The Work Choices of the Millennials Generation in Natuna's Maritime Space

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Abstract

This research aims to elaborate on the various factors underlying the millennial generation of Natuna Regency in determining their work choices in the maritime space. The conditions of the maritime space in Natuna Regency, the rapid development of technology, and the pace of land area development are conditions faced by Natuna millennials in making their work choices. This study uses qualitative research methods. The object of study in this research is the work choices of the millennial generation in Natuna Regency, Riau Islands Province. This paper is part of a reflection on research about maritime culture. The approach used is descriptive-analytical. The results of this study describe how external conditions such as technology, development, and geography influence the internal conditions of millennial agents. This interaction results in a logic of taste and work practices in the maritime space of millennial agents in Natuna Regency. The various external and internal conditions experienced by Natuna millennials accumulate and form a logic of taste that produces values, leading to several maritime practices that have evolved from the maritime work practices of previous generations.

Keywords: Millennial Generation, Work Choices, Maritime, Technology.

INTRODUCTION

The millennial generation is a generational group identified by several scholars due to the distinct characteristics found within each generational cohort. These characteristics differ because each generation experiences unique socio-cultural conditions as they develop over time (Serafino, 2018; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). The perception and recognition of these differing characteristics influence cooperation among people in social, political, and economic capacities and extend to entities in the public, informal, commercial, and non-governmental sectors (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

The distinct characteristics of each generation contain further meanings and values related to how each generation views life. These unique meanings and values tend to lead to forms of practices that evolve from generation to generation. The meanings and values, or what Pierre Bourdieu terms the "logic of taste," arise from the life journey or personal history experienced by individuals or agents (Bourdieu, 1993). This logic of taste underpins each choice made and the practices decided upon.

This means that the personal history of each individual, with all its socio-cultural conditions, shapes the distinctive characteristics of their generational group. In the views of several experts on generational comparisons, there are several generational groups popular in society, such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y or Millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha (Juhász, Bencsik, & Horváth-Csikós, 2016; Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015; Ricucci, 2018). The millennial generation, which is the subject of this study, is a group that has experienced a socio-cultural transition, particularly during rapid technological development.

The socio-cultural conditions experienced by millennials in the technology sector range from the absence of digital technology to the advanced digital technology of today. The contrasting personal history experienced by this generation is unique because these socio-cultural conditions were not experienced by the preceding and succeeding generations. In several studies, Generation X is noted to lack experience with technology, particularly digital technology, resulting in a majority of Generation X lacking competence in digital technology.
On the other hand, Generation Z, which grew up amidst rapid technological advancements, has extensive personal history with technology, leading to a generation highly skilled in using digital technology (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Yakob, 2009).

The millennial generation experienced different conditions compared to the two generations before and after them. Millennials grew and developed during the transition and evolution of digital technology. Therefore, millennials are further divided into two subgroups based on their relationship and competence with digital technology. There is no dominant group within the millennial generation regarding their relationship with and competence in digital technology. This contrasts with Generation X, dominated by those lacking digital technology competence, and Generation Z, dominated by those proficient in digital technology.

Given that the millennial generation is not dominated by technological competence, it is interesting to explore other external conditions that shape the characteristics of this generational group, including geographical or environmental conditions where the generation grows and develops. This study examines the maritime environment in Natuna Regency, where millennials grow and develop. Geographical conditions influence human actions and behavior (Lefebvre, 1991). In the interaction between humans and the environment, nature or the environment intervenes for humans to adapt, while humans use their intellect to alter natural patterns to meet their needs.

This article specifically elaborates on these two external conditions within the personal history experienced by millennials in Natuna. It further illustrates how these conditions play a role in determining work choices made by the millennial generation in Natuna Regency. Previous studies on the three topics—millennials, technology, and maritime—have not been integrated into a single study. Previous studies have only combined two of the three topics, such as millennials and technology, technology and maritime, or millennials and maritime. Moreover, these three topics are discussed in response to the context of work choices, particularly in the maritime space of Natuna Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Millennial Maritime Work Choices in the Analysis of Pierre Bourdieu’s Practice Theory

Several factors influence work choices in maritime areas, including space and time, inherited understanding, technological advancements, and government policies. These factors affect millennials' work choices in the maritime space. The personal history of people who attain higher education levels differs from those who only complete basic education or none at all. This difference in educational attainment leads to diverse perspectives, tastes, and interests in technology between these groups (Pierre Bourdieu, 1993).

Using Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory as an analytical framework, this study presents the dialectics and dynamics of millennial agents and their maritime structure in determining their work choices. This study highlights the various values and practical logics of Natuna’s society and the personal history of agents or actors in Natuna, illustrated through Bourdieu's concept of habitus with all its influencing aspects. It also examines the different conditions of Natuna's maritime space, in terms of class structure and domination.

The practice theory approach emphasizes the strong historical dimension of social structure dynamics and governance. This dynamic allows the formation of an undeniable cultural background. Rather than proposing a unified cultural conception, practice theory acknowledges the coexistence of alternative practices within the same cultural environment, different conceptions or perspectives on the same practice, and the struggle to maintain and reproduce cultural norms (Rouse, 2006). Additionally, practice theory serves as a resource for understanding cross-cultural interactions brought about by migration, political domination, or trade relations (Bourdieu, 1998; Rorty, 1991; Rouse, 2006).

Practice theory generally shares the conception of social or cultural structures that exist only through their ongoing reproduction in practice. These practices vary in the degree of stability they can maintain (Heidegger, 2001; Schatzki, Cetina, & Savigny, 2001; Taylor, 2010). The conditions associated with specific class existence produce habitus, a system of durable and transferable dispositions, structured structures that tend to function as structuring structures (Bourdieu, 1990). Thus, Bourdieu views habitus as having a level of stability.
comparable to the concept of culture in classical anthropology. The objective homogenization of group or class
habitus, resulting from the homogeneity of existence conditions, allows practices to be objectively coordinated
without conscious calculation or reference to norms, and mutually adjusted without direct interaction
(Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu, 1998).

Pierre Bourdieu's dialectical thinking on the dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism has produced
remarkable concepts that have inspired subsequent scholars. He broadly argues that both subjectivism and
objectivism fail to comprehend subjective objectivity. Bourdieu stresses that neither approach is adequate for
analyzing social reality: subjectivism fails to understand the social foundations shaping consciousness, while
objectivism fails to recognize the social reality formed by individuals' conceptions and representations of the
social world (Bourdieu, 1990).

To avoid the subjectivism-objectivism dilemma, Bourdieu focuses on practice, which he sees as the result of
the dialectic between structure and agency. Social practice is neither objectively determined nor the result of
free choice. Bourdieu develops a concept of agency free from the voluntarism and idealism of subjectivist
understanding, and a concept of social space free from the deterministic and mechanistic causality inherent in
many objectivist approaches. Thus, Bourdieu’s genetic structuralism or genetic sociology combines the analysis
of objective social structures with the analysis of the origins of mental structures, which are socially formed and
crystallized in certain individuals, leading to practices (Bourdieu, 1990). This perspective sees that objective
structures and agents' subjective representations are continuously intertwined and dialectical.

Bourdieu introduces key concepts to explore the integration between agency and structure and to reconcile the
conflict between subjectivism and objectivism. This subjectivist (agent) and objectivist (structure) dialectic
introduces concepts such as habitus, capital, field, and doxa in Bourdieu's practice theory. These concepts are
crucial in measuring the practices of individuals or groups within a social space (Bourdieu, 1990). Borrowing
the term field from Bourdieu, a field or arena is a network of relations between objective positions within the
structure (Bourdieu, 2015; Krisdianto, 2014; Ritzer & Goodman, 2014). A field is also a structured relationship
that unconsciously regulates the positions of individuals and groups in spontaneously formed social life
(Bourdieu, 1998; Ritzer & Goodman, 2014).

Within the field (arena), agents occupying various positions or creating new positions (class structure) compete
for control of interests or resources specific to the field. The maritime field then creates positions for the agents
involved. These positions refer to the rules within the maritime field itself. Thus, an agent's position in the
maritime context may differ from their position in other fields. Maritime practices in the maritime field are
highly determined by the agent's position within that field, making capital's role significant in determining the
agent's position in the maritime field.

Maritime capital or power is believed to determine agents' positions in the maritime field. It is not surprising
that within the maritime field, there is competition, investment, and capital distribution. Since capital is of
interest to each agent in the maritime field, domination in capital distribution also occurs as a continuing impact.
Bourdieu's depiction of class structure shows the relationship between taste and social class, where taste
functions socially in the process of social class reproduction and manifests as symbolic domination.

Bourdieu views lifestyle as a systematic product of class habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Taste is the practical
operation of class habitus, enabling the order of lifestyle differences based on class to materialize. Bourdieu
sees taste as a generative formula that produces lifestyle, uniting various preferences, allowing social agents to
express the same expression and intention across all sub-arenas (fields) of symbolism, such as in choosing
clothing, food, or work (Bourdieu, 1984).

**DISCUSSION**

**Millennial Generation, Technology, and Work Choices**

Generations are defined as communities of individuals belonging to the same age group born around the same
period of time. Generations are often considered historical communities with a hierarchy of values, attitudes,
and common interests shaped by specific experiences such as wars, changes in social systems, and economic
 crises (Simko, 2017). However, in each case of grouping individuals into these generations, it is motivated by the belief that they each possess a set of different values and attitudes as a result of shared events and experiences. The millennial generation is the first to come of age in the new millennium, shaped by significant events such as the rise of the Internet and social media, fundamentally altering communication and relationship-building.

The current maritime generation, having traversed through education and embraced technological advancements, refers to the concept proposed by Diana Oblinger and James Oblinger, consisting of baby boomers (1947-1964) in smaller numbers, Generation Xers (1965-1980), Generation Y/Netgen/millennials (1981-1995), and post-millennials (1995-present) who are currently maturing (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Putra, 2016). Fundamental understanding in grouping generations often refers to the social-cultural events and phenomena experienced by these groups of people. These events and phenomena create collective memories that impact lives (Dencker, Joshi, & Martocchio, 2008; Putra, 2016). Among these generational groups, millennials or Generation Y are particularly interesting to study in this maritime context. The current age range of millennials, approximately 29-43 years old, marks a period of maturity in their lives. This age range also represents their productive years, providing them with higher life mobility compared to other generational groups. Furthermore, millennials, according to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, have been significantly influenced by technological developments more than any other generation.

Technology is an integral part of millennials' lives, shaping their communication, work practices, and leisure activities (Camp, Young, & Bushardt, 2022). Millennials stand out in their use and engagement with technology, as they were born during the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) boom and massive globalization (Mohd et al., 2019). The social impact of technology on millennials has significant implications for higher education and leadership, influencing how they interact with information and engage with society (Au-yong-oliveira, Gonçalves, Martins, & Branco, 2017).

Millennials are more inclined to be comfortable in smart environments due to their personal history with technology (Veiga, Santos, Águas, & Santos, 2017). Their relationship with technology is deeply ingrained in their daily lives, affecting their behaviors, preferences, and interactions across various application platforms. Their comfort with technology, preference for digital communication, and proficiency in using technological tools make them a unique and influential generation in the digital era.

Previous research suggests that millennials prioritize work values when determining their work activities (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Indriyana, 2017; Twenge et al., 2010). The paradigm shift from land to sea as a central area significantly influences the level of work values in the eyes of millennials, particularly maritime millennials. Millennials are considered innovative and expressive, emotionally and intellectually, believed to be capable of reinforcing and developing maritime identity and practices.

The distinctive characteristics of millennials make this study increasingly intriguing to explore. Not only because of their close relationship with technology, making them an interesting generation, but also because millennials, or Generation Y (as termed by Lynne C. Lancaster), tend to attribute meaning to their work. Thus, if a work loses its meaning for Generation Y, they easily leave it (Lancaster, 2004; Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012). This underscores millennials' strong desire for freedom. Furthermore, millennials also highly value education and a balanced lifestyle, consistent with previous psychological studies on millennials. Their desires and ambitions grow alongside their skills and technological access, proving millennials to be rational in their approach to work. This is further enhanced by their high regard for education, positioning millennials as having the potential to achieve their ambitions and goals (Juhász et al., 2016; Twenge et al., 2010).

Millennials tend to choose works that align with their life values and offer opportunities for personal growth and development (Ip, Liang, Lai, & Chang, 2020). Millennials' expectations for their future workplaces continue to evolve in response to the dynamics of modern work environments. The combination of millennials, technology, and work choices becomes increasingly fascinating to delve deeper into.

Maritime millennials in Natuna Regency, the focus of this study, experience intriguing conditions. The geographical position of Natuna Regency, with many small islands and a larger maritime area compared to land,
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along with its distance from the provincial capital of Riau Islands and the national capital of Indonesia, affects infrastructure development and human resources in Natuna Regency, which lag behind other regions in Indonesia (Arman & Swastiwi, 2018; Igiasi, Wahyuni, & Niko, 2022). This condition also influences the personal history of millennials in Natuna in living their lives.

Such geographical conditions create disparities in various aspects of community life and are reflected in limited access and living practices. Developmental, social, economic, and technological disparities are manifested in the limited forms of practices that millennials can engage in on several island areas. Because these disparities are not only visible by comparing regions outside of Natuna Regency but also among islands or regions within Natuna Regency. Several areas that serve as district centers or county centers receive better infrastructure development compared to other island areas.

Millennials at the beginning of their works are said to be interested in workplaces that provide interesting works, work-life balance, work security, and necessary information (Kuron et al., 2015). Policy gaps in development, which are so focused on land areas and seem to neglect coastal areas and their seas, reemerge as findings of the study. Because of the minimal development policy in coastal areas and their seas presenting values where land areas are more attractive, safer, and easier to access information, millennials tend to prefer working in land areas and leaving the sea as a workspace. Land areas promise easy access to information, especially digital information, with rapid development of information infrastructure in land areas. Land is seen as a more attractive work arena compared to maritime areas.

Millennials are characterized by their familiarity and comfort with digital technology, growing up during a period of rapid technological advancement. The impact of technology on millennials is extensive and diverse, affecting various aspects of their lives including communication, social interaction, work habits, and recreational activities. One significant aspect of millennials' relationship with technology is their dependence on digital communication tools. Millennials prefer to communicate via text messages, social media platforms, and email rather than face-to-face interaction or telephone calls. Their preference for digital communication has changed how millennials build and maintain relationships, with many relying on social media to stay connected with friends and family. Additionally, technology influences millennials' work habits and work choices.

With the rise of remote work systems, millennials have adopted flexible work arrangements enabled by technology. This generation values work-life balance and seeks opportunities that allow them to work from anywhere using digital tools and platforms. Moreover, technology has enabled millennials to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors, with many starting their own businesses or engaging in online side businesses. In terms of recreational activities, technology plays a crucial role in how millennials entertain themselves. Streaming services, social media, and online gaming have become popular forms of entertainment for this generation.

Millennials are known for their ability to multitask and use multiple devices simultaneously, reflecting their comfort in navigating the digital landscape. Furthermore, technology also influences millennials' consumption habits and purchasing behaviors. E-commerce platforms and mobile payment systems have made shopping more convenient for this generation, which is accustomed to instant gratification and personalized shopping experiences. The relationship between millennials and technology is complex and diverse, shaping various aspects of their lives including communication, work habits, leisure activities, and consumer behavior.

**Dominance of Structures in Maritime Millennial Work Choices**

Development policies and formal education give birth to legitimacies of structures or recognitions of structure towards the value of an object or the value of a practice (Pierre Bourdieu, 1990, 1998; Giddens, 2004). In this study, the value of a practice is also inseparable from the existence of legitimacy or recognition of structures towards the practices carried out. Recognition towards several maritime practices developing through practices carried out by millennials has not yet been considered as a work practice in the maritime space of Natuna society. Although maritime practices such as tour guides, marine conservation, and content creators in the sea space produce significant economic values, they have not yet impacted social influence and positioned Natuna millennials in certain positions within the maritime structure of Natuna society.
Ultimately, Natuna millennials choose to lead their lives by engaging in many work practices. Work practices carried out by Natuna society members who are accustomed to performing more than one work practice ultimately increase the number of work practices performed by millennials in Natuna. According to the Natuna society in the past, engaging in more than one work practice is a strategy to cope with the natural conditions in the oceans faced by Natuna society. When the sea becomes unfriendly at certain times, gardening practices are survival strategies for Natuna society.

Meanwhile, millennials who bring a broader perspective to their living space, engaging in more than one work practice is not only a survival strategy. Instead, it becomes an existence and self-satisfaction that is the goal of performing these many work practices. Although engaging in more than one work practice is also done to gain recognition of their position in society by structures. Millennials now bring new and broader perspectives compared to the general public. The beauty of Natuna's nature and all the potentials possessed by Natuna attract millennials to promote and maintain it. Through practices that then introduce Natuna to the outside world about the potentials held by Natuna. So that people outside Natuna not only know about border conflicts and fisheries conflicts in Natuna, but have begun to recognize Natuna as a beautiful place and also comfortable in its society.

Realizing the presence of new practices in their maritime space, knowing that these practices bring economic benefits to agents who do them and also the community and appreciate the practices carried out by millennials. However, practices such as tour guides, environmental conservation, and content creators have not yet received structural recognition from society as a work practice. In fact, these practices are not recommended as works to the community in Natuna.

The structure of Natuna society does not prohibit the implementation of these practices in their maritime social space, but these practices have not yet gained recognition as a profession within the structure of Natuna society. This is similar to sports practices in the modern world in various regions of Indonesia. Sports practices are recognized by Indonesian society as a proud practice and produce economic value when done professionally. However, the profession as an athlete has not yet gained recognition by Indonesian society as a practice and work profession.

Recognition of Natuna millennials' work practices as a work profession by their community structure shows the dominance and symbolic power in the maritime field of Natuna. This symbolic power, which Natuna millennials consider correct, leads to more work practices than the number of work practices of the previous society. Because millennials realize the need for social recognition, the need for economically valuable income and the need to demonstrate self-existence and satisfaction in performing work practices. So in addition to working in government offices, companies, entrepreneurship, fishing and fish farming, millennials also work as tour guides, conservationists, and content creators.

Symbolic power in recognizing professions shown by the community structure and then considered correct by millennials is a doxa in Bourdieu's view. Doxa in Bourdieu's view tends to support certain social arrangements in that space or field, which ultimately on one side gives privileges to the more dominant party with the assumption that the values created by the dominant party will prove themselves and be universally liked (Adib, 2012; Pierre Bourdieu & Collier, 1988). Thus, doxa can be said as unconscious and fundamental values and considered as truth values in the field or space that will prove itself as the truth and inform and shape the thoughts and actions of agents in a specific field or space (Adib, 2012; Pierre Bourdieu, 2002).

CONCLUSION
This research study generally depicts how Natuna millennials' work choices in their maritime space are shaped by various dynamics within their community structure. The dialectics of external and internal conditions experienced by Natuna millennials form perspectives and values that subsequently drive them to choose works in their maritime space. Development policies, technological proximity, personal history in education, and Natuna millennials' maritime space are external conditions internalized by Natuna millennials and become one of the formative habitus of Natuna millennials. These conditions then give rise to perspectives, tastes, and
values for millennials, culminating in work practices that Bourdieu refers to as the externalization of internal concepts.

The dominance of structures in the recognition of work practices within Natuna society encourages Natuna millennials to engage in more than one work practice. The advent of knowledge through digital technology related to economic potential in the maritime living space of millennials has led to the emergence of work practices in sectors never before undertaken by previous generations, such as tour guides, sea content creators, and marine conservation. Although these new work practices are not prohibited by Natuna community structures, recognition of these work practices by Natuna society structures has not been obtained. Therefore, millennials undertake more than one work in their lives, namely work practices to meet economic needs and also work practices for recognition within the social structure of their community.

Referring to the series of processes and research results related to the work choices of millennial generations in the maritime space of Natuna Regency, several recommendations are proposed for various elements involved with millennials in Natuna; (a) For the community structure in Natuna, recognition of maritime work practices carried out by Natuna millennials is highly necessary. Because recognition of these work practices as acknowledged practices will affirm the position of millennials within the maritime community structure in Natuna; (b) For millennials in Natuna, increasing knowledge and ability to use technology should continue alongside the ongoing development of global knowledge and technology. Thus, recognition of practices and millennials' positions within the maritime structure can be realized; (c) For Regional Governments up to the Central Government, more detailed regulations covering the development of thinking, practices, and impacts are needed. This is deemed necessary not only to facilitate the development of knowledge, technology, and practices from the millennial generation and beyond. But also, to actively engage in the development of community life by guiding the direction of change in the form of the development of knowledge, technology, and work practices within their society.

REFERENCES


