on public expenditure for communication needs that reach the highest number (5,13%) along with the need for transportation and financial services (Figure 2). Studies show that the people of Tulungagung use those media for education (Khoiriyah & Sari, 2018), maintain group values (Panuju, Susilo, & Sugihartati, 2017), and get global information (Syaipudin, 2020).
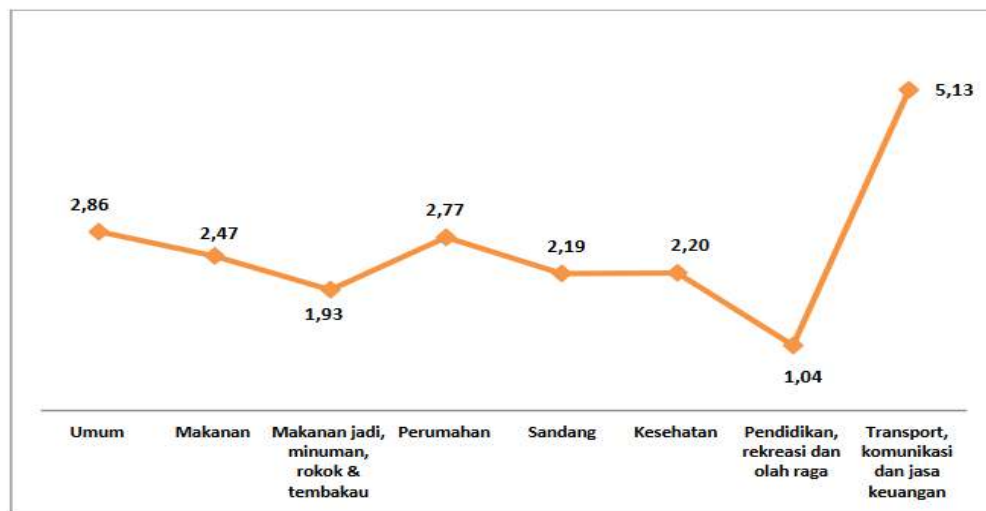
Figure 2. Tulungagung Expenditure 2017
Source: Economic Data and Statistics Kab. Tulungagung 2018

Third, Tulungagung with the character of rural society is appropriate for socio-cultural mediatisation research. Geertz (1973) and Jansson (2010) state that people's behaviour that shows cultural values in concrete forms is the character of rural society. In Tulungagung, the embodiment of local culture -*guyub rukun*- appears and is embedded in various cultural artefacts such as community names, bus stops, radio, parks, or social actions. The researcher refers to Jansson (2010) which states that the appearance of cultural values that are easily identified will facilitate socio-cultural mediatisation research.

METHODOLOGY

The concept of mediatisation aims to explain the interrelation of media, society, and the socio-cultural aspects (Couldry, 2012) as the theory of figuration emphasizes the concept of heterogeneity in society (Elias, 1994). Likewise, the study of communication practices through the media requires in-depth observation of the needs, dependencies, uses, and expressions of locality (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008). Therefore, this study uses an interpretive paradigm to understand each experience and socio-cultural complexity from the informant's point of view (Creswell, 2013) as they are members of society and media users.

The researcher begins the thought process by understanding the social context currently being mediatized, where interactions, needs, and people's dynamics are related to the existence and use of social media (Hjarvard, 2008). Every society's action contains cultural values reflected in the media (Couldry & Hepp, 2013). Thus, social media has become a culture that shapes people's actions (Wohn & Bowe, 2014). The researcher then determined the focus of the analysis on the type of media, the constellation of actors, the theme of the conversation, and communication practices (Hepp, Breiter, & Hasebrink, 2013).

Table 2. Profile of Informants

Name	Country	Job	Age	Sex
MN	Taiwan	Parental caregiver	45	Female
MY	Hongkong	Parental caregiver	48	Female
MO	Hongkong	Housemaid	27	Female
RS	Romania	Workers of Indonesian embassy guest house	28	Male
AP	Malaysia	Fire alarm system	28	Male
AD	Jerman	Ship-officer	32	Female

Source: (Interview, 2021)

This study determines informants purposively (Table 2) and selects Tulungagung as locations by considering the clarity of place, the presence of phenomena, and social distinctiveness (Hamidi, 2004). The selection of informants is based on active participation in the use of social media (Alwasilah, 2000). The researcher then builds connected, immersive, open, and honest relationships. For this reason, extracting data from informants begins by asking for permission, explaining the aims, objectives, and benefits of the study. Researchers get to know the informants personally, feel the socio-cultural situation in the informants' hometowns, follow personal accounts, and join online communities that the informants follow. The following research stage is in-depth interviews with open questions and multimodal documentation. The researcher collects information in visual or textual form from workers' social media pages in profiles, status, posts, comments, or statistics. The final virtual ethnography step is to return the results and analysis to the informants. Feedback becomes a

confirmation and triangulation if the researcher's understanding matches the meaning the informant wants to convey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Socio-Cultural Context in Media Engagement

Various cultural artefacts in Tulungagung display the slogans of *guyub* (togetherness)*, rukun* (harmonious)*, ayem* (calm)*, tentrem* (peaceful)*, mulyo* (noble)*,* and *tinoto* (orderly). Those slogans appear at the bus stop (Figure 1), park (Figure 2), social action (Figure 3), or local police, military, and government (Figure 4). Although *guyub* and *rukun* are cultural concepts that are preserved nationally (Suparlan, 2003), research shows that each community has its elements of the locality which make the manifestation of the *guyub rukun* value appear in different patterns of action (Woodward, 2001; Muhaimin, 2001; Budiwanti 2000). Amid socio-cultural diversity, the concept of harmony is an essential foundation for maintaining the unity of the Indonesian nation.

Figure 1. Local culture slogan as the name of bus stop
Source: (Research data, 2021)

Figure 2. Local culture slogan as the name of the park
Source: (Research data, 2021)

"Orang Tulungagung suka kebersamaan. Orang yang tidak saling kenal bisa berbincang bersama di warung kopi, masjid, atau alun-alun kota. -Mereka- rukun-rukun, suka menyapa, dan bergotong royong juga." [Tulungagung people like togetherness. People who don't know each other are having conversation at a coffee shop, mosque, or town square. -They-

get along well, like to greet, and work together too.] (AP, February 2021)

"Saya merasa guyub, rukun, ayem, tentrem, mulyo, tinoto bukan sekedar tulisan di monumen. Tapi memang orang Tulungagung mempraktekannya dalam pergaulan. Lihat saja, masyarakat Tulungagung selalu rukun meskipun berbeda suku, agama, tingkat ekonomi, atau pekerjaan. Hidup di Tulungagung itu tentram, tidak ada masalah sosial, dan orangnya tidak neko-neko" [I feel *guyub, rukun, ayem, tentrem, mulyo, tinoto* not just writing on a monument. But indeed the Tulungagung people practice it in daily life. You see, the people of Tulungagung are always harmonious even though they have different ethnicity, religion, economic level, or occupation. Life in Tulungagung is peaceful, there are no social problems, and the people are not adventurous.] (AD, February 2021).

Figure 3. Local culture slogan as the name of social action
Source: (Research data, 2021)

Figure 4. Local culture slogan as the logo of local police, military, and government
Source: (Research data, 2021)

Apart from various cultural artefacts, the manifestation of the value of harmony also appears when the people of Tulungagung talk about social events. For example, election events that trigger national

conflicts (Lim, 2017) or religious issues that cause national problems (J & Hidayati, 2018; Santoso & Djauhari, 2019) are not a source of social conflict in Tulungagung. As Figure 5 shows, the Regent of Tulungagung appeals to maintain harmony and not to follow national conflicts. Also, the Tulungagung police chief prohibits otganisations that can create exclusivity or social division (Figure 6).

Figure 5. *Guyub rukun* as discourse in media

Source: (AntaraJatim.com, 2016)

Figure 6. *Guyub rukun* as discourse in media

Source: IG @kacamata_tulungagung, 2021

Referring to Seto's (2017) argument, specific values that often appear in direct interaction or through the media show the negotiation process and the cultural context of a society. Therefore, harmony is a cultural context that surrounds the interaction of the Tulungagung people, including the media engagement of workers abroad. Furthermore, workers' media engagement will be broken down based on media, social relations, discussion themes, and communication practices.

Media Type

The researcher refers to Kietzmann et al. (2011), who defines social media as a network-based application with various social functions. Thus, social media is a means by which users can build identity, manage existence, share, chat, form relationships, groups, and reputations. Among several social media platforms, informants use Facebook and WhatsApp the most (Table 3).

Table 3. Type of social media and numbers of followers/friends

Informant	Facebook	WhatsApp	Instagram
MN	49	63	-
MY	53	77	-
MO	2994	162	1037
RS	93	126	273
AP	102	134	460
AD	431	209	368

Source: (Informants' social media, 2021)

Informants said they used Facebook because many relatives, friends, or neighbours had joined it.

> "*Saya tidak mungkin menutup akun facebook karena semua kenalan ada disana. Akun saya sudah menyebar ke banyak kenalan lama. Kadang orang sering ganti nomor telfon, tapi kalau facebook kan lebih permanen. Lagipula, foto-foto -saya-sejak jaman dahulu sudah di facebook. Saya tidak mau banyak kenangan dan hubungan hilang.*" [I can't possibly delete my Facebook account because all my acquaintances are there. My account has spread to many old acquaintances. Sometimes people often change phone numbers, but Facebook is more permanent. After all, -my- photos have been on Facebook since long time ago. I don't want many memories and relationships to be lost.] (AD, February 2021).

> "*Banyak orang tua, guru, atau tetangga di facebook. Saya tidak mau mendapat komentar negatif jika mengunggah foto terlalu seksi atau menunjukkan uang dan barang di facebook. Sedangkan instagram kan baru, jadi saya bisa memilih siapa yang ingin saya jadikan teman.*" [There are parents, teachers, or neighbours on Facebook. I don't want to get negative

comments if I post too sexy photos or show money and goods on Facebook. Meanwhile, Instagram is new, so I can choose who I want to make friends with.] (MO, February 2021)

On Facebook, informants share photos or upload more general posts. For example, the informant shared photos of the environment abroad, photos with fellow workers from Tulungagung, prayers, words of self-encouragement, or using a family photo as a Facebook page to express homesickness (Figure 7). The informants want to present themselves as simple, diligent, hardworking, and unpretentious workers. In comparison, Instagram informants share more expressive and personal photos to build a modern, successful, and happy impression (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Informant RS's Facebook page

Source: (Research data, 2021)

Figure 8. Informant RS's Instagram page
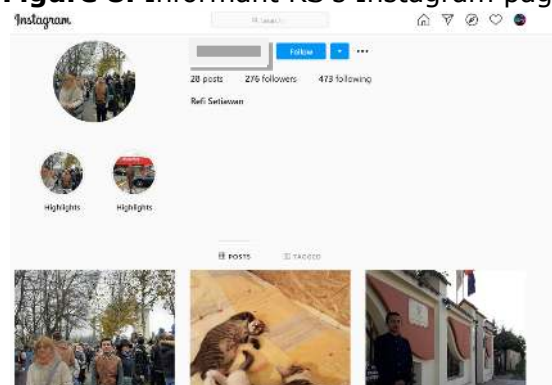
Source: (Research data, 2021)

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is a social media to build a more private relationship. Informants share WhatsApp numbers only with certain people who have intimacy, such as family or close friends. However, although all informants know Instagram, older workers prefer not to use it. They feel that they do not have many photos to share on Instagram, and Facebook is enough space to socialise.

> "*Saya tahu instagram. Tapi kalau instagram kan kita harus mengunggah foto. Sedangkan saya tidak percaya diri untuk difoto. Jadi saya lebih memilih facebook.*" [I know Instagram.

> But for Instagram, we have to upload photos. Meanwhile, I don't have the confidence to be photographed. So I prefer Facebook.] (MY, February 2021)

Actor Constellation

Informants select relationships in each social media account. They have relations which the majority are from Tulungagung on Facebook. Informants realise that they do not have too much interaction or relationship with foreign workers or residents abroad. Therefore, Facebook is the choice to gather collectivity, create harmony and social interaction with relatives, friends, or neighbours. They feel the need to maintain the identity and acceptance of the group from social relations in Tulungagung through Facebook.

> "*Saya jarang jalan-jalan atau bergaul dengan orang sini (orang local luar negeri). Kalaupun berteman, dari sesama pekerja dari sekitar Tulungagung juga. Biasanya kami memasak atau makan bersama. Jadi apa yang mau diunggah di instagram?*" [I rarely go out or hang out with people here (local people abroad). Even if I make friends, they are fellow workers from around Tulungagung too. Usually, we cook or eat together. So, what do I want to upload on Instagram?] (MN, February 2021)

On WhatsApp, informants establish intimacy with family and close friends. Meanwhile, on Instagram, young informants choose not to have relationships with certain people who are considered to have the potential to create personal conflicts. They prefer to accept friendships with new, not too close, and non-judgmental people on Instagram.

Informants also feel the need to have a relationship with culture, relatives or maintain a sense of membership with the Tulungagung community. Informants follow the Facebook or Instagram account of @kacamata_tulungagung, which uploads the latest information, displays photos of tourist attractions, cultural sites, local figures, community habits, traditional entertainment, or ceremonies in Tulungagung. The @kacamata_tulungagung is created by local people independently on the platforms Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The informants admitted that they enjoy speaking in the Tulungagung language with fellow followers when commenting on the post @kacamata_tulungagung. This language and involvement make them feel welcome and remain members of the Tulungagung community.

> "*Saya tidak akan selamanya bekerja di luar negeri. Keluarga saya di Tulungagung, jadi saya pasti pulang. Karena itu, saya mengikuti akun @kacamata_tulungagung karena bisa mengetahui info terbaru tentang Tulungagung. Kadang ada foto perayaan, tempat bersejarah, jajanan tradisional, atau aktivitas yang khas. Itu semua membuat saya rindu akan*

kenangan masa lalu di Tulungagung." [I will not work abroad forever. My family is in Tulungagung, so I will definitely go home. Therefore, I followed the @kacamata_tulungagung account because I could find out the latest information about Tulungagung. Sometimes there are photos of celebrations, historical places, traditional snacks, or special activities. It all makes me miss the past memories in Tulungagung] (MY, February 2021)

"Karena bekerja di rumah orang lokal, maka saya menggunakan bahasa luar negeri. Saya senang membaca komentar, caption, atau berbincang dengan sesama pengikut @kacamata_tulungagung karena kita menggunakan bahasa daerah. Saya merasa orang-orang itu satu kelompok dengan saya, disana saya berasal." [Because I work at a local's house, I use foreign languages. I like reading comments, captions, or chatting with fellow followers of @kacamata_tulungagung because we speak the local language. I feel that those people are in the same group as me, as where I come from] (AD, February 2021)

In a mediatisation, community groups can be formed because of linkages, organised situational action (Rheingold, 2003), and the internet algorithm datafication or numeric inclusion process (Passoth et al., 2014). In this study, workers who join @kacamata_tulungagung share the meaning of ownership of the cultural similarities of Tulungagung. The use of local languages (in captions and follower conversations) and local content creates a '*common we*' feeling. This feeling becomes motivation, action guide, or orientation to build group relationships through the account @kacamata_tulungagung.

Communication Theme

Informants are not interested in sharing moments while working abroad. Informants do not disclose the type of work, bad experiences, or inconveniences for certain people (new acquaintances or people who do not have personal closeness). On the other hand, informants feel happy when someone asks about their health or social situation abroad.

"Dimanapun bekerja pasti ada suka dukanya. Tapi kalau sedih-sedih, saya tidak bagi. Paling saya ceritakan ke keluarga dekat di WhatsApp. Kalau di facebook atau instagram, ya saya tidak bagi." [Wherever we work, there must be ups and downs. But if I'm sad, I don't share. Most, I tell my close family on WhatsApp. If on Facebook or Instagram, yes, I don't share it.] (RS, February 2021)

"Saya pernah sakit dan dimarahi orang. Tapi saya hanya cerita ke pasangan. Buat apa orang tahu saya jauh-jauh bekerja, tapi tidak nyaman. Biar saja mereka hanya tahu kalau saya bahagia dan sukses nanti." [I've been sick and have been scolded by people. But I just told my partner. Why would people know that I was away from work, but it was uncomfortable. Let them only know that I will be happy and successful later.] (MY, February 2021)

Informants prefer to post about family, social situations, or friends abroad via Facebook (Figure 9). While on Instagram, they often display selfies, shop, or travel abroad (Figure 10).

**Figure 9.** Informant MO's post on Facebook

Source: (Research data, 2019)

Informants choose not to make a status on WhatsApp. They prefer to talk about personal things (sickness, money, feelings of boredom, homesickness, or loneliness) through direct messages or WhatsApp calls. Informants always reply to comments from friends or followers of their social media account. However, they rarely comment and prefer to give emoticons to other people's posts. Likewise, they only comment if the uploads on the accounts of the groups they are participating in are considered attractive. Older informants also often tag certain family or friends in their uploads (Figure 11). Informants feel that people who are tagged have relevance with them to discuss specific topics of conversation.

Communication Practices

Informants are always connected to social media. The type of job, employer, or boss still permits informants to access social media. However, the informants understand that they still had to limit themselves from using cell phones while working.
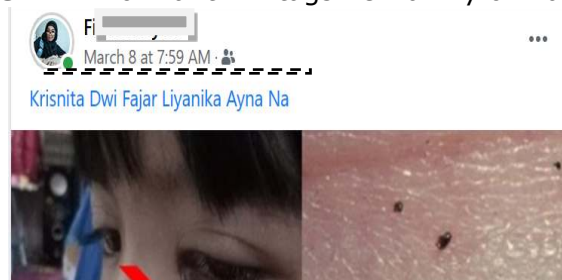
Figure 10. Informant MO's post on Instagram
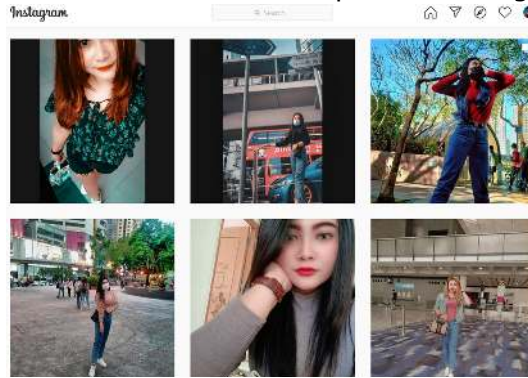
Source: (Research data, 2021)

Figure 11. Informant MN tags her family on Facebook

Source: (Research data, 2021)

Informants put up notifications when there is an update on social media. However, informants chose not to appear online. So, they can delay or even not reply to messages or comments on social media.

> *"Sebenarnya, saya selalu online. Tapi kadang kalau tidak penting atau masih sibuk, saya tidak membalas. Kalaupun membalas pesan, benar-benar ketika saya senggang. Makanya, saya pasang status offline biar orang tidak tahu kalau saya sudah membaca pesan."* [Actually, I'm always online. But sometimes if it's not important or I'm still busy, I don't reply. Even if I reply to those messages, it's really when I have my spare time. That's why I put an offline status so people don't know that I've read the message.] (MY, February 2021)

> *"Saya sering lihat unggahan, tapi tidak semua saya komentari. Paling unggahan yang menarik atau teman tertentu yang saya komentari. Atau saya biasanya hanya memberi emot. Kadang meskipun saya ditandai, saya juga tidak komentar kalau tidak merasa perlu dibalas."* [I often see uploads, but I don't comment on all of them. Most interesting uploads or certain friends that I comment on. Or I usually just give emotes. Sometimes even though I'm tagged, I also don't comment if I don't feel the need to reply.] (AD, February 2021)

Implications

The results and discussion above provide several theoretical implications. First, the relationship between society and the media is closely related to socio-cultural values. It is the variety of socio-cultural values that make up the difference in media engagement. Second, differences in socio-cultural values also show that humans are agencies that actively construct reality. Thus, even though the media develops and offers various discourses, humans still have the authority to choose media or interpret those media discourses. In other words, the media is just a tool or *material vehicle* (Sorokin, 1947) to transmit information. The socio-cultural aspect is the background for the human in choosing the type of media, determining the theme of the conversation, forming relationships, or communication practice. Third, no one type of media dominates society. The development of digital technology makes various types of media converge. Thus, people are increasingly faced with unlimited discourse from the media.

Practically, this study also implies that, first, each worker is free to interpret the types of media and discourses in them. This interpretation ultimately becomes the basis for the worker to create content and choose a particular medium. Including, the worker can display a self-image or choose a different relationship on various types of media. Second, workers' communication with their family or relatives in their home country can be more intensive by using the media. This can reduce homesickness and strengthen the sense of ties to the group in the home country. Third, workers can develop borderless relational networks through the media. From these relationships, workers can develop themselves by exploring knowledge, joining new communities, or even opening businesses.

CONCLUSION

Some findings can be summarised in several vital points. First, as media users, workers create and have the authority to determine social relations and self-image. Workers also construct complex meanings for the types and discourses that the media evoke. The workers' meaning is related to the environment abroad and based on experiences and socio-cultural values from the hometown. This is because workers have limited face-to-face interactions with local citizens or international workers abroad. Workers prefer to befriend workers from Indonesia, especially those from the same hometown. Also, in terms of media engagement, workers prefer to select relationships, participate in online forums, or have accounts that are still related to their hometown.

Second, mediatisation makes the media a facilitator for the figuration of social networks for users with similarities and relationships. In this study, workers connected on social media accounts that uploaded Tulungagung social and cultural content. In

other words, the network of workers' social media is due to similarities and linkages to their hometown.

Third, workers feel that the role of social media, which uploads local content, can define, and strengthen social ties. Workers remain connected and become part of the Tulungagung community when they know about regional developments, social events, see photos of local culture, or communicate in local languages. It can be said that *guyub rukun* as Tulungagung cultural value have shaped the character and needs of workers to create collectively. On the other hand, social media, as @kacamata_tulungagung provides and reinforces the values of that *guyub rukun* through uploads.

Fourth, as with the interpretive paradigm in general, the findings of this study are subjective and contextual. In a mediatisation study, this paradigm is beneficial for exploring the socio-cultural diversity in Indonesia. This study suggests that the government or policymakers understand the relations of society and media in a profound, specific, situational, and comprehensive manner. This means that understanding media engagement requires research on the behaviour or text that appears on the screen and the social and cultural context behind media users.

Those significant findings show how the socio-cultural context shapes people's relations with the media. Therefore, every society relates with the media in its practices. In other words, not only Western countries or urban areas with advanced media technology, but people in the rural areas who have limited media infrastructure also have engagement with the media. Therefore, the researcher recommends further studies to explore the socio-cultural dynamics that shape the use of social media in rural communities related to the digital divide.

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