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## The Influence of Social Media on the Formation of Self-Identity among University Students in Surabaya (A Case Study of University Students in Surabaya)

Dimas Jaya Samudra<sup>1\*</sup>, Avika Azka Rachel Minata<sup>2</sup>, Nur Jawza' Habibah Pramesti<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Surabaya, dimas.23010@mhs.unesa.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Negeri Surabaya, avika.23024@mhs.unesa.ac.id

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Negeri Surabaya, nurjawza.23038@mhs.unesa.ac.id,

\*Corresponding Author Email: dimas.23010@mhs.unesa.ac.id

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### ABSTRACT

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Focusing on higher education institutions in Surabaya, this study aims to examine the role of social media platforms in the formation of self-identity among youth in the digital era. The research further analyzes how social media influences social values and beauty standards, while also exploring the positive and negative impacts of its usage. Utilizing a quantitative methodology, data were collected through questionnaires administered to the participants. The findings indicate that active social media engagement significantly enhances communication patterns and self-identity development, providing substantial benefits to the students. Conversely, excessive use may impede face-to-face interactions and compromise the quality of real-world social bonds. Beyond highlighting the need for caution, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of social media's role in students' lives. It emphasizes that users should utilize these platforms appropriately to foster healthy interactions and communication. Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and offer deeper insights into how social media shapes the identity development of university students in Surabaya.

**Keywords:** *Communication Patterns, Self-Identity Formation, Impact, Insights, Interaction, Social Media, University Students.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media can be defined as interactive technology that facilitates the creation, sharing, and aggregation of content within virtual (remote) communities. The term "social" implies that these platforms are designed to foster interaction and collaboration among users. Social media has revolutionized the way individuals communicate and interact, enabling connectivity without the constraints of time and space. It serves as a space where users seek information and express themselves during the process of identity formation. One of the most widely utilized social networking sites is Instagram, which serves as one of many digital forums for discussion. Instagram allows users to upload and distribute images and videos, offering various features such as IGTV, direct messaging, and Instagram Stories. As a social network, it enables users to follow one another, while its photo-sharing tools—including likes and comments—facilitate interpersonal engagement (Nabila, 2016).

An individual's attitudes and behaviors can be significantly influenced by Instagram usage during the critical period of identity formation. For some, Instagram acts as a platform for healthy competition, fostering a metamorphosis into more attractive and imaginative individuals. Conversely, certain users exhibit a tendency toward materialism, frequently showcasing their possessions. A common theme in contemporary youth culture is an obsession with achieving

greater success in the online world than in reality, where many post content primarily to garner likes and comments (Nurul, 2019). Negative consequences of Instagram during adolescence include diminished self-confidence, unhealthy competition over material wealth, and a reluctance to face reality. Modern youth consistently pursue both global and local trends, driven by the belief that staying current will grant them popularity and the fear of appearing obsolete among their peers (Akhmad & Prili, 2018).

In addition to Instagram, Facebook is an application widely used by adolescents as an interactive tool for building friendships. However, Facebook also presents negative impacts, such as the potential for misinterpreting received information. During this developmental stage, adolescent curiosity often drives them to try new products advertised on the platform, which can influence their behavior both positively and negatively. As a generation, youth are characterized by their openness to new experiences and fluctuating interests. This phenomenon is often reflected in their social media habits; for instance, many adolescents now view venting their frustrations on Facebook as an ideal outlet. Facebook remains a compelling phenomenon in the digital world, attracting users either intentionally or as a gateway to other platforms (Adinya, 2013). This is largely due to the ease of membership and the lack of financial costs, as Facebook does not impose the same limitations found in paid services.

WhatsApp was developed during the current wave of technological breakthroughs to facilitate easier interpersonal communication. According to Jumiatmoko (2016: 53), this internet-based program enhances communication through its various functional features. WhatsApp has become the most popular social media platform for information exchange. Launched on February 24, 2009, by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, the software was designed with a deep understanding of its potential for mass communication and information distribution (Harianto, 2019: 79). Beyond serving as an information medium, WhatsApp is extensively used by students as a learning tool to facilitate academic collaboration. However, it is also subject to misuse, such as the creation of fake accounts for fraudulent purposes, cyberbullying, and the distribution of phishing links. Consequently, these three platforms play a pivotal role in the self-formation of adolescents and students, who must navigate both the positive and negative impacts of their digital presence.

The development of civilization is profoundly influenced by technological advancement. Adolescents, particularly students, are heavy users of social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp (Febianto, 2016). The primary objective of this research is to examine how social media plays a central role in adolescent identity formation in the modern digital era. It explores how university students construct and manage their self-image through the content they upload. Furthermore, social media usage affects social norms and beauty standards; adolescents are often influenced by images shared by peers, celebrities, and influencers who are perceived as ideal models. This can create social pressure to conform to these standards in both appearance and lifestyle. According to sociologist Wilbert Moore, identity transformation represents a significant change encompassing social structures, behavior, and social interactions, including shifts in norms and values. As noted by Moro (2016), adolescents frequently use these platforms to share personal experiences, such as stories and photographs, with their social circles in this digital age.

Social networking sites offer a seamless and secure means for exchanging comments and sharing opinions with other users. However, within these digital environments, individuals may misrepresent their identities or even engage in criminal activities. Adolescents, in particular, are in a critical developmental stage where they strive to construct their identities through peer interactions. Currently, as the younger generation perceives social media usage as an essential social norm, those who abstain from these platforms are often regarded as obsolete (Putri et al., 2016). While social media frequently fosters positive emotional development, it can also inadvertently exert negative influences. Beyond significantly shaping behavioral patterns, social media may induce psychological challenges among its users.

Driven by the continuous evolution of the digital era, individuals are now able to communicate in ways that were previously only possible through face-to-face interaction. The widespread adoption of social media has facilitated the global dissemination of ideas and information, creating new avenues for connectivity. The emergence of social media

represents a significant shift in human history, as virtual communities are no longer constrained by physical distance or temporal limitations. Sharing life events and experiences with social circles is a prevalent practice among social media users, particularly within the younger demographic. Social media offers a perceived safe space for free self-expression and the construction of a positive self-image, serving as an ideal platform for expanding social circles. Despite these benefits, social media is not without its drawbacks; excessive use may lead to adverse consequences, affecting not only daily routines and habits but also an individual's psychological well-being and identity.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study is categorized as quantitative research. According to Sugiyono (2009: 14), a quantitative approach—rooted in the positivist paradigm—is employed to examine specific populations or samples, typically through random sampling techniques. McCusker (2015) posits that the "what," "how," and "why" of a phenomenon can be systematically addressed using quantitative methods. These inquiries form the foundation for the researcher's data collection process. By utilizing statistical methods, researchers assign numerical values to variables to facilitate empirical testing. Quantitative research aims to provide a rigorous justification for investigated events and relationships through numerical data analysis. This study utilizes standardized data collection instruments, specifically survey questionnaires.

The primary objective of this research is to quantify the extent of social media's influence on the identity development of youth. This allows for a deeper academic understanding of how adolescents construct their identities through digital platforms and the factors influencing such usage. In this study, the questionnaire serves as the primary data collection tool, consisting of a series of systematically arranged questions administered to the research sample. Data are derived from the compiled responses of the participants, accessed via online survey tools such as Google Forms. To obtain detailed insights into how social media affects communication patterns in the self-identity development of university students in Surabaya, the questionnaire utilizes a Likert scale for response measurement.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Result

#### General Data

This research was conducted by distributing an online questionnaire consisting of 11 items via Google Forms. The study employed a closed-ended questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1–5) targeting university students in Surabaya who actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, Telegram, X, and TikTok. Data collection was carried out in two phases: an initial pilot study involving 30 respondents to test instrument validity, followed by a secondary distribution to the full sample of 397 respondents. The collected data were subsequently processed and analyzed using SPSS software.

#### Specific Data

##### 1. Frequency Analysis (F-Test)

Variable X<sub>1</sub>: Frequency of Social Media UsageBased on the results regarding how frequently university students in Surabaya use social media, the data shows that 209 respondents (52.3%) "Agree" and 100 respondents (25.0%) "Strongly Agree" with the statement. Furthermore, 69 respondents (17.3%) remained "Neutral," while 15 (3.8%) "Disagreed" and 7 (1.8%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 1. The result of X<sub>1</sub>

Valid	1	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
				Percent	Percent
Valid	1	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
	2	15	3.8	3.8	5.5
	3	69	17.3	17.3	22.8
	4	209	52.3	52.3	75.0
	5	100	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

"Variable X<sub>2</sub>: Frequency of Social Interaction via Social MediaThe findings regarding the frequency of digital interaction with others indicate that 176 respondents (44.0%) "Agree" and 114 (28.5%) "Strongly Agree." Additionally, 73 respondents (18.3%) were "Neutral," 27 (6.8%) "Disagreed," and 10 (2.5%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 2. The result of X<sub>2</sub>

Valid	1	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
				Percent	Percent
Valid	1	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	2	27	6.8	6.8	9.3
	3	73	18.3	18.3	27.5
	4	176	44.0	44.0	71.5
	5	114	28.5	28.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Variable X<sub>3</sub>: Duration of Social Media UsageThe data concerning the duration of social media use among students reveals that 163 respondents (40.8%) "Agree" and 110 (27.5%) "Strongly Agree." Meanwhile, 89 respondents (22.3%) opted for "Neutral," 25 (6.3%) "Disagreed," and 13 (3.3%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 3. The Result of X<sub>3</sub>

Valid	1	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
				Percent	Percent
Valid	1	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
	2	25	6.3	6.3	9.5
	3	89	22.3	22.3	31.8
	4	163	40.8	40.8	72.5
	5	110	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Variable Y<sub>1</sub>: Impact on Communication PatternsRegarding whether social media has altered their way of communicating with others, 205 respondents (51.2%) "Agree" and 68 (17.0%)

"Strongly Agree." Conversely, 94 respondents (23.5%) were "Neutral," 27 (6.8%) "Disagreed," and 6 (1.5%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 4. The Result of Y<sub>1</sub>

Valid	1	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
				Percent	Percent
Valid	1	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	2	27	6.8	6.8	8.3
	3	94	23.5	23.5	31.8
	4	205	51.2	51.2	83.0
	5	68	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Variable Y<sub>2</sub>: Impact on Self-PerceptionIn response to whether social media influences how they perceive themselves, 168 respondents (42.0%) "Agree" and 96 (24.0%) "Strongly Agree." Furthermore, 102 respondents (25.5%) remained "Neutral," 30 (7.5%) "Disagreed," and 4 (1.0%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 5. The Result of Y<sub>2</sub>

Valid	1	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
				Percent	Percent
Valid	1	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	30	7.5	7.5	8.5
	3	102	25.5	25.5	34.0
	4	168	42.0	42.0	76.0
	5	96	24.0	24.0	100.0

Variable Y<sub>3</sub>: Impact on Social Interactions with Friends and FamilyWhen asked if social media affects their interactions with friends and family, 154 respondents (38.5%) "Agree" and 89 (22.3%) "Strongly Agree." Additionally, 115 respondents (28.7%) were "Neutral," 34 (8.5%) "Disagreed," and 8 (2.0%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 6. The Result of Y<sub>3</sub>

Valid	1	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
				Percent	Percent
Valid	1	8	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	34	8.5	8.5	10.5
	3	115	28.7	28.7	39.3
	4	154	38.5	38.5	77.8
	5	89	22.3	22.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Variable Y<sub>4</sub>: Impact on Interests and HobbiesRegarding the influence of social media on personal interests and hobbies, 169 respondents (42.3%) "Agree" and 105 (26.3%) "Strongly Agree." Meanwhile, 94 respondents (23.5%) opted for

"Neutral," 31 (7.8%) "Disagreed," and only 1 (0.3%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 7. The Result of Y<sub>4</sub>

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	.3	.3	.3
	2	31	7.8	7.8	8.0
	3	94	23.5	23.5	31.5
	4	169	42.3	42.3	73.8
	5	105	26.3	26.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Variable Y<sub>5</sub>: Impact on Daily Decision-Making The results for whether social media influences daily decision-making show that 180 respondents (45.0%) "Agree" and 82 (20.5%) "Strongly Agree." On the other hand, 92 respondents (23.0%) were "Neutral," 37 (9.3%) "Disagreed," and 9 (2.3%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 8. The Result of Y<sub>5</sub>

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
	2	37	9.3	9.3	11.5
	3	92	23.0	23.0	34.5
	4	180	45.0	45.0	79.5
	5	82	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Variable Y<sub>6</sub>: Ease of Digital vs. Face-to-Face Communication Regarding the preference for digital communication over face-to-face interaction, 171 respondents (42.8%) "Agree" and 94 (23.5%) "Strongly Agree." Furthermore, 99 respondents (24.8%) remained "Neutral," 28 (7.0%) "Disagreed," and 8 (2.0%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 9. The Result of Y<sub>6</sub>

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	28	7.0	7.0	9.0
	3	99	24.8	24.8	33.8
	4	171	42.8	42.8	76.5
	5	94	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Variable Y<sub>7</sub>: Impact on Self-Expression Finally, concerning social media's influence on self-expression, 165 respondents (41.3%) "Agree" and 108 (27.0%) "Strongly Agree."

Additionally, 95 respondents (23.8%) were "Neutral," 28 (7.0%) "Disagreed," and 4 (1.0%) "Strongly Disagreed."

Table 10. The Result of Y<sub>7</sub>

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	28	7.0	7.0	8.0
	3	95	23.8	23.8	31.8
	4	165	41.3	41.3	73.0
	5	108	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

## 2. Normality Test

It can be concluded that the data is statistically normally distributed, as the significance value (*P*) is  $0.077 > 0.05$ , as demonstrated in the normality test results.

Table 11. Normality test

### One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		400
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	3.96261974
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.077
	Positive	.044
	Negative	-.077
Test Statistic		.077
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

## 3. Correlation Test

Based on the Pearson Correlation table, the relationship between Variable X and Variable Y is considered valid and significant, as the correlation coefficient of 0.599 exceeds the *R*-table threshold of 0.361.

Table 12. Correlation test

		Correlations	Total_X	Total_Y
Total_X	Pearson Correlation	1	.599 <sup>**</sup>	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	
	N	400	400	
Total_Y	Pearson Correlation	.599 <sup>**</sup>	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		
	N	400	400	

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4. Linear Regression Analysis

The estimated contribution of the Independent Variable (X) to the Dependent Variable (Y) is 35.9%, while the remaining 64.1% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted if the significance value is  $> 0.05$ , indicating that Variable X does not have a substantial influence on Variable Y. Conversely, if the significance level is below 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, signifying that Variable X exerts a significant influence on Variable Y.

Table 13. Linear Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.599 <sup>a</sup>	.359	.357	2.485

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total\_X

Table 14. Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant) 5.258	.925			5.685	<.001
	Total_X .511	.034	.599	14.929		<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Total\_Y

Analysis Output: The results indicate a significance value of  $< 0.001$ . Since this value is below the 0.05 threshold, it is concluded that social media (Variable X) has a significant impact on the process of building self-confidence/identity (Variable Y).

#### 3.2 Discussion

Based on the analysis and hypothesis testing regarding the influence of social media (X) on self-identity formation (Y), the results demonstrate that social media has a statistically significant effect on the formation of self-identity. It can be inferred that university students in Surabaya, as active users of social media platforms (TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, and Telegram), are largely influenced by these applications. This influence manifests in changes to their self-identity, socialization patterns, and a degree of digital dependency. Social media frequently serves as a medium for self-expression, particularly among the youth in Surabaya. These findings, obtained through SPSS software analysis, support the previously proposed hypotheses.

These results align with the study titled "The Impact of Facebook on Social Behavior Among Adolescents in Gampong Alue Beuraweh Langsa Kota" by Hamidah Hanim (2023), which examined the frequency of Facebook's influence on social behavior. That study confirms that the public behavior of adolescents is heavily influenced by the time spent on social media platforms. It further proves that social media serves as both a space for self-expression and a tool for maintaining long-distance social relationships.

Furthermore, this study is consistent with the research conducted by Putri, Nurwati, and Budiarti (2016) titled "The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Behavior." Their findings indicate that adolescents tend to "overshare" on social media, documenting nearly every aspect of their lives.

Following the latest trends helps them feel more stylish and integrated into their social circles. The study highlights that social media significantly shapes the lives of young people as they use these platforms to keep up with viral information and trends.

Additionally, Silvia Fardila Solihah's (2015) research on "Social Media Dependency Levels and Social Anxiety" utilized a similar quantitative methodology. Her findings suggested that individuals with high levels of social anxiety or social disorders are more likely to depend on social media as a coping mechanism to overcome nervousness and seek entertainment through online interactions.

Overall, social media reflects the dominant cultural values of society. Students in Surabaya are exposed to trends and lifestyles popular among their peers, which influences their fashion choices, speech, and behavior. The influence of social media on identity formation is complex and multidimensional. While it can be a powerful tool for individual development, creative expression, and community building, excessive use can lead to serious psychological and interpersonal consequences. To maximize the benefits and minimize negative impacts, students must develop strong digital literacy, learn to distinguish valid information, and cultivate healthy online relationships.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that many students undergo the process of self-identity formation through their social media usage. Social media platforms significantly impact this process, offering both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, platforms like Instagram, Twitter (X), Telegram, and WhatsApp facilitate communication and social interaction, allowing students to share personal experiences, express themselves, and build extensive social networks.

However, social media usage also carries significant negative consequences. A primary example is the self-confidence crisis experienced by some students. Feelings of dissatisfaction and low self-esteem often arise from the tendency to compare one's life with the curated profiles of others. This situation can trigger "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO), creating a compulsive need to stay connected. Furthermore, students may experience depression, mental health issues, and pressure to appear perfect in pursuit of social validation (e.g., "likes").

In conclusion, social media plays a dual role in shaping the identity of students in Surabaya. While it offers opportunities for self-expression, over-reliance can jeopardize mental and social well-being. Therefore, it is essential for students to use social media wisely, maintaining a balance with physical activities and face-to-face interactions to preserve their mental and social health.

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