

**Communication and Social Media Activities
Study on Bengkulu Students' *Social Network Sites* during Pandemic era**

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to find out and explain how communication activities among students during the covid-19 pandemic through the use of social network sites. The results showed an increasing trend in the activity of using social media networks such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *TikTok*, among students in the pandemic period. Based on communication activities and social media use, students have a tendency to orient themselves as active users when determining the social network sites they choose. This shows that the learner finds satisfaction with fulfilling the message and the need for information for himself as explained through the model of uses and gratification theory, individual interest and freedom in determining social media determined by the student himself. Another finding, there is a tendency of consumptive patterns among students by accessing and making purchase transactions on goods they want through online shops, there is a tendency of dependency in the use of communication media with an average use of 5 to 6 hours per day, there is a popular orientation culture through interest in following Korean impressions and impersonation behavior on *TikTok* social media content.

Keywords: Communication Activities, Pandemic, Social Media, Students, Social Network Sites

INTRODUCTION

The results of Wearesocial Hootsuite research, January 2019, social media users in Indonesia reached 150 million or 56% of the total population. Gadget social media users reached 130 million or about 48% of the population (databoks, 2019). Meanwhile, based on survey data conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) on June 2 to 25, 2020, internet users in Indonesia increased to 196.7 million people until the second quarter of 2020. (kompas.com). During the Covid-19 pandemic there was a change or shift in the configuration of utilization or use of the internet. Previously the configuration of internet utilization was in offices, campuses, schools and public places. However, nowadays the configuration of internet used is shifting to housing, residences, and settlements. (kominfo.go.id)

In other parts, the use of the internet for learning activities of students aged 5-24 years continues to increase. In 2020, 59.33% of students will use the internet. This figure grew rapidly from 33.98% in 2016. According to the level of education, the increase in internet use occurred at all levels of education, especially elementary schools. Within two years, primary school students accessing the internet increased to 35.97% in 2020 from 16.64% in 2018. While other levels of education, namely Junior High School to 73.4%, High School 91.01%, and college 95.3%. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) explained that the internet is a necessity for students to continue to carry out teaching and learning activities in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. (databoks.katadata.co.id).

The increasing of internet used also occurs in the process of teaching and learning conducted online during the pandemic, online learning has an impact on students, the results of Setiawan et al research showed that 44.26% of middle and high school students expressed the discomfort of learning online. The source of discomfort was caused by more task load because of lack of understanding, and ineffective. (2021: 83).

Research related to online learning was also conducted by Mar'aha et al, the results showed the obstacles experienced by students, teachers and parents, lack of technology mastery, the addition of internet quota fees, communication and socialization between students that are not intertwined. (2020: 445). In addition, the use of the internet in online learning and the use of social media has also increased significantly. Data showed that smartphone users were very active in utilizing social media platforms. According to Hootsuite (We Are Social) Indonesian Digital Report 2020, the most widely accessed social media by the public is *YouTube* (88%), *WhatsApp* (84%), *Facebook* (82%), *Instagram* (79%), and *Twitter* (56%).

The increasing in internet used also occurred in Bengkulu, the trend of increasing could be seen from 2017 which was only 32.66% of internet users to 32.66% in 2018, while 2019 to 40.72% and in 2020 to 45.32%. The study which is funded by UNICEF and conducted by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, found that 98 percent of children and adolescents knew about the internet and 79.5 percent of them were internet users. Besides, the children and adolescents were those who were still students.

Based on the phenomenon of increasing the use of social media as illustrated from some data that has been written, especially among students, research was needed to find out what social media activities were carried out by students in Bengkulu, especially during the Covid-19 outbreak. The level of activity carried out as a picture of students in the selection of social media by associating it based on the theory of Uses and Gratification based on their desired motives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative research. Sugiyono (2014: 76) stated that qualitative approach is a process of research and understanding based on methodologies that investigate a social phenomenon and human problem. Qualitative research is conducted under natural conditions and is discovery. In qualitative research, the researchers were as the main instrument. Data collection based on information research, which were students who could provide certain information for research purposes, and have knowledge and also data that supports research. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques (sample aims), namely techniques by determining informants by sampling data sources with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2014: 218) such as owning a smartphone, internet network quota and knowing social media.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Currently, most of teenagers who are addicted to playing smartphones, in a day teenagers who are on average high school and vocational students can spend 7 hours just to play mobile phones, the students have the same reason that is for entertainment by opening various social media applications such as *TikTok*, *Facebook* and *Intagram*. Siska a teacher at *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Lebong* said that teenagers would be hard to separate from the digital world such as mobile phones and social media, because teenagers wanted to explore their curiosity by using social media and the internet.

Basically teenagers are an age where curiosity and awareness are so high, that they vent into social media so that their curiosity is immediately fulfilled. Even though they unconsciously make social media a duty and become an addiction that is done continuously. The content in internet can also change the mindset of teenagers according to the content they see like many teenage girls who watch Korean dramas so many like how Korean culture is displayed by Korean dramas.

From the results of interviews with high school students, none of them opened the internet to read the news, they read and knew information from social media such as Facebook and Tiktok, even some students admitted that the information spreaded on the Internet was the right information. So they trusted the information they received. While students tend to like Facebook social media because it could be opened even though there was no internet quota. Some of the research findings in meeting needs based on the *Uses and Gratification theory* include, in addition to Facebook social media, social media usage activities include *Whatsapp* and *Instagram*, in addition to the use of the *TikTok* application to be a favorite social media used because it is one of the applications that are in demand by the milenial. According to one of the students "Ceria (19)" the selection of social media is one of the needs in getting pleasure in surfing on social media.

To eliminate fatigue due to too much learning and eliminate boredom as well, therefore I often see entertainment content such as about comedy, talent shows, movies and music. Some applications I also use such as *YouTube* to watch discussions about, foodblogger and music even I have tried to buy goods needs through via online, which I usually buy, namely clothes.

Many students who used social media as entertainment and communication tools only, but the entertainment context here is very broad, Anisa Ellen (19) is a student of SMAN 08 Bengkulu City said in addition to using zoom for learning activities in the pandemic period, social media activities that are familiar to play Instagram, see YouTube, TikTok and WhatApp. Even seeing entertainment content did not go unnoticed such as vlogs, mukbang, pranks, and youtube.

I also often bought necessities through online such as pants, clothes, sandals. I do this for 1 to 2 times a month. While the most commonly used social media is Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, because of this application I feel a lot of content that can be entertaining.

Thalita Audia (15) Student of SMAN 06 Kota Bengkulu who was currently sitting in the 10th grade revealed that she used the internet for approximately 4 to 5 hours. Thalita explained that he received quota assistance from the government and he felt that enough to use, she usually used the internet while studying, doing tasks, opening social media such as Instagram, Tiktok, Messenger, Facebook, WhatsApp but from the various social media she has, Thalita more often used social media WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, and Tiktok as a means to communicate to her friends and entertain themselves.

One of my ways to entertain myself is to see entertainment content like music, and videos. While if communicating, the communication tools used are WhatsApp and Facebook where both applications are the most effective way to send messages or make video calls or commonly people call it video call to many people. I also often buy necessities through online, the items I often buy are clothes and beauty tools, and usually I buy more than 4 times a month.

Among students had the tendency to use Instagram social media because they usually created instastory to be uploaded on social media accounts that they used and also on Instagram more features and effects that can be used. In addition, there is social media used among students today such as

tiktok application, the application they often use because of tiktok they got entertainment for themselves by creating content activities that they do every day.

Motives and partisanship in the use of social media in the context of *uses and gratification* is an option for teenagers when determining which media can provide convenience when sharing online such as spreading photos, videos and also social networking services that can be used to interact and share messages to their friends.

The use of social media according to teenagers at the time of the pandemic could be used as a form of actualization and self-existence for teenagers themselves. So according to them, the use of social media such as Facebook or Instagram could be used as a storage for memories in the future and the process of interaction from reactions between them to comment and like photos, videos and other content uploaded.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic students tend to access the internet by using a computer and the rest used hand phone. In a day, they could spend 2 GB of package data in using the internet and it was used to open social media, games, and search for subject matter. Students were using the internet often used to open social media and play games, such as opening Facebook, Instagram and TikTok applications, all three applications became a trend among students in the period of Pandemic. This research also showed the phenomenon of students to join a certain group to get information, entertainment and others, although there was often fraud and spread of hoax news. Students also followed several accounts on social media, this was done because they felt happy and entertained when they saw the activity on that sites.

Another trend in media activities among students in this study was their desire to follow the accounts of Korean K-Pop personnel, this was according to them, Korean K-Pop personnel have a handsome and beautiful look. On the other hand, activities in the use of social media during pandemics found a tendency to increase consumption among students in making online purchase transactions. Thus, this study had illustrated that the tendency of social media selection was done personally among students themselves through their desires, this was done based on the pleasure of getting entertainment and fulfilling the satisfaction of the information obtained.

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