

# Portrayal Social Media Usage by Adolescents in Rural Areas

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## Keywords:

adolescents, rural areas, social media usage.

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## ABSTRACT

The urgent need to use social media not limited by time and place has become unstoppable among teenagers in rural areas. Wise management in social media can prevent adolescents from being trapped in maladaptive behavior to trigger dependency conditions. Initial studies on adolescents' use of social media in rural areas are essential to avoid the misuse of social media. This study aims to analyze adolescents' use of social media in rural areas. The involvement of 198 adolescents in the study came from six junior high schools located in rural areas. The study was found in six schools in the rural area of South Sumatra province and used a cross-sectional method. The determination sample was based on a purposive sampling technique according to the research sample criteria; each school was represented by 33 students who were determined using a simple random method, and data was collected by distributing questionnaires. Based on the analysis results, it is known that most participants use social media at night for 3-6 hours and the purpose of its use is to obtain information. WhatsApp was the most preferred by participants, and the duration of accessing social media among females was longer than males. It can be concluded that adolescents' use of social media must be appropriately managed with alternative approaches to prevent and deal with adolescent problems by collaborating with teachers, parents, and students. The use of social media must be adequately addressed through the formation of peer groups to create more discipline and responsible adolescence.



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## 1. Introduction

The rapid development of internet technology seems to eliminate the distance between space and time, making it easier to connect with the world community regardless of place and time to find and share information and ideas. According to UNICEF in Indonesia explained that the internet had become a basic need for students for teaching and learning amid the Covid-19 pandemic, apart from being an entertainment medium as well as accessing information and social media [1]. The presence of social media makes one's private space merge with the public space; there is a cultural shift that does not hesitate to upload all personal activities to be conveyed to the public through social media accounts to form self-identity [2], [3].

Adolescents are people trying to find their identity using social media for almost 24 hours, inseparable from smartphones, including teenagers in Indonesia. As a means for closer interaction between individuals, sharing and exchanging ideas and ideas, images, and videos in specific community networks so that they have the opportunity to have positive and negative impacts on adolescents [4- 6].

Indonesia is currently one of the countries with huge social media users, especially among students [1], [7]. According to education level, internet use increased at all levels of education [8- 10]. This phenomenon follows the Uses and Gratification model that certain motives influence the use of social media, so it gives birth to satisfaction for consumers [11- 13]. The benefits and gratifications approach questions what people do with the media, namely, using the media to satisfy their needs. However, accessibility to social media can be influenced by user characteristics, including the user's location when using social media. The purpose of using social media for students in the city may differ from students who study in remote areas. There are seven purposes for using social media: seeking information, interacting socially, online business, expressing opinions, entertainment, and filling spare time [14- 16].

Social media platforms function to create a network [11], [17], [18] of friends and become a forum for online communities because they have similar activities, interests or interests, and backgrounds or communities on the YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter platforms. The platforms that facilitate the exchange of messages in the form of text, audio, images, and videos between users include Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp [15], [19]. Previous studies on the use of media in rural areas are about how mass media has an impact or influence on adolescents' preferences for the agricultural sector and the migration of young people from urban villages [20], [21]. At the same time, this study will explore the characteristics of social media use among junior high school students in remote areas using the services and gratifications theory approach. The things studied include information about the attributes of accessing social media, including the platforms used, how, when, and when to use them, goals, and motivation in using social media.

## **2. METHOD**

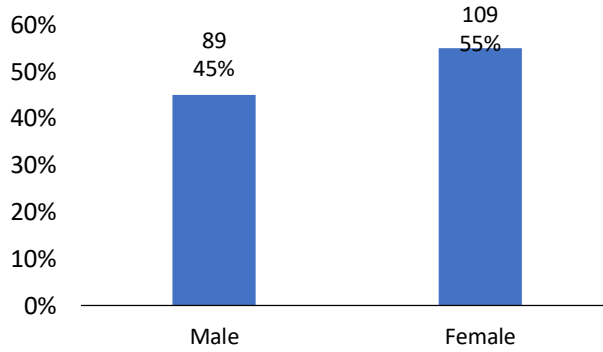
This quantitative research uses cross-sectional method to identify the use of social media among junior high school students outside Palembang by using the services and gratifications theory approach. Students recruited as research respondents came from six junior high schools in South Sumatra in the rural area, 2 hours away from the provincial capital, status as a government-owned school in the rural area with the highest number of students compared to other schools. The participants involved were 198 students drawn randomly, by lottery, and with the same proportion of the six schools, 33 students each. The sample number is determined based on a minimum sample size of 30 for each school. The error tolerance of the sample size is 10% as an error margin. The sampling technique applied was simple random sampling, without distinguishing gender and year of school entry. Respondent involvement in the study began with using the permission from the school to explain informed consent to students. The researcher also presented to the students that student involvement in the research would not affect the teacher's assessment of the students.

The distribution of questionnaires became a data collection technique in this study. The questions asked to participants were simple, including patterns of internet and social media use, preference for social media platforms, reasons for using social media, and time allocation in accessing social media. This study uses the benefits and gratification theory approach to understand participants' behavior patterns in utilizing social media. This survey on social media is also related to a person's identity through status updates or conveying ideas and opinions. This component encourages the rationalization of social media users about their identities. This research was carried out in June and July 2022 after obtaining approval from the Palembang

Health Polytechnic Research Ethics Committee Number 0542/KEPK/Adm2/VI/2022.

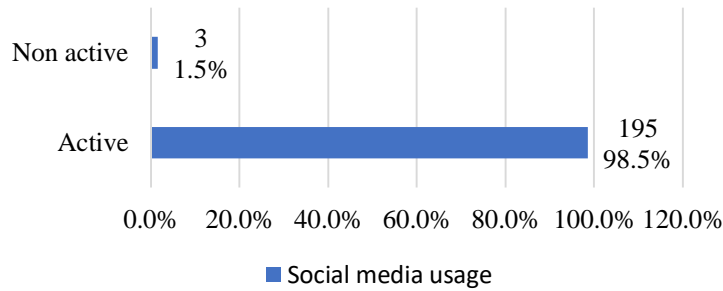
### 3. RESULTS

Based on the data collection results, the following table 1 shows the demographics of the respondents totaling 198 students, including 109 (55%) women and 89 (45%) men, and the classification of active social media users.



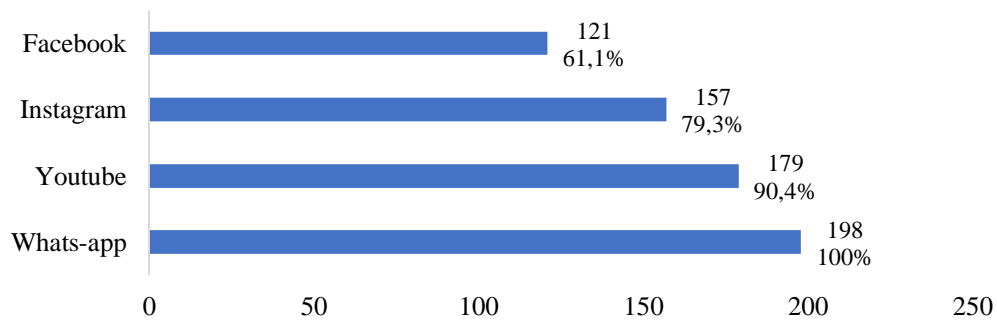
**Diagram 1.** Gender of participants

The percentage difference between female and male participants was 10%.

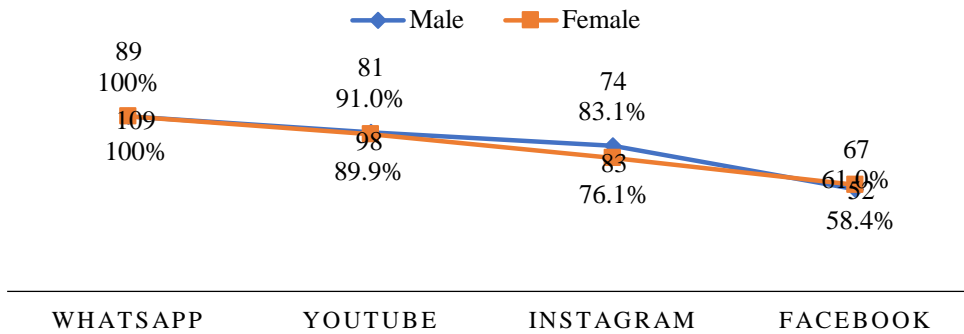


**Diagram 2.** The activeness of the participants in using social media

According to diagram 2, it appears that almost all participants actively use social media.

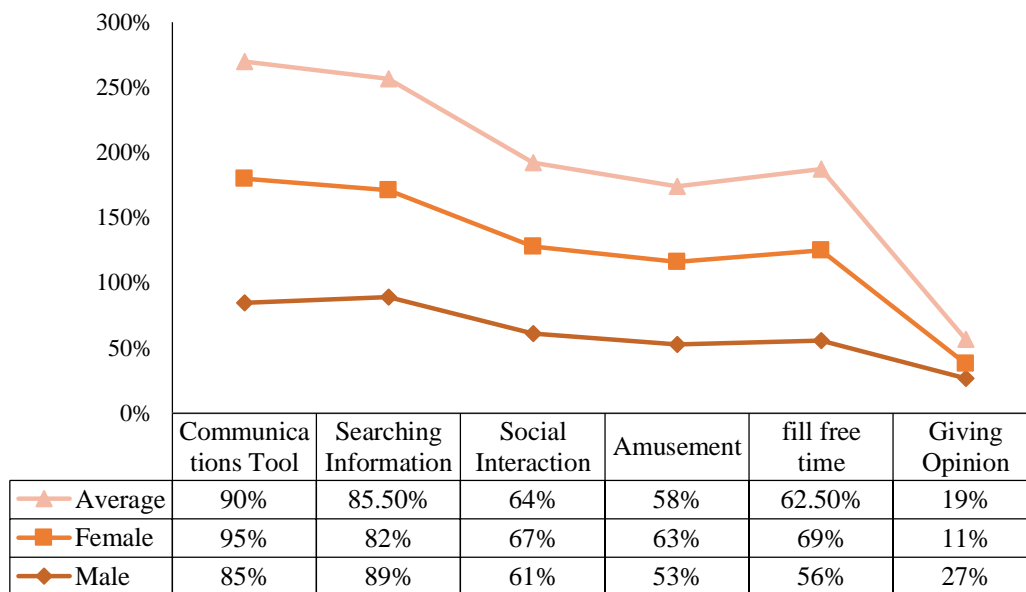


**Diagram 3.** Percentage of utilization of social media platforms



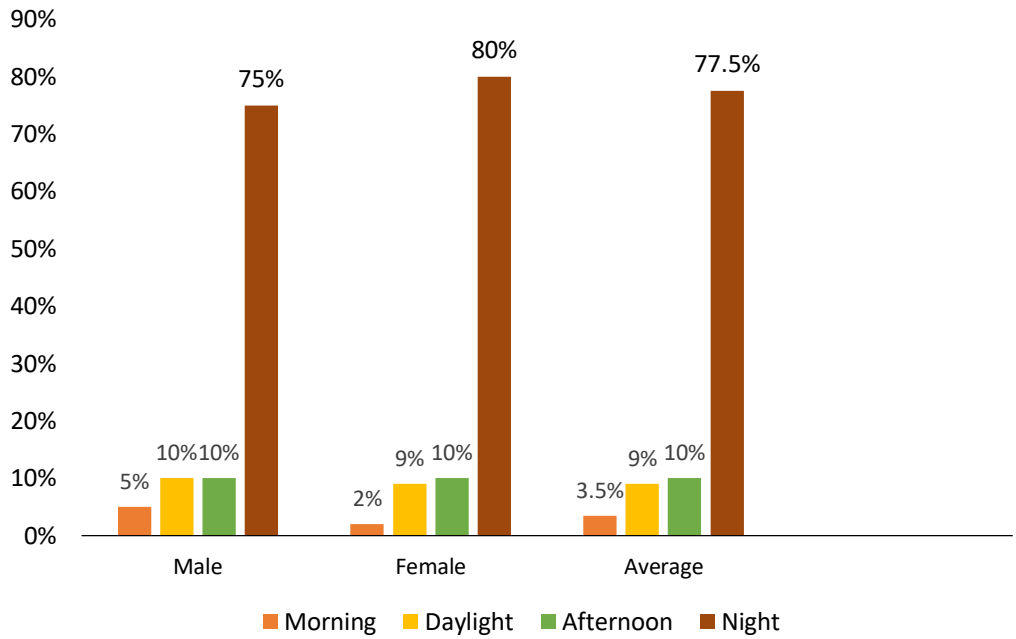
**Diagram 4.** Percentage of use of social media platforms by gender

The WhatsApp platform is the main choice for teenagers in using social media, followed using YouTube, Instagram and Facebook sequentially.

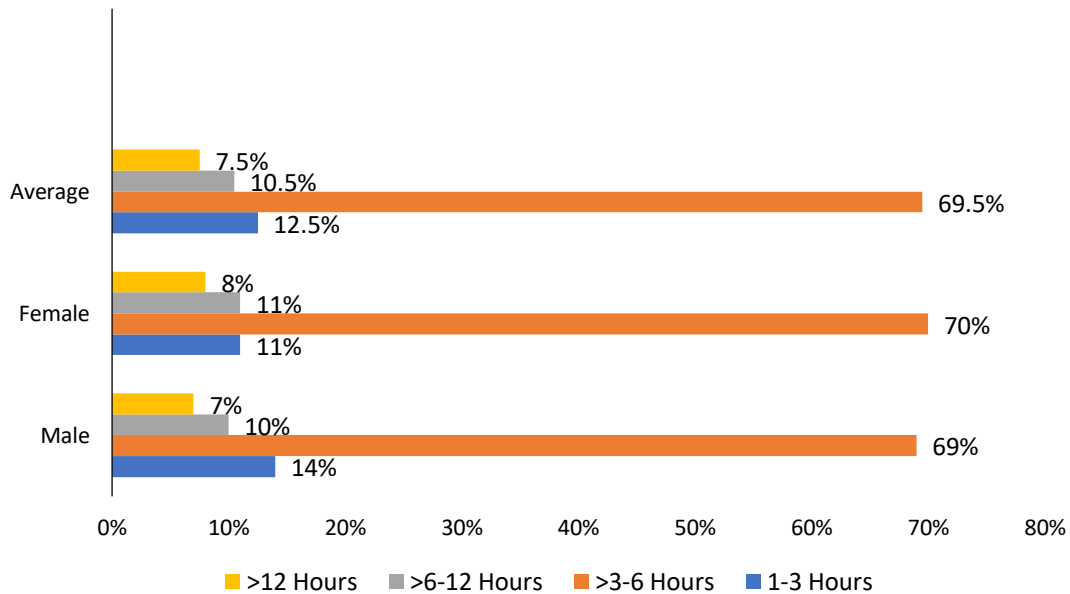


**Diagram 5.** Percentage of intended use of social media by gender

The results of the data analysis in diagram 5 show the percentage of use of social media platforms by gender. It appears that as a communication tool is the main goal of students using social media, both female and male respondents.



**Diagram 6.** Percentage of social media usage by access time



**Diagram 7.** Percentage of use of social media by duration of access

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The presence of technology has a tremendous influence on human life and creates a symbolic relationship with technology; humans create technology, and then technology returns to the human figure. According to McLuhan, media technology has revolutionized society because nowadays, people depend on technology. The order of society is formed based on its ability to use technology. Communication technology is the leading cause of cultural change; media is an extension or existence of the human mind; consequently, the media plays a dominant role in influencing the stages of human development [22], [23]. Human behavior and technology have interactions within the socio-technological environment [24- 26]. When communication technology is present in a new form, it will affect the structure of society, communication

strategies, society and culture, and social processes. The presence of new media indirectly changes the structure of society.

The uses and gratifications theory is very relevant to be correlated as an approach to the use of social media among adolescents. Adolescence comes from the Latin word *adolescere* which means to grow or grow into adulthood. The term adolescent has a broader meaning, including mental, emotional, social, and physical maturity [27]. Adolescence is a period of transitional development between childhood and adulthood that includes biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes [28]. Teenagers' preferences in choosing social media are strongly influenced by their characteristics. Teenagers often ask for the opinion and approval of their peers to make decisions [29], [30]. However, with social media, asking for views from peers is considered an unimportant act. Previous research shows that most teenagers share information on social media. Various information becomes the key for them to get attention themselves. They often complain about 'oversharing' by other social media users, even though they are trapped in it [31]. They share on social media about so many things, even personal ones. Social media will not be able to describe the user's personality fully. Therefore, teenagers use social media to grow their positive image. Teenagers tend to give a good impression on social media by hoping others will perceive them as they expect [30], [31].

The study of the uses and gratifications theory aims to identify the causes of using or refusing to use mass media, the benefits of using mass media, and the aspects most favored by those who access social media. Another explanation shows that everyone always has needs that they try to fulfill. Certain types of audiences satisfaction can determine attention to media messages [32], [33]. Individuals have an assessment and belief in one of the mass media that is considered capable of meeting their needs. The motive will support the individual's judgment and confidence in the media, so they are encouraged to consume it. After being destroyed, it will be seen that the fulfillment of the individual's initial motive for social media. Some experts have classified social media users based on the theory of need and gratification into four categories, including the categories of diversion, personal relationships, determinants of personal identity or individual psychology, and surveillance efforts. The uses and gratifications theory assumes that users must be active so that their needs for social media can be met [34- 36].

In this study, almost all respondents use the internet and social media as communication tools. They are more connected at night for more than 3 hours; as stated by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers, internet users in Indonesia have experienced a sharp spike in the last three years [15], [37]. This fact is supported by the Covid-19 pandemic, which requires that many activities be carried out online, especially learning activities and changing students' habitual patterns in using the internet. Suppose you look at the comparison between female and male participants in using social media. In that case, there is no difference between the two groups because all students use it, and only three people are less active in using social media. Based on the survey results, it is known that only four platforms are used by participants, starting with the most preference, namely the Whatsapp, Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook platforms. WhatsApp uses a practical registration system, just by using a phone number. There is no character limit for sending messages, offering a picture messaging service that is very easy to do by using WhatsApp. The convenience provided by social media makes teenagers feel at home for long surfing in cyberspace. Social media opens up opportunities to comment, provide open feedback and share information in a fast and unlimited time.

Adolescents are clearly in a period of transition, leaving childhood before entering adulthood. Teenagers who become hyperactive on social media also post daily activities that seem to describe their lives to keep

up with the times. Although sometimes, their posts on social media don't always reflect the situation. The uses and gratification theory explains the nature of audiences actively consuming media. They can selectively sort media messages to meet the audience's needs. The selection of media by participants is motivated by the desire to obtain information; in other words, the audience consumes media driven by certain motives to meet their needs. The core of the uses and gratification theory is the selection of media by the audience to obtain satisfaction, fulfill wants or needs, or motives. Communication, especially in mass media, does not have the power to influence audiences; they are active and selective in choosing media, giving rise to motives in using media and getting satisfaction. This understanding is closely related to self-identity in the perspective of communication, not produced alone but through the process of communicating with others. Identity can be negotiated, strengthened, and changed in a communication process. This phenomenon is highly correlated with adolescents' use of social media to shape their identities.

The users of social networks have mainly become teenagers who still need parental supervision in their usage. Social media has a positive impact and benefits the development of science and technology, making it easier to communicate, find and access information, develop relationships, and add friends, but social media can also harm teenagers. Changes in attitude shown after they depend on social networks include becoming lazy, angry, and aggressive because they are too busy with social networks and forget their obligations as students [38- 40]. Teenagers can become hyperactive on social media and often share their daily activities to be known by the public, they also want recognition from the social environment, but many things they do are not following ethics and norms [41], [42]. Self-awareness and parental supervision are needed in using social media wisely so that they can use it appropriately, not be abused, and not fall into dependency problems that can endanger themselves and others.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Social networking technology that is overgrowing has an impact and life changes. As an online media, social media makes it easy for its users to participate, share, and create creative ideas. The speed with which teenagers can access social media has resulted in a significant phenomenon. The impact of social networking sites may be felt more by teenagers than most social networking users. In addition to the ease of communication, rapid exchange of information flows, free advertising media, expanding business connections and networks, and increasing friendships, social media also has a negative impact that causes dependence. The inability to control oneself, difficulty interacting in the real world, and self-centeredness indicate the importance of forming peer groups so that they can remind each other following the adolescent world approach. All parties, such as the government, society, and the media, must take responsibility for facing the challenges of the ease of life offered by social media in the future because it will affect the quality of the superior generation.

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