

Online Human Trafficking: The Impact of Social Media Used

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Abstract: This paper examines the human trafficking victims caused by the rapid flow of information as a result of the technology. The purpose of this paper is to discover the negative impact of technological development resulting in human trafficking victims. This research was conducted using a qualitative method by interviewing victims who had experienced human trafficking in Cianjur Regency, West Java. The results of this study indicate that women who were involved in human trafficking had low education. As a result, they were unable to filter the rapid flow of information well, and thus made them the victims of human trafficking. Social media have encouraged women to be tempted to work and earn money to meet their needs so that they were trapped in human trafficking.

1 INTRODUCTION

In this era of modernization, the ability to use technology is considered important. Technology provides benefits to people's lives, either urban communities or villagers. One of the benefits of technology is to make it easier for people to obtain information and interact with others in different parts of the world.

Technology can generate positive and negative impacts (Andari, 2011). This study reveals that one of the negative impacts of social media is making a person unsatisfied with himself (Perloff, 2014). Facebook is an application that provides chat feature; even users can upload photos and all activities on Facebook and can be seen by everyone. Social media could give a direct impact on a person who is dissatisfied with oneself, especially to adolescent girls or adult women (Perloff, 2014). This causes women in rural areas who do not have jobs because of having low educational want to have a job to meet their needs, especially to meet their lifestyle.

Low education and economic limitations make these women trapped in human trafficking; the victims of human trafficking got a job offered through Facebook which eventually lead to human trafficking. The low level of women's education has caused the women in the village unable to filter the information properly so they can be easily tempted to fake offers by the human trafficking syndicates (Muflichah, Wintoro, Rahadi Wesi, 2009).

Poverty or the feminization of poverty which is the main factor of human trafficking victims is easily deceived. Women in villages who are unskilled and are lured by large amount of money are the targeted by human trafficking crime syndicates (Muflichah; Wintoro; Rahadi Wesi, 2009). Human trafficking has existed long ago, globalization has transformed and increased human trafficking for sexual exploitation about ten times and gained enormous profits (Chi & Chung, 2009).

The problem of human trafficking occurs in many countries. In Brazil, for example, girls are trafficked from rural to urban areas to work as prostitutes. In china, girls are trafficked as poor brides for sale from rural areas to urban areas (Feingold, 2005).

There have been many studies that reveal about human trafficking, and the impact of social media. The study revealed that globalization has caused many problems one of which is human trafficking (Andari, 2011). Another study conducted by Muflichah, Wintoro, Rahadi Wesi (2009) found that human trafficking is caused by poverty and becomes an easy target for women in the village because it has been deceived by invitation to work with a high salary. Study by Chi and Chung (2009) also revealed that culture contributes to human trafficking, e.g., women's culture in Asia who wants to meet the needs her family financially. Social media can make a person become unconfident and has a sense of dissatisfaction with himself because he sees others (Perloff, 2014).

This study aims to investigate human trafficking caused by social media. The victims cannot filter information well enough so that they can be easily deceived by human trafficking crime syndicates.

2 METHODS

This study was a qualitative research with descriptive analytic method chosen based on the problems studied. This research tries to describe the cause of human trafficking victims caused by the seductive lifestyle which resulted in trapped in human trafficking.

This research was conducted in Cianjur Regency, West Java Province. The participants in this research were five people. Four of them were human trafficking victims and one was the employee of Integrated Service Center for Women and Children Empowerment (P2TP2A) in Cianjur Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interview to the participants. The data were then analysed using content analysis.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSION

Based on the results of interviews conducted to the P2TP2A officer, technology can affect the case of human trafficking. This is because technology such as the Internet can be used as a medium to convey the message of recruiting victims of human trafficking. In addition, the syndicates use technology as a tool to communicate with other actors residing within the country and abroad because this case involves not only one country but also several countries. The victims were usually sent to other cities in Indonesia, such as Batam, and to other countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

The case of human trafficking in Malaysia can be found in the study of Niko (2016) describes the Indonesian people experienced economic constraints so that they are employed as domestic servants and even become servants of lust in discotheques in the Sarawak region, Malaysia.

The officer added that the victims were falling into human trafficking cases because of their lack of knowledge so that they were easily exposed to the syndicates. The majority of the victims were primary and junior high school graduates, and only a small percentage of those went to senior high schools. Based on the fact, the researcher concludes that one

can be involved in human trafficking case because they have less qualified knowledge.

Related to that, Farhana (2012) mentioned the factors that cause human trafficking include materialism, poverty, family destruction, out-migration network, lack of education and information, insensitivity and gender injustice, official corruption and collaboration. Meanwhile, Sylvia (2014) describes poverty and low formal education can cause human trafficking. Truong (2006) explains that poverty and lack of opportunity are considered as contributing factors to the problem of trafficking. Based on these opinions, it is revealed that one of the causes of human trafficking case is a lack of education and information. It is clear that women in Cianjur Residence who are lack of knowledge and use the internet can be easily deceived by fake information.

Another informant, Nina, revealed that she was invited by his friend via Facebook account to work in Singapore. At that time, about five people were sent to Singapore. They were offered jobs as administrative employees with a promising salary. However, after arriving in Batam they were examined related to their identity and destination. The officers saw no indication of fraud, then called P2TP2A Cianjur and returned the five girls from Cianjur. P2TP2A has cooperated with Batam police government because there are many cases of human trafficking sent to Batam. When there are victims from Cianjur, they directly report to P2TP2A. Then after the suspect was caught, who was the father of one of the five victims. He acknowledged that the purpose of sending the five girls was not to be an administrative clerk, but for other purposes.

Another informant, Ani, has experienced to apply for a job found on her friend's Facebook page. Because she was unemployed, she immediately sent a message via Facebook to the person who wrote the status. Then, they met somewhere and finally she was invited to go to work in Surabaya. Finally, she was trapped in the case of human trafficking. She did not know that the job was not actually a café waiter, but as a prostitute. After she started working and felt reluctant to continue the work, she finally escaped and reported to the police.

Another case was experienced by Eni, a 15-year-old student, who was initially invited by someone to work but was later trapped as a prostitute in the Cianjur area. Based on her confession, she had to serve a man in a villa or hotel and her employer was waiting for her during she served men. After more than a month of working, she contacted her friend over the phone to offer work with a reason that she

was tired of working alone and needed friends to work with her. After she met her friend, but her friend did not accept to work as a prostitute, she finally reported to his parents and reported to P2TP2A Cianjur. As a result, Eni, who was earlier initially as a victim, became entangled as the perpetrator for recruiting her friend to be involved in the case of human trafficking.

Then, another informant named Nia was invited by someone to work at a café in Batam. Seeing her friends on her Facebook page with a modern style encourages her to get a job with a higher salary. She was curious to see other areas and want to feel what it feels like to board the plane. Flight experience, according to her, can be a pride and also can increase her confidence to be exposed to others. It made her accept the job offer. However, after being in Batam, she was then sent to Malaysia to serve as a housemaid. However, she eventually escaped to the Indonesian embassy in Malaysia. Then, she returned to Indonesia even without her salary.

Technology can indeed be a scary thing when faced with those who have lack of education resulting in social problems such as human trafficking. However, this is not entirely the fault of the victims because those who participate and play important roles in this case are the traffickers who abuse technology for their personal advantages. Thus, the negative thing that arises as the impact of rapid technological development is not coming from the technology itself but from the users who are irresponsible.

The existence of social media such as Facebook can connect individuals with other individuals in different areas. They can add a lot of friends with people who were previously unknown. In correlation with the results of current study, recruitment of human trafficking victims was not only done by agents, but it can start from the introduction through social media Facebook. In the beginning, individuals meet each other on Facebook, and then invite to meet each other. This becomes a great pride for some people because they can know and meet other people in different areas. The meeting then led to the job offer with promising salary, so that in the end individuals are trapped in the case of human trafficking.

Technology could be a disaster for the community if someone lacks of the necessary education and information. It makes some women in Cianjur District easy to be influenced through the job vacancies offered in the social media. Job offers with high salary are difficult for them to refuse. People with extensive knowledge will rethink when they are

offered a job with an irrational salary, while those with less informed conditions accept the offer without re-thinking or seeking further information related to the job offered.

Facebook can be an intermediary medium for a person to communicate then culminate in the recruitment of individuals to become victims of human trafficking. On the other hand, Facebook also provides benefits to be a media for victims to report or ask help to their Facebook friends that they were in a dangerous condition or persecuted as victims. Finally, the victim can be helped for reporting to their friend. Then the victims are handled by the authorities and P2TP2A institution. Therefore, through this technology, the crime of human trafficking case can be revealed.

Related to that, as delivered from the research result of Nurbayani, et al (2015) the positive impact of social media is easy to get information and communication, and to add friendship. All the human trafficking victims were informed that they accepted the job offer because they wanted to be successful like other friends. They see the phenomenon through social media Facebook based on posts from their FB friends (Perloff, 2014).

If it is associated with Roucek and Warren's (1963) description of the characteristics of rural communities, one of which is that the village community is homogeneous in terms of livelihoods such as farmers. However, at present, these characteristics have changed. The facts in this study show that people only want to get jobs outside the farm, and they even intend to go outside the region or abroad.

All victims of human trafficking victims can be considered as poor families. This is proven at the time researchers did the observation. Many people live in slum areas, and most of them want to change their lives. Unfortunately, they are not aware how to get appropriate jobs, and use social media to get information related to job vacancy. Due to their lack in knowledge, they could be easily trapped by the syndicate of human trafficking.

In relation to the feminist theory described by Saptari and Holzner (1997, p.47), it is the idea of awakening the low position of women in society, and the desire to correct or change those circumstances. In this case, the women must realize to get their rights to improve their living condition. Their desire to change their destiny is emancipation.

The informants in this study accepted the offer of job to earn more money. Seeing Facebook postings of people who have achieved success have pushed them to try their luck overseas. This is a critical mindset

that women not only stay at home but also have to seek for a change.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and analysis of the data presented in this study, it can be concluded that the technology that is developed so rapidly and so sophisticatedly can cause a disaster for a community if the community has a low level of education and literacy. The information provided through the internet, such as social media, will be easy to spread and difficult to block. Those who are lack of information, tend to take it for granted without capturing the information disseminated through the internet. As a result, they are easily trapped in the case of human trafficking. However, the technology also provides many benefits. The results of research show technology, particularly social media, can move women to work outside. By seeing postings from friends on Facebook who post about luxurious lifestyle, for example, women are motivated to get a similar status so they are looking for a better job. There are changes in people's thought that women should work to change lives, so that they are not only fixated on domestic work. Their decision to work is emancipation. Unfortunately, sometimes their strong motivation is not equipped with sufficient knowledge and literacy skills so that for some women, particularly from rural areas, limited knowledge can lead them to negative things such as human trafficking case. Thus, education becomes very important in the advancement of technology and information.

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