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Mini-Symposium as a Forum of Discussion and Workshop

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Mini-Symposium as a Forum of Discussion and Workshop

This December issue of Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia (Makara Hubs-Asia) features papers from the two mini-symposia that were held in 2019 as well as other papers that resonate with the themes of the symposia. This year Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia (Makara Hubs-Asia) got the opportunity to host two mini-symposia. The first symposium took place in January 2019, carrying the theme Young People and Media. The presence of digital media has made it part of today's children and families in many places around the world, including in Asian countries. In Indonesia, for example, internet penetration has increased from approximately 34.5 percent in 2014 to 64.8 percent in 2018 (Indonesia Association of Internet Service Provider, 2017, 2018). The 2018 data from the Indonesia Association of Internet Providers showed that 66 and 91 percent of individuals aged 10 – 14 and 15 – 19, respectively, are connected to the Internet, suggesting the importance of digital technology in their life. On the one hand, the availability of the internet and communication technology provides affordances to young internet users (e.g., education, entertainment, media production, entrepreneurship). At the same time, today's youth encounters various online risks, including undesirable content, identity theft, and violation of privacy. The emergence of digital and mobile media and all changes that follow the presence of the technology brings new research opportunities as well as challenges for scholars to work on: How children, teens, and emerging adults use the new media? What are the effects of digital media content on youth and their behavior? How should parents and caregivers manage children's media use?

In this issue, Shin and Huo (2019) reported factors that might affect the decision to follow brands of consumer products on WeChat among Chinese emerging adults. They found among their respondents, in addition to the young adults' materialism, peer and parents are influential in deciding which brands to follow on social media. This study joins existing studies on media and the consumers, particularly those that take the perspectives of youth and their meaning-making of the product brands and consumer values in the context of the digital platform.

Liu, Lwin, and Ang (2019) investigated the role of parents in mediating their teens' identity disclosure on Facebook. The researchers reported that parental mediation seems to be effective in reducing visual personal identity disclosure through increasing privacy concerns, especially among teens with a larger number of friends on the social networking site. The finding implies that parents need to take more effort to know the size of their children's online network and cultivate children's awareness of online risks and privacy concerns.

Besides materialistic values and privacy issues, internet addiction has also been one of the risks that have received scholarly attention. In their study, Kurniasanti and colleagues (2019) tested factors that predict internet screen time among Indonesian teens. The finding of their study, particularly the self-perception on whether an individual is addicted to the internet, can be used as a basis for a longitudinal study to make a causal inference on this critical issue.

The fourth article in this issue takes a slightly different turn and beautifully bridges the topic of youth and media and the topic of diversity. Adji (2019) used the lenses of sociology and cultural studies in analyzing the characters in the popular and best-selling Indonesian teen novel "*Assalamualaikum Beijing*." In her analysis, Adji examined how the author of the novel, Asma Nadia, constructed the storyline and juxtaposed the plot to the mainstream Indonesian television soap operas. Furthermore, the study also touches on how the characters in the story went through the cultural, ethnic, and religious differences among them, where cultural submission in the form of religious conversion was chosen as a solution to manage the difference between the story's protagonists.

The second mini-symposium was conducted in October 2019 with "Diversity and Healthy Relationships" as its theme. The theme was chosen for several reasons. First, diversity is a prominent issue in the development of an increasingly global world. Diversity comes in various forms, including gender, ethnicity, political and religious beliefs, or socioeconomic status. A survey conducted by Pew Research Center in 2019 shows that people in the world overall feel that the world is more diverse today. According to the study, in the Asia-Pacific nations, South Koreans, Australians, and Indonesians perceived that the composition of their country is becoming more varied. Second, diversity is a two-eyed sword: it can enrich a society, but it can also cause intergroup conflicts or even violence that stems from biased thinking, prejudice, and discrimination (Crisp & Beck, 2005; Fiske, 2002; Ginges, Sheikh, Atran, & Argo, 2016; Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002; Laurin, Gaucher & Kay, 2013). This paradox raises the question of how an institution, community, or government should manage the different kinds of individuals at different layers of the social system? Managing differences without an adequate understanding of the nature of the

differences may cause a backlash and increasing the risk of conflict and violence instead of elevating society.

The second four articles in this issue focus on the issue of diversity. As a multi-ethnic country, Indonesia faces various challenges related to the issue of diversity, particularly related to the construct of identity. In their study, Suryani, Setiadi, Nurrachman, Panggabean, and Wibawa (2019) explain that regarding group identity, both Chinese and non-Chinese groups in urban contexts, national identity is found to be stronger than ethnic identity. This finding suggests that different ethnic identities can be united through national identity (i.e., being "Indonesians") as a superordinate identity. Furthermore, it also resonates with the results of the 2019 Pew Research survey that Indonesians tend to have a positive outlook about the diversity in the country.

While Suryani and colleagues examined social identity among Chinese Indonesians as ethnic minorities in the country, Susana, Mayawati and Bernardo (2019) focused on a different kind of diversity by investigating the acceptance of homosexuals in Indonesia. In their study, Susana et al. measured the Perceived Threat of Homosexuals among Indonesians. This instrument is essential to identify negative attitudes and discrimination against gay and the potential conflicts related to it.

One of the critical points in the research on diversity issues is how cultural differences in the global era should be approached. In his research, Bernardo (2019) uses the concept of polyculturalism as an avenue to accepting cultural diversity and cultural similarities. He found that personality traits and polyculturalism can predict cultural intelligence, both of which are influenced by cultural differences.

Another source of diversity is age or cohort. While Baby Boomers start to enter the age of retirement, the Millennials and Generation Z are the current jobseekers in the labor market. The finding of Sartika's (2019) study illustrates the importance of consistency between personal and organizational values among Millennials and Generation Z. It implied that in order to retain their employees, organizations should find candidates whose personal values resonate with the values of the institution.

Technological changes, as well as the increased diversity in societies, necessitates the production of the right knowledge for scholars in social science and humanities. Furthermore, researchers in social sciences and humanities also face the challenge to conduct studies that can serve as a guideline and evidence for policymaking. As Indonesia's Minister of Finance, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, S.E., M.Sc., Ph.D., expressed in her speech at the Diversity and Health Relationship symposium, the reality of implementation at the organization and policy level is still far from the expectation. It suggests that scholars need to conduct high-quality research and to find the avenues to implement the findings of their work.

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