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Social Media Usage and Social Interaction Among Generation Z In Indonesia

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Abstrak | Bahasa Indonesia

Perkembangan media sosial telah mengubah cara Generasi Z berkomunikasi, membangun hubungan sosial, dan berpartisipasi dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Intensitas penggunaan media sosial yang tinggi menciptakan berbagai pola interaksi sosial baru yang memengaruhi cara individu berinteraksi, bertukar informasi, dan membentuk jaringan sosial di era digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh penggunaan media sosial terhadap interaksi sosial Generasi Z di Indonesia. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei yang melibatkan responden Generasi Z yang aktif menggunakan berbagai platform media sosial. Data dikumpulkan melalui penyebaran kuesioner secara daring dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif serta analisis regresi linear sederhana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media sosial memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap intensitas interaksi sosial, kemudahan komunikasi, dan perluasan jaringan sosial, meskipun juga berpotensi mengurangi kualitas interaksi tatap muka apabila digunakan secara berlebihan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa media sosial telah menjadi bagian penting dari dinamika kehidupan sosial Generasi Z di Indonesia. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan pemanfaatan media sosial secara bijaksana agar mampu mendukung interaksi sosial yang sehat serta memperkuat hubungan sosial dalam masyarakat digital.

Kata Kunci: Media Sosial, Interaksi Sosial, Generasi Z, Masyarakat Digital, Komunikasi Digital

Abstract | English

The rapid development of social media has transformed the way Generation Z communicates, builds relationships, and participates in social life. The widespread use of social media has created new patterns of social interaction that influence how individuals communicate, exchange information, and establish social networks in the digital era. This study aims to examine the influence of social media usage on the social interaction of Generation Z in Indonesia. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method involving Generation Z respondents who actively use various social media platforms. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression analysis. The findings indicate that social media usage has a positive influence on the intensity of social interaction, communication effectiveness, and the expansion of social networks. However, excessive use may reduce the quality of face-to-face interaction. These findings suggest that social media has become an integral part of the social dynamics of Generation Z in Indonesia. Therefore, the responsible use of social media is essential to promote healthy social interaction and strengthen social relationships within the digital society.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Interaction, Generation Z, Digital Society, Digital Communication

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has significantly transformed the way people interact, communicate, and participate in social life. One of the most influential developments is the widespread adoption of social media, which has become an essential part of everyday communication across different age groups. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, and WhatsApp have evolved beyond communication tools into spaces for information exchange, self-expression, community participation, and relationship building. These changes have reshaped patterns of social interaction and created new forms of communication within contemporary digital society.

Among various demographic groups, Generation Z represents the most active users of social media. Born and raised during the digital era, this generation has grown alongside the rapid development of internet technology, making digital communication an inseparable part of their daily lives. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z utilizes social media not only to maintain interpersonal relationships but also to build social identity, access information, participate in online communities, and engage in collaborative activities. Consequently, social interaction is no longer limited to face-to-face communication but increasingly occurs through digital platforms that enable real-time interaction regardless of geographical boundaries.

Indonesia has experienced substantial growth in internet penetration and social media usage during the past decade. The increasing accessibility of smartphones and affordable internet services has encouraged young people to integrate social media into various aspects of their daily activities. Social media has become an important medium for communication, entertainment, education, business, and community engagement. As a result, digital interaction has become a dominant characteristic of contemporary Indonesian society, particularly among Generation Z, who actively participate in creating and sharing digital content while maintaining extensive online social networks.

The increasing intensity of social media usage has generated both positive and negative consequences for social interaction. On the positive side, social media facilitates communication, expands friendship networks, encourages collaboration, and enables individuals to participate in broader social communities regardless of physical distance. Digital platforms also provide opportunities for individuals to express opinions, exchange ideas, and develop social relationships more efficiently than conventional communication methods. However, excessive dependence on social media may reduce the frequency of direct interpersonal communication, weaken emotional attachment in face-to-face relationships, increase social comparison, and influence psychological well-being. Therefore, understanding the relationship between social media usage and social interaction has become an increasingly important issue within contemporary social science research.

Previous studies have examined various aspects of social media usage among Generation Z. Existing research generally highlights patterns of media consumption, motives for using digital platforms, self-expression, identity formation, and communication behaviour. Several studies indicate that Generation Z primarily utilizes social media for communication, entertainment, and information seeking, while digital interaction has gradually become an integral component of everyday social activities. Other studies emphasize that social media contributes significantly to identity construction and online community participation among young people. Nevertheless, many previous studies focus primarily on communication patterns or psychological outcomes rather than specifically examining how the intensity of social media usage influences social interaction within the context of Indonesian digital society.

This condition indicates the existence of a research gap. Although numerous studies have investigated social media usage, relatively limited attention has been given to understanding its influence on the quality and dynamics of social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia from a broader social science perspective. Most previous research concentrates on media consumption behaviour, educational contexts, or psychological dimensions, while fewer studies integrate social interaction as the primary analytical focus. Consequently, further investigation is necessary to explain how social media contributes to the transformation of interpersonal relationships, communication behaviour, and social participation within contemporary Indonesian society.

From the perspective of social sciences, social interaction constitutes one of the fundamental elements shaping social relationships and community development. Digital communication technologies have altered traditional patterns of interaction by introducing virtual environments where communication occurs continuously through digital platforms. The emergence of online communities, digital collaboration, and virtual social participation demonstrates that social interaction is no longer restricted by physical space. Consequently, analysing social media usage from the perspective of social interaction contributes not only to communication studies but also to broader discussions concerning digital society, cultural transformation, and social change.

This study therefore aims to analyse the influence of social media usage on social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia. Specifically, the research examines whether the intensity of social media usage contributes to communication patterns, relationship building, and social participation within digital environments. The findings are expected to enrich discussions in the fields of social sciences, media and communication studies, and digital society by providing empirical evidence regarding the relationship between digital technology and contemporary social interaction.

Furthermore, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of social science literature concerning digital society and the transformation of social interaction in the era of technological advancement. Practically, the findings may serve as useful references for educators, policymakers, community organisations, and digital platform users in promoting responsible social media usage while strengthening healthy social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia. In addition, understanding the relationship between social media usage and social interaction is becoming increasingly important as digital communication continues to shape social behaviour in modern

society. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding how social media influences interpersonal relationships among Generation Z within Indonesia's rapidly evolving digital environment. This research also supports the development of social science studies by offering a deeper understanding of communication patterns and social interaction in the context of digital society.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey approach to examine the influence of social media usage on social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows researchers to measure relationships between variables objectively through numerical data and statistical analysis. The study focused on identifying the extent to which social media usage contributes to patterns of social interaction among young people living in the digital era.

The population of this study consisted of Generation Z individuals residing in Indonesia who actively use social media platforms in their daily lives. The target population included university students and young adults aged between 18 and 27 years who regularly access at least one social media platform such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, or WhatsApp. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, in which respondents were chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The criteria included: (1) being a member of Generation Z, (2) actively using social media for at least one year, and (3) accessing social media on a daily basis. A total of 120 respondents participated in this study.

Data were collected using an online questionnaire developed based on indicators of social media usage and social interaction identified in previous social science literature. The questionnaire consisted of two main variables. The independent variable was social media usage, measured through indicators including frequency of use, duration of use, communication activities, information sharing, and online participation. The dependent variable was social interaction, measured through indicators such as communication intensity, relationship maintenance, participation in social activities, collaboration, and interpersonal communication. All questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Before data collection, the research instrument was examined through validity and reliability testing to ensure that all questionnaire items accurately measured the intended variables. Item validity was assessed using Pearson Product Moment correlation, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The instrument was considered reliable when the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeded 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe respondents' characteristics and patterns of social media usage. Furthermore, simple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the influence of social media usage on social interaction among Generation Z. Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests, including normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, were conducted to ensure that the data satisfied the assumptions required for regression analysis. Statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software with a significance level of 0.05.

The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the relationship between social media usage and social interaction among Generation Z while contributing to the development of social science studies, particularly in the fields of media, communication, and digital society.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

This study involved 120 respondents representing Generation Z in Indonesia who actively use social media in their daily lives. Based on the demographic characteristics, most respondents were between 18 and 24 years old and regularly accessed social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and X. The majority reported spending between three and six hours per day on social media for communication, information seeking, entertainment, and social networking.

The descriptive analysis indicated that the overall level of social media usage among respondents was high. Most participants agreed that social media had become an essential part of their daily activities, particularly for maintaining communication with friends, sharing information, participating in online discussions, and developing social relationships. Respondents also reported that social media enabled them to stay connected with communities regardless of geographical distance.

The results of the simple linear regression analysis revealed that social media usage had a positive and statistically significant influence on social interaction among Generation Z. The significance value obtained was lower than 0.05, indicating that the proposed hypothesis was accepted. The regression analysis demonstrated that increased social media usage was associated with higher levels of communication, interaction, and social participation within digital environments.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination showed that social media usage contributed substantially to variations in social interaction among respondents, while the remaining variation was influenced by other social and environmental factors that were not examined in this study. These findings suggest that social media has become one of the important factors influencing contemporary patterns of social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia.

3.2 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that social media has become an important medium for facilitating communication and strengthening social interaction among Generation Z. The widespread use of digital platforms enables young people to maintain relationships, exchange information, participate in online communities, and communicate efficiently without geographical limitations. These results indicate that digital communication has become an integral component of contemporary social life.

The positive relationship between social media usage and social interaction suggests that digital platforms provide opportunities for individuals to expand their social networks and maintain interpersonal relationships more effectively. Generation Z tends to utilize social media not only for entertainment but also for educational purposes, collaborative activities, and community participation. Consequently, social interaction increasingly occurs through both online and offline environments, reflecting the transformation of communication patterns in digital society.

The findings also reveal that the intensity of social media usage contributes to more frequent communication among individuals. Interactive features such as instant messaging, video sharing, online discussions, and virtual communities encourage continuous interaction and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences. These characteristics strengthen social connectedness and promote greater participation in various social activities.

However, the study also indicates that excessive dependence on social media may reduce opportunities for direct face-to-face communication. Although digital interaction offers convenience and accessibility, interpersonal communication in physical settings remains essential for developing emotional relationships, empathy, and mutual understanding. Therefore, maintaining a balance between online communication and direct social interaction is necessary to support healthy social relationships.

From the perspective of social sciences, these findings reflect the ongoing transformation of social interaction within contemporary digital society. Technological development has changed the way individuals communicate, establish relationships, and participate in community life. Social media no longer functions solely as a communication tool but has evolved into a social environment where cultural values, communication patterns, and collective identities continue to develop.

The results of this study contribute to discussions within the fields of Social Sciences, Media and Communication, and Digital Society by providing empirical evidence that social media significantly influences patterns of social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia. These findings also emphasize the importance of promoting responsible social media usage in order to maximize its social benefits while minimizing potential negative consequences for interpersonal relationships.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that social media usage has a positive and significant influence on social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that social media has become an integral part of contemporary social life by facilitating communication, expanding social networks, and encouraging participation in digital communities. The increasing use of digital platforms has transformed the way young people establish interpersonal relationships and engage in social activities within the digital society.

Despite its positive contributions, excessive dependence on social media may reduce opportunities for direct face-to-face interaction, which remains essential for developing interpersonal trust, empathy, and meaningful social relationships. Therefore, maintaining a balanced use of social media is necessary to maximize its benefits while minimizing potential negative impacts on social interaction.

The findings of this study contribute to the development of social science literature, particularly in the fields of Media, Communication, and Digital Society, by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between social media usage and social interaction among Generation Z in Indonesia. Practically, this study suggests that educators, policymakers, community organizations, and digital platform providers should encourage responsible and balanced social media use to strengthen healthy communication patterns and sustainable social relationships in contemporary digital society.

Future research is recommended to investigate additional factors influencing social interaction, such as digital literacy, online community participation, cultural values, and psychological well-being. Expanding the research to different age groups and regions in Indonesia may also provide a broader understanding of social interaction within the rapidly evolving digital environment.

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