THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INTERACTION PATTERNS AMONG TEENAGERS

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Abstract

Social media has revolutionized interaction patterns among teenagers, providing them with new opportunities to communicate and share experiences like never before. However, an important issue that arises is how intensive use of social media affects mental health and the development of social skills. The tendency to spend excessive time online can reduce opportunities for in-person interactions that are important for social and cognitive learning. The lack of face-to-face contact can hinder adolescents in developing empathy and non-verbal communication skills. Furthermore, constant social comparison and the search for online validation can trigger psychological distress, including self-esteem issues and anxiety. The research method in this study uses literature research method. The results show that social media provides ample opportunities for adolescents to connect socially, explore identity, and participate in online communities. However, adolescents' use of social media also poses significant challenges. In particular, findings suggest a correlation between intensive social media use and an increased risk of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, as well as a reduction in face-to-face interactions that may affect the development of healthy social and emotional skills.

Keywords: Social Media, Interaction Patterns, Adolescents.

Introduction

In this digital era, social media has become an integral component of daily life, especially among adolescents. The ease of access and tendency to use social media with high intensity in adolescence brings significant changes to how adolescents interact socially with their surrounding environment (Meer & Staubach, 2020). The development

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of various social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter has redefined traditional concepts of communication, creating new patterns of interaction (Pratoom, 2021).

Adolescents, who are the age group between 13 to 18 years old, are in the process of searching for self-identity and are a period that is highly susceptible to external influences (Aslan, 2017). In this phase, social interaction plays a crucial role in the formation of values, attitudes and behaviors. Social media, with its rapid advancement and convenience, allows adolescents to communicate virtually without time and space constraints, which can result in a shift in traditional social interaction patterns (Savi et al., 2021).

With the emergence of the "virtual world" phenomenon, many adolescents may spend more time interacting on social media than through face-to-face interactions. This raises various questions about how this phenomenon may affect social behavior, the formation of interpersonal relationships, and the quality of communication between adolescents and their families, friends, and the wider community (Lei & Su, 2021).

The urgency of research on social media and adolescent interactions lies in the significance of the transformation of ways of communicating among the younger generation influenced by the information technology revolution. With its undeniable prevalence in adolescents' daily lives, social media plays an important role in their identity formation, cultural exposure, and cognitive capacity (Negi, 2023). An in-depth understanding of the impact of social media on sociocultural interaction patterns is essential to mitigate its negative effects, maximize its positive potential, and prepare adolescents to face the challenges of both the virtual and real worlds (Kulsum et al., 2024). They are future assets whose development is currently at a crucial point, mediated by the devices and social networks they hold in their hands. Therefore, scientific engagement on this issue is not only urgent for now, but also decisive for the quality of social interactions in the long run (Zhang, 2023).

The adolescent phase is a critical transitive period in human development, during which individuals undergo massive physical, emotional and social changes. Typical characteristics of adolescence include identity exploration, rebellion against authority, search for autonomy, and development of social and emotional skills (Chen, 2022). During this period, adolescents are very vulnerable to being influenced by the environment and peer groups as part of the process of finding their identity and place in society. In this context, social media often acts as a field of experimentation where adolescents try out various social roles without being bound by physical and real-time constraints, allowing them to explore identity safely behind a layer (SESERMAN, 2021).

The role of social media in the lives of adolescents today is almost inevitable and has a permeative impact, transforming traditional ways of interaction into more digital-centric ones. With its multifaceted functions, social media not only facilitates communication but also becomes a means of self-expression and social recognition,

which is particularly important for adolescents who are in the process of building self-esteem and self-confidence. These platforms provide a space for adolescents to connect with a wider community, share experiences and receive social support (Singh & Manju, 2022). However, this also presents new challenges, including issues of addiction, cyberbullying and other negative impacts on mental health. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of the role of social media in this stage is key to supporting adolescents to better and more safely navigate this important transition (Muller, 2023).

The study of the influence of social media on adolescents' social interaction patterns is important because by understanding its implications, stakeholders such as parents, educators, and policy makers can better regulate and assist adolescents as they explore the virtual world. This study is expected to provide a broader view of both the benefits and potential risks of social media as an interaction tool for adolescents at a critical time of their social development.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature research method. Literature research or literature study is one of the research methods widely used in various disciplines. This method involves collecting, evaluating, and analyzing data from literature sources relevant to the research topic (Sio et al., 2024); (Nguyen et al., 2024); (Kim et al., 2024).

Results and Discussion
Social Interaction Theory

Social interaction is a basic phenomenon in human social life. Simply put, social interaction can be defined as the process by which individuals relate to and influence each other (Motiramani & Modi, 2022). These interactions are the building blocks of a larger society, as they allow humans to communicate, cooperate, exchange ideas, and build the different types of relationships that make up our social structure. The social actions that a person takes in the interaction process are not solely the result of spontaneous reactions, but are also often influenced by pre-existing norms, values, expectations and social roles in a particular cultural context (Fitriani & Ramadhani, 2022).

Several theories have been constructed to explain how social interactions take place and their underlying structures. The theory of symbolic interactionism, developed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, is one of the most well-known (Sukaemi et al., 2023). This theory emphasizes the meanings or symbols interpreted by individuals in the process of interaction. In this view, social interaction is not only an exchange of behavior, but also an exchange of subjective meanings communicated through language and symbols. Therefore, individuals' understanding of social situations and

their reactions to them are strongly influenced by their personal interpretations of these symbols (Yuliyanti et al., 2021).

Social exchange theory, developed by George C. Homans and Peter Blau, also provides a framework for understanding social interactions. This theory considers that social interactions are similar to economic transactions, where individuals tend to maximize the benefits of social relationships (Flambonita, 2024). Each individual in the interaction will consider the costs and benefits of their actions, and relationships tend to be persistent when participants feel that they receive rewards that match the effort they invest. Therefore, the balance of giving and receiving in social relationships is important. Exchange theory presents an instrumental and economic perspective in understanding the dynamics between people and the motivations behind their social actions (Saputra & Salih, 2023).

In addition to symbolic interactionism and social exchange theory, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory presents another perspective on social interaction. Giddens argues that social structures and individual actions are intertwined in a dynamic process called structuration (Qaisar et al., 2020). According to Giddens, social structures not only limit individual actions but are also produced and renewed through these actions. Social interaction, in the context of structuration theory, becomes the field where individuals continuously use and modify the rules and resources in the social structure. This concept of "duality of structure" emphasizes that individuals are not only passive to existing social norms and values, but also active in shaping and changing their social reality (Beri & Kumari, 2022).

Social interactions are influenced by the broader context of social institutions and structures, including class, gender, race, and institutions such as family, education, and government. These factors give shape to expectations, norms and behaviors in social interactions, as well as being areas where inequality and power are played out. For example, interactions between superiors and subordinates in the workplace are determined not only by individual personalities, but also by organizational structures, corporate culture, and broader power dynamics (Giglietto et al., 2021).

Finally, in today's digital age, social interaction theory must also consider how technology affects the way individuals interact with each other. Social media, online communication and digital platforms have opened up new dimensions of social interaction, allowing individuals to communicate virtually without geographical restrictions. This phenomenon has expanded the scope of social interaction but also raised new questions about identity, privacy and social dynamics in digital societies. Hence, the understanding of social interaction continues to evolve along with technological developments and socio-cultural changes.

The Influence of Social Media on Adolescent Psychology

Within the scope of social psychology, understanding how media affects social behavior and cognitive processes draws on various theories. Social Cognition Theory, influenced by the work of Albert Bandura, for example, outlines how people learn social behavior through observation, imitation and modeling. Media plays a large role in this, particularly through its role as a primary source of behavioral displays that can be imitated (Yuan, 2022). Television programs, movies, and social media content often present role models that viewers can emulate, both positively and negatively. In addition, the concept of self-efficacy (a person's belief in their ability to execute an action) can also be strengthened or weakened by media messages. This phenomenon can be seen in how advertisements and films can influence individuals' perceptions of reality and social norms, in turn influencing their personal behaviors and expectations (Jiayao, 2022).

Another important theory is the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which focuses on the reasons why individuals use media and what kind of satisfaction they get from it. In this theory, media consumers are seen as active in choosing what they watch, read or listen to based on their own needs and wants. Factors such as the desire to escape reality, the need for information, personal identity formation, and social integration are some examples of motivations that drive media consumers (He, 2022). Today's digital technologies, especially the internet and social media, have both broadened and complexified the scope of this theory, as they give users more control in selecting and interacting with media content, and allow for the formation of virtual communities that can facilitate a sense of social attachment and self-validation (Wang, 2024).

From the perspective of the Cognitive Dissonance Theory developed by Leon Festinger, media can also play an important role in how individuals cope with discrepancies between their beliefs and behaviors. Media often presents information or views that conflict with one's personal beliefs, which can trigger dissonance (Surkyn et al., 2023). To reduce this dissonance, individuals may change their beliefs, ignore conflicting information, or seek confirmation in media content that aligns with their existing views. In a broader context, the "echo chamber" phenomenon on social media, where information only reinforces pre-existing views, is a clear example of how Cognitive Dissonance Theory plays out in the interaction of media with social psychology (Kelly & Rubin, 2024).

Meanwhile, Framing Theory, which is often used in media analysis, discusses how the media's choice to present a particular issue or information can influence public perception and interpretation. Framing is not simply about what the media shows, but rather how the information is presented. This includes what is emphasized, reduced, or omitted in the narrative (Ismail, 2021). Through framing, the media builds a certain narrative or point of view that can greatly influence public opinion and social discourse. For example, in the case of public health crisis news, an emphasis on fear-inspiring messages can lead to completely different outcomes compared to an emphasis on

prevention and solution messages. In this regard, social psychology provides insights to better understand the ways in which media influence individual interpretations and the social dynamics of society (Ibrayem, 2023).

Social media has changed the way we communicate, interact and form relationships with others. While the benefits are many, including increasing connectivity and providing a platform for self-expression, social media has also been identified as negatively impacting mental health. Several studies have found that excessive social media use can be associated with increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression (Anjani & Widyatama, 2023). This is largely attributed to comparing oneself to others, exposure to cyberbullying, and the often unrealistic reality portrayed on social media platforms, which can then affect self-esteem and life satisfaction. Moreover, constant virtual connection can also reduce control dissatisfaction and sleep quality, another important factor for good mental health (Garrand, 2023).

On the other hand, social media is also argued to have potential as a supportive tool for mental health, if used in the right way. These platforms can be an important source of social support, especially for individuals who have difficulty finding support in the real world (Tian, 2022). Groups, forums, and accounts focused on mental health week awareness, for example, can provide a space for individuals to share stories, management strategies, and solidarity. In addition, many mental health professionals also use social media to disseminate useful information, raise awareness about mental health issues and reduce stigma around seeking help. Therefore, while risks to mental health certainly exist, social media also brings potential as a valuable resource for improved well-being, depending on how individuals choose to use it (Britska et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the influence of social media on mental health is a complex and multi-tiered topic, featuring impacts that can simultaneously be positive and negative. On the one hand, excessive use of social media can contribute to mental health problems, including increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, depression, as well as affecting one's self-esteem and sleep quality. This is mainly due to comparing oneself to others, exposure to negative treatment such as cyberbullying, and exposure to unrealistic representations of other people's lives. However, on the other hand, social media also offers opportunities to build social support, disseminate useful information, and provide a space for individuals to express themselves and find community. With conscious and regular use, social media can serve as an important tool to support mental health. Therefore, the key to utilizing social media is through informed and critical use, where individuals are expected to take a balanced approach in integrating social media in their daily lives to support their mental well-being.

Patterns of Social Interaction among Teenagers

The use of social media has fundamentally changed the way we interact and communicate with each other, having a far-reaching impact on patterns of social

interaction in society. With easy access and the ability to quickly connect with others around the world, social media has opened a new window to previously unthinkable possibilities for interaction (Markowitz, 2022). However, while providing space for wider and often more inclusive interactions, social media has also replaced many aspects of face-to-face interaction with digital communication. This can have an impact on the depth of interpersonal relationships, where communication via social media is often more concise and less in-depth. As a result, while the number of "friends" or followers may increase, the quality of individual connections may decrease, leading to a phenomenon where one feels connected but at the same time isolated (Pasa & Mahyuni, 2022).

Furthermore, the constant exposure to various social media has changed the norms and expectations related to how we interact with each other. Viral trends and challenges, for example, are the new normal and often emerge as a form of interaction that reflects the perception of the group or community. However, negative aspects have also emerged such as "fear of missing out" (FOMO), where individuals may feel pressured to constantly connect and post content to not feel left out (Hilte et al., 2020). This can put additional strain on interpersonal relationships, as the pressure to "show off" an idealized social life can erode authenticity in relationships and cause individuals to spend more time managing online perceptions than improving real relationships. This paradox, where technology designed to bring us closer together can also make us feel more detached from each other, is one of the significant consequences of changes in interaction patterns due to the use of social media (Cinarsih, 2023).

Furthermore, the influence of social media on interaction patterns is not only limited to individuals, but also extends to the professional and educational realms. In the world of work, the use of social media platforms such as LinkedIn has changed the way we network and seek job opportunities. Professional interactions are now faster and cover a wider network, not limited by geographical boundaries (Barry et al., 2022). However, this also poses new challenges such as the importance of maintaining a professional image online and enforcing boundaries between personal and professional life. In the education space, the use of social media has helped in forming learning communities, where students and educators can share resources and collaborate more easily. However, it also brings challenges in the form of distraction and the potential for the dissemination of false or biased information (Sun et al., 2020).

Thus, while social media has provided new tools for interaction that strengthen global connectivity, it also requires a critical and thoughtful approach to managing its impact. Finding a balance between the benefits and potential harms of social media is key to reaping the maximum benefits of these technologies without causing harm to real social interactions. Often, this involves awareness and an active effort not to let social media dominate the way we interact, but rather as a tool that complements and sometimes enriches the way we communicate and relate to others.

Conclusion

The influence of social media on interaction patterns among adolescents is an important research topic given the prevalence of its use among this group. Key findings show that social media has played a significant role in shaping the way adolescents interact and build relationships. With widespread access to various platforms, adolescents now have greater opportunities to connect with peers and the wider community, which could theoretically enrich their social experiences. Social media provides a space for teens to explore identity, share interests and develop a sense of belongingness.

However, this influence is not without its problems. Overuse of social media has also been linked to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression among adolescents. Social comparison theory practiced online can contribute to negative self-image and social anxiety, as teens often compare themselves to the portraits of seemingly perfect lives posted by others. In addition, excessive online interactions can reduce the time and ability for face-to-face interactions, an ability that is crucial for healthy social and emotional development.

Creating a balance between social media use and physical interaction is emerging as a critical need for adolescent well-being. Educating teens about responsible social media use and limiting screen time are important steps to ensure that social media serves as a tool that empowers, rather than hinders, healthy social development. Engaging adolescents in social and community activities that support the growth of interpersonal and face-to-face communication skills is also important to offset the impact of social media. In summary, while social media has the potential to broaden and deepen social interactions among teens, it is important to recognize and address the challenges that come with it.

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