Netnography Study on Reverse Culture Shock and Re-Adaptation Process Among Content Creator on Youtube Channel

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Abstract. Reverse culture shock is a condition experienced by people when they went to a new social environment. They need to re-adapt to make themselves feel comfort in their original social environment. Many content creators in youtube making this issue as their content. That's why netnography study was using in this research to find out this matter. The focus of this study is to trace back all digital footprint leaves by youtubers about reverse culture shock content eventhough some of the youtubers does not even realized that what they produced was about reverse culture shock. Since this research is on going research, the results of this research is still not yet known.

Keywords: Netnography, reverse culture shock, re-adaptation process, youtube

1 Introduction

Most people will prepare themselves to experienced culture shock when they went to a new social environment. However, only few people realized that they also could experienced culture shock when they coming home to their original social environment that used to be very familiar with themselves as a part of their life. This is what we called as reverse culture shock. When someone experienced reverse culture shock, they have to go through re-adaptation process to make themselves feel comfort in their original social environment. Many people does not realize this condition that makes research about reverse culture shock not as many as research about culture shock, and research about re-adaptation not as many as research about adaptation.

Shibuya (2003) as mentioned by Agha and Taysir [1] stated that many researchers interested in studying about culture shock and crossculture adaptation process when someone moved abroad. Some researchers also interested in studying about reverse culture shock and the challenging stages they face when they moved back to their original social environment. The re-adaptation process they face is almost similar with the crossculture adaptation when they moved to new social environment. According to Gullahorn and Gullahorn [5] [3], the main difference between culture shock and reverse culture shock was about the expectation of the sojourners. Usually sojourners often expected that the could return to an unchanged home town as an unchanged individuals,

which was not the case in this study. Or we can say that one can expect (and thus is more or less cognitively prepared for) the cultural differences when entering a new culture, thereby potentially minimizing the effects of culture shock. On the video sharing channel youtube, there are several channel had been identified by researcher had stories about reverse culture shock and how they overcome the re-adaptation process that become youtuber's content. All of this reverse culture shock problems are very interesting for researcher to studying to learned about this phenomenon that inspired youtubers to create this content.

Researcher decided to used netnography study to found out about this matter since netnography study is still less popular among crossculture communication researchers in Indonesia. The focus of this study is to trace back all digital footprint leaves by youtubers about reverse culture shock content eventhough some of the youtubers does not even realized that what they produced was about reverse culture shock. The main reason why youtube was choosen among other social media was the fact that youtube has been proven as number two internet site most viewed by Indonesian internet users and only beaten by Google. This data published by We Are Social in January, 2023 based on data from December 2021 until November 2022. Youtube was accessed 833 million times during those period, while Google was accessed 2.02 billion times (detiknet, Saturday, March 18 2023). We Are Social report about "Digital 2023 Indonesia" gives us comprehensive image of digital technology trend in Indonesia. This report shows that active internet users among Indonesian population reaches 212.9 million people in January 2023. This number significantly increasing compare to the previous year since in 2021 active internet users number around 202 million people from total Indonesian population that has reaches 276.4 million people in January 2023. In other words, internet penetration ini Indonesia has reaches 77%.
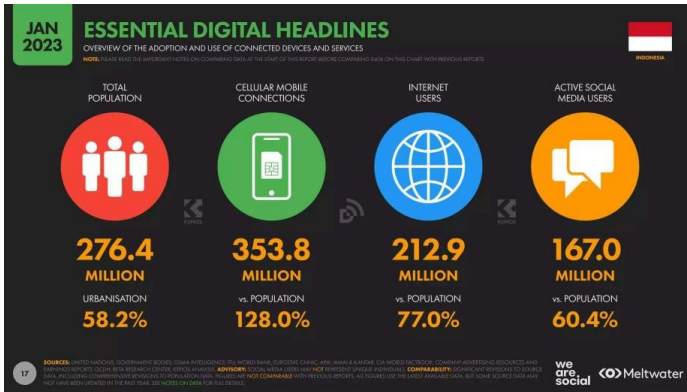

Figure 1. Indonesian internet user number
Source: We are Social, 2023

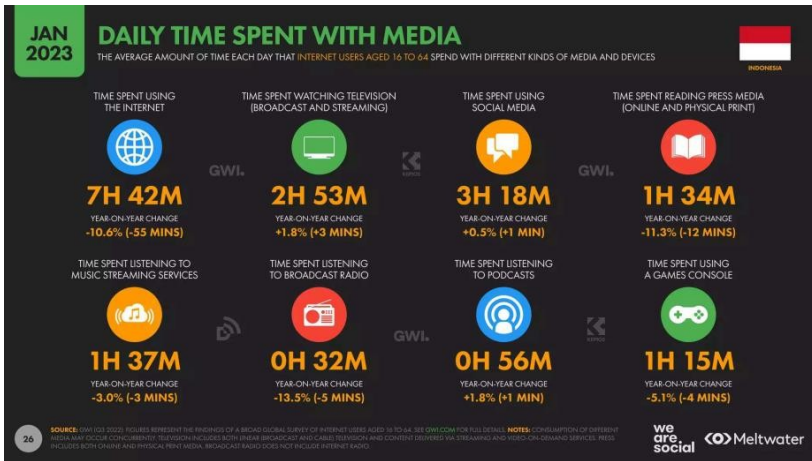Internet users in Indonesia spent various time when they accessed internet, that shown below

Figure 2. Indonesian time spent on internet
Source: We are Social, 2023

This research using phenomenology approach to catched and interpreted the process of human interactions: what they said and what they did as a product of their perspective of the world. According to Flick (2009), phenomenology is the way of describing and analyzing the life of the research subject along with the meaning and understanding of their life. This research used the Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) to have a good qualitative research approach as mentioned by Sandelowski (in Given, 2008) which explained that interpretative connecting strategies in various situation to have different output.

The main difference of this research with the previous researches was in the locus of this research which is the digital footprint in youtube created by the content creators. While most of the previous researches focused on quantitative methods or mix methods, this reseach was focused on qualitative methods of netnography study that was not commonly used for crossculture communication in Indonesia.

2 Literature Review

There are so many literature review study on crossculture communication, and it still continues to grow along with the current development. Some of them are study of cultural differences, face-to-face negotiation, uncertainty and anxiety, and accomodation (Foss & Littlejohn, 2009). Berger (in Griffin, 2012) said that in a communication process, every individual will observed to predict of how the interaction will took place in the future.

2.1   Reverse Culture Shock

US Department of State [15] mentioned that reverse culture shock experienced by so many people when they came back to their original place after they lived for some times in another environment outside their home town. Problems about psychology aspects, emotional aspects and cultural aspects that they faced almost similar with the U-Curve that experienced by people with culture shock. But for reverse culture shock, John Gullahorn and Jeanne Gullahorn had developed W Curve to describing the process of reverse culture shock [16].

Here are several definition of reverse culture shock:
   a. Re-Entry Shock is simply a common reaction to returning home from studying abroad. It is an emotional and psychological stage of re-adjustment, similar to your initial adjustment to living abroad) [9]
   b. A condition experienced by someone when they come home to their original cultural and social environment after spending years abroad [17]
   c. The person experienced more shocks and troubles when they have to adapted to their own original culture

2.2   Re-adaptation

Adaptation is the way any living thing to adjust oneself to their environment. We need adaptation because every environment is different and have their own characteristics.Therefore, we need to adapt in order to survive [6].

Guddykunts and Kim (in Utami, 2015) found out that there are two step of adaptation: cultural adaptation and cross-cultural adaptation. Cultural adaptation happened at the time we socialized with other. It is marked with the encoding and decoding process of a message. This process defined as enculturation. Next step, cross-cultural adaptation happened involving three things: aculturation, deculturation and assimilation.

Richard West [14] put forward three choices to conduct adaption, which is convergence, divergence and excessive accommodation.

2.3   New Media

Internet according to Holmes (2005) [11] is the foundation of global interaction technology development that changes coverage and the nature of communication medium. Easier and cheaper internet access has contributed so much on virtual reality of the entity or user in virtual world. We can says that entity become tangled with the virtual and offline-online world that not just parallel connected but also melted and merges [10].

In the year of 2022, 5.3 billion people already using internet all around the world or equal to 66% of the world population (dataindonesia.id, 2023). Although the fact showed that 63.5 million of people in Indonesia not connected yet to the internet.

The increasing of internet user also broaden the use of technology and people mobility that cause the wider inter country borderless relationship [2]. Orlikowski (2012) mentioned that human at this time living in a sociomateriality life, where human and communication technology has merges and interact each other (Greenfields, 2015).

3   Research Design

Qualitative methods were used in this research. The goals of this methods is to understand and explore the meaning of individual thought in social and humanity matters. Data in qualitative research obtained by explore participant data by interview, observed and giving meaning on the data [8].

This research using netnography study as an etnography approach through digital footprint leaves behind in cyberspace by the content creator in youtube that produced content about reverse culture shock and re-adaptation process of what they experienced before.

Netnography study is an approach of using etnography while conducting research on community and culture in internet [12] [7]. Netnography characteristic according to Kozinets [7] is replacing field study with computer mediated communication especially through internet.

Online traces can be textual, graphic, photographic, audiovisual, musical, commercial sponsored political fannish and many other things. These cultural experience can be engaged with, communicated through, and then reflected upon, forming the three fundamental elements of netnography: investigation, interaction and immersion)[7].

For this research, lurking methods was used for observing the content of reverse culture shock in the youtube channel. Paradigm, theory and konventional methods considered will not be able understand this new realm. Researchers needs to adjust or seeking for a new theory or methods to understand the social life created by the internet as mentioned by Kozinets [7] in Oktaviani [12].

Edelmann [4] mentioned that lurking technique is a popular activity among online user. Edelmann said that nowadays technology considers lurking as a valid and important form of online behavior. They need to be considered as an important factor in online research. It is also necessary to understanding why users decide to lurk, what activities lurkers engage in, and whether the online environment is more valuable by turning lurkers into posters.

Informants in this research was selected by purposive technique. The number of informants determined based on the need of this research with the certain condition, such as:

1. Content creator that once lived in Indonesia then going back to their country
2. Indonesian content creator that lived abroad and then going back to Indonesia
3. Having online traces of thematic video about reverse culture shock

Data analyze on this research will be using taxonomic analysis guidelines by Spradley: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis.

Since this research is on going research, the results of this research is still not yet known.

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