

## The Implication of Social Media Toward College Students' Online Behavior in Bandung

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**Abstract.** *In Indonesia, there has been an increasing amount of internet usage. Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is a form of communication held between two people or more and a computer as the media. While 92,1 % of internet users in Indonesia are college students, it is important to investigate the impact of social media toward their behavior since internet can bring both positive and negative impacts. In this research, 483 college students in Bandung were asked about their Social Network Sites behavior through a structured interview. The data analysis used was MaxQDA software in order to gain the themes. The result of this study discovered that 47% of the participants used social media for more than 6 hours a day. Their top purposes of using social media were communication, entertainment, and information searching. While high social media use is related to social media addiction and several behaviors that might lead to mental health issues, it is possible that this escalation resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic.*

**Keywords:** *Social media behavior, Computer Mediated Communication, Social Network Sites*

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### INTRODUCTION

A large part of the social culture of the younger generation involves communicating via digital media, whether it is email, social media, or texting (Allen, Ryan, Gray, McInerney, & Waters, 2014; Griffiths, 2010). It was found that 171 out of 264 million Indonesian access the internet. According to the Asosiasi Pengguna Jasa Internet Indonesia survey, 64,8% of Indonesian citizens access the internet (APJII, 2019). There is 27 million addition in one year compared to 2017. West Java is the highest contributor to internet usage in Java. Users' age is approximately 15-24 years old. Based on the occupation, 92,1% of users are college students.

The existence of computer-mediated communication has brought advantages to people's lives recently.

CMC nowadays is represented by the internet and specifically by Social Network Sites (SNS). The advantages of the internet are stated by Baruah (2012), which found that online sharing of information also promotes the improvement in the communication skills among people especially among the learners/students of educational institutions. (Risius & Beck, 2015) also found positive effects of social media management tools, broadcasting accounts, and conversational communication on public perception. A social media study in Indonesia found that social media culture can act as a teacher that is able to educate the public (Sampurno et al., 2020). Those were findings that proved social media effectiveness.

However, other findings stated that the use of social media could cause

problems for youngsters (Bányai et al., 2017). The differences between effective internet use and problematic internet use were found by (Xu & Tan, 2012). Their research stated that the transition from the normal use to the problematic use of social networking platforms is when these media are perceived as an important mechanism or even exclusive to release stress, loneliness, and depression. The use of the internet as a mechanism to release stress is one of the criteria that leads to behavioral addiction. Although anybody who has access to the Internet can potentially develop an addictive use of technology, there were specific demographic factors that tended to increase the risk (Kuss et al., 2014).

The explanation above supports the internet generation's potential to gain positive advantages from the CMC and supports the risks that potentially occur. Social media is paradoxical. It can bring positive but also negative impacts towards its user. A survey has been conducted by researchers on 100 college students in Bandung. It showed that 35 % of the respondents used the internet for 2-4 hours a day, 25% of the respondents used the internet for 4-8 hours a day, 40% of the respondents used the internet for 8-12 hours a day, and 100% of the college students mostly accessed social media in their internet use. Therefore, it is important to explore the implication of social media toward college students' online behavior in Bandung as the internet generation. Is it effectively increasing positive impact or does it become problematic behavior where it is perceived as an important mechanism or even exclusive to mental health?

## METHOD

This research used qualitative methodology and concentrated on describing and categorizing the qualities of an online data survey. This is a

possible way to provide a more complete understanding of college student's SNS behavior. Because human experience and interaction are far too complex to reduce in a few variables. In this research, subjects were questioned about their SNS behavior. The amount of the research subjects were 483 college students in Bandung, Indonesia. The sampling technique used was multi-stage sampling. The first stage conducted was cluster sampling which divided Bandung colleges based on the geographical cluster (West Bandung, East Bandung, Central Bandung, and South Bandung) to divide the cluster equally and represent the colleges in Bandung. Each cluster was represented by a single university and then followed by convenient sampling conducted in every university to gain the subjects.

Data was gathered through a structured interview. The questions were both open and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were: (1) Did you regularly access the internet in the last six months? (2) How long did you access the internet platform(s) in a day? (By seeing the records on the smartphone). The open-ended questions asked were (1) What kind of social network site(s) that you access and why did you choose those sites? (2) Please explain the reasons you used those social network sites! (3) Please explain the activities that you did when accessing the social network sites!

We used MaxQDA software to analyze the interview data. First, we highlighted important words or sentences from the interview to determine codes. After creating the codes, we highlighted other typical words or sentences to gain sub-codes. The first codes resulted in themes, while the second codes resulted in subthemes. Then, obtained themes and subthemes showed data trends.

## RESULTS

The results are in the tables and descriptions. The tables explain the coding results, and descriptions explain the representation of qualitative data gained through subjects' responses.

Table 1 shows that most respondents accessed social media for 3-9 hours per day. Only 16,15% of them access social media for 0-3 hours per day. And there were approximately 19% of them access social media for a very long duration (> 9 hours and >12 hours a day). They were preoccupied with social media, the feeling that they didn't want to miss what was happening on social media. Also, they accessed social media for such long hours because they were looking for activities to cope with their sadness to make them feel better.

The followings are some statements that represent the reasons why they access the internet for a long duration.

Subject 334: "Cause a lot of times, if I feel annoyed, I end up playing with my phone and then opening social media." Subject 410: "If I don't open social media, I'll feel curious about who has updated. I like stalking a lot of celebrities, and keeping an update of what they're doing. I just feel happy seeing them." From these answers we found that most of the reasons of this online behavior are to make them feel better and to get out from negative feelings.

It can be seen from Table 2 that there were the four most accessed SNS by college students in Bandung. They were WhatsApp, Instagram, Line, and YouTube. The other SNS were not popular for college students in Bandung.

WhatsApp was used mostly because this is the easiest tool to perform daily communication and usually, they get fast responses through it. The followings

TABLE 1. Daily duration of social network site(s) accessed

Coding	Sum	Percentage
3-6 hours	164	33.95%
6-9 hours	130	26.92%
0-3 hours	78	16.15%
9-12 hours	63	10.04%
>12 hours	48	9.94%

TABLE 2. Social network site(s) accessed

Coding	Sum	Percentage
WhatsApp	199	41,20%
Instagram	115	23,81%
Line	88	18,22%
YouTube	57	11,80%
Twitter	17	3,52%
Facebook	3	0,62%
Kakao Talk	1	0,21%
Skypee	1	0,21%
Whisper	1	0,21%
Reddit	1	0,21

TABLE 3. Reasons using social network site(s)

Coding	Sum	Percentage
Communication	192	39,75%
Entertainment	162	33,54%
Information searching	82	16,98%
Killing time	41	8,49%
Business	6	1,24%

are some statements that represent the reasons they used WhatsApp to get effective communication: Subject 73: “The most effective application for communication is WhatsApp because usually, people will reply fast.” Subject 69: “WA is the easiest application to reach out to anyone, I can text fast by WhatsApp and also keep in touch with many people. Either friends or best friends that I rarely meet or the relatives who live far away.” Subject 24: “Sometimes, when using WhatsApp, I can express my feelings compared to when I talk face to face. And when I’m too prideful to apologize, I apologize via WhatsApp.” From the answers we can conclude that they assumed WA is the easiest platform to communicate.

The second most used SNS was Instagram. They like to use Instagram because this application allows them to share photos and videos. They can follow almost everyone who has an Instagram account, and they get to see the photos and videos as entertainment and as a role model in lifestyle. The followings are some statements that represent the reasons why they used Instagram: Subject 287: “Instagram is interesting because I can share photos and videos. I can see what other people share or we also can share our photos and videos, showing our existence on social media.” Subject 129: “Seeing pictures can become an inspiration—seeing new things, so I won’t miss out an update.” Subject 1: “Instagram provides an account where we can share and save our pictures at the

same time, so it’s safe if they’re saved online. If the pictures are saved in a flash disc or laptop, they can get lost due to the virus.” We can see that Instagram had an impact in setting the role model on their lifestyle, and became an inspiration on their attitude and behavior.

The third most accessed application was Line because this application provides various options such as news, stickers, and filters in the video call. The followings are some statements that represent the reasons why they choose Line: Subject 420: “There are more stickers when using Line, so the chat is more fun, and the stickers represent my feelings.” Subject 362: “It’s more fun to use Line if I want to video call because there are some features that WhatsApp doesn’t have, such as filters that make me prettier or cute filters.” Subject 52: “When using Line, I can text and read the news at the same time on Line Today.” Subject 107: “The automatic-adding-friends-system without using ID, so I don’t have to add phone numbers and it’s connected with email and Facebook.” We can conclude that they like the platform because it provides them with features that help them express their feelings and emotions more.

The fourth most accessed application was YouTube. The videos that YouTube provides can add more information needed. For instance, tutorials such as fashion, make-up, and cooking tutorials. They even subscribe to their favorite YouTubers. The followings are some statements that represent the

TABLE 4. Activities during accessing the social network sites

Coding	Sum	Percentage
Viewing others' posts	229	47,41%
Communicating	156	32,3%
Sharing posts	33	6,83%
Stalking people or celebrities	26	5,38%
Searching for information	18	3,73%
Watching video	8	1,66%
Managing online business	7	1,45%
Online shopping	5	1,04%
Online dating	1	0,21%

reasons why they like YouTube: Subject 15: "If I need an answer, YouTube always has the answer. There are so many things, for example, if I want to cook something and I want to know how to do it, I immediately search for cooking tutorials on YouTube." Subject 117: "Subscribing my favorite YouTube channels, like Atta Halilintar." Subject 255: "Accessing YouTube to watch lectures from ustadz, increasing my religious knowledge, as a substitute of attending Islamic class." From the answers, we can conclude that the YouTube platform helped them in providing "do it yourself" tutorials, knowledge, and simply subscribing to their favorite celebrity influencers.

Table 3 shows five themes as the reasons for using social network sites. The first is mostly to maintain communication. Most respondents communicated with friends, friends they rarely met (living far away), families, and to broaden relations. The second is to get entertainment and most of the entertainment they accessed were K-Pop celebrities, music, Korean movies, standup comedy, games, and soccer. Third, they used social network sites for information searching. The subjects they searched were political, economic, historical, news, education, trending topics, health, and religious information. Fourth, social network sites were used for killing time. Killing time by

online shopping, watching make-up and skincare tutorials, infotainment, fashion tutorials, playing online games, sharing photos, and seeking traveling inspiration. Last, social network sites were used for business, they used their accounts to sell products.

The followings are some statements that represent the reason why they used social media: Subject 111: "On social media, sometimes I'm able to express what I'm afraid to express in real life. For example, if I say I love you to my partner, I will feel shy, but I don't feel shy if I say it on social media." Subject 5: "I use social media for entertainment. I mostly access social media to see the update about K-Pop." Subject 9: "I use social media for entertainment, watching YouTube channels, or watching soccer." Subject 107: "I use social media to know about what the current trending topic is." Subject 299: "I use social media to watch political and economic information that sometimes relate to my college assignments." Subject 419: "I use social media whenever I have free time and I have nothing to do. I usually watch gossip." Subject 15: "I use social media to sell my products."

Table 4 shows respondents' activities during accessing SNS. Almost half of the respondents (47,41%) accessed SNS to view other people's posts, 32,3%

of them used SNS to communicate with others, 6,83% of them use SNS to share posts, 5,38% of them used SNS to stalk people or celebrities, 3,73% of them used SNS to search for information, and the rest of them used SNS to shop online (1,04%) and to date online (0,21%).

## DISCUSSION

Widely different claims about the impact of CMC on mental health have been reiterated for decades and across disciplines (e.g., Burke & Kraut, 2016; Chan, 2015; Meier & Reinecke, 2020; Orben & Przybylski, 2019; Twenge et al., 2018). The duration of using social media in approximately 34% of college students in Bandung, Indonesia was 3-6 hours per day. Another approximately 37% of college students accessed social media in 6 -12 hours per day. Almost 10 % spent more than 12 hours per day, only 16 % spent 0-3 hours per day. Duration is one of the indicators of social media addiction. Daily use of 6 hours minimum for minimum 3 months is the indication of addiction (Tao, 2010). Social Media Addiction (SMA) or addictive social media use (in a non-clinical sense) is defined as being overly concerned about social media, strongly motivated and have been devoting a great amount of time and energy to using social media, to the degree that an individual's social activities, interpersonal relationships, studies/jobs, and/or health and well-being are impaired (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). From the result, we found that most of the reasons of this online behavior are to make them feel better, to get out from negative feelings. This was one of the indications of problematic use of social media.

Data show that the SNS accessed commonly by college students in Bandung were WhatsApp, Instagram, and Line applications and were used commonly for communication, entertainment,

and information searching purposes. Irwanto & Hariatiningsih, (2019), found that people used Instagram for information sharing and entertainment. This explains why most college students use this application effectively for communication. The reason that was commonly used during using social media was that they could do something that they were not able or shy to do socially in face-to-face relations. Although finding in meta-analysis suggests small negative association between social media use and mental health (Meier & Reinecke, 2020), this could be an indication of the impairment of individual social activities.

The second most accessed SNS was Instagram, and this is a relatively new form of communication. It was launched in October 2010 where users can easily share their updates by taking photos and sharing them with the media. It has seen rapid growth in the number of users as well as uploads. The ability to share photos and videos, and allow everyone to comment, is making Instagram seen as entertainment. College students in Bandung use Instagram mostly for viewing others' posts. This means that they like to observe other people on Instagram whom they follow and this could be someone they know in real life and most people they follow are celebrities.

This can also be explained by the finding in Korea which stated that one of the motives people to use Instagram was "peeking". The motives were to pursue relaxation, avoid troubles they encounter in reality, engage with friends they had never met before in reality, and form a parasocial relationships (Lee, Lee, Moon, Sung, 2015). This means they like to watch what other people share on Instagram, do what they do, wear what they wear, and follow the value of their idols that they follow on Instagram. We can see from the result that Instagram

had an impact in setting the role model on their lifestyle, became inspiration on their attitude and behavior. As explained in Computer-Mediated Social Learning theory, where they were focused on how people learn and adopt behaviors (Baldwin, Perry, and Moffitt, 2004). CMC changed social barriers, it allowed people getting intimate with other people they had not even met and saw (Baldwin, Perry, and Moffitt, 2004).

Sheldon & Newman, (2019) studied Instagram use among middle school students and identified two motives previously unidentified in Uses and Gratification on social media research. These included lurking and escapism. Lurking has been connected to a desire to remain anonymous and/or preserve privacy and safety (Nonnecke & Preece, 2000), being too shy to post publicly, and the ability to gain information without actively posting (Rau, Gao, & Ding, 2008). Lurking may also constitute a form of entertainment (Nonnecke & Preece, 2001), as in the case of celebrity voyeurism. With this research, we can conclude that the social media behavior in Bandung college students indicated lurking as a common behavior in social media. In CMC and on the internet we may be isolated and alone, but, paradoxically, visual anonymity may render the group and its norms, stereotypes, and so on particularly influential. In consequence, to the extent that the group identity is salient and we identify with the group, we are likely to be influenced by its norms (Spears, 2017). Other than depersonalization happening in CMC, (Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018) explained that daily internet use was highly correlated with Instagram addiction.

On the other hand, CMC has some positive implications as well. Our data showed that 1,24% of the respondents used social media for their business. Some research also suggested that social

media can be used as an advertising platform for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Suryono et al., 2020) and macro businesses as well (Manurung et al., 2020). Additionally, we can conclude that they like the social media platform because it provides them with features that help them express their feelings and emotions more. It helps them to articulate their emotions and feelings in communication, as well as helps them in providing tutorial information and knowledge. A social media study in Indonesia also found that social media culture can act as a teacher that is able to educate the public (Sampurno et al., 2020).

Since this research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative to note that internet usage, especially social media, has been increasing. (Siste et al., 2020) stated that online duration increased by 52% compared to before the pandemic. In India, 87 % of people reported an increase in its usage with 75 % spending an increasing amount of time on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp (Business Today, March 30, 2020). Due to the physical distancing order where people are not able to talk with each other face to face, CMC on the other hand seems like the only communication solution. Not only communication, but entertainment and education as well. Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information, (2020), stated that internet usage has increased by 40% during work from home and distance learning (Kominfo, April 17, 2020). So, it is still unclear whether the increased social media use among college students in Bandung is a form of problematic internet use, a coping mechanism, or simply a new effective way of communicating. Since we didn't measure the degree of impairment among the participants, we cannot conclude that 37% of the participants are suffering from

social media addiction

## CONCLUSION

This research served important data about the implications of social media toward online behavior that served both positive and negative implications. Generally, social media provides unlimited information about everyone who uses the platform. Unlimited information means everyone can search for or see everything posted without being censored. This can be potentially valuable or even harmful information as well. This information processed and implicated young people's behaviors on social media itself. College students or young people represented in this research were at the stage of certain developmental tasks that involved environment or peers as the significant influence on their behaviors. What occurred in their environment or with their peers was documented on social media that can be accessed at any time or any place. This might influence the "peeking" and "lurking" behavior. They did not respond directly to the information that were uploaded to social media but they were constantly aware of every information that their friends or even celebrities that they did not know personally. Even though they did not respond directly to the information makers, it is implicated through their behaviors by doing what their idols do, wearing what they wear, and following the values that their idols show on social media. When they have actively involved in one-way relationships, they also show declined social activities. This will indicate parasocial relationships where people imagine having a relationship with another person they do not know personally but they imagine having a really close relationship. They might admire, and even feel affection toward their idols. Severe parasocial relationships can lead to mental health issues. Social

media literacy will be a necessity in order to avoid mental health issues in young people who actively access social media.

In conclusion, the data gained might indicate problematic use of social media, by showing the impairment of individual social activities, lurking behavior as a common behavior in social media, making celebrities as the role model in their lifestyle, and inspiration on their attitude and behavior. These create the opportunity to seek more answers on whether social media might cause mental health problems in young people.

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