



THE ANALYSIS OF INSTAGRAM USERS AMONG STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 1 PERCUT SEI TUAN

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the patterns of use, motivations, and the positive and negative impacts of Instagram on students at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with five students who actively use Instagram. The results indicate that Instagram is accessed almost daily, particularly during leisure time at home or school breaks. The most frequently used features include Stories, Reels, and Direct Messages (DM). The primary motivations for using Instagram are entertainment, information seeking, and self-expression. Socially, Instagram has a positive effect by helping students maintain friendships and express their identities. However, it also poses negative impacts, such as disrupting concentration and causing social pressure through self-comparison. Therefore, it is crucial for adolescents to manage their time effectively and use social media responsibly.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an important element in the lives of teenagers in today's digital age. One of the most popular platforms among the younger generation is Instagram. This application allows its users to share photos, videos, and stories, as well as interact visually, making it a very attractive communication and self-expression tool for teenagers (Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert, 2009). The widespread use of Instagram among students is not only related to entertainment, but also plays a role in shaping their lifestyle, creating a digital identity, and influencing their social and emotional interactions (Keles, McCrae, and Grealish, 2020). The use of social platforms, especially Instagram, among high school students in Indonesia continues to increase significantly every year. Based on data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2023), more than 90% of teenagers aged 13 to 18 are active on various social media, with Instagram being one of the most popular. This phenomenon shows that Instagram is no longer just a medium for entertainment, but has become an important element in the social life of adolescents, especially in building self-image and strengthening relationships between peers.

Previous studies have examined the influence of social media on the social and emotional development of adolescents. A study by Vannucci, Flannery, and Ohannessian (2017) revealed that social media can provide positive benefits, such as strengthening social connections, but on the other hand it also has the potential to cause negative impacts, such as decreased self-esteem and increased social anxiety, depending on the pattern of use. Another study in Indonesia, conducted by Putri and Santosa (2021), also highlighted

the positive and negative influences of social media on students, although the study was quantitative with a large and geographically diverse sample.

However, there is still a lack of studies that specifically explore how students in certain schools understand and utilize Instagram in their daily lives. SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan, with its large number of students and diverse social backgrounds, is the right location to study this phenomenon in more depth. This study aims to fill this gap by using a qualitative approach that focuses on students' experiences and views on the use of Instagram as a medium of entertainment, a means of self-expression, and a tool for socializing.

Unlike previous studies that tend to analyze the impact of social media in general through quantitative methods, this study emphasizes a contextual understanding of the duality of Instagram's impacts—both positive and negative—on the social and emotional aspects of students in a particular school environment. With this approach, the study provides a valuable contribution in enriching the literature related to the role of social media in shaping the identity and social dynamics of adolescents in the digital era, while opening up opportunities for further research that is more focused on digital literacy education interventions and managing healthy social media use among students. In Indonesia, especially among high school students, the use of social media is increasing every year. According to data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2023), more than 90% of internet users aged 13 to 18 are active on various social media platforms, with Instagram being one of the most popular. This phenomenon shows that Instagram has gone beyond being just an entertainment platform; It has become a very important part of students' daily social life, including in building self-image and establishing relationships with peers.

The high frequency of Instagram use also raises several questions. Is it true that Instagram use has a positive impact on students' social and emotional development? Or can it trigger problems such as impaired concentration, social pressure, and social anxiety caused by comparing oneself with others? Previous research has shown that social media can produce positive effects, such as increased social connections, but can also have negative effects, such as decreased self-esteem and increased anxiety, depending on how it is used (Vannucci, Flannery, and Ohannessian, 2017).

SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan is one of the public schools in Deli Serdang Regency that has a fairly large student population with diverse social backgrounds. Initial observations of the school showed that many students in this school actively use Instagram for various purposes, ranging from entertainment, seeking information, to expressing themselves. There is still little research that specifically explores how students in this school understand and use Instagram in their daily activities.

This study aims to examine the behavior, motivation, and effects of Instagram use among students of SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan, using qualitative methods. The findings of this study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role of social media in students' lives, as well as being a consideration for schools, parents, and decision makers to support students in facing the digital era with a healthy and intelligent approach.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach through a case study method. A qualitative approach is chosen because it can explore the subjective and in-depth understanding that people have about certain social phenomena (Creswell, 2016). Through case studies, this study attempts to explore a group of people or individuals in real situations in an in-depth and detailed manner (Yin, 2014). The focus of this study is to understand how students of SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan use Instagram and the impact of social media on their social, emotional, and academic lives. Participants in this study were grade XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan who were actively involved in using Instagram. The selection of informants was carried out using the purposive sampling method, which means choosing informants based on certain considerations and criteria that are considered relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2017). The criteria for becoming an informant include: (1) students who have been actively using Instagram for at least the past six months, (2) willing to be interviewed in depth, and (3) reflecting diversity in terms of class, gender, and usage patterns. The number of informants was 5 people, on the grounds that this number was sufficient to achieve data saturation, which is when the information obtained begins to repeat itself (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014).

Information was obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and document collection. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide to remain flexible but also maintain focus on the issues to be studied (Patton, 2002). Observations were conducted to observe the symptoms or behavior of informants in the context of their schools and daily lives. Documentation in the form of searching for Instagram content uploaded by informants was also used to complete data from interviews and observations, of course by obtaining approval and complying with proper research ethics.

The information obtained was analyzed using the thematic analysis method (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This analysis process includes: (1) transcribing interview data, (2) reading and understanding the data as a whole, (3) coding emerging themes or issues, (4) grouping data into major themes, (5) compiling thematic narratives that explain the meaning of each category found, and (6) concluding based on emerging thematic patterns.

The opinion of Miles & Huberman (1992: 16) states that analysis consists of three streams of activities that occur simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions/verification Fadhil (2020).

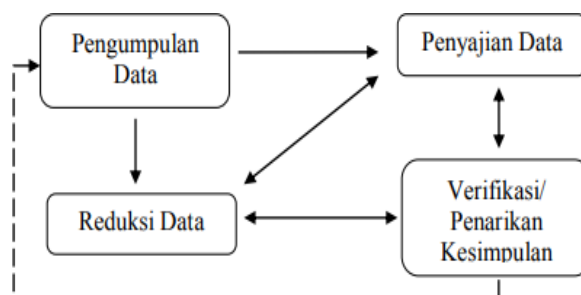


Figure 3.1: Miles and Huberman's Interactive Data Analysis Model

Ensuring data validity is the main focus in this process. This research applies the method of source triangulation, subject checking, and discussion with colleagues. Triangulation is done by analyzing information from several sources and the data collection methods applied. Member checks are done by providing temporary results to informants to confirm their truth. Meanwhile, peer debriefing is done by discussing the results of the analysis with colleagues or supervisors to reduce subjectivity from researchers (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Based on in-depth interviews with several students at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan, it was found that Instagram has become an important part of their daily lives. They not only use Instagram for fun, but also to interact socially and express themselves. The majority of respondents admitted to actively using Instagram every day, especially during free time such as after school or before going to bed. The features they use most often are stories, reels, and direct messages (DM). They feel that Instagram gives them the opportunity to show themselves as they want to show others, either through photos, videos, or opinions. These results are in line with Andarwati's (2019) research which states that teenagers use Instagram as a means of forming self-identity and image in the digital world. The students also felt positive benefits from using Instagram. Some of them stated that they felt encouraged when they saw educational or inspiring content. Many also felt more confident after sharing content and receiving positive responses from their friends. Instagram is considered a place to develop creativity, such as visual design, photography, and video editing. Research by Dzikri, Aisyah, and Mahfuzah (2024) supports this, by showing that social media such as Instagram can increase students' self-confidence, creativity, and digital communication skills if used in the right way.

This study shows that students at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan use Instagram in a dual way, namely bringing important benefits and challenges in their social and emotional aspects. On the one hand, students can express themselves, increase creativity, and establish wider friendships. Instagram serves as a useful platform in building social skills and strengthening their online identity.

On the other hand, the results of the study also revealed the existence of social pressure experienced by students. Several respondents stated that they felt pressure to show a perfect image through uploads and felt anxious when responses from other users, such as the number of "likes," comments, or views, did not meet expectations. Social comparison with peers or famous figures on Instagram can lead to feelings of lack of self-confidence and envy. In addition, excessive use of Instagram can also interfere with focus while studying.

This finding is in line with the social comparison theory formulated by Festinger (1954), which states that people tend to compare themselves to others as a way to assess themselves. In the realm of social media, this comparison has the potential to cause psychological stress that can lead to social anxiety, as explained in the concept of "Instagramxiety" by Lim, Purnomo, and Sari (2021). Kumorotomo's (2022)

research also supports this result by showing that the frequency of Instagram use can interfere with students' academic responsibilities.

Furthermore, the results of this study strengthen the Uses and Gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1973), which states that social media users seek to fulfill their needs for entertainment, information, and self-expression. However, if usage is not managed properly, negative impacts such as impaired concentration and social pressure can arise. Therefore, digital literacy skills and good time management are very important so that students can use Instagram in a healthy and productive way.

Overall, this study makes a significant contribution by providing a contextual understanding of how students at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan understand and manage the use of Instagram in everyday life. These findings open up opportunities for further research to develop more targeted and effective educational interventions in digital literacy, as well as explore the long-term impacts of social media use on adolescents' social and emotional development.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, it is concluded that Instagram has a significant role in the social and psychological aspects of students at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan. This social media not only functions as a source of entertainment, but also as the main tool for students to establish social relationships and express their identities through various features such as stories, short videos, and direct messages. These results strengthen the understanding that Instagram has become an inseparable part of the daily lives of teenagers in forming self-image in cyberspace.

From a scientific perspective, this study makes a significant contribution by showing two sides of Instagram's influence on students, namely the positive side which includes increased self-confidence, inspiration, and digital creativity, and the negative side which includes social pressure, anxiety due to social comparison, and disruption in learning concentration. The qualitative approach applied in this study allows for a more in-depth analysis of how students interpret and regulate their use of Instagram in their social context, an aspect that has not been widely explored in previous studies.

As a next stage, this study opens up opportunities for the development of further studies that can formulate effective intervention strategies, especially in the field of digital literacy education and management of social media use among students. Future research can also expand the focus by involving different schools and communities, and exploring the long-term impact of Instagram use on adolescents' social and emotional development. In addition, the active involvement of educators and parents as a guide in the healthy and responsible use of social media is an important point that needs to be studied further to support the optimal use of digital technology. In this way, this research not only enriches insights in the field of science about adolescent interactions with social media, but also provides a strong foundation for the development of relevant educational policies and programs in today's digital era.

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