COMMUNICARE
Journal of Communication Studies

Digital Gathering Spaces: An Exploration of A Facebook Community For TKI/TKW Riyadh dan Jeddah Saudi Arabia And Stories It Reveals

Niyu[1], and Marcelyn Anthony[2]
[1,2] Universitas Pelita Harapan, Tangerang, Banten

ABSTRACT

Communities on social media have become a platform to connect and interact with individuals with the same interests among a variety of groups as well as a forum for interaction to discuss topics aligned with the interests of diverse parties. For Indonesian migrant workers (TKI) in Saudi Arabia, the Facebook community serves as a social media outlet to present and address the issues they encounter. This study aims to investigate the interactions between TKI/TKW and the issues addressed within the Facebook community and examine their stories in digital space. This research employs a qualitative approach with netnography methods. The primary source is the Facebook community of TKI/TKW in Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and supporting sources are derived from literature studies. The findings revealed that the Facebook community for TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia is a mechanism for these individuals to share information, obtain emotional support, and provide solutions for TKI/TKW who encounter problems in a way that is understandable to them. As observed where numerous cases of TKI/TKW depict the mistreatment of these domestic workers or stories of troubled migrant workers, the findings reveal that the stories about the obstacles and problems that arise are largely caused by illegal migrant worker. Other findings reflect a single-story narrative does not represent the actual condition of TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia, more stories are to be revealed. The existence of a Facebook community for TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia can be a highly advantageous community for its member.

INTRODUCTIONS

Digital Spaces is one of the platforms that is commonly used nowadays by people of all ages. At the Digital Safety Inaugural Meeting 2021, Indonesian Minister of Communication and Information Johnny G. Plate stated that digital space must benefit Indonesian citizens, especially during this digitalization era (Rizkinaswara, 2021). The growth of digital networks has furnished an online rendezvous for individuals to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences, and challenges (Reddit & GlobalWebIndex, 2019). Various communities in digital platforms facilitate individuals to gather in digital spaces, providing opportunities to interact and express themselves, following the goals of these communities.

According to We Are Social and Hootsuite, Naurah (2023) stated that since January 2023, Facebook has become the most used digital platform with 2.9 million active users. The digital gathering space becomes important, especially for migrant workers

Corresponding Author: Niyu. Universitas Pelita Harapan
Jalan M.H. Thamrin Boulevard No.1100, Tangerang Regency, Banten 15811. Email: niyuyufisa@gmail.com
Article History: Submitted December 2023, Accepted December 2023, Published January 2024

outside their home country. By joining a digital gathering space like the Facebook community, they can easily share information, exchange ideas, and be more effortless and accessible everywhere. Knowing that Facebook is one the most popular platforms by people around the world to gather and communicate, Indonesian Migrant Workers (known as Tenaga Kerja Indonesia or TKI) and Indonesian Female Migrant Workers (known as Tenaga Kerja Wanita or TKW) in Saudi Arabia utilize Facebook groups and created a Facebook group as a social digital gathering platform to share their thoughts and concerns or simply their daily life working as a migrant worker in Saudi Arabia.

There are multiple Facebook groups for TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia, including one specifically for those in Riyadh and Jeddah. If we research the Facebook community of Saudi Arabian TKI/TKW, more than 50 communities will appear on Facebook. The Facebook group TKI/TKW Riyadh and Jeddah Saudi Arabia is one of the TKI/TKW communities with the highest number of followers, totaling over 67,000 members. It operates as a private group focusing on society for information media and communication between TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia. Both legal and illegal migrant workers join this Facebook group. The community itself was created for migrant workers, especially those who work in Saudi Arabia, to be as vocal as possible regarding their concerns or experiences working as migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. The emergence of an exclusive cohort has acted as an independent filter to determine eligibility, and this particular group is one of the cohorts whose members are highly engaged.

Most of the migrant workers also share many job opportunities and share their stories, which are mostly quite gruesome to hear. Knowing that most Indonesian migrant workers are usually portrayed with harmful incidents or gruesome incidents in mainstream media, this research will overlook and examine the stories of TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia. This Facebook community becomes relevant to this research since it portrays the daily life of Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. One researcher has also participated in various activities and joined this community from 2021 to May 2023. This study aims to investigate the community of Facebook groups TKI/TKW Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This study aims to investigate the potential benefits of the digital landscape in the era of digitization (Rizkinaswara, 2021).

The main objective of this research is to investigate how digital meeting rooms are in the Facebook community of TKI/TKW Riyad and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. This research will also explore stories, experiences, and challenges shared in the Facebook community. To achieve this research objective, this study will examine the dynamics of the Facebook community for TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia, focusing on their social interactions. This research will also identify common themes and topics discussed in the Facebook community, analyze the content shared by TKI/TKW to gain views on the problems they face in their support system and examine their role in providing information, emotional support, and opportunities for empowerment.

Hopefully, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the Facebook community for TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia, with particular emphasis on their stories, experiences, and interactions in digital meeting rooms. This research seeks to

make a valuable contribution to the literature on online communities, the migration experiences of migrant workers, and the role of digital platforms in supporting and empowering immigrant workers to achieve these goals. Through exploring the Facebook community, this research is expected to contribute to existing knowledge about the experiences of TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia, looking at the perspectives and challenges expressed through digital meeting rooms.

Online communities are a term that is used to refer to a group network that communicates with each other in the digital space (Wu Song, 2009). Leveraging Knowledge for Innovation in Collaborative Network explained that online communities are divided into three types of members: private individuals, professional individuals, and organizations (Camarinha-Matos et al., 2009). Three division types differentiate online communities (Matos et al., 2012): community or network of independent intellectual workers, virtual organizations, and voluntary communities – collaborate in a specific field of hobbies or discuss a particular topic without any responsibilities. Online communities have different ways of connecting and interacting with individuals with the same interests (Camarinha-Matos et al., 2009). A few characteristics make online communities detached from organic communities, such as Loose affiliation, Special activities, untied to place and time, verbal and paralanguage, Partial plural, and Heterogeneous (Van Dijk & Hacker, 2018).

The process of reciprocal influence people exercise over one another during social encounters is known as social interaction. It typically refers to in-person interactions where participants are physically present with one another for a predetermined amount of time. However, in modern society, we can also consider social interactions mediated by technology, such as texting or posting on an online community (Little, 2016).

Robert Freed Bales created the social interaction theory, often known as the Social Interaction Systems Theory; this was intended to be based on the dynamics of social contact, reinforced by a value analysis of the encounter's subject matter. Additionally, Robert Bales created interaction process analysis. The group members' behaviors and responses were to be noted by the observer under one of twelve categories, which are showing solidarity, decreasing tension, showing agreement, giving suggestions and opinions, providing and asking orientation, suggestions and opinions, agreeing, showing tension and antagonism (Bales, 2012).

Through their research, Jahan & Kim (2021) found how the construction of social exchange theory influences participants' behaviors in online communities to the benefits felt by its members. Social exchange theory (SET) is a theory that studies social behaviors and interactions between two parties by looking at the cost-benefit elements in which the parties involved relate it to the risks and benefits of the relationship being undertaken. In this SET theory, parties involved in social interaction expect rewards and benefits through their interactions.

The Social Exchange Theory, put forward in 1958 by George C. Homans, an American sociologist, has continued to develop until now, followed by various other sociologists. Social exchange, which shapes social relations and human behavior, is an essential point of Homans' theory. In the context of online communities, findings

regarding the participation of online community actors through a SET perspective reveal that support given to online community members will result in participation that benefits online community users (Jahan & Kim, 2021). In this case, SET shows that social interaction in online communities is based on the exchange of benefits and based on costs.

Through mutual exchange in online communities, members tend to assist other members when they have received help in the past. The benefits expressed in online communities include social, functional, learning, self-esteem, and hedonic benefits based on exchange-oriented relationships between individuals and the bonds created therein (Jahan & Kim, 2021). In the present era, online societies have emerged as a forum for discourse and engagement, enabling the exchange of perspectives on themes congruent with the concerns of various factions facilitating an avenue for articulation and communal backing (Al-Saggaf & Williamson, 2004).

Social networking encloses communication platforms that enable the establishment of connections between individuals from various backgrounds, thereby creating a forum for self-expression and engagement to deliberate on topics that correspond with the preferences of diverse entities (Kapoor et al., 2018). The emergence of these communities has become an essential feature of the routine existence of individuals and institutions, displaying a considerable variation in both the scope and extent of participation (Dover & Kelman, 2018). The growth of digital communities has facilitated a forum for individuals to engage and open up about their experiences in a sincere and caring context. The emergence of internet-based communities has established a platform for individuals to engage and disclose their experiences in a more open and supportive environment (Lüders et al., 2022).

These societies have become an inseparable part of modern-day existence, providing regular updates on personal status, news feeds, chains of commentary, advocacy for political causes, omnipresent reviews, rankings, and evaluations (Rainie et al., 2017). In conclusion, social media communities have become a platform for self-disclosure and interaction to discuss topics aligned with the interests of diverse parties. These communities have provided a digital gathering space for people to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences, and challenges. Online communities have become integral to modern life, providing a platform for self-disclosure, social support, and interaction. The emergence of these communities has become an essential feature of the routine existence of individuals and institutions, displaying a considerable variation in both the scope and extent of participation.

Social media that creates digital spaces is a conductor for a community to have relationships and information. People with the same agenda gather to discuss or share feedback in a digital gathering space. Digital gathering space allowed society to chat or discuss current affairs, especially during the pandemic, when people were coming together to have good conversations and discussions (Sachdeva, 2021). In other words, digital gathering spaces can provide various platforms to connect with parties with various similarities regarding interests, challenges, experiences, and others.

Creating a healthy digital gathering space is the key for countries to grow in the digitalization era. Digital spaces are used by kids from age 5 until seniors, from stay-at-

home moms until state officials must create a healthy digital gathering space (Ridha, 2022). Digital space is not a secondary alternative, but it integrates with human life; adapting to digital gather space is very important, knowing that it can help us communicate and gather, but we have to understand that it is vital to know how to manage and use it wisely as humans are the controller of the digital gathering space (Kementrian, 2021).

As for Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong, digital culture has provided opportunities for communication and activities (Wahyudi & Allmark, 2020). Through social media platforms, Indonesian workers in Hong Kong establish communication and activism to continue to be connected with family and friends, which will indirectly reduce the social isolation they experience (Wahyudi & Allmark, 2020). Social media chat applications via smartphones make access to information more accessible, and they can be involved in the virtual world. In their findings, they underlined the use of Facebook as the most widely used option when Indonesian migrant workers want to stay connected with their relatives, family, and friends in Indonesia. This digital culture allows them to have a digital gathering space for various social interactions.

According to Wijaya (2016), the empowerment processes of migrant domestic workers in the online community context, specifically in digital spaces such as Facebook, highlights the potential of digital spaces to enhance the well-being, awareness of migration challenges, and capabilities to take action towards changes for migrant domestic workers. Online communities can effectively empower migrant workers by providing a platform for collective action, building public awareness, and influencing public policies (Wijaya, 2016). It also shows that online communities can help migrant workers maintain relationships with others and feel connected in a new environment where they face many challenges. The importance of digital spaces in empowering migrant workers provides a unique model for understanding how empowerment processes for migrant workers operate in the online community context.

METHOD

The current study utilizes a qualitative methodology by applying netnography to investigate with an interpretive paradigm. Netnography is an exclusive methodology tailored to scrutinize cybercultures and communities (Bowler, 2010). Due to the escalating number of users participating in online communities such as social media, cyber research has gained significant importance and warrants attention. Netnography furnishes a mechanism explicitly designed to explore the online culture and its communities, enabling researchers to gain insights into the behaviors, attitudes, and interactions among online users (Kozinets & Gambetti, 2020). To explore stories, experiences, and challenges shared in the TKI/TKW Jeddah Riyadh Arab Saudi Facebook community.

The emergence of netnography begins with the use of the term ethnography in cyberspace by Atkinson & Hammersley (1994), where ethnographic research is applied with the participation of ethnographic researchers, directly or indirectly, in their daily

interactions within a certain period to see what happened regarding what happened and collecting data that can be used to get answers to existing research questions (Kozinets & Gambetti, 2020). Research on digital gathering spaces that explores the Facebook community of TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia uses the approach by Robert Kozinets, which emphasizes how to explore interactions and communications that occur in cyberspace, in this case, especially in the social media Facebook community of TKI/TKW communities in Arab Saudi.

The primary data in this study is the Facebook community with a group called TKI/TKW Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Secondary data were obtained from literature studies and news related to TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia. To conduct this research, researchers made observations in the Facebook online community of TKI/TKW of Riyad and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from 2021 to 2023 by first becoming an approved group member. Data is obtained through observation and documentation of activities and interactions that occur within the group. Data analysis was done by classification, coding analysis, and contextualization of the communication within the group. Anonymity and confidentiality of the parties involved will be maintained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia Facebook Community

The Facebook community used in this research was an online community where TKI/TKW from Indonesia gathered to share information and ask questions regarding working as a migrant worker in Saudi Arabia. The community also has members who post job openings and share their stories, such as how to become legal migrant workers, and people in the community use this platform to find missing people. The community consists of 67.309 people living in Saudi Arabia and Indonesia.

This community is strict, knowing that not all people can join immediately; the administrator needs to approve and filter each member to prevent any racism, bullying, or other harmful activities that could happen so that a few admins in this community watch all contents closely. As a private group, there is a rule from the administrator who is encouraged to always establish friendly ties and exchange messages in a polite, dignified manner and a spirit of brotherhood, unity, and friendship. The rules given by the group admin include the prohibition against posting advertisements, gambling, *pesugihan*, insulting, and postings that cause division. In addition, it is strictly forbidden to post things that contain *syirik* (shirk) and *bidah* (heresy). Consequences of existing violations will be issued. The emphasis on prioritizing Islamic culture is a highlight for its members.

The communication in this group always went two ways: one person posts, and the other will respond and interact. An example post on this group is one of the members asking how to send money back to Indonesia via the post office; other members simply interacted and shared a solution from their personal experiences. On the contrary, there are some posts where members share that they came illegally to work and are planning to run away, so they are asking for suggestions on how to return to Indonesia.

Surprisingly, most members who responded told them to go to the embassy and let them take care of the rest, knowing that going back illegally can be dangerous for either TKI/TKW. Caution and solutions were shared as a response to the troubled TKW.

Based on observations, Facebook group TKI/TKW Jeddah Riyadh members who joined were legal and illegal workers. Apart from migrants in Saudi Arabia, other indicated members are family members of TKI/TKW, prospective TKI/TKW who plan to work in Saudi Arabia, and former TKI/TKW. Although not all identities are disclosed by its members, several members do not hesitate to express their identities openly. The members try to share information that may help one another. Members also show their concerns by helping with solutions to problems. The social dynamics in the community itself show that members share empathy towards each other; this can be seen from replies and support given to one another on Facebook posts.

Social Identity

Social identity is part of an individual's self-concept based on perceptions of membership in a social group. In Tafjel's (1957) theory of social identity, this social identity is inseparable from social categories such as race, gender, religion, and other factors that affect this social identity. According to Mapelli (2019), the identity constructed by migrants on Facebook shows that social identity can be negotiated and redefined in discursive practices on social media such as FB. Migrant workers can connect with others by sharing the same experience and also become part of the FB community (Mapelli, 2019). This social identity and interactions in the FB digital community will be formed.

In the TKI/TKW Riyadh Jeddah FB community, the feeling of being part of a group is formed by members sharing various content and personal experiences. This will open connections with their 'friends' in the group; '*ásamualaikum,* my friends all in this group, I ask for prayers that I will always be healthy, amen...(and introductions are often accompanied by posting selfies of themselves). FB can be a privileged space for negotiating and constructing identities for its members. In this context, TKI/TKW often share their data, explain their existence as domestic workers in certain areas, and share the activities they are currently doing. There are also posts showing selfies of themselves or video recordings of them singing or playing musical instruments. Their self-introduction usually begins with greetings; some display self-portraits in various styles.

Figure 1. Group Members Introduces Themselves

Source: TKI/TKW Riyadh and Jeddah Saudi Arabia (2023)

The process of forming the identity of the TKI/TKW, which is distributed in this digital space, becomes the formation of the Identity as desired when they participate. For TKI/TKW, when they enter a new cultural group environment in Saudi Arabia, their self-identity will also experience a shift because their roles and values have also changed. If previously, when they were still in Indonesia, they might have a different identity and a different job, but in the context of being a TKI/TKW, their identity would also change. Many of the members involved in this Facebook group work as domestic workers, drivers, and laborers.

As domestic workers, TKI/TKW who are members of the TKI/TKW FB community in Jeddah Riyadh often refer to themselves or their colleagues as comrades in arms to look for '*fulus*' (money), '*pejuang devisa negara*' (foreign exchange fighters), and '*kaburan*' (fugitives, referring to illegal migrant workers). As friends in the struggle to make a living, their self-esteem as a financial supporter for their family in Indonesia is often mentioned in existing posts, such as greeting with '*hai pejuang nafkah keluarga*' (hi family breadwinner) and '*duhai tulang punggung keluarga*' (the backbone of the family). As they are also called '*pejuang devisa negara*'' (foreign exchange fighters), they also describe their identity as foreign exchange heroes when they refer to their return to Indonesia. There is a classification of their identity as valid TKI/TKW that is communicated through authorized channels and those that are communicated via unauthorized means.

The status of migrant workers as legal migrant workers or illegal migrant workers plays a vital role. In terms of status, their existence in carrying out their daily activities, getting a job, and even protection from the government and agencies have a significant difference. Through various discussions in this digital space, it was revealed how those who work as illegal TKI/TKW have a fragile and vulnerable position, such as being a victim of fraud, being abused physically and financially, unable to live in peace, having problems with the legal authorities in Saudi Arabia. Various cases in the news are related to crime or criminality by TKI/TKW, the majority involving illegal TKI/TKW. Therefore, through various posts and discussions, it is not recommended to become illegal workers or '*kaburan*' people.

TKI/TKW with official status seems to have more self-confidence. The basis for this assurance is primarily derived from the perception that they can be safeguarded against diverse instances that contravene the legal code. On the other hand, from the discussions presented, the wages for legal TKI/TKW appear to be lower than those who are illegal. Those from the official route also experienced significant cuts. Through this difference, TKI/TKW, who are illegal or known as '*kaburan*', enter into the conversation by providing various justifications for their decision to be '*kaburan*'. Other justifications, aside from the higher salary this illegal worker receives, are the freedom to determine their destiny, whom they want to become workers for, and the freedom to explore various possible jobs.

In addition to the self-identity that has been described previously, their identities as Muslims and Muslim women are also not left behind. Emphasis on terms commonly

used by Muslims in Indonesia is shared on various occasions. Starting from the explanation in the group description, which provides sanctions for violations that occur intending to maintain *friendship among Muslim men and women. Then prioritize Islamic culture'*. The statement in this info group explains that they and their members are assumed to be '*Muslims*' who have understanding and become adherents of the Islamic religion.

Other instructions for interacting are the frequent distribution of prayers and various common terms for Muslims, such as statements in posts that are shared while saying a prayer, '*Ya Allah engkau telah mengizinkanku kembali pada hari Jum'at ini, izinkanlah pula kami untuk terus bersyukur atas segala nikmat yang telah engkau beri'* ('O Allah, you have allowed me to return this Friday, also allow us to continue to be grateful for everything. the favors you have given'); *Semoga engkau terus limpahkan segala rezeki dan keberkahan yang tak terhingga untuk kami serta orang tersayang kami. Aamiin Ya Rabbal'alamin'* ('May you continue to bestow all fortune and countless blessings on us and our loved ones. Amen *Ya Rabbal'alamin'*). Self-declaration through Islamic discussion and various Islamic attributes marks their religious identity, although not all members show and share these gestures.

The similarity seen in interactions on the FB page of the Riyadh Jeddah TKI/TKW group is their status as Indonesian citizens who are migrating and trying their luck in Saudi Arabia with locations in Riyadh and Jeddah. Although the position of the region in Saudi Arabia does not rule out the possibility that Not all of the members are in Saudi Arabia: 'Assalamualaikum Wr Wb, Thank God, I work at Haíl, and I can still meet fellow Indonesians, even though they are from different regions. The spirit of foreign exchange heroes family warriors may always be given health and blessed fortune for families in Indonesia, Amin ya Rab.' outgoing breadwinners, as well as foreign exchange heroes, are often found as statements referring to themselves and other group members who are seen as having the same fate and struggle. Cultural identity as an Indonesian remains attached to TKI / TKW workers in the FB TKI / TKW Riyadh Jeddah community.

Support Community

The process of adjusting for TKI/TKW requires recognition and support. Support is obtained from the Facebook community of TKI/TKW Jeddah and Riyadh while actively engaging and participating. The empowerment of the digital interaction space is in its capacity to provide information, interaction, and collaboration (Wijaya, 2016). The involvement of participants in the Riyadh Jeddah TKI/TKW FB group is inseparable from the purpose of the group's presence as a source of information and communication for TKI/TKW in Saudi Arabia.

The sources of information shared in this group are varied and cover many aspects, including those related to work, learning about local culture and habits, learning languages, how to adapt, and searching for people who disappeared while working in Saudi Arabia. Discussions conducted in the FB digital space of the TKI/TKW Riyadh Jeddah group, apart from sharing information, casual communication through self-

introductions, and also sharing entertaining posts, are also carried out through their posts.

Because work is the main factor for their presence in Saudi Arabia, job vacancies or various information related to work are the most frequently asked questions or information found in various posts by group members. Job-related info: starting from available job vacancies or looking for work, from being a housemaid, driver, cook, construction worker, to child caretaker. Requests for job information also varied; '*butuh info loker kerja buat suami istri*' *(*need job locker info for husband and wife), '*info kerja #clining_services Dor to Dor di dubai (Bukan PRT) GAJI 1500AED*.' (work info #clining_services Door to Door in Dubai (Not PRT) SALARY 1500AED).

The style of language used here is also very casual with the use of terms that are familiar to them and can be understood even though there are typos or errors in the use of English terms '*minta info PT yg amanah*' *(*requests for info on trustworthy agency), from prospective TKI/TKW who want to work in Saudi Arabia are also often found from those who are still in Indonesia and intend to become workers in Saudi Arabia; or there are also those who are looking for work after leaving the contract with the previously registered company and are trying their luck by asking for information in the group, or simply asking or giving information about service provider companies or agency which are often referred to as '*sarikah*'. Discussion of work-related information dominates chat rooms and walls.

Discussions regarding employment opportunities, necessary authorizations and procedures for securing a job, and various recommendations for career options in Saudi Arabia are crucial due to the unique challenges of working within its borders. By sharing the various opportunities, the TKI/TKW in the FB community can support each other, provide advice, and even become a helpful resource for their members.

Information sharing also covers daily needs and activities, such as transportation, how to get treatment or drug recommendations for treatment, recommendations for places to get the necessities needed, money transfers, and the range of salaries they get. Creating a virtual community within Facebook can potentially improve the situation of TKI/TKW, who are isolated due to their overseas employment. Through disseminating knowledge, these individuals can engage and exchange ideas with others in similar circumstances, thus reducing their seclusion. Through the shared experiences of group members, this virtual space aids in the acclimation and assimilation of individuals to a new culture, covering a wide range of aspects such as customary practices in Saudi Arabia, anecdotes related to Saudi Arabian employers, and the acquisition of Arabic terms, definitions, and translations. Cultural adaptation and learning communities occur directly or indirectly in this TKI/TKW Riyadh Jeddah group.

Illegal TKI/TKW is still visible by their continuing to provide posts and suggestions that support or discourage others from joining as 'kaburan' TKI/TKW. This can be seen in various existing posts: '*dibutuhkan 1 orang di Riyad yang kaburan, dijamin baik majikannya. Yang bisa masak dan beres-beres. Gaji 2000. Dijemput sama misternya*' (need 1 person in Riyad who is a fugitive, guaranteed by his employer. Who can cook and clean up. Salary 2000. Picked up by mister). This work offers for illegal migrant workers,

'*tapi sekali lagi pikir-pikir ya kalau mau kabur, kalau tingkah laku majikan masih bisa ditolerir, sebaiknya bertahan saja tunggu finish, tapi kalau sudah kelewatan silahkan cari yang lain*' (but once again reconsider it, if you want to run away, if the employer's behavior can still be tolerated, it's best to just hang on and wait for the finish line, but if it's unbearable, please find someone else). This posting is about a maid who had experienced bad treatment before she ran away, although she advised that it is not recommended to be a fugitive.

'*Mau tanya untuk para suhu di grup, tolong jangan di bully ya, kalau misalnya kaburan dari sarika, itu pas pulang susah gak ya? Mohon informasinya*' (I want to ask the master in the group, please do not get me bullied, okay? Please provide information), here are posts from migrant workers who have run away and asked for advice regarding the process of returning to Indonesia; Various posts from TKI/TKW *'kaburan'* do not fully support the act of becoming illegal workers, but sometimes there are several conditions which they think are urgent, so they have reasons on deciding to become illegal workers. The struggles and what they experienced were openly shared and responded to by members of the same group; some supported and advised, and some were against the actions taken.

Networking Community

In the digital space, those with something in common will tend to gather with those similar to themselves. A networking community has a goal to be connected. In the Jeddah Riyadh TKI/TKW FB group, individuals are connected based on the same experience and background as migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. This similarity, coupled with the challenges and problems they often have, gave birth to a stronger sense of belonging between them. Connections that exist in this community are sometimes considered to be resources for answering various things, ranging from job connections, looking for missing people in the hope that someone will identify or be able to provide information regarding the missing person, selling services, promoting their business, and becoming an extension to connect—those in Indonesia and those in Saudi Arabia or vice versa.
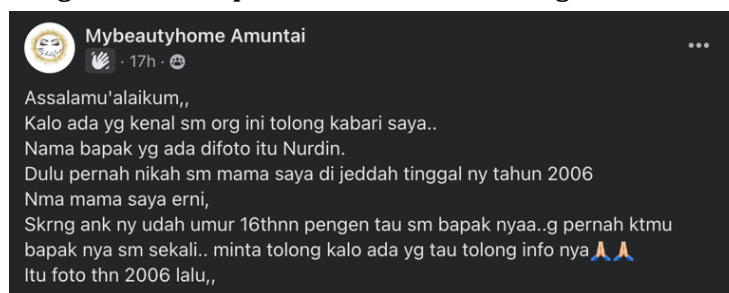
Due to the network that belongs to the FB group, which has 67.8 thousand members, even though the group info there is a prohibition against posting advertisements, some parties still try to post advertisements that sell products or services. One of the service advertisements featuring people being able to earn money (a photo of a man and a woman with lots of money) from Umik Siti Maimunah's account, with the intro 'if you want a consultation, please contact me via WA 085853918***. The number provided is the Indonesian provider number. This information is found in group member accounts posted on wall pages. Posts like this sometimes appear, but the admin has deleted some posts that appear like this and cannot be found again.

The exciting thing about the posts on the TKI/TKW Riyadh Jeddah FB group is that the posts are looking for missing people or relatives whose whereabouts are unknown. Posts from the family include photos of missing people and posts like the following: 'Nurhasanah's name from Sumedang has lost contact with her family, 25 years in Saudi Arabia. A year ago, I learned they were still around Mecca, asking for help. Maybe

someone has seen it.' 'Sorry in advance, sir/madam. Maybe someone has met/known my mother for about 4 years, and there is no news. The latest info is that my mother lives in Riyad. Please help.', 'sorry, maybe someone knows my sister, she has been working in Medina for 7 years, until now there has been no news from her family, and her husband is always waiting for news from her'.

These posts received various responses, ranging from those who wished to be found, felt they had known him, or made various assumptions about the possibilities that could occur. From the response, it has not been found that the missing party has been found. Even though they did not find a solution, posting the missing person seems to have given hope to family members.

Figure 2: A Group Member Posted A Missing Person Info

Source: TKI/TKW Riyadh and Jeddah Saudi Arabia (2023)

There are also posts looking for relatives of people who died while working in Saudi Arabia as migrant workers. This post displays a photo of the original passport of the person who died, with the caption: *'Assalamualaikum wr wb*, sorry I am asking for help in this TKI/TKW group. Does anyone know this passport photo? The problem is she died in Saudi Arabia, please provide information, OK?'. 49 comments responded, and the chat was closed by being informed that the family of the person who died had been found and contacted. The various stories behind the posts of TKI/TKW reflect the various dynamics that must be faced and endured by those who become domestic workers in other countries.

With the desire to share personal stories and experiences, groups in this digital community create a sense of community belonging (Mapelli, 2019) to gain friendship and trust from other group members. Correspondence within the FB community is conducted through the exchange of posts. Through such exchanges, they share their innermost emotions due to being subjected to unfavorable treatment, about romantic relationships in other countries, experiencing various health problems, inquiring about the entitlements they are eligible for, arranging permits, and the like. They anticipate emotional sustenance and experience genuine support if their inquiries are responded to. Sharing will strengthen the sense of unity and reinforce the feeling of belonging to the group. The support provided through interaction within the group will also assist TKI/TKW in dealing with various challenges and finding solutions to problems.

CONCLUSION

Online communities are a place to gather digitally and open various opportunities for online users to interact and communicate. As one of the private FB community groups for Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, the TKI/TKW community in Riyadh, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, shares various stories and experiences experienced in this digital space. The tribulations faced by TKI/TKWs, in addition to their inherent difficulties, serve as an additional layer of complexity to their odyssey. These diverse anecdotes are articulated via posts, submissions on the wall, or in the comments section.

The study results describe how the FB Community of TKI/TKW in Riyadh and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia makes these digital gathering spaces a place to share information, communicate, and collaborate. In their interactions, community members support and empower each other by helping them adjust to their new environment and helping them face challenges. Through this digital community, their identity as Indonesian TKI/TKW is divided between legal and illegal migrant workers. In addition, the religious identity displayed is self-identity as a Muslim and a Muslim woman.

Members of the Jeddah Riyadh TKI/TKW FB group also find space to express and show their existence through posting words, photos, and self-videos. However, self-exposing can sometimes lead to sharing personal information that should not be done in public spaces. The notion of cultural identity among Indonesian individuals is a concept that persistently remains intertwined with the community of TKI / TKW laborers located in the FB TKI / TKW Riyadh Jeddah locality as a digital community that provides support to Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, upon receiving responses to their inquiries TKI/TKW expect to be provided with emotional nourishment and authentic assistance.

Disseminating information will promote solidarity and strengthen the sense of being part of the collective. The support provided through participation within the group will contribute to the resolution of various challenges, aid in identifying feasible solutions, and help them adapt to Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the connectivity and networks established are expected to serve as valuable resources to aid fellow members. Establishing healthy digital meeting places to facilitate communication and collaboration in digitization is crucial.

For future research, some suggestions that can be given include exploring the role of digital platforms in supporting and empowering migrant workers in other countries. Another suggestion for future research examining the potential of digital platforms in promoting the rights and welfare of migrant workers, especially in dealing with illegal migrant workers, is that it will also provide valuable insights for studies related to TKI/TKW.

REFERENCES

Addeo, F., Delli Paoli, A., Esposito, M., & Ylenia Bolcato, M. (2019). Doing Social Research on Online Communities: The Benefits of Netnography. *ATHENS JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES*, *7*(1), 9–38. https://doi.org/10.30958/ajss.7-1-1

Al-Saggaf, Y., & Williamson, K. (2004). *Online Communities in Saudi Arabia: Evaluating the Impact on Culture Through Online Semi-Structured Interviews*. http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/

Bales, R. F. (2012). *Social Interaction System* (2nd ed.). Transaction Publishers.

Bowler, G. M. (2010). Netnography: A method specifically designed to study cultures and communities online. *Qualitative Report*, *15*(5), 1270–1275. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2010.1341

Cárdenas, D., & de la Sablonnière, R. (2020). Participating in a new group and the identification processes: The quest for a positive social identity. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *59*(1), 189–208. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12340

Dover, Y., & Kelman, G. (2018). Emergence of online communities: Empirical evidence and theory. *PLoS ONE*, *13*(11). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0205167

Jahan, N., & Kim, S. W. (2021). Understanding online community participation behavior and perceived benefits: a social exchange theory perspective. *PSU Research Review*, *5*(2), 85–100. https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-12-2019-0036

Kementrian, K. (2021, November 24). *Kita Harus Memahami Cara Kerja Ruang Digital*. Kontan.

Kozinets, R. V, & Gambetti, R. (2020). Netnography Unlimited. In *Netnography Unlimited*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003001430

Little, W. (2016). *Introduction to Sociology* (2nd ed.). BCcampus.

Lüders, A., Dinkelberg, A., & Quayle, M. (2022). Becoming "us" in digital spaces: How online users creatively and strategically exploit social media affordances to build social identity. *Acta Psychologica*, *228*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103643

Mapelli, G. (2019). The identity construction of migrants on facebook. *Languages*, *4*(3). https://doi.org/10.3390/languages4030052

Mintarsih, A. (2019). Digital gathering spaces. *Migration, Mobility, & Displacement*, *4*(Spring).

Naurah, N. (2023, February 14). *Daftar Platform Media Sosial yang Paling Banyak Digunakan 2023, Facebook Juaranya*. Goodstats.

Rainie, L., Anderson, J., & Albright, J. (2017, March 29). *The Future of Free Speech, Trolls, Anonymity and Fake News Online*. Pew Research Center.

reddit, & globalwebindex. (2019). *The era of We*.

Ridha, M. (2022, November 14). *Mewujudkan Ruang Digital yang Sehat*. Detiknews.

Rizkinaswara, L. (2021, September 16). *Menkominfo: Ruang Digital Harus Bermanfaat*. Kominfo.

Sachdeva, R. (2021a, August 14). *Digital gathering spaces for marginalized groups help spur connections during pandemic*. The Canadian Press.

Sachdeva, R. (2021b, August 14). Digital gathering spaces for marginalized groups help spur connections during pandemic. *The Canadian Press*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/digital-gathering-spaces-1.6141181

Van Dijk, J. A. G. M., & Hacker, K. L. (2018). *Internet and Democracy in the Network Society* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Wahyudi, I., & Allmark, P. (2020). *Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong: Smartphone culture and activism Buruh migran Indonesia di Hong Kong: Budaya ponsel pintar dan aktivisme.*

Wijaya, S. (2016). *Empowerment in online communities: An investigation of Indonesian migrant domestic workers.* Queensland University of Technology.

Wu Song, F. (2009). *Virtual Communities: Bowling Alone, Online Together (Digital Formations)* (First). Peter Lang Publishing Inc.