

# Human Network and Social Media\*

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**Abstract**—Social media influences on every realm of our daily lives. It changes especially our human networks. In this article, three issues are proposed. Issue 1 is “Social media expands the human network?”, Issue 2 is “Social media reduces the human network? And Issue 3 is “Social media intensifies the clanning characteristic of the existing network”.

**Keywords**—Social media, human network, connectivity, Facebook, Kakaotalk

## I. SOCIETY OF HUMAN NETWORK

KOREA has been a society of a personal connection and a human network ever since old times. Such as where an individual man was born, which school the man graduated from, and where the man came from, a birth, graduated school, and origin have become a decisive factor in the man's life. How many people the man has been well acquainted with, and what kind of people the man has known may result in the success or failure of his life. We call the personal connection based on relations, the personal relationship. Representative personal relationships are blood relations, school connections and territorial connections. It is fact that blood relations and territorial connections among them have been decreasingly influential compared with the past. But, the school connection has exercised a decisive influence on a social behavior of most members of society.

The school connection has been recognized not only as a main variable which determines the success of the man's social life, but also as the major base of the own human relations. There are many kinds of personal relationships not based on general connections. People, who don't have the certain school connection or territorial connection because they frequently move, have created personal relationships with people at work. Thus, personal relations, or the human network, is the decisive factor which has affected Korean society, regardless of the human connection.

Many countries have various societies of the human network like Korea. In every society, people are active in the network with other people. This network has impacted their own life directly and indirectly. Above all, the human being is the relational existence. The human being cannot live without the

own human network, and receives a self-identity from the relations. However, the degree and a range level of relations are different even though the relations are formed. There shows a difference in each society. The human connection with an official in the company may be very helpful in finding the work in a certain society. On the other hand, the human connection can have the decisive effect in that certain society. Also, if there is a close relation between the school senior and junior, not just simple relations, such human relations may increase a speed of a promotion in that society. In Korean society, the human connection of the individual has exercised the important effect on all usual fields, ranging from employment, promotion, marriage, accident handling to consumption.

Some people have mentioned that this human network is very influential only when people within the network are influential or wealthy. That is, the human network is significantly meaningful only when members of the human network can mobilize many supports. Nevertheless, as Jaeyeol Yee insisted, the human network has actively worked in all areas of the normal social members' daily life, regardless of a scale of resources to be produced or reproduced within the human network[1].

Recently, the research of the human network has been actively conducted by the academic community. The network includes the network between the same organizations, such as the between companies, the network between the religious community, and the network between civil communities. Also, it includes the network between individuals, such as the human network in the social community, and the human network to be used for employment. The flow supports to select one of a behaviorist and structure as the object of research for existing social science. In terms of the behaviorist, the social science analyzed only the characteristics of behaviorist. Also, in terms of the structure, it was intended to explain the behaviorist's characteristic through the structure's characteristics. However, it is a fact that the structure impacts the behaviorist's characteristics. But, the behaviorists have the different characteristics from the structure. In the same manner, the structure is not a collection of behaviorists' characteristics. As Durkheim mentioned, it is because the interaction with the group and individuals must be understood for the collective consciousness of one society. At this time, the network of relations between behaviorists becomes important as the factor which connects the behaviorist and structure. The network of behaviorist relations has largely impacted the behaviorist's characteristics and has become the base to form the social

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structure at the same time.

I intend to focus on the network of the individual level, that is, the human network among the network of relations in the paper. It is because I have been concerned about the individual's consciousness and behavior, not the organization for a long time. It is also because I have considered that it will be easy to identify the organization based on the research on the organization's members.

In particular, I intend to find out how the formation and maintenance style of the human network has changed and developed owing to social media (information and technology), such as the Internet and the mobile phone, by considering that an epochal development of social media which ties persons together has played a decisive role in forming and maintaining the human network. In a modern information society, the relation between men can be hardly maintained without social media. In other word, a dependence on social media has increased. If there is no social media, some people will feel uneasy and uncomfortable because they cannot maintain the relation. Also, when people leave the smart phone at home, they will feel uneasy for a while, all day, because they are isolated from friends. Social media is the fastest developing technology in the 21st century compared with other technologies. Thus, social media has been applied to form and the maintaining of the human network in a variety of ways. In recent years, a photo-taking function of the smart phone is a good example. That is, the smart phone users can take pictures with intimate friends anywhere at any time and then share pictures with them and others. Others have confirmed their own human network through intimate friends' pictures contained in the social media space. Thus, the smart phone has formed and maintained the human network between individuals as it continues to be developed.

We have thought that the human connection includes family relations, relative relations, friend relations, senior-junior relations, territorial relations, and other relations formed at work. Furthermore, we have considered which role I have played in those human networks and how these relations have impacted life.

The network is classified by a property of nodes in the network. The network may be the connection between individuals, like friends, and may be the connection between organizations, such as the civil organization. In here, we call the connection between individuals the human network. The social network has been generally used. of the word 'social' means sociable relations between the nodes, not the property of nodes in the network. That is, if the relation between members of the human network is social (resource sharing and transmission, etc.), it can be referred to as the social network.

Being the individual level of the network, the human network means 'All of direct interactions and indirect interactions which are composed of people and are related with each other .I will research how much the human network of the Korean society has been affected by social media in the formation and maintenance of the human network There is a variety of

technologies in information technology. Also, the technology has been rapidly developing, and unexpected new technology has been developed. However, there is no doubt about that the social media and the smart phone have affected the Korean people the most for the past 10 years, even though no one can predict the development of future social media. In particular, both the social media and the smart phone have achieved the most, the information sharing and communication activation, which is an ultimate objective of information technology. The most important technologies are the social media and the smart phone in forming and maintaining the network of relations between people in relation to a discussion.

## II. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Relating to this research, Wonho Jang analyzed the characteristics of the human network online, through the paper, 'A Change of the Cyber Community and the Social Relation'[2]. Through the research, he indicated that the online community showed more open human relations than the community of the actual world. Wonho Jang evaluated that the online cyber community had a positive function to recover the human relations, which have currently disappeared. In particular, he showed a creative research result by observing that the online human network was connected with the offline human network. In his research, the human network in the online cyber community was set as the object of research. But, this research was intended to find out how the human network has changed, owing to the technology in the actual world.

As the research on the relation between the school connection and IT, there was the paper 'the school connection of the Korean society: a role of the human capital in the creation of the social capital' written by Yonghak Kim[3]. In the paper, the independent variable was the difference of a capability, which can enter the top university, and the dependent variable was a possibility of the entrance into the elite. As the result of his research, he pointed out that people who graduated from a top university and high school was highly like to enter to the elite group than people who didn't graduate from the top school. Yonghak Kim looked into the Internet communities for the research, and then measured where these communities came from by selecting the communities which showed the high activity among Internet school communities. I also measured it directly in an initial research process. My research result was similar to the research result of Yonghak Kim. That is, people who come from major universities have carried out Internet community activities more actively than people who come from minor universities[4]. The research was intended to analyze the organization level's network, not the individual level's network, and to measure how the top university network impacted the Korean society.

## III. KEY ISSUES

For the last several years, the social media and smart phones have been rapidly expanded in the Korean society. A population

of social media exceeds 30 million. Most people have smart phones. People have used the Internet to do work in the office and to spend spare time at home. If the Internet is excluded, daily life, such as the work and leisure cannot be incontestable. Because most people have smart phones, regardless of its necessity, they have to use it to communicate with others. It is because they are isolated from the network if they don't use the smart phone and social media. The smart phone has become an essential device for an urgent contact and the communication at work. Recently, the smart phone has the variety of additional services such as photo-taking, games, broadcasting services for the leisure. Work and leisure without the smart phone is unthinkable and unimaginable.

Information technology expansion has largely impacted many ranges of society. The representative part is the human network of the Korean society, which is the subject of this research. People have actively utilized social media in maintaining the human network formed by blood relations, school connections, and territorial connections. It is because social media is the communication technology of the new generation, which can satisfy people's desire on personal communication. There was a home-net research on Internet utilization in the initial era of Internet, in the USA. This research indicated that people used the social media because they wanted to meet their desire on personal communication (email) not to find information, and they mainly exchanged messages with people in the same region. People have the desire to continuously communicate with others. That is, they have the desire to make relations with each other. The social media and the smart phone have given a chance which allows them to communicate with people in a unlimited area and people in other regions regardless of the time and space, as well as in the limited time and space. In particular, the social media and the smart phone enable people who have decreasing chances of the personal contact, because they are too busy to make the various relations.

#### Issue 1 : Social media expands the human network ?

The first hypothesis about the effect of social media on the human network is that the human network of the individual has generally expanded as social media has been introduced in the daily life. In these days, social media culture has deeply penetrated daily life. When comparing the number of people who meet in the actual physical space and online virtual space, the number of people who meet in the online social media space for 10 days will be larger than the number of people who meet in the actual space for 100 days. Let's see the research of Donghu Lee on the expansion of the human network in social media situation. One of her interview respondents answered that he met 4 million people whom he talked through messenger[5]. Also, one female respondent answered that she increased the number of friends through people whom she met online. Connecting with people in any form is important in the research of the human network.

Social media enables people who can hardly meet due to geographical restrictions to meet together by using one keyword.

Disappeared personal connections are reborn and recreated to social media. Social media makes people meet intimate elementary school friends again and enables to recover the friends' network which had been broken up after graduation. Because of this, social media has expanded and strengthened the existing human network. There are two aspects in terms of the expansion of the human network owing to social media. That is, the offline human network has been more expanded owing to social media, and the online human network has been changed and expanded to the offline human network. In this relation, Donghu Lee indicated that online human relations had expanded to offline human relations and the offline human relations were strengthened through the online. The discussion insisting that social media has expanded the human network means that the new network has been created by using social media while the existing network has been maintained as it is. In particular, while social media space is normalized, the human network formed in social media space has occupied the important position in various human networks of the individual[6].

The expansion of the human network by social media can be considered as the increase of connectivity. The net connectivity is the connectivity with other nodes taken while one node exists in one network. Depending on the scale of connectivity, the scale of the capital that the network provides to internal nodes in the network is determined. At this time, the capital provided to each node owing to the network's effect is the net capital. The connectivity grows big while the interaction of nodes is activated in one network. For example, if colleagues who don't know each other well exchange their own news in the social media community, the net connectivity among them increases. When the net connectivity increases, nodes will strongly feel the close connection with nodes, which are directly or indirectly connected with them. On the other hand, if there is no interaction between nodes in one network, the net connectivity decreases, and nodes will strongly feel that they were separated, and a possession in the network at the same time. For instance, if there is the network among apartment residents but they don't know neighbors, this network is just objective network, but it is meaningless network to nodes. Social media has increased the net connectivity of people, and has expanded the connection size of the individual. Also, because the smart phone enables people to make the relations with others anywhere at any time, it increases net connectivity. At this time, if the connectivity of 'A' and 'B' in the network increases, and the connectivity of 'B' and 'C' increases, the connectivity of 'A' and 'C' will also increase. That is, the increase of the individual net connectivity results in the increase of whole network.

However, some people have insisted that the human network of the individual is determined by the individual character and nature, not social media, through seeking to cut the information technology determination. According to the insistence, it is fact that social media has somewhat contributed to the expansion of the human network of the individual. But, the important thing is the intention that the individual attempts to expand his or her

own human relations. Some people have insisted that the quiet person will give up to the isolated world by using social media, and so their human network will be increasingly reduced, but the active and dynamic person will expand their own human network by striving to meet many people by using social media.

According to the research which studied a comparison of extroversion and introversion and investigated Internet utilization by comparing the extroversion and introversion in the actual life, an extrovert who is extroversive in the relation of the actual friends or families has shown the extroversive characters even on Internet. That is, the extrovert has firmly expanded their own human network by using the Internet and mobile phone, but an introvert has become isolated from actual life, because of the lack of participation in the network activity of actual life and does only social media community activity with the computer in an isolated room. The research of Donghu Lee also pointed out such the matters[7].

*“Several interviewees indicated the negative opinion or its limitation about the online connection. One said that he/ she felt individualized and isolated because of the small number of opportunities which directly and socially interchange with people, due to the Online. Another person said that the online human relations are not same as the offline human relations”*

Issue 2: Social media reduces the human network?: a small scale and centralization

If social media technology is developed for a purpose of connecting plural people, not enjoying by oneself, social media is surely the technology established on the assumption of human sociality. Also, it seems to be natural that the larger the connection methods and volumes are, the higher its intensity and sociality is if plural people are connected.

However, in terms of a problem of awareness and interest, we cannot help accepting the limitations of social media. It is because the person who rejects ‘being different from oneself’ will not meet people who have different character and point of view even though there are many connection possibilities. Thus, social media is likely to enable people to become estranged and not to heal the actual disruption and integrate the society. In other words, social media may be used to reduce the human network intentionally and prefer the safe network to convenient small scale-network.

The small scale of the human network has the characteristic of centralization by social media. People have made relations with a lot of people by using social media. However, they have tended to organize the centralized network, which is composed of only close friends by using this technology. As the example, there are Facebook, Naver Line and Band, Kakaotalk. The phenomenon is called as a privatization or privatism of online space. The privatization means that the activity of public area is filled with private activity. In the similar context, the privatism means “a behavior, thought, and desire to build the meaningful personal area in a complicated and various social relations. Finally, human beings have acquired resources in the relations with others, but have desired to have their own network and

space. Network concentration is done through a consecutive exclusion process. It is related to the social organization that the group must be exclusive to integrate the group after one group has been formed[8]. To reduce the organization’s network and centralize information and resources, a mechanism which excludes things to approach the network needs to work.

Issues 3: Social media intensifies the clanning characteristic of the existing network.

Social media intensifies the clanning effect in the existing human network formation or new human network formation. It is well shown in the connection-making using the community and messenger. In Twitter, there is a large portion of who seek to activate the existing human network focused on the people who have the similar minds, territorial connections and school connections. In particular, the relation making of Kakaotalk, which has become recently famous, has applied the Korean-styled relation-making to the social media community. The relations are limited to the intimate friends, colleagues and groups, and these people exchange their own news through the Internet. Accordingly, social media has intensified the clanning effect which is the characteristic of the existing human network.

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