

Social Media Usage and Digital Detoxification on Teenagers in Medan

Yovita Sabarina Sitepu and Hendra Harahap

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Jl. Dr. A. Sofian No. 1A, Medan, Indonesia

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Abstract: This research is about social media usage and digital detoxification on teenagers in Medan. It aims to know how the teenagers, especially high school students in Medan spend their time on social media, what the impact of the social media usage on their health, and their efforts to reduce their social media addiction. Descriptive Method is used in this research and data is collected through questionnaire and focus group discussion (FGD). There are 300 students from six high schools in Medan as sample and 14 of them representing their school as informants in FGD session. This research finds that 93% of the students use Instagram and Whatsapp and they spend more than 1 hour per day to access their social media site. From FGD, it finds that the students feel their life become meaningless without social media. All of the informants never hear about digital detoxification before but they are willing to try such as make a no phone zone in their home and dim their phone screen light so that they can not distract easily when notifications come in.

1 INTRODUCTION

Today, most of people around the world are talking with one another using social media. We use social media to share our ideas, feelings, opinions, experiences, and many more. People even use social media for activities such as selling products or services, shopping, online gaming, and looking for a romantic relationship.

Digital Around The World in 2019 released that there are 4.388 billion internet users or 56% of the world total population. It also said that 3.484 billion people as active social media users. Then, 3.256 billion users access the social media via mobile devices (Kemp, 2019b).

As in January 2019, Facebook is social media platform that has the most active users accounts. It has 2.271 million active users accounts. Youtube is on the second with 1.900 million active users accounts and followed by Whatsapp and FB Messenger with 1.500 and 1.300 million active users accounts (Kemp, 2019a).

How important social media is in our lives now can be seen from the time people spent everyday on. Average time that people worldwide spent on social media is 2 hours 16 minutes. Philipphines is the country with the biggest average amount of time per

day spent using social media. It spent 4 hours and 12 minutes per day. Indonesia is ranked fourth with 3 hours and 26 minutes per day (Kemp, 2019a). The amount of time people spent on (social) media increases every year than they devote to any other activities.

The percentage of millennial aged between 25-34 as social media users is 32% and followed by people aged between 18-24 years old (27%). Meanwhile, the percentage of users aged between 13-17 years old is 7%. It is said that youth (ages 15-24) is the most connected age group (Kemp, 2019b; UNICEF, 2017).

There are many reasons why children engaged into online activities. Childwise's Monitor Report in 2017 found that children aged 7-16 use internet to watch video clips (59%), listen to music (56%), play games (54%), complete homework (47%), interact with family and friends (47%), social networking (40%), look up information (38%), and upload videos, photos and music (Livingstone, et al., 2017). Those portray the importance of new media in children's lives. What Indonesian children do with the internet is just as like as children in Europe and North America.

There are plenty researches about the impact of smartphone to children (Borzekowski & Rich, 2011;

Bassett et al, 2016; Chang, et al., 2018). But, only a few about social media addiction and especially about digital detoxification.

Concern about social media abuse is tracked back to a 2011 report by The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) who claimed that “Facebook Depression” could develop when children spend a lot of time on social media (Berryman, Ferguson and Negy, 2017). O’ Keefe et al. (cited by Bassett et al., 2016) said that like “classic” depression, “Facebook depression” may cause social isolation, promote substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, or aggressive or self destructive behaviors.

Because of the excessive time using social media in teenagers lives, some commenters have expressed concern about the effects. How many hours per day do the teenagers spend on social media? Is there a difference amount of time they spent between school days and weekends. What the impacts of excessive social media use on their health and quality of life? What have they done to reduce their social media addiction? This study aims to address these questions to the teenagers.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media and Mental Health

When we hear about addiction, the first thing comes to our mind is drug abuse. The concept about the dependency of physical to drugs is used to describe the condition of excessive internet use (Holden in Niculovic et al., 2012).

Griffiths (cited by Chang et al., 2019) said that smartphone addiction is a subset of behavior addictions and could be categorized as a technological addiction.

DSM-V from American Psychological Association (APA) defines behavioural addiction as an addictive disorder that does not involve the ingestion of a psychoactive substance (Wilcockson, Osborne and Ellis, 2019). Smartphone addiction is not included in the DSM-V and need further research encouraged by the APA.

Symptoms of substance use disorder are grouped into four categories: impaired control (a craving or strong urge to use substance); social problems (failure to complete major tasks at work, school or home, etc); risky use (continued use despite known problems); drug effects (tolerance, withdrawal symptoms) (Parekh, 2017). As said by Lin, et al. (cited by Chang et al., 2018) that

symptoms of smartphone addiction paralleled with substance use disorders.

As symptoms of substance use disorder, we also expect that these symptoms also happen in behavioural addictions, however, their measurement is often problematic (Wilcockson, et al., 2019).

People access social media from their smartphone and the internet. Several issues arise from the overuse of smartphone and the internet, they are: (a) psychological effects such as anxiety, lack of concentration, sleep disorders; (b) social effects such as relationships break, loss of sense of community; (c) physical effects such as harm from accidents eg. Texting while driving, repetitive strain injury (RSI) (van Velthoven, Powell and Powell, 2018).

Stiegel and Lewetz conducted a research and found that social media abstinence led to an increase in craving for social media, but mood and anxiety were unaffected (Wilcockson et al., 2019).

2.2 Social Media Usage Habit

Social media usage habit should be understood as an umbrella term for different platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. All of those platforms have distinct groups of users and used for distinct communication, business, and other purposes. It contains statistical data about amount of time people spend on social media platforms, reasons why they use each social media platform. This also portrays the differences between countries, age, gender, income, and so on.

There are several aspects of teenagers’ social media usage that need to be found out in this study. They are, exposure or time spent with social media and individual motives in using social media.

2.3 Media Dependency Theory

Dependency theory tells about powerful mass media and how that power makes audience members depend on media content. It also argues that people become more and more dependent on media and media content to understand what is happening around them (Baran, 2010).

Through media, we learn about how to do or to behave, to interpret what is going on around us and most of all we use media to escape from our routine, reality or situation. The media dependency theory can explain people media use and the impacts on their lives (Baran, 2010).

2.4 Digital Detoxification

Smartphones, laptops, computers and all services that associated with internet, Wi-Fi are known as a product of digital technology. Those devices using a binary computational code (Hadlington and Scase, 2018).

Digital detox has emerged incredibly in the field of behavioral science as a solution to the overuse of digital devices. Digital detox is restraining self from using digital or electronic devices for a certain time, as a way to reduce the distractions that caused by always being connected (Basu, 2019).

Newport, the author of *Digital Minimalism* proposes digital declutter that people can begin by taking a 30-day break from optional digital technologies. These include any applications such as social media, online news and entertainment sites, games and streaming videos (Newport, 2019). Those are kinds of digital detoxification.

3 METHODS

This study aims to analyse teenagers' social media habit that consists about the amount of time the teenagers spend on social media in the school days and in the weekends and also their motives. Moreover, to analyse the impacts of excessive social media use on their health and quality of life and the efforts to reduce their social media addiction.

A survey was conducted to get quantitative data about teenagers' social media habit. Teenagers were asked to answer a questionnaire relate to their social media addiction through Social Media Addiction Scale-Student Form. The sample comprised of 300 teenagers from 6 senior high school in Medan City. The sample included both female and male teenagers.

Focus Group Discussion was used to dig teenager's opinion and feeling about the impact of social media into their lives. The informants was choosen from the respondents in the survey that has been conducted before. There were 16 teenagers participated in the FGD.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

We collected data fo N= 300 from 6 high schools in Medan. Participants were predominately female.

Age range between fourteen to seventeen and the biggest representation was aged sixteen. Monthly allowance varied and only few of them who spend more than five hundred thousand rupiah per month.

Most participants have smartphone for the first time at aged between eleven to thirteen. Summary statistics for demographics of respondents can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondent demographics.

	% of Responses
Gender	
Male	47.5
Female	52.7
Age	
14	6.3
15	24
16	40.7
17	29
Monthly Allowance	
<300000	45.3
300000-500000	34.3
>500000	20.3
Age when using internet for the first time	
7-10	40
11-13	47.7
14-17	12.3
Age when having mobile phone for the first time	
7-10	43
11-13	43.3
14-17	13.7
Age when having smart phone for the first time	
7-10	14
11-13	52
14-17	34

Most of the respondents have been using internet since they were in primary school. They also have had devices that connected to the internet since then. Those depicts confirm that generation Z are very familiar with technology (Adam, 2017).

Whatsapp and Instagram are the most used social media by the respondents. Ninety three percent of respondents use those platforms. Hootsuite confirms that Youtube, Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram are the most used social media platforms in Indonesia.

Sending or exchanging message with family or friend is what the most respondents do with their social media. Besides, as students, social media is the platform that can help them doing assignments

given by teacher. Moreover, Youtube is an escapism tool when they feel bored. Respondents listen to music from applications such as Spotify, Joox, etc. Their dependency to social media are quite high especially to communicate with family and friends.

Table 2: Reasons using social media.

	% of Responses
Watch video clip	92.7
Listen to music	95
Play game	80.7
Do homework	93.7
Send message with friend and family	97
Social network	88
Look for information	96.3
Upload picture	83.3
See other's post	92

More than 50% of the respondents use Facebook less than 1 hour in weekdays or school days. But, the amount of time they spend on Whatsapp is still high because it is used to send messages and discuss about assignments in whatsapp group.

When weekends come, the duration they spend on social media is significantly increase. Whatsapp and Youtube are two social media platforms that have been accessed more 5 hours per day by the respondents.

Results from social media addiction scale-student form show that 46% of respondents state Agree over statement *I always want to check my social media*. Moreover, 42.2% say Agree over statement *I realize my productivity decrease because of social media* and 34% say Disagree. The decreasing of teenager's productivity is one of many negative impacts from social media overuse. It can cause distractions of attention disorders (Borzekowski and Rich, 2011).

However, Maggie Sibley (in Chadd, 2019) suggests distraction that happen in younger people as a caused from digital media use is not a developed ADHD symptoms. So, parents need no worried if their child does not have ADHD symptoms and there is no family history about that.

There are 36.3% of respondents who always search for internet connection wherever they be just to check their social media. Besides, 13.7% of them say *Strongly Agree* and 30.7% *Agree* that accessing social media is their way to stay informed. This condition is consistent with reasons why they use social media and what platform they use the most.

That condition is also a manifestation of a fear of missing out (FoMo). FoMo is often characterized by a desire to continually find out what other people

doing on social networks (Beyens et al. and Przybylski et al. in Hadlington and Mark, 2018).

About 54.3% of respondents confidently say that they are *Disagree* over statement *A life without social media becomes meaningless for me*. Only a few or about 12% of respondents say *Agree* over it. It seems like most of respondents feel no problems whether there is social media or not.

Another result shows that 47.2% of respondents choose *Strongly Disagree* over statement *I use social media so frequently that I fall afoul of my family*. Only 1.7% say *Strongly Agree*. It means that many respondents not do phubbing.

There are 16 teenagers who came as informants in FGD session. All of them had sleep disorders caused by always stay connected even a minute before they sleep at night. They also said that the first time they do after wake up is check their smartphone including their social media. All of the informants said that they ever and usually bring bring their smartphone while studying at home, even when go to the toilet.

An informant in FGD said that he ever felt depression after always saw what others post in their Instagram accounts. He follows a lot of selebgram and artists accounts. After that he felt that his life not as lucky as others and began to hate himself. He even began to hurt part of his body (arms). His parents took him to psychiatrist. This happened when he was in junior high school.

Mostly respondents from survey never heard about digital detoxification. Only 30% of them have heard about it. But, when being asked again in FGD, many of informants have doing something that also means of digital detoxification.

Here, parents and teachers play important roles. While at home, parents give rules about when and where children can not use their smartphone. Like some of the informants say that they can not use their smartphone while eating with parents.

At school, they can not use their smartphone while studying. However, there are also certain subjects in which they are allowed to use smartphone to finish the assignments.

At the end of FGD, participants agreed to reduce their social media usage. There are several ways that agreed to be tried as follows: broadening their no phone zone not only while eating or watching with parents but also try not to bring into bed and while in the toilet; mute notification from one or more applications from their smartphone; dim the phone screen light; delete unnecessary applications from smartphone; set a day in weekends as a no phone day.

5 CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the amount of time used by the teenagers on social media. The duration increases in weekends. In weekdays or school days many of them only spend less than 1 hour on social media while in weekends they spend between 1 to 3 hours per day or even more than 5 hours per day.

Whatsapp, Youtube and Instagram are the big three as the most used social media platform by the teenagers. The reasons why they use social media are for educational purposes, entertainment, escapism, and as media to expressing themselves. They can post photos, videos that have been created or recipe they have been tried.

Most of respondents of this study realize that their attention easily distracted by notifications from social media. They feel hard to concentrate while studying at home or while doing something. They also feel fear if they become the last person who know the latest information (FoMo). The teenagers also experience sleeping disorders. They do not have enough time to sleep in the evening because still connected into the social media until late night.

Digital detoxification is something that never been heard before by most of the teenagers. But, they are willing to do as a means to reduce their social media use. For example to broaden their no phone zone at home and set one day in the weekends as a no phone day.

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