

The Influence of the Need to Belong on Self-Presentation of Teenage Instagram Users in Bandung, Indonesia

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Abstract—The present study aims at finding out the influence of the need to belong on the self-presentation of teenage Instagram users. Need to belong is a basic need to form and maintain interpersonal relationships. Self-presentation is behavior that is motivated to give a certain impression verbally or nonverbally. The study employs quantitative method, taking 346 teenage Instagram users in Bandung, Indonesia ranging from 15 to 18 years old. Leary M. R's *Need to Belong Scale* and Lee et al.'s *Self-Presentations Tactics Scale* were used as research instruments to measure self-presentation. The data analysis involved linear regression technique. The study finds that the need to belong has a significant impact on self-presentation. Self-presentation is manifested in the form of positive self-presentation and negative self-presentation. To create a positive and useful self-presentation for teenage, efforts are needed to grow the need to belong to teenage.

Keywords—*instagram; need to belong; self-presentation; teenagers*

I. INTRODUCTION

Individuals use social media to virtually interact with each other, sharing their thoughts, beliefs, attitude, and experiences with others living in other places [1]. Social media users can create their own profiles and share their personal information by uploading photos, videos, or instant messages to their friends and family [2]. Instagram is one of the most-commonly used social media, having been a part of, in particular, teenagers' lives.

Using Instagram, teenagers have chances to think of and choose what they would like to show to others. They can upload photos and put a caption by highlighting their personality aspects or share the best photos to represent certain impressions [3]. Instagram photos and videos are media used by the teenage users to portray their best-self and maintain certain images in front of public [4,5]. Ting also stated that teenagers would present themselves to maintain relationships among individuals by using Instagram since its users can choose what kind of impression they would represent through their photos or videos [4].

Certain impressions or images managed or “crafted” to show to others is known as *self-presentation* [6]. *Self-presentation* is generally motivated by a desire to show proper impression to others, or an image in accordance to one's expectation and online identity projection [7].

Each individuals takes various strategies to get what they want, gain the desired self-image, craft and maintain self-identity, and enable themselves to easily face social environment [8]. Observed from the development perspective, self-presentation is an important aspect of teenagers' social and emotional development and a key element in self-development, playing a role in one's identity development similar to the self-concept [5,9,10]. Self-presentation is also a way teenagers can compare their behaviors, attitudes, and values [5].

Based on a study conducted by Puspitasari, teenagers upload photos or videos to Instagram to fulfil four aspects [11]: a need to explain themselves, a desire to give and seek attention to/from others, a need to look great, and a need to get some supports. Puspitasari added that teenagers need peers to gain affection and acceptance from their environment which later may develop a sense of self-respect [11]. The four aspects aforementioned have meanings included in the definition of the “need to belong”. Other studies also stated that teenagers present themselves in various ways and would put an effort to be connected with their peers. This is caused by the need to belong to their peers in a large scale on Instagram [12].

According to Leary et al., the need to belong is a necessity to be accepted in a group and get connected with others [13]. The need to belong is a part of teenagers social development [14]. Teenagers have a strong need to belong to their friends, since friendship plays an important role as a resource and a support network for teenagers to cope with emotional and social problems [12,15].

The need to belong arises as a motivation for an individual to be accepted in a circle of friends [12]. Isolation from the circle can lead to loneliness, negatively affecting one's emotional welfare, significance and goals of life, and self-efficacy [16].

The study conducted by Sarita & Suleeman shows that the lower need to belong someone has, the lower one's self-presentation is [12]. Similarly, the higher the need of belong someone has, the greater one's frequency on self-presentation. In presenting themselves, teenagers display a pleasant impression, such as giving compliments, showing concern, exhibiting positive personality, or doing something approved by others.

Data from the preliminary study on four high school students in Bandung, Indonesia shows that the teenagers use Instagram as a room for existence, socialization, and a way to follow updates or information shared amongst their social circles. They usually access Instagram through their cell phones, enabling them to see and follow popular trends on the social platform easily, such as following "in my feelings" and "mannequin" challenges, uploading "outfit of the day" (OOTD) photos, and the like. In addition to this, some users upload photos of themselves in sexy or revealing clothing articles, public display of affection, or videos showing the uploaders violating social norms or rules.

Recently, social scientist have begun studying instagram, examining demographics characteristic of users: motivation for use, instagram usage, self-presentation in social media [3-5,7,11]. According Sarita & Suleeman there is relationship between need to belong and self-presentation [12]. This research integrates these approach.

Based on previous studies and preliminary study conducted, we are motivated to investigate the influence of the need to belong on self-presentation of teenage, high-school Instagram users in Bandung, Indonesia.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design and Variables

The study was conducted using non-experimental ex post-facto design. Quantitative method is employed, with the concept of "Need to Belong" applied as the independent variable and self-presentation as the dependent variable.

B. Participant

Participants for the study are teenage Instagram users in Bandung, Indonesia, ranging from 15 to 18 years old. Participants were 346 students (109 males, 237 females), receiving extra credits for participation. Samples were taken using cluster sampling technique at several high schools in various districts in Bandung.

C. Instrument

The instrument used to measure the need to belong was the Need to Belong Scale adapted from Leary M. R [13]. The instrument consists of 9 items in form of Likert scale with answers including "extremely disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "extremely agree". The instrument has a reliability score of 0.72. To measure the self-presentation, the study employed *Self-Presentations Tactics Scale* by Lee et al. which have been adapted to the context of Instagram usage [17]. The instrument comprises 63 items in form of Likert scale, with answers

including "never", "rarely", "frequently", and "always" and a reliability score of 0.97.

D. Data Analysis

The data obtained for this study were analyzed statistically using linear regression technique.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographically, most participants are female students (237 persons or 68.5%), followed by 109 male students (31.5%).

The comparison results between the high and low need to belong observed on students is shown in table 1.

TABLE I. THE CATEGORY OF NEED TO BELONG

Category	N	Percentage
High ($X \geq 8.98$)	164	47%
Low ($X < 8.98$)	182	53%

Table 1 shows that the need to belong observed respondents in this study, respondents had need to belong to high category by 47% and low category by 53%. The percentage results show that the need to belong level is relatively same, but tends to the category low. This means that among teenage instagram users in Bandung relatively does not make supports more friendship as a source for dealing emotional and social problems.

Low need to belong indicates that there is lack of respect for relationship with others, no caring about the criticisms of others [18]. Low need to belong make teens less appreciation of friendship, tend to be difficult to get along with and maintain friendship [19]. The teenager also has no concern for the acceptance of others, not easy to feel anxious, tend not to do procrastination and not easily hurt by others [19].

The comparison results between the high and low self-presentation observed on students is shown in table 2.

TABLE II. THE CATEGORY OF SELF-PRESENTATION

Category	N	Percentage
High ($X \geq -10.6$)	210	61%
Low ($X < -10.6$)	136	39%

Table 2 shows that the self-presentation observed respondents in this study, respondents had self-presentation to high category by 61% and low category by 39%. The percentage results show that the level of self-presentation of adolescent instagram users in Bandung was dominated by high categories. This means that teenagers using Instagram at Bandung tend to have a high desire to give a certain impression to others and create the desired self-image, this will allow adolescents tend to be easy to deal with the social environment. The high self-presentation can have a positive impact on relationships with other people, such as establishing communication with family and old friends, increasing friends, increasing opportunities for learning and more easily sharing information [20].

The comparison results between the need to belong observed on male and female students is shown in table 3.

TABLE III. THE COMPARISON OF THE NEED TO BELONG ACCORDING TO SEX

Sex	N	Mean	Sig (2-tailed)
Female	237	50.98	t = 2.724 $\alpha = 0.007$ ($\alpha < 0.05$)
Male	109	47.85	

Table 3 shows that the need to belong observed in male respondents is different to the one in female respondents, reaching the significance level of 0.007 ($p < 0.05$), with female respondents' mean score being higher than male respondents'. This implies that among teenage Instagram users in Bandung, the need to belong in female students are significantly higher than the one in male students. This result is in line with the findings in Leibovich N, Schmid V, Calero A, stating that female teenagers have a higher need to belong compared to male teenagers [21]. Female teenagers show greater needs for stable bond and accepting others. Women have an ability to feel both their own emotions and others, allowing them to understand others' mood and develop the need to belong towards a more fulfilling relationship. However, the finding is different to the one in the study conducted by Leary et al., stating that male teenagers have a greater need to belong in comparison to female teenagers [13].

The comparison of self-presentation between male and female students is presented in table 4.

TABLE IV. THE COMPARISON OF SELF-PRESENTATION ACCORDING TO SEX

Sex	N	Mean	Sig (2-tailed)
Female	237	49,53	t = -1,283 $\alpha = 0.200$ ($\alpha > 0.05$)
Male	109	51,01	

According to table 4, it is observed that the difference in the self-presentation of male and female students has a significance level of 0.200 ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the self-presentation of male and female teenage Instagram users in Bandung. The behavior of self-presentation exhibited by both male and female teenagers through Instagram do not differ greatly, as observed from either photos and videos uploaded or post captions [3]. Both female and male teenagers do self-presentation as a way to get what they want, build the desired self-image, create and maintain self-identity, and allow them to face social environment with ease [10].

Based on the statistic calculation of linear regression, it is found that the impact of the need to belong on self-presentation has a value of $r = 0.16$ ($r^2 = 0.026$) at the significance level of 0.003 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that the need to belong significantly influences the self-presentation. The greater the need to belong is, the greater one's chance to do self-presentation is. It can be inferred that the need to belong has a relation to the increasing self-presentation of high school

Instagram users in Bandung. The higher the need to belong observed in the high school Instagram users, the greater their possibility to present themselves through Instagram.

This result is in line with the study conducted by Sarita & Suleeman, finding that the need to belong is able to increase self-presentation [12]. A high need to belong in teenage Instagram users lead them to present themselves through the social platform by showing a pleasant impression, such as uploading photos and videos accompanied by compliments, concerns, images of positive personality, or something approved by many as a caption.

The percentage of the need to belong on self-presentation of teenage Instagram users in Bandung can be determined by seeing the value of determination coefficient (r^2). The r^2 value of the need to belong related to self-presentation is 0.026. This implies that teenagers' self-presentation is influenced by the need to belong as much as 2.6%, while other factors make up the rest 97.4% of the influence.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that (1) the need to belong observed in female teenagers is significantly higher than the one in male teenagers, (2) self-presentation does not differ greatly between male and female teenagers, and (3) the need to belong significantly influences self-presentation.

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