THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE WAY TEENS SOCIALIZE IN THE GLOBAL ERA

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Abstract

The rapid development of information technology has brought changes in the culture of Indonesian society.. It cannot be denied that the impact of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 cannot be avoided with the presence of the internet.. Social mediaSocial media provides individuals with the tools they need to build online identities, interact with others, and build social networks. This study aims to discuss the impact of social media on how teenagers socialize in the global era.This research uses qualitative methods through literature review and in-depth interviews. The literature review includes scientific articles, reports, and previous research findings. This research indicates that social media hasimpactsignificantly impacts adolescents' lifestyles and social interactions. Social media introduces global trends, shapes self-identity, and creates new social patterns that expand opportunities for friendship but also pose challenges in the context of mental health and social anxiety.

Keywords: *Impact of social media, Teenagers, Global Era, Socialization*

Introduction

The rapid development of information technology has brought about changes in Indonesian culture. Since the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of Industry 4.0 in the early 21st century has had a significant impact on people's lives, including robots, financial technology, big data, artificial intelligence, digital business, and e-commerce. The impact of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 is undeniable, with the advent of the internet. Connecting technology to the internet allows things to work smarter, and decisions are made based on configured processes and become part of a complex network of services. The internet allows technology users to access social media more easily. Social media provides individuals with the tools they need to build online identities, interact with others, and build social networks. It is undeniable that social media, closely related to the internet, has spread and developed across all age groups, including children. The potential benefits and risks of internet use for children and adolescents are well known. Social media is an online medium where users can easily participate, share, and create content, including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most commonly used forms of social media worldwide. The We Are Social report shows that the number of active social media users in Indonesia reached 167 million in January 2023, equivalent to 60.4% of the Indonesian population. However, the number of active social media users in January 2023 decreased by 12.57% compared to the previous year's 191 million. This decline is the first in a decade. Meanwhile, the time spent playing games on social networks in Indonesia reached 3 hours and 18 minutes per day, the tenth highest in the world. Furthermore, the number of internet users in Indonesia in January 2023 reached 212.9 million people. Unlike social networks, the number of internet users at the beginning of this year was still 3.85% higher than the same period last year. Of these, 98.3% of internet users in Indonesia use mobile phones. Furthermore, the average Indonesian spends 7 hours and 42 minutes using the internet daily. For Indonesians, social media has become a reality, becoming an addiction. They can't go a day without accessing social media, and in fact, they are almost 24/7 inseparable from their smartphones. The most widely used social media platforms include Facebook, LINE, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Messenger, TikTok, and others. Each of these platforms has its own unique strengths in attracting users.

The Millennial generation, born between 1980 and 2000, grew up amidst these technological advancements and is the group most affected by these changes. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become an integral part of their daily lives, transforming the way they interact and communicate. These changes create new dynamics in social and cultural interactions that are interesting to explore further. However, concerns about technology addiction are growing as social media often replaces face-to-face interactions. The link between excessive internet use and aggression, anxiety, ADHD, depression, and other mental health issues can impact children and adolescents. Therefore, there is no definitive recommendation for children to use electronic devices from an early age. Among the many effects of internet and social media use on children and adolescents, there are also positive sides, namely children can inform and educate themselves, build identity and self-esteem, and also connect to a wide range of friends and participate in various activities and communities. Other disadvantages are exposure to violent behavior, harmful stereotypes, cyberbullying, adult-themed internet content, and excessive use (especially for gaming) can hinder the development of social skills and inhibit physical activity. In addition, factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, health status, victimization, emotional intelligence, parent-child bonding, and school culture related to cyberbullying, can also have an impact. (Aulia Fahima, 2023).

On the other hand, the increasing use of social media among the public has created a sense of personal freedom to express opinions, ideas, criticisms, and suggestions. Some individuals have even misused social media for criminal purposes. Several incidents that have enlivened social media include the "Pacu Jalur" phenomenon in 2025, which went viral worldwide, and the arrival of world musician "Alan Walker" at Al-Azhar University in Medan in 2024. Discussing "viral" phenomena cannot be separated from the role and influence of social networks on life in our society. The current state of Indonesian society demands that the government take an adaptive and responsive stance. In fact, social media has transformed social life at almost all levels and social classes. Social change and development are absolutely necessary for the social cycle to function properly. Therefore, the government needs to regulate the freedom of social media use in Indonesia. This is why the author wants to conduct a study entitled "The Impact of Social Media on How Teenagers Socialize in the Global Era."

METHOD

This research employed qualitative methods through literature review and in-depth interviews. The literature review included scientific articles, reports, and previous research findings related to the impact of social media on adolescents' social interactions in the global era. To deepen the analysis, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 adolescents aged 15-18 attending Al-Azhar High School in Medan. Interview questions focused on their perspectives and experiences regarding social media use, their lifestyles, and the impact of their interactions. Interview data was analyzed thematically to uncover general patterns and explore the impact of social media on adolescents' lifestyles and interactions in the global era.

Discussion

Social media is an online platform that people use to build social networks or social relationships with others who share similar interests, group activities, or personal activities or interact with careers. (Akram & Kumar 2017). Social media, as an instrument for identity formation and self-expression, has transformed the process of identity formation in adolescents. With social media, adolescents can try out various styles, follow fashion trends, and adopt the behavior of figures they admire, such as influencers or celebrities. Self-expression, which was previously limited to local environments, is now evolving through interactions in digital spaces, allowing adolescents to experiment with their identities. In this process, social media also creates pressure, especially for adolescents who feel the need to meet certain standards to be accepted in society. Some experts, such as social psychologists Handayani and Putri (2020), state that constant social comparison can cause adolescents to experience an identity crisis or feelings of inferiority when they are unable to meet the social standards presented through social media. There are both positive and negative impacts of social media's influence on students' social interactions. Positive impacts found include students being able to easily obtain information and making new friends.
and broaden the insights found in social media that are meaningful and useful for readers. (Abuk and Iswahydi 2019). Meanwhile, research (Wahyuni 2017) revealed that students use social media as a guide in their social life that is important for finding information and connecting with friends, interacting with people they like both in friendship and the opposite sex, friends they haven't seen for a long time, and even new ones they meet.

The Impact of Social Media in Influencing Teenagers' Lifestyle Preferences

Social media significantly shapes teenagers' lifestyle preferences through the visualization of deep-rooted global trends. For example, K-pop culture, popularized through social media, has successfully encouraged many

teenagers to adopt the fashion styles, hairstyles, and even music tastes they see in digital content. Teenagers who want to be part of this trend tend to invest significant time and money in achieving a similar look and lifestyle. Furthermore, social media encourages teenagers to engage in certain activities deemed attractive by the digital community, such as creating video content or promoting themselves as influencers. Unfortunately, this tendency to follow trends sometimes blurs the line between teenagers' needs and desires in determining their true lifestyle preferences.Research (Qomariyah 2013) on social media usage behavior among urban students, shows that urban students use social media for four dimensions of interest, namely information, recreational activities, communication, and transactions. Although of the four internet usage purposes, social media activities carried out by urban students are more for recreational activities than for other interests.

Psychological Impacts and Social Pressures of Social Media Use

Social media often triggers psychological stress for teenagers. Features like the number of "likes" and "followers" create benchmarks of popularity and social acceptance among teenagers, leading them to measure their self-worth based on the interactions they receive through social media. The concept of FOMO, or Fear of Missing Out, causes teenagers to worry about not following trends or activities popular among their peers. The impact of this social pressure can be long-lasting and affect adolescents' mental health, leading to stress, anxiety, and even depression. This phenomenon was proposed by Arifin (2021), who found that feelings of inferiority due to social comparison through digital media can be a trigger for anxiety and low self-esteem in adolescents.

Social Interaction Patterns Formed by Social Media

Social media allows teenagers to expand their social networks without being limited by distance. They can meet and interact with people who share similar interests, which might previously have been difficult in a physical setting. This phenomenon boosts social confidence, but it also brings some negative effects. With the high intensity of virtual communication, some teenagers have begun to rely on online interactions rather than face-to-face meetings, which can diminish their social skills and empathy in real-world situations. A study by Sugiono (2023) found that excessive social media engagement can affect how teenagers respond and adapt in face-to-face interactions, which are crucial for their emotional and social development.

The Impact of Popular Culture in Social Media on Adolescents' Values and Identity

Social media has become a platform for the spread of popular culture, introducing teenagers to various foreign lifestyles, such as Western culture and K-pop. Besides being a form of self-expression, exposure to this culture can sometimes trigger feelings of dissatisfaction with local values or identity. Teenagers who are drawn to a particular popular cultural lifestyle can experience an identity crisis or feel dissatisfied with their local culture. However, according to Puspitasari and Wijaya (2019), this phenomenon also carries positive values, as teenagers become more open and able to appreciate cultural diversity.

Case study

There is a teenager named Maya. Maya is active on various social media such as TikTok and Instagram. Maya, who is just an ordinary student, is now starting to recognize what she is interested in. Initially, Maya saw various K-pop content on various platforms, she felt attracted to K-pop content. She began to find out more about K-pop, about culture in South Korea, and tried to imitate it. Every day she listened to Korean songs, watched Korean dramas, tried various Korean cuisine, and even learned Korean. Now she is very familiar with Korean culture, and has a desire to go to that country. When she was in the third grade of high school, she already knew where she was going. She chose to study Korean literature, because she was already familiar with things that smelled of Korea, so she did not hesitate to take that major. When she was in college, she participated in a student exchange to Seoul, one of the cities in South Korea, which was indeed her dream, Maya felt that she was not in vain to know K-pop, and did not regret learning a foreign language, because she achieved her dream and gained new experiences. This case study shows how social media can shape adolescent identity, but also cause psychological impacts if not managed properly.

Conclusion

This research indicates that social media has a significant impact on adolescents' lifestyles and social interactions. Social media introduces global trends, shapes self-identity, and creates new social patterns that expand friendship opportunities but also pose challenges in terms of mental health and social anxiety. Therefore, it is crucial for adolescents and their parents to be more judicious in managing social media use. Furthermore, education, which

teaches about the positive and negative impacts of social media, is crucial so that adolescents can optimally benefit from social media without being burdened by its negative effects.

Closing

Social media has become an inseparable aspect of adolescent life in the digital age. As discussed, while it has positive impacts, such as facilitating self-expression, expanding social networks, and introducing global trends, social media also has negative aspects, including social pressure, anxiety, and dependence on virtual validation. Therefore, awareness and wise management by all parties, including adolescents, parents, educators, and policymakers, are needed to mitigate its negative impacts. It is important for young people to use social media as a tool that supports self-development and healthy social interactions, without sacrificing the balance between the virtual and real worlds. With the right approach, social media can be a tool that enriches the lives of adolescents in this digital age.

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