



# TYPES OF APPLICATIONS AND MOTIVES FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

Social media is a digital application for socializing in cyberspace. This study discusses the types of applications and motives for using social media among students at FDK UIN Alauddin and the Department of Biology FMIPA UNM. This study uses a qualitative approach, a type of phenomenological research, and a scientific approach namely social media and attribution theory. The results showed that the five social media applications most used by students were: (1) WhatsApp, (2) YouTube, (3) Instagram, (4) Facebook, and (5) Twitter. While the motives for using social media are: (1) communication motives, (2) learning, (3) seeking information, (4) da'wah/preaching, (5) entertainment, (6) shopping and (7) sharing interesting moments. In using social media, students need to avoid negative messages, selectively receive useful information, and improve communication skills according to Islamic values.

**Keywords:** Social media; communication

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In April 2023, there were 5.18 billion internet users worldwide, which is 64.6 percent of the global population. Of all internet users, 4.8 billion or 59.9% are social media users (Statista.com, 2023). This shows that social media is the dominant application used on the internet. Social media provides interaction facilities or builds a community to share knowledge, insights, information, beliefs, experiences, and interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal and social relations in cyberspace create community or public networks based on interconnection which are supported by global networks through the participation of individuals in their communities (McInroy & Beer, 2022).

Social media has both positive and negative impacts. The positive impacts of social media such as making friends, exchanging information, adding insight, online business (Sari et al, 2020), expanding networks, motivation for self-development, making it easier to obtain information, creating a sense of empathy, sharing, and online business (Arini, 2020). Meanwhile, the negative impacts of social media include decreasing learning grades because students spend their time accessing the internet, users chat for hours, use Facebook for more than 3 hours (Agung and Marisa, 2019). Excessive use of social media causes addiction, lack of self-confidence, stress, decreased social feeling (Faliyandra et al, 2021), moral decline, delinquency, and changes in patterns of human interaction (Ngafifi, 2014, in Fitri, 2017).

One way to increase the positive impact and overcome the negative impact of social media is to pay attention to users' motives (reasons) for accessing social media. College students are one of the dominant social media user groups in Indonesia. According to research by APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers) that internet users in Indonesia for the 2021-2022 period were 210.03 million. We are social – Hootsuite data, February 2022, stated that the number of internet users in Indonesia is 204.7 million and social media users are 191.4 million (Bangun & Purnama, 2023). College students are one of the dominant social media user groups in Indonesia. The 2018 APJII stated that 89.7% of internet users in Indonesia are students and 97% of internet users access social media (Saputra, 2019). Media users can be either active or passive users (Valkenburg et al, 2021). In this study, students are categorized as active user groups. Students as young intellectuals use social media to maintain online friendships, communication, learning, entertainment, and da'wah.

Social media is an application to interact or communicate in digital social processes. The word "social" refers to a collection of people who interact with each other. Meanwhile, "media" is an application that is used to establish these interactions, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and the WA messaging application. Social media provides many benefits, but these applications are also often seen as a medium that provides bad access to trivialities, mortality and narcissism (Thomas, 2020). Using social media must comply with ethics (Tike, 2012), contain correct messages (QS. Al-Nisa: 9), precise (QS. Al-Anisa: 63), gentle (QS. Thaha: 44), easy understood (QS. Al-Isra: 28), good (QS. Al-Nisa: 8), and respect for others (QS. Al-Isra: 23).

Social media is online media that users use to share with others, participate and create content in the form of blogs, wikis, forums, networks and virtual spaces supported by internet technology (Juanda, 2017). Social media consists of information infrastructure, tools for producing and distributing personal messages, news, ideas or cultural products in digital form. Digital media messages are produced and consumed by individuals, organizations and industries (P.N. Howard and M.R. Parks, 2012 in Bate'e, 2019).

The emergence of social media has changed the characteristics of old media such as radio telephone, television and print media. Some of the characteristics of social media (Romli, 2018) are multimedia, actuality, fast, update, broad capacity, interactive, documented, and hyperlinked. Other characteristics (Lister et al, 2009) are digital, interactive, hypertextual, networked, virtual or virtual, and simulation.

Every user has a motive or reason for interacting digitally through social media. Attribution theory can explain users' reasons for building symbolic interactions in cyberspace. Reasons are explanations for what happened and why people acted in certain ways. When people interact with other people, communication decisions are influenced by implicit theories or attributions. Attribution theory provides a framework for understanding how people explain their own behavior and that of others. This note reviews the process of attribution and examines its importance for determining success or failure, managing conflict in interpersonal relationships, and for determining people's attitudes toward stigma and discriminatory behavior. It ends with information about the fundamental attribution errors and the theory of self-perception. An important basis of attribution theory is that people behave the way they do for a reason. In other words, people have reasons to develop their impressions of other people in symbolic interactions (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009; Komala, 2009).

## **2. METHODS**

This research discusses the types of social media and the motives (reasons) of digital interaction of social media users among students. This study uses a qualitative approach (qualitative approach) with the type of phenomenological research. Phenomenology is the study of knowledge that comes from conscious awareness or experience (Hadi et al., 2021). This research is to find out the experience of netizens or users (users) in using various social media applications and the motives for digital interactions carried out through social media. The scientific approach of the research is social media theory and attribution theory.

The data sources for this research consist of primary data and secondary data, namely: Primary data in the form of observations on social media and interviews with students who are informants of this study. The informants were students from three departments within the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication at UIN Alauddin Makassar, namely the Department of Communication Studies, the Department of Journalism, and the Department of Da'wah Management FDK UIN Alauddin Makassar and students of the Biology Education Department, FMIPA Makassar State University (UNM). Furthermore, secondary data is data collected from printed and electronic documents related to the research focus. The data analysis technique used in this study is an interactive model from Miles & Huberman which consists of three steps: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. General Description

Social media creates groups of people who interact in cyberspace with the same interest background, who use social media to exchange thoughts, information, and opinions, or just hang out and share entertainment. Online, members of this group discuss various developing topics, both non-formal matters such as hobbies, food, sports, etc., as well as formal issues such as office work, seminars, and sharing lecture material. In contrast to real-world social communities that can hold meetings by making appointments, and specifying an agreed time and place, in cyberspace everyone can interact whenever and wherever they are. Communities utilize various social media applications such as blogs, forums, websites, or social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram. Social media users exchange information via text, audio, photos, videos, animations, emoticons, and others according to the facilities provided by social media applications. Social media is not only to add friendship, knowledge, and insight but also to strengthen social values that apply in society (Alyusi, 2016).

Currently, various social media applications are available on the internet. Each application has characteristics or characteristics that are different from other applications. Students as a group use a variety of social media applications according to the needs and facilities available in the application. This research was conducted through interviews with informants, namely: 12 FDK students at UIN Alauddin Makassar from the Department of Communication Science, Journalism, Da'wah Management (May 2021) and 5 students from FMIPA UNM majoring in Biology Education (March 2023). The following are the results obtained from interviews with informants.

Students (informants) do not only use one social media application but several applications are used according to features to fulfill student activities as young people who are studying or developing friendships in cyberspace. Informants interviewed in this study stated that they use the social media application Facebook (FB) which provides movies and dramas, YouTube media as a lecture facility with various video content, and Instagram (IG) which contains communication facilities and various video shows. Media WhatsApp (WA) as a means of communication with friends, relatives and lecturers for lectures, organizational activities and so on (Chintya Yuniar Asma, IKOM A). Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp provide communication facilities with other people, to find and disseminate information. YouTube is like portable and complete television. Its simple use and wide reach are personal reasons for using YouTube (Fadeliyah Ikhwan, IKOM A).

Another informant admitted that he used several social media such as WA, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The media provides long-distance

communication features and learning platforms, also contains a variety of the latest and popular information, both nationally and internationally (Muhammad Rifqi Hidayatullah, IKOM B). It is undeniable that Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and WA are the most used social media applications by students. YouTube provides a visual display (video) for learning and following developments. Instagram as a platform publishes activities or promotions through Insta Stories and other features. WA is a must-have application as a message-based media, for communication by sending messages to WA contacts (Muhammad Asri, IKOM B).

Students use Facebook to find information about the Makassar area, especially Gowa, such as accidents, death information, and others; and promote sales. YouTube for entertainment media, watching lectures, and recitations. Instagram is the same as YouTube. WhatsApp for communication with friends and family, as entertainment, sales promotion, as well as media for learning in courses that use WhatsApp (Sri Ayuningsi, Journalistic A). Other students also mentioned WA as a means of communication with friends, friends and family, as well as a lecture facility during a pandemic. Meanwhile, Instagram, to follow existing trends, writes photo captions on Instagram (Megawati, Journalistic A).

Each social media application has its own characteristics and facilities used by students. Facebook application for communication between both teenagers and parents, stay in touch with family and new acquaintances. Instagram to communicate, add friends, and get actual information. While YouTube is a means of learning and entertainment (Rasimah Rasyid, Journalism C). Facebook has a marketplace where you can buy products and contact sellers. YouTube is a source of reference, literature and adds insight. WhatsApp is a media that connects us with friends, family and relatives, both via text messages, telephone and video calls. Instagram provides features and filters to make stories funny and unique (Melania Fitri Ardita, Journalistic C). Instagram and YouTube to get information and listen to religious lectures, as well as educational needs, while WA is for communication, and online learning (RadhiahWildanaJaya, MD-A). Facebook (FB) for online shopping with marketplace features, YouTube for information, science and technology, while Instagram is for capturing personal moments as well as a medium of interaction. WhatsApp, an easy, practical and quota-saving social media (Zilmutadayyana Candra, MD-B). Social media as a source of information, science, religion, and politics. Including fashion, makeup and skincare. WA, Telegram and Instagram to exchange information with other people, family, friends, relatives and looking for friends (PutriAmelia, MDB). YouTube, Facebook and WA as a means of seeking information and knowledge (Putri Anggun Asprillia, MD-C).

Students of the Biology Department, FMIPA UNM, said the social media applications used were YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp. YouTube is a source of learning, watching movies and vloggers. Instagram contains new information and makes friends. Whereas WA is for communication purposes with friends, relatives and family (Nurkhafifah Jaelani, Biology Education A FMIPA UNM). YouTube to search for

videos of lecture materials, access discussion of biology Olympiad questions, and lectures. Instagram to find information about the world of biology, preaching, and content on how to make interesting dishes. WA is used to communicate with friends, lecturers, and family (St. Fatima Kadir, Biology Education A).

YouTube, Instagram, WA, Twitter, Telegram and Line applications for communication, information and entertainment (Nurul Afifah Ahqaf, Biology Education A). YouTube provides entertainment to educational video content, as a learning tool and visual presentation. Instagram connects us with friends, family or anyone around the world, also to promote business, entertainment, and improve photography skills. WA to send and receive messages, photos, videos and voice (Nadya Maharani Vega, Biology Education B). YouTube, Instagram, WA, and Telegram, have advantages and disadvantages, to seek information, increasing knowledge and universal communication tools (Nurasyah Fadila, Biology Education B).

## **B. Types of Social Media Applications**

The change in mass media technology which is broadcast or called old media into new media that is interactive or called new media has overcome various technical problems of conventional one-way communication to become two-way communication and even multi-way with more producer and consumer of information (prosumer). Audiences, namely readers, viewers, and listeners, are no longer passive like in the old days of media (newspapers, radio, television), but the media have provided interactive tools, chat columns or responses that can be conveyed directly to sources. The convergence of cellular and internet technologies has given rise to various online applications supported by interactive features such as the exchange of text, photos, audio and video. The emergence of social media applications is a technological innovation in the new media era as a continuation of the old media revolution.

Social media applications make it easier for people to communicate to overcome space and time limitations in face-to-face interactions. Digital technology enables synchronous as well as asynchronous interactive communication. Advances in hardware technology have given rise to various new devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and Android TVs that are used to communicate, store data, and watch via cellular networks and the internet. Service providers have provided various applications to communicate and share information through recorded messages and live broadcasts that they wish to publish to a global audience. Social media applications allow people to communicate without location boundaries (borderless), at any time and exchange messages via mobile devices, and wireless gadgets, which are easy to carry around.

The use of social media is not only for person-to-person or communication between individuals such as messenger or inbox facilities, but communication can also be in the form of groups through group facilities for family, work friends, business

partners, college friends, or communities who have the same interests. In addition, social media is also open, as a public space that can be seen, read, and responded to by anyone connected to the social media, especially those who have friends, followers and subscribers. Based on the results of the interviews with the informants above, it was found that the five most used social media applications by students are:

### *1. WhatsApp (WA)*

WhatsApp (WA) Messenger is a message exchange application for smartphones that is used across platforms that use internet data packages. Users can exchange messages in various formats, namely: text, photos, audio, or video. Messages sent or received will be stored on the user's device such as a smartphone, laptop or online storage. The WhatsApp application is widely used by the public because it is reliable, and practical, has a group chat feature, can make voice and video calls, and share documents (<https://www.whatsapp.com>, July 2020). WA is a social media for users who use the status feature to upload photos, videos or text and interact via chat messages.

### *2. YouTube*

YouTube is a website for sharing videos located at [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com). This website allows users to upload, watch and share videos. Various video content created by creators, including film, TV and music clips uploaded on this site. Apart from that, amateur content such as video blogs, short original videos, and educational videos are also present on this site. Most content on YouTube is uploaded by individuals, although media companies such as CBS, BBC, Vevo, and other organizations upload material to the site as a YouTube partnership program. Unregistered users can watch videos and registered users can upload unlimited videos (<https://en.wikipedia.org>, 22 January 2021).

### *3. Instagram*

Instagram, commonly called IG or Insta, is a photo and video sharing application that allows users to take photos, take videos, apply digital filters, and share them with various social networking services, including Instagram's own. One unique feature on Instagram is cropping photos into square shapes like the results of Kodak Instamatic and Polaroid cameras. Instagram can be used on iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch, Android mobile phones and Windows Phone. This application can be downloaded at the Apple App Store and Google Play (<https://id.wikipedia.org>, 22 January 2021).

### *4. Facebook*

Social media Facebook has a web address or URL (Uniform Resources Locator), namely: <https://www.facebook.com/>. Student Monitor (2006) mentions Facebook as the second most popular thing among scholars, parallel to beer, after the iPod is ranked first (Syarifuddin, 2014). The social networking site Facebook provides facilities

in various languages to find friends around the world, places to interact, deliver information, propaganda, advertisements, find old friends, family interactions, exchange opinions, learning platforms and reference resources that are interactive and creative (Satar, 2015). Users write messages in the status column, upload photos or videos. They create groups to gather family or friends in virtual space (Yusof and Harun, 2015).

### *5. Twitter*

Twitter's address is <https://twitter.com>. Various activities carried out through the Twitter application are part of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), a process of human communication via computers that involves audiences in certain contexts for certain purposes (Nasrullah, 2016 in Paramastri and Gumilar, 2019). Twitter offers a social network that allows users to send and read messages called text-based tweets of up to 140 characters but on November 7, 2017 it was increased to 280 characters. Twitter users are free to send tweets along with photos or videos and other users are also free to reply to send tweets (Rosalina, et al, 2020). Now Twitter users can upload tweets with a maximum of 4000 characters but the condition is a monthly subscription to Twitter Blue (Clinten, 2023).

Actually, there are several other applications used by students such as Telegram and TikTok, but what is described here are only the five social media applications most used by students.

## **C. Motives for Using Social Media**

According to the online version of the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) fifth edition (2023), the motive is the reason (cause) for someone to do something. The term motive comes from the Latin word *movere* or to move which means to move. Therefore, the motive is defined as the strength within the individual that encourages them to act or can be called a driving force. Motives are also interpreted as drives, desires, desires, and other drives that originate within humans. Every human behavior has a motive in it, whether it is the level of behavior that takes place consciously or unconsciously (Liani and Rina, 2020).

Motives for using social media are the reasons, causes, or drives that exist in a person to choose and use digital applications to communicate and exchange information in social interactions. Symbolic interactions through social media can be carried out through hardware devices, software, and cellular networks or the internet. The use of social media has been used intensely during the Covid-19 period to overcome social distancing. Now the use of social media has become a major need in society, in social, family, and interpersonal relations which replace more face-to-face communication physically. For example, students who are in various cities and cannot visit each other can communicate with their families and friends through social media group facilities such as Facebook or the messaging application WhatsApp (WA). Social



media users can communicate using text formats, share photos, or video conferences as a substitute for face-to-face communication.

Students using various social media applications have certain motives or reasons according to their needs. Based on the general description of the results of the study, it was found that students' motives for using social media were:

### *1. Motive of Communication*

The first motive (reason) for students to use social media is to communicate with family, lecturers, friends, and acquaintances. Such as WA which is used to exchange messages with families in the area; to communicate between students and lecturers in online learning; and to communicate with fellow students and associates. Communication is the process of exchanging messages between communicators and communicants circularly through the media to create commonalities of opinion, attitudes and behavior among all parties involved according to the expected context (Akil, 2012). According to McQuail (1994), there are no forms of communication relationships, namely: (1) the command mode. The sender is in a lower position with the aim of carrying out the order. For example, students who receive lecture assignment instructions from lecturers; (2) the form of service (the service mode). The sender and recipient are bound by common interests in market situations and others. For example, students who offer goods and serve buyers in online shops; (3) the association mode. The sender and recipient have certain normative ties or mutually agreed values, for example, communication between fellow students in their class.

### *2. Motives for Learning*

Educational motives are the second reason why students use social media applications. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, school and lecture activities were carried out online. With social media, the distance learning process can be carried out through various applications such as WhatsApp, Meeting Zoom, Google Meet, Classroom, Yahoo groups, or e-learning such as the "Lentera" application used by UIN Alauddin Makassar. After the Covid-19 pandemic has passed, online learning is still carried out in synergy with offline learning, which is called hybrid learning. Through social media, such as YouTube, students get references for courses assigned by lecturers to study learning videos such as on the "Anshar Akil Channel" as a learning channel for students and the public to get lecture material, motivation, and preaching. Thus, students do not only get learning resources from books, ebooks, or journals, but also multimedia media sources on YouTube.

### *3. Motives for Seeking Information*

The next motive is to seek information on social media. The presence of new communication technology that uses connections between computer networks or the internet provides an opportunity for users to seek information as well as being a source

of information. The internet is a place to store information virtually which can be accessed at any time according to user needs. A kind of archive is available online. This is certainly different from the old media, such as newspapers, radio, or television which require the presence of audiences at the same time when the information is published (Nasrullah, 2016). Social media is an abundant and easily accessible source of information. Any information needed can be obtained through social media applications. The reason students use social media as a source of information is that various recent developments or issues that are currently being discussed can be found quickly on social media, both in the form of news text, photos, audio and video.

#### *4. Motives of Da'wah/Preaching*

Students also use social media to get lecture materials or Islamic da'wah. The aim is to increase knowledge, increase faith and practice Islamic teachings in life. Through social media, students can obtain material on Islamic studies delivered by well-known preachers or preachers according to the friends they want. As a means of da'wah, social media can be used to increase Islamic insight and knowledge or the integration of Islamic knowledge and general knowledge. According to Anshar (2019) that the themes of da'wah delivered are: faith, sharia, morals, muamalah, and general messages (such as education, character, defending the country). While the da'wah method uses a multimedia message format delivered in the form of text (writing), images (photos), audio, and video.

#### *5. Motives of Entertainment*

Students use social media to get entertainment, such as watching movies and listening to music. Social media is a facility that provides a variety of entertainment such as movies, music or games which are widely available on YouTube. In addition, social networking services can also be a means of entertainment by making acquaintances or making friends with new people. Entertainment can also be obtained by creating a status containing humorous or entertaining words posted on social media FB, Instagram or Twitter.

#### *6. Motives for Shopping*

Students use social media because they want to shop online, for promotion or buying and selling. With the existence of a marketplace provided by social media such as Facebook (FB), or promotional media such as Instagram, it is easier for students to choose and get the desired products through various social media available on the internet. Students admit that they can order a product or service without having to go to a store but simply order it through social media on the internet.

## 7. The Motive of Sharing Interesting Moments

The next motive for students to use social media is to share interesting moments. Students store and distribute digital data in the form of text, photos, audio, and video to fellow users. For example, photos or videos of holiday trips on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. Initially, the exchange of messages was informative but later formed an attitude of mutual understanding, understanding feelings, and realizing joint action through transactional communication. In sharing messages on social media, an attitude of giving and receiving between communicators will be created; empathy so that there is emotional closeness or trust between the communicators; and apply positive ethical values.

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the social media applications used by students are: (1) WhatsApp, (2) YouTube, (3) Instagram, (4) Facebook, and (5) Twitter. While the motives (reasons) of students using social media are: (1) communication motives, (2) learning, (3) seeking information, (4) da'wah/preaching, (5) entertainment, (6) shopping and (7) sharing interesting moments.

As an implication of this research so that social media provides optimal benefits, students need to pay attention to (1) The use of social media needs to avoid spreading negative messages; (2) selectively receive useful information; and (3) improve communication skills according to Islamic ethical values which serve as a guide for all netizens.

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