

# Social Interaction Among Adolescents Who Use Social Media

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**Abstract:** This study examines and discusses how social interactions of adolescents who use social media that carried out directly and indirectly, social interaction motives, and the impact on their psychological aspects. This research uses a qualitative approach. The research analysis used is the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This study analyzed three cases of adolescents who use social media with an average social media usage of 7-10 hours per day. These three cases explain how the interaction of adolescents using social media. The results show that adolescents engage in social interactions with positive motives such as friendship, group discussion, business, and also honing language skills. In addition, there are two negative motives shown, namely revenge and the desire to drop. High intensity of using social media causes poor quality of direct interaction. Adolescents get busier with their mobile phones and do not heed the surrounding environment.

**Keywords:** social interaction, adolescents, social media, social psychology

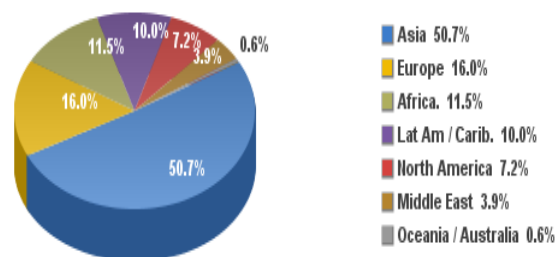
## Introduction

Internet usage has increased every time. The internet has become an important substance in life today. The internet is a communication network that connects one electronic media with another using the global standard system of Transmission Control Protocol/ Internet Protocol (TCP / IP) as a packet exchange protocol to serve billions of users around the world (Savolainen, 2006; Ferber, Foltz, Pugliese, & Ferber, 2005). Nowadays people on all continents have relied on the internet to obtain information and share information. The top three percentages of internet users are indicated by Internet World Stats, namely 50.7% (Asia), 16.0% (Europe), and 11.5% (Africa). The top three ranks are occupied by China, India, and Indonesia. The composition of internet users based on age, 49.52% aged

19-34 years, and 75.50% aged 13-18 years (Kominfo, 2018).

The Internet, which was originally only for accessing information, can now be used to access information, search history storage, share data, or bring people together to search for the same information (Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013; Tokunaga & Rains, 2016). One of the internet revolution and web 2.0 is the emergence of social media used for social interaction.

Facebook and Twitter are social media that started the web 2.0 era, followed by WhatsApp, Line, and Instagram in the web 3.0 era (Leonardi et al., 2013; Obar, 2015). Social media is the most used account. Social media that are often used by internet users including teenagers are facebook, youtube, WhatsApp, and Instagram.



Source: Internet World Stats - [www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm](http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm)  
Basis: 4,536,248,808 Internet users in June 30, 2019  
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Figure 1. Internet User Distribution in the World-mid-Year 2019

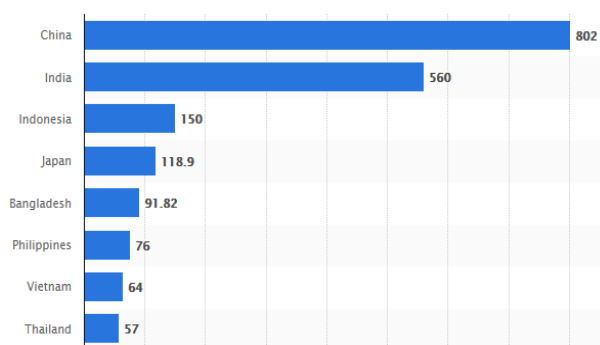
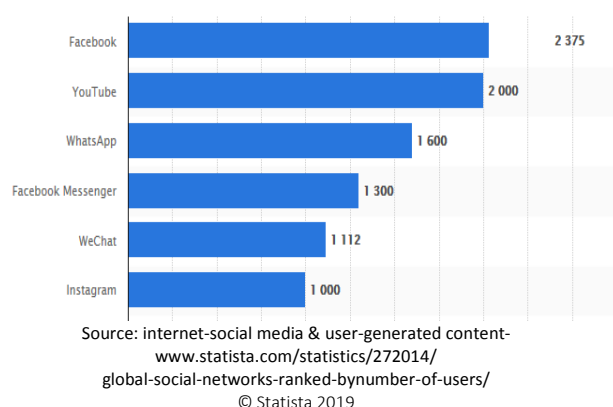


Figure 2. Number of Internet users in selected Asia-Pacific countries 2019 (in millions)



*Figure 3. Most Famous Social Network Sites 2019 by active users*

The increase in internet usage followed by an increase in the use of social media has various impacts for its users. Social media become the most used media by adolescents to conduct social interactions (Bond, 2019). Social media usage affects human life especially the pattern of interaction between individuals, groups, and communities. Social interaction is the key to all social life because, without social interaction, there would not be a life together (Sukanto, 2010). Social media has become a media for social interaction; activities such as chatting and commenting are ways individuals do in social interaction through social media (Hall, 2018; Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2007). Through social media, teenagers can interact with their friends without having to do face-to-face meetings, and expand friendship networks by getting acquainted through social media (Hardakis & Hadson, 2013; Barry, Sidoti, Briggs, Reiter, & Lindsey, 2017; Kahai & Lei, 2019) (P. Hardakis & Hadson, 2013). Nowadays social media has become a multipurpose media; individuals can not only communicate and discuss with other individuals but also can communicate with groups and communities. Through social media, teenagers can also learn and guided discussions with peers and teachers (Hamid, Waycott, Kurnia, & Chang, 2015).

On the other hand, too often in using social media as social interaction can have bad effects on the adolescents' environment. Adolescents become busier with their gadgets than interacting with people around them, the duration of sleep decreases because of too easy access to do interaction make adolescent pay less attention to their sleep (Bond, 2019; Khan, Uddin, Mohammed, & Islam, 2019). It can cause psychosocial problems and mental health among adolescents. The busyness of adolescents with gadgets in interacting with peers or making new friends can reduce the quality of communication in the family and the environment that are close to teenagers. It

has the potential to lead to unfavorable perceptions and prejudices from individuals around adolescents, thus forming negative patterns of interaction. In addition, the reduced quality of sleep due to too much time spent interacting on social media results in problems in concentration and emotion. Both of these problems also affect the quality and patterns of social interaction. Unstable emotions and lack of concentration when interacting can result in misperceptions and disputes between individuals and groups (Reeck, Ames, & Ochsner, 2016; Cornelius, Birk, Edmondson, & Schwartz, 2018).

Patterns of social interaction will produce social relations. Positive social interactions and based on positive motives will result in positive social relationships (such as friendship, cooperation, and support), while negative social interactions and are based on negative motives will result in negative social relationships (such as hostility, competition, and disputes) (Laurence, 2019; Cheng, Long, Chen, & Yang, 2019). The gap of social interaction that occurs between social media and daily life outside social media certainly raises the pattern and quality of social interaction that is different from the two. This has caused various impacts on social life and mental health of adolescents. This phenomenon will be studied in depth to enrich insights and knowledge about social interaction in adolescent users of social media so that the wider community can weigh and account for the use of social media to be wiser and not interfere with the quality of social interaction outside social media.

## Method

This study uses a qualitative approach, which is a phenomenological study of adolescent users of social media. The phenomenon of concern in this study is the social interaction of adolescent social media users. The participants of this research are three adolescents aged 15-18 years old who are actively using social media. They were chosen based on the intensity of using social media in their daily lives. Subjects use social media every day on an average total of 7-14 hours per day. The research analysis used is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which is an approach to qualitative data analysis by developing how individuals understand their experiences (Larkin & Thompson, 2011).

## Result

The analysis was carried out on three cases of adolescent social media users with an average social media usage of 7-10 hours per day. The three cases explain how the interaction of teenagers using social media.

### Case 1

A is a 15-year-old boy who had enough intensity to use social media every day. The most commonly used social media by A were WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. A claimed that she often interacted through social media because it was more practical and did not have to arrange a time to meet someone. Besides, he could also get acquainted with new people from various regions and countries. A used social media every day from morning to morning.

Facebook was the media that A used to meet new people. A preferred to interact with people who had the same interests as him. A had a fondness for reading novels; he liked to be a member of reading communities. He often got acquaintances from the community. He often discussed with acquaintances about novels that he had read in online libraries through Facebook messenger. In addition, through Facebook, A could hone his ability in English by getting acquainted with people from different continents such as Europe and America. He and his acquaintances often exchanged stories about their respective countries. A claimed that his insights were increasing through telling stories and discussing with new people on Facebook. A did not respond to all those who wanted to get acquainted with him on Facebook because there were some people who had bad intentions, such as looking for friends to have sex and offering A to admit that he often forgot the time when discussing with his acquaintances until almost morning.

A preferred to use WhatsApp in communicating with people he had known for a long time, such as school friends, playmates, and family. A often chatted with friends through WhatsApp while outside of school. A also used WhatsApp to exchange news with his parents. A claimed that he also discussed lessons with classmates through the WhatsApp group even though this was rarely done. A more often chatted with three close friends in the WhatsApp group to greet the latest gossip that was being talked about. A also claimed that he often talked about other friends with his three friends. A realized that this was not good, but A felt it was pleasant.

While on Instagram, the activities carried out by A were only to look around and comment on photos or stories uploaded by his friends. While on Twitter, A more often uploaded words that represent his feelings. When he was at loggerheads with other people, A liked to upload words that were insinuating towards that person on Twitter. A claimed that this often affected the perception of others which could cause quarrels and disputes. Based on the experience that A had, he once uploaded the status to insinuate Y, but X felt that the status was for X; it made A and X disagreed until a conflict involved many people, where A's friends and X's friends clashed with each other's insinuating status and made sarcastic comments.

A claimed that he rarely interacts with people at home. He more often shut himself in a room and was busy chatting with friends or acquaintances on Facebook. A also said that he often slept late at night because he was busy responding to WhatsApp and facebook messenger from his friends and acquaintances. This made A difficult to get up early and fought with his parents every morning because he was difficult to wake up. A also often came late to school and had problems concentrating when attending learning in class which affected his academic grades at school. A claimed he could not be separated from social media because he felt that without social media his life would be boring.

### Case 2

B is a 16-year-old teenage boy who attended a pesantren. Social often used by B were facebook and WhatsApp. B claimed that he often communicated with others through social media than meeting in person. B often used social media to interact with friends and new people from various regions and countries. Social media became an important part of his life because without social media he would not be able to see the world more broadly.

According to B, facebook was very broad media. He could interact with people from various places. B was often acquainted with the people of Saudi Arabia to hone Arabic language skills. Besides, B was also included in K-Pop fan members. He often traded K-Pop merchandise through Facebook. B also exchanged information about the latest K-pop news with fellow K-pop fans. Through Facebook, B could find his old friends so he could interact again with them. B also liked to upload his photos on Facebook. He was happy when many people liked his photos and made good comments, but some gave bad comments so that B often felt insecure and thought about the negative comments.

B used WhatsApp to communicate with parents and lovers who lived outside the city. B was very often chatting, phoning, and video calling with his girlfriend, so he rarely interacted with his friends in Asrama. He said that he preferred to be alone and busy with his cellphone. He felt more comfortable interacting with people through social media. In addition, he also liked to chat with school friends who were students of other classes. B claimed that he was not very close with friends from other classes if at school, but when on social media B was very familiar with them. B felt ashamed if he greeted them at school; he was afraid they would not reply to his greetings. B was also a member of the K-Pop fan group. There he often exchanged information about everything relating to K-Pop. He often spent hours and even nights after reading the contents of the group. B admitted that the activity was very time-consuming, but he felt happy and entertained because he was not an easygoing person in the surrounding environment.

During the interaction on social media, B felt he could be more intimate with his friends. He felt freer to argue in a group forum and chat more intimate with his friends. However, B found it difficult to interact well when face to face with friends or other people. B felt more reserved, and when he met face to face, B did not greet people who often interacted with him on social media.

### Case 3

C is a 16-year-old boy who often used social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp. C used facebook to find new acquaintances, youtube to see the latest videos, and WhatsApp to exchange news with friends or parents. As a teenager who was migrating, C was greatly helped by the presence of social media. Social media was a pretty important part of his life now. Without social media, C could not communicate quickly with family and friends. Besides, through social media C could easily get the latest information happening around the world.

Facebook and YouTube were social media used by C. C was very often acquainted with new people through Facebook. C hoped he could find a lover through Facebook. C claimed he was an individual who lacked confidence in approaching women. He rarely communicated with women directly. His desired to have a lover could be helped through social media. He met several times and eventually dated women in other places. During dating, he never had a meeting with a woman who was in a relationship with him. C also used Facebook to practice English language skills and exchanged stories about culture in each area with people he knew on Facebook.

Youtube was C's tool to get new information from various things. C liked to give comments to each other with people on YouTube about a video. He liked watching anime on YouTube. In addition, C also got many acquaintances from YouTube because he had an interest in anime. They often gave the news to each other if there were new episodes.

C also stated that he rarely interacted directly with his friends. C claimed to have more friends on social media. At school, he admitted that he rarely interacted with his classmates. He preferred to interact with friends who were on social media he just met.

### Discussion

Social interaction which was originally conducted on a one-on-one situation has now changed with the existence of social media as a medium of communication without having to do face-to-face. In these practical times teenagers more often use gadgets as a medium of communication with others. Teenagers think that through social media they will more easily communicate with anyone quickly. Social media has become the most

important part of teenagers' life. Teenagers are individuals who are in a period of making friends. They like to form groups and communities on the basis of equality. The existence of social media makes it easier for them to communicate with their friends. They feel life will be boring and more difficult without the presence of social media, so teenagers are very dependent on social media.

Adolescents also feel more anxious when social media suddenly becomes unusable. This happened some time ago in Indonesia when all social media did not work for 24 hours. They began to feel bored and anxious because they could not communicate with anyone and there was no activity they could do. It indicates that now, social media has become a center for the activities of teenagers in their daily lives. Activities undertaken by adolescents on social media include sharing pictures, videos, or other information to a wide audience (Throuvala et al., 2019). These activities are part of activities that can shape the occurrence of social interaction. Each individual who interacts certainly has different motives which in turn will form certain patterns of interaction and relationships.

Social interactions conducted by teenagers using social media have a variety of motives. The motives shown are positive and negative. Positive motives shown are establishing friendships, discussing, getting information, honing foreign language skills, and looking for lovers, while the negative motives are talking about the ugliness of other people. The motives shown by adolescents before conducting social interactions will form patterns of social interaction that will affect individual social relationships.

Positive motives shown by adolescents will form associative interaction patterns. The pattern of interaction is formed because of the motive for cooperation, tension reduction, and mutual support. Although positive interaction patterns can lead to conflict, they will end with associative interaction patterns in the form of accommodation to reduce tension and achieve peace. Associative interaction patterns embody friendships and family relationships between individuals, groups, and communities. Associative interaction patterns are patterns of interactions that form a group or community where cooperation is established for certain interests (Kwok, 2019). The existence of the K-Pop fan community, reading community, class groups, or organizational groups, is a manifestation of the results of associative interaction patterns in adolescents in addition to the realization of good relations between individuals.

Negative motives shown by adolescents form dissociative interaction patterns. The pattern of interaction is formed due to the motive to bring down and influence other individuals in forming negative perceptions (Zhou, 2019). Dissociative interaction patterns can also occur because of the status uploaded by

adolescents on social media which means satire for other individuals. This status can lead to wrong perceptions of other individuals who read it, resulting in contradiction and even conflict. Besides, negative motives such as talking about other people also form dissociative interaction patterns in the form of contradictions so that other individuals who listen become hateful too. Competitiveness, jealousy, and dislike cause adolescent to talk about the vice of other teenagers.

Social media does have many benefits in the process of indirect social interaction among teenagers. However, it should be observed that social interactions carried out through social media also have a negative impact on adolescents' social life and mental health. Adolescents who often do social interaction through social media have poor sleep quality, which could affect the concentration of learning and emotions of adolescents (Calheiros & Stauder, 2018; Scott, Biello, & Woods, 2019; Scott & Woods, 2018). Teenagers become irritable, anxious, and cause a bad mood when interacting directly. In addition, adolescents also become individuals who are passive and less active in direct interaction. Teenagers are busier with gadgets and lazy to move. Frequent interactions on social media can also result in direct dissociative interaction patterns, so the quality of social interactions becomes poor.

Research on social interaction in adolescent users of social media needs to be developed for future research. Future studies are suggested to pay attention to other factors that shape adolescent interaction patterns, such as personality, education, environment, gender, and background to enrich information.

## Conclusion

Social media has become a media that is crucial in the implementation of social interaction among adolescents. Teenagers do social interaction with various motives, which then form social interaction patterns. Positive motives such as discussion, cooperation, and expanding relations have formed patterns of associative interaction. Negative motives such as bringing down others by talking about the ugliness of others have shaped dissociative social interaction patterns. The frequent use of social media as a means of social interaction makes adolescents have poor quality social interactions and emotionally disrupts the mental health of adolescents.

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