



## PROSIDING

# Konferensi Nasional Komunikasi

## Youth's and Social Media: A Media Literacy Study

Fitrie Handayani<sup>1</sup>, Vivien Sylvina<sup>2</sup>, Arsiyanti Lestari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Marketing Communication Department, Bina Nusantara University  
 Jl KH Syahdan No.9 Kemanggisian Jakarta

<sup>1</sup>*fitrie.handayani@binus.ac.id*, *fitrique@gmail.com*, <sup>2</sup>*vivien.sylvina@binus.ac.id*,  
<sup>3</sup>*arsiyanti.lestari@binus.ac.id*

### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore youths awareness of the use and impact of social media. Youth access and use social media as their virtual identity. The identity that often different from the reality, that makes it is hard to judge. This qualitative research study used phenomenological approach that takes into account the growing prominence of social media. Data collected from group discussion, consisted of students from two junior schools in South Jakarta, Indonesia. Three specific themes emerged from the discussion: (a) Technical Skills, (b) Critical Understanding (c) Communicative ability. The result shows that youth tend to have adequate skill regarding the technical use of social media, but show ignorance and oblivious state in terms of critical understanding. That makes youth become vulnerable to the online risk. The result also indicate that promoting media literacy is urgent and required partnership among stakeholders.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Online Risk, Social media, Virtual Identity

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menggali sejauh mana pengetahuan kaum muda tentang penggunaan dan dampak dari sosial media. Kaum muda mengakses dan memanfaatkan sosial media sebagai identitas virtual mereka. Identitas yang acap kali berbeda dengan kenyataan sebenarnya, sehingga membuat sulit untuk ditebak. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi, yang mengangkat kian maraknya penggunaan sosial media. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kelompok diskusi terfokus (focus group discussion), yang terdiri dari pelajar dari dua sekolah menengah pertama di Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia. Ada tiga tema spesifik yang didapatkan dari diskusi, yaitu (a) Kemampuan Teknis, (b) Pemahaman Kritis dan (c) Kemampuan Komunikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kaum muda memiliki kemampuan teknis yang memadai untuk menggunakan sosial media, namun kurang memiliki pemahaman kritis sehingga membuat mereka rentan terhadap resiko online dari penggunaan sosial media. Penelitian ini mengindikasikan pentingnya mempromosikan literasi media kepada kaum muda, dan hal ini memerlukan dukungan dari berbagai pihak.

Kata kunci : Literasi Media, Resiko Online, Media Sosial, Identitas Virtual

**Copyright © 2017 Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia. All rights reserved**

### Introduction

Social media phenomenon brings great interest in both public and academic concerns

since it relates to every aspect of modern age. As part of new media development, social media initially provides a place for its users to

connect and feel connected with the surrounding. However, the initial function then widened to a degree of subjection. In some cases, users no longer care about the usefulness of social media instead of automatically using it as life necessities in a point that it transforms into habit. Teenagers are one or even prime customer of social media. They treat social media as daily partner and often feel comfortable to shed their emotions there. Watkins said, "young people today are born and grow with computers and the internet at their fingertips" (Watkins, 2009) in which they produce, they distribute and they consume information through internet.

Based on a survey of Nielsen Cross-Platform 2017, there is an increase internet access by netizens in almost all places. Some places including Public Vehicles (53%), Cafe or Restaurant (51%) even at concerts (24%) show the increasing number of digital media access compared to 2015. The increase also occurred for home-access internet and workplace. Compared to 2015, the frequency of watching video content over internet also shows improvement across all age groups. However, YouTube is still the most accessible online video platform.

(<http://www.nielsen.com/en/press/room/2017>).

The characteristics of teenager also reflecting new media's conduct including digital, interactive, hyper textual, virtual, networked and stimulated (Lister, Martin, Dovey, Giddings, Grant and Kelly, 2009). Modern, creative, informed, expressive, flexible and risk taker are some of good qualities possessed by them right now. However, some are argue that virtual is the most concerned value for explaining the connecting line among new media and young people in which it often categorized youngster as either attached or not attached to anything.

This thought is most likely influenced by the psychological view of teenagers' motivation of using social media in which the thing that put forward is the pursuit of self-existence. Virtual is concerned with the concept

of virtual identity which is often assumed to be separate from the real entity so that it can easily be changed as desired although not necessarily in accordance with reality. Regardless of the dominant value, achieving or even enhancing positive qualities needs awareness from young users to fully aware of both sides offered by new media. Hence this paper will illustrate Indonesian teenager in terms of how they wisely perceive social media phenomenon in everyday life.

Social media usually defined as the relationships that exist between networks of people (Walter & Riviera, 2004). Another definition of social media stated by Hamm et al (2013) is a group of online applications that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Kaplan (2010) mentioned the classification of social media by their social presence or media richness and self-presentation or self-disclosure including collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia); blogs or microblogs (e.g. Blogs, Twitter); content communities (e.g. YouTube); social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Path) and virtual gaming or social worlds (e.g. Dota).

Users make social media accounts as their home in virtual world. That home primarily used to build a network to the surrounding and performs activities similar to those in real world range from public matters to personal affairs. That is to say, social media not only changed people's view of the media but also a bunch of ideas of how social life should be done particularly through the media. In 2017, eMarketer estimates Indonesian netter will reach 112 million people. By that amount, it is not surprising if Indonesia is often categorized as the country with the highest user for social media. One of a kind can be seen from how popular worldwide hashtag on twitter often comes from Indonesia. In other fact, one of the Indonesian businessmen even decided to invest a large stake in Path.

The object of this study particularly is junior high school students from South Jakarta region. Since phenomenology becomes an

approach by collecting data through Focus Group Discussion,

partnership is a recommended need. Non-Governmental Organization called Jejak Langkah which has been concerning in social

### **Theoretical Framework**

Media literacy is broadly defined as “an individual’s capacity to interpret autonomously and critically the flow, substance, value and consequence of media in all its many forms” (Celot

1. Tornero, 2009). The difference nature of traditional media and new (digital) media would surely impact the capacity needed by individual to interpret messages or contents from new media. Research on new media literacy offers diverse conceptions. There are concepts that emphasize specific skills and techniques needed to use many forms of new media, including social media.

There are also concepts that comprise new media literacy as a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for generating, communicating and negotiating meanings (Scribner & Cole, 1981). Aufderheide (1993), stating that media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms. New media literacy hence should be assessed as the wider contexts. Then, Mihailidis and Thevenin (2013) define media literacy as a core competence for engaged citizenship in participatory democracy, by making people able to act as critical thinkers, effective creators and communicators, and agents of social change.

Celot & Tornero (2009) identified two dimensions of new media literacy: (1) competences and (2) contextual factors. Individual competences refer to an individual’s capacity to exercise skills of cognitive processing, analysis and communication. They are further divided by three key indicators including (a) media use, (b) critical

literacy being a key associate regarding the case of social media. Great attention to social literacy becomes appropriate when juxtaposed with media literacy which is a term used to define a thorough understanding of media. understanding and (c) communicative abilities. Media use is how an individual possesses technical skills of media access and usage. Critical understanding examines the individual’s knowledge on media influence and media regulation, ability to evaluate content, fluency to interpret meanings, skills for critical search of information and critical judgments against copyrights violation and personal data misuse. A communicative ability is how individuals have capacity to establish social relations, participating in the public sphere and creating content through media. (Celot & Tornero, 2009)

### **Material and Methodology**

The phenomenological approach in this study derived from the importance of describing the little known yet complex phenomenon of social media use and impact among teenagers. The phenomenological approach seeks to understand human experience from the everyday lives of those who experience an event, phenomenon or object (Castro, 2003).

Phenomenological studies require a researcher “to enter the world of individuals and to understand their perspectives” (Slavin, 2007). Each participant’s distinct contribution can provide a clearer understanding of how aware the students with the use and impact of social media. In other words, with this phenomenology approach, it is expected to reveal how literate our youngsters with the social media.

As argued by Lester (1999), by using an interpretive phenomenological dimension, the study can contribute significantly to the practical theory, which can be used to inform, support or challenge policy and action.

As for the method, we selected the focus group discussion since it has capability to

reveal participants' distinguished opinion and personal preferences (Frey & Fontana, 1991). Additionally, the method lends itself to this research because opinion and personal preferences can be identified through individual reflection and interaction between participants.

The participant in this study is junior high school students in South Jakarta considering the fact that Focus Group Discussion held in big city's circumstances where the pupils have a broad access of technology and being exposed by globalization values as well. South Jakarta's area became the scope that fit the reasons for accessibility and availability of informants.

Interaction between participants in focus groups discussion allows comparisons between behaviors and preferences to be drawn during the interview (Morgan, 1997). Furthermore the qualitative interview allows participants to reflect on what is often invisible to the interviewer: their feelings, emotions, and thoughts as they reflect on the process of search, evaluation, and creation of information (Weiss, 1994).

## Result and Discussion

### 1. Media Use

This skill includes Technical skills of access and usage. All participants of the discussion reported that they have two up to four social media accounts. Almost all students have Instagram profiles, YouTube comes to the second most used social media, followed by Line and Facebook. The time they spent to access internet varied 4-6 hours per day. The reasons they use internet in the order of importance are: research for school task, connect with friends, watch YouTube, post pictures/status. The participants have no issue significant issues in accessing and using internet and social media. They are familiar with the features in IG, Youtube, Facebook and so on.

### 2. Critical understanding skills.

Some criteria set to examine critical understanding skill includes individual's knowledge on media influence and media regulation, evaluation of content, fluency to interpret meanings, skills of critical search of information and critical judgments against personal data misuse.

Compared to their technical skills, the students demonstrate less awareness of critical understanding skills.

Most students admitted that they couldn't distinguish between credible and incredible information. According to them, they received some forwarded postings and did not conduct any search for information which seems doubtful. If they didn't like the postings, they just ignored them. However, since many postings were forwarded from their circle of friends, they tend to believe it without verifying the content.

The students also demonstrated ignorance about rules and rights in using social media. The students are not informed about regulations on Facebook, nor do they engage in actions against violations of these rules and rights. They couldn't recall rules in Facebook or IG nor do they engage in actions against violations, even though they remember they need to check the Terms and Conditions when signing up in any social media account. Hence, they also did not really aware of the consequences if they post and/or share contents that are insulting, offending or dangerous. However, some of them were aware of some cases related with the use of social media, some charges of defamation that violates UU ITE (Law of Electronic Information and Transactions).

*"Liat sii... tapi ya cuekkin aja langsung centang, abis lama kalo baca dulu haha.. [I saw that conditions, but I just skipped it since it takes time to read it. ]"*, said one of the students.

In regards to critical safety skills, most students shared their personal data/profile, although some set their profile that could only be accessed privately or between their circle of friends. They seemed aware of the type of

personal data they disclose on their profile pages, yet oblivious to the dangers that can possibly result from revealing identifiable information in social media environments (such as school, email address).

The students also check friend request before accepting. Some of the considerations of accepting friend request were as follows: it is from someone they met, they share common friends online. This results are in line with previous research (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011) that suggested that although connections between strangers can be made, people primarily use social networking sites to communicate with those who are already in their offline social network. Students tend to trust their friends' friend to accept friendship online. As Papaioannou (2011) stated that online and offline interactions interface in such a way that the primary deciding factor of accepting someone to be a friend or granting them profile access seems to be whether they are already in the online circle of friend. Although, one cannot guarantee that someone is „harmless“ simply by the the fact that he/she is related to our offline friends.

Witty and Joinson (2009) stated that in much online interaction people are strategically managing their online identity to meet both their own goals and the expectations of the other. Therefore, the identity of people online might be very deceitful that one cannot judge only by their profile or circle of friends they have. Students seem a bit ignorance in this state.

### **3. Communicative abilities.**

Communicative abilities are evaluated against three indicators including establish social relations, participate in civic activities and express creativity. The discussion leads to social relations by asking which group teenagers tend to join in social media and how they treat those group affiliations afterward. Most of them stated that they follow groups according to the groups they have in real life

such as school groups, extracurricular groups and so on. Besides, they also follow groups based on their favorite hobbies such as internet games crowd and cooking club. However, when it comes to an attachment toward group, some of them surely said that the closest sense of belonging still refers to a group representing the ones that they have in a real life in which they have met some or most of the members in person.

This finding may not necessarily the same if the object is a teenager whom has an addictive tendency to kind of activity sponsored by internet such as online games. Barker (2009) once revealed it was group identification and collective self-esteem which becomes youth's motivations for using social networking sites. After all, for teenagers who serve as research objects, identity ownership and self-esteem is more to strengthening real-life social relations rather than the virtual bond.

Furthermore, teenagers also asked whether social media is used for contributing in public matter and participating in online civic activities. They claim that it depends on the type of social media. Content communities such as YouTube and social networking sites especially Facebook deemed capable to encourage the desire of teenagers to engage in public issues and even react to online social movements that are often also initiated by teenagers. In Indonesia, one such example is found in political campaigns where young voters' intention becomes more active since they are being socialized through new media as well as able to express their choices regarding such public issues. Earl and Kimport (2011) argued that digital communication technologies have facilitated mobilization of individuals seeking common goals; civic or non-civic.

### **Conclusion**

The characteristics of social media and youth's online activities make it vulnerable for the them to the online risk. Teenagers see social media as the main source of information and medium to spark their interest. The results of

this study indicate that most students have adequate technical skills to use a range of social media application, but they seem oblivious to conduct critical search and evaluation of information and ignorance with regulation or infringement.

Most of the teenagers in the discussion share their personal information online. This is in line with the previous research done by Ministry of Communication and Information Technology which stated that youth are prone to potential risk in digital world since they share their personal information i.e home address, phone number or school address. Youth are also unprotected from the negative content as they are often exposed to incidentally by the pop-up message or untrusted link or porn advertising (Kominfo, 2014).

The emerging facts of online risk especially among youth make the idea of media literacy become a more provoking-thought. Media literacy hold out the promise that youth should be able to make informed choices of their use of media, exercise their rights to freedom of expression and become effective and creative in their online world. The promotion of media literacy is also hoped to empower youth although this is a much contested notion in that empowerment does not equate with the opening up of new opportunities and access of information (Livingstone, 2002; Quinn, 1997). Empowerment in this terms tend to refer to make students become confident to “feel able to do what they can do best” (Livingstone, 2002, p. 237) such as becoming creative and responsible. Judging the uses of social media among junior school students in this research, the form of empowerment demonstrated is still far from this.

Celot and Tornero (2009) suggested that a set of contextual factors may affect individual competences and impact the overall level of media literacy. These factors include media education, media literacy policy/regulation, the media industry, media pluralism and civil society. This study focuses only on media education which currently is not formally

included in the national curriculum of primary education in Indonesia. The promotion of media literacy mostly initiated by non-profit organization, schools or universities. The exploration of media education will require partnership with many stakeholders in the society, including government advocacy, company, university, NGOs and other concerns citizens.

The partnership is required to help youth to prevent online risk. Our previous collaboration with Jejak Langkah showed a beneficial result. It should be strengthened and broadened to other stakeholders as well. The media education should cover issues that are central to the experience of growing up in a world full of digital media. Youth should be able to use the full range of digital media and technology tools for self-expression, advocacy, and education. Call for action addressing how youth analyzing news and advertising, distinguishing between propaganda, opinion and information, examining risk contents, and exploring the ways in which violence and sexuality are depicted in media messages.

## References

- Aufderheide, Patricia. 1993. *Media Literacy. A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.
- Livingstone, S. (2002). *Young people and new media: Childhood and the changing media environment*. London: Sage Publications.
- Livingstone, Sonia. (2007). *Handbook of New Media*. Sage Publications. London.
- Safko, L. (2010). *The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools & Strategies for Business Success*. New Jersey: Wiley
- Witty, M., Joinson, A. (2009). *Truth, Lies and Trust on the Internet*. Routledge. New York.

Castro, A.D.. (2003). Introduction to Giorgi's Existential Phenomenological Research Method. Retrieved from: <http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/pdf/213/21301104.pdf>

Celot, P. and Tornero, J. (2009). Study on assessment criteria for media literacy levels: A comprehensive view of the concept of media literacy and an understanding of how media literacy level in Europe should be assessed. [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/literacy/docs/studies/eavi\\_study\\_assess\\_crit\\_media\\_lit\\_levels\\_europe\\_finrep.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/literacy/docs/studies/eavi_study_assess_crit_media_lit_levels_europe_finrep.pdf).

Ellison, N.B., Steinfield, C. & Lampe, C. (2011). Connection Strategies: Social capital

implications of Facebook-enabled communication practices. *New Media &*

*Society*, 13(6). Retrieved from <http://nms.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/01/26/1461444810385389>

Hamm, M.P., Chisholm, A., Shulhan, J., Milne, A., Scott, S.D., Given, L.M., Hartling,

L. (2013). Social media use among patients and caregivers: a scoping review. *BMJ Open* 3, 5

<https://www.researchgate.net/.../236692945>  
So  
cial media use among patients and caregive  
rs

Kaplan, A.M., Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and

opportunities of social media. [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S007681309001232](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S007681309001232)

Kominfo. (2014, February 18). Siaran Pers Tentang Riset Kominfo dan UNICEF

Mengenai Perilaku Anak dan Remaja Dalam Menggunakan Internet. Retrieved from: <http://kominfo.go.id/index.php>

Lester, S. (1999). An Introduction To Phenomenological Research. Retrieved from:

<http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf>