

Instagram Use and First-Year College Students' Social Adjustment

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Abstract -- Despite many research on the relation between social media and college students, the results are still varied. Moreover, a study that focuses on patterns of social media use is still limited, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, this study tested the relationship between patterns of Instagram (IG)-a popular social media in Indonesia-use and social adjustment of the first-year college students. This correlational study involved 137 college students in Jakarta Greater Area. Data were gathered using The Instagram Perceived Use Scale and The Social Adjustment subscale of The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). The multiple regression statistical analysis showed that among four patterns of IG use, only three patterns related to the freshmen' social adjustment. They were the pattern of maintaining a social connection (MSC), sharing and seeking personal information (SSPI), and gaming (GAME). Furthermore, MSC was the only significant predictor to college freshmen's social adjustment. Meanwhile, there was no correlation between social adjustment and using IG for pursuing social romantic or sexual relationships (PRSR). In conclusion, IG use could significantly predict first-year college students' social adjustment as long as the usage is intended to maintain their social connections.

Keywords: college student, Instagram use, social adjustment, social media

Abstrak -- Penelitian untuk memahami hubungan antara sosial media dengan kehidupan mahasiswa semakin populer akhir-akhir ini. Namun demikian, hasil studinya masih beragam. Selain itu, studi yang berfokus pada pola dari penggunaan sosial media masih terbatas, khususnya di Indonesia. Untuk itu, penelitian ini ingin menguji hubungan antara sejumlah pola penggunaan Instagram (IG), salah satu media sosial yang sangat populer di Indonesia, dengan penyesuaian sosial dari mahasiswa tahun pertama. Dalam penelitian berdesain korelasional ini, data dikumpulkan dari 137 mahasiswa yang berkuliah di daerah JaBoDeTaBek, dengan menggunakan The Instagram Perceived Use Scale serta bagian penyesuaian sosial dari The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Hasil uji statistik dengan analisis multiple regression menunjukkan bahwa hanya 3 (tiga) dari 4 (empat) pola penggunaan IG yang mempengaruhi penyesuaian sosial mahasiswa tingkat pertama. Bersama-sama, penggunaan IG untuk menjaga jaringan sosial, membagi dan mencari informasi pribadi, dan bermain game dapat menjelaskan penyesuaian sosial mahasiswa tingkat pertama. Namun, hanya penggunaan IG untuk menjaga jaringan sosial-lah yang dapat menjadi prediktor bagi penyesuaian sosial. Sebaliknya, penggunaan IG untuk mendapatkan hubungan romantis atau seksual, tidak berkorelasi dengan penyesuaian sosial. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan IG dapat mempengaruhi penyesuaian sosial mahasiswa tahun pertama selama digunakan untuk menjaga jaringan sosial.

Kata kunci: mahasiswa, penggunaan Instagram, penyesuaian diri sosial, sosial media

INTRODUCTION

The first-year of college life is a transition period for every college students, from high school to university. This transition period causes the freshmen, or the first-year college students, to face significant changes in their lives. They have to enter a new

environment and to meet new responsibilities that could be very different from the previous one (Fischer, 2007; Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007; Katz & Somers, 2017). This transition is a complex process and has multidimensional effects for many aspects of their life. It could affect college students' well-being as it could be the resource of anxiety and

acute stressor for them (Bowman, 2010; Gall, Evans, & Bellerose, 2000; Katz & Somers, 2017).

To be able to get through the transition period successfully, the ability to adapt or adjust successfully in university is essential for the first-year college students. Adjustment to university life, or college adjustment, is among factors contributes to college students' achievement and persistence until graduation (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Tinto, 1993). The first year of college is an important period for students' success because it will affect steps for the next college experiences. Students who adjust well in their first year would go on to be successful in their college life (Gray, Vitak, Easton, & Ellison, 2013; Wohn & LaRose, 2014).

Adjustment in university is called college adjustment. According to Baker and Siryk (1984, 1986), college adjustment is a multidimensional construct that refers to students' ability to cope with the academic, social, and emotional demands inherent in college experiences. Among the four aspects that construct college adjustment, this study will focus on social adjustment. Social adjustment is students' ability to adjust to their new social college life (Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1986). Furthermore, Baker and Siryk (1984, 1986) explain that social adjustment is college students' adaptation to interpersonal relationship and social demands offered by the university, also their self-perception about their ability to succeed in social function. It consists of several aspects, includes students' participation in the general college activity, involvement as the relation with others in the college, and satisfaction with social college life.

Social adjustment is as critical as any other dimension of college adjustment, including academic adjustment (Enochs & Rolland, 2006; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Forming and adjusting to new social life in the college while maintaining the previous social network is one of the fundamental duty of college students (Swenson et al., 2008; Yang & Brown, 2015). Moreover, for some, college life means living separately from their families for the first time (Enoch & Roland, 2006; Gray et al., 2013). This situation forces them to live independently, increase their autonomy, and adjust socially (Bowman, 2010; Gray et al., 2013). The social adjustment can predict the first-year students' success in college and beyond (Baker & Siryk, 1989; Gray et al., 2013). On the other hand, students who have difficulty adjusting socially to college are more likely to suffer loneliness, anxiety, and depression (Mounts, Valentiner, Anderson, & Bowsel, 2006).

College students' adjustment are related to many factors (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Enoch & Rolland, 2006; Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007; Hirai, Frazier, & Syed, 2015; Katz & Sommer, 2017; Yazedjian, Toews, & Navarro, 2009). Among factors been said to influence it is social media or social network system (SNS) (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2011; Gray et al., 2013; Junco 2011; Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011; Yang & Brown, 2015). Albarran (2013) defines social media as a form of technology or application used by human to develop and maintain their social networks. Social media is also defined as a group of an internet-based application built on ideology and technology that enable its users to participate and to share

in the form of various communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Meanwhile, Social Networking Service (SNS) is one of the kinds of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) that can be used to do that. SNS is a web-based service that enables individuals to build up their profile, to see other users share their information, and to interact with other people in the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In this study, both constructs are used interchangeably.

Nowadays, to interact and to form a social relationship, it is common for college students to use social media or social networking sites (SNS). Research shows that most college students are frequent SNS users (Junco, 2012). A survey conducted by Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (2016) indicates that SNS users in Indonesia are dominated by college students (89,7%). Therefore, several studies have shown interest in examining the relationship between SNS use and social adjustment of college students.

However, the results still vary. Some research (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011; Ellison, Wohn, Khan, & Fewins-Bliss, 2012; Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011) have supported that SNS gives benefit to college students' social adjustment. Gray, Vitak, Easton, and Ellison (2013) have proved that SNS is associated with better social adjustment to college with the mediation of social capital. On the same light, Yang and Brown (2015) had found that using SNS to communicate with on-campus friends had a positive relationship with college social adjustment.

On the other hand, some other research has shown different or even contradictory results. Kross et al. (2013) find that SNS use, or Facebook, in particular, is related to the

decrease of subjective well-being. Whereas, the level of subjective well-being is highly associated with college adjustment. Meanwhile, Yang and Brown (2015) proved that there was no relationship between using SNS to communicate with off-campus friends with college students' social adjustment. Instead, communication with strangers via SNS even had a negative association with college social adjustment. Meanwhile, Junco (2011) had found that the use of SNS did not impact social relationships of college students.

The different results may also be affected by the definition of social media use. Some research defines SNS use as the number of friends whom the user has (Gray et al., 2013; Kalpidou et al., 2011). Some others define it as the amount of time spent using the media (Ellison et al., 2011; Wohn & LaRose, 2014). Yang and Brown (2015) have pointed out the weaknesses in those kinds of definition. Based on their research on measuring the usefulness of the SNS as perceived by the user, in general, there are four SNS use patterns as seen by college students. Those are: seeking and sharing personal information (SSPI), gaming (GAME), maintaining social connections (MSC), and pursuing romantic or sexual relationships (PRSR). However, only MSC and PRSR have significantly had a relationship with college social adjustment (Yang & Brown, 2015).

This study wanted to examine the relationship between the four patterns of SNS use with social adjustment of college students in Indonesia. As suggested by Yang and Brown (2015), it is important to re-examine their model of the relationship between the perceived usefulness of SNS and college students' social

adjustment in different population. Therefore, in this study, we would examine it in the population of first-year students, or the freshmen, in Indonesia. Besides that, different from the previous research, rather than measuring only the perceived usefulness, we measured the actual habit of IG use of the students.

This study would use different SNS platform. While much previous research has chosen Facebook (Gray et al., 2013; Yang & Brown, 2015), this study would investigate Instagram (IG) as the social media platform. It is because IG is a social media that has emerged rapidly as a popular new medium, especially among the younger generation (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014). Instagram is also one of the most popular SNS used in Indonesia. In fact, according to research (Clement, 2019), Indonesia is in fourth place worldwide as the largest number of users of IG with 59 million people. Essentially, IG is a social media application that enables users to take photos or pictures and share them instantly with friends on different social (Ting, Ming, Run, & Choo, 2015). Considering the different nature of IG and Facebook, this study wanted to re-investigate the relationship between IG usage and the social adjustment of the first-year college students, especially in Indonesia. More specifically, this study would investigate whether all four patterns of IG use have a relationship with first-year college students' social adjustment.

METHODS

This study used a non-experimental, correlational study design to test the

relationship among variables in the real-life situation. Participants of this study were 138 first-year college students from Jakarta Greater Area. However, out of 138 participants, only data from 137 participants were used in the statistical analysis because one participant was not the first-year student. Among 137 students participated in this study, most participants were female students (78.1%). The age ranges from 16 to 20 years old ($M= 18.00$, $SD=.58$). The majority of participants (94.2%) were coming from public universities.

Participants responded to two measurement scales used in this study, which were the Instagram Perceived Use Scale and the Social Adjustment Scale. Aside from the two scales, we also asked participants' gender, age, type of college/university (public or private), city of origin, and living place as control variables.

The Instagram Perceived Use Scale (IPUS) is the Indonesian adaptation and modification version of Facebook Perceived Usefulness Scale created by Yang and Brown (2015). From 19 items available on the original scale, this study only used 14 items as items with low inter-item reliability were eliminated. In the IPUS, participants were asked to rate each item on a 4-point Likert scale (1=almost never to 4=very often). However, this study modified the original IPUS. Rather than sharing their opinion on the usefulness of the IG, each item of IPUS in this research required participants to rate how often they use IG for each dimensions measured. The dimensions were: Seeking and Sharing Personal Information/SSPI (four items), Gaming/GAME (two items), Maintaining Social Connections/MS (five items), and Pursuing

Romantic or Sexual Relationships/PRSR (three items). An example of an item in this scale was "I use Instagram for keeping in touch with college friends." Overall, the IPUS has good reliability index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .827$) with correlation scores of each item to total items (rit) range from .327 to .597. Respectively, each dimension also has an acceptable reliability index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .654; .659; .753; .802$).

The Social Adjustment Scale used in this study was taken from the social adjustment dimension of SACQ (Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire) created by Baker and Siryk (1986) and has been adapted to Indonesian language (Malay & Rifameutia, 2016). SACQ is a psychometrically proven and widely used scale in research regarding college adjustment (Choi, 2002; Yazeidjan et al., 2009; Lai, 2014). This adaptation of the social adjustment scale consists of 17 items. Participants responded by giving their rating on a 7-point Likert scale (1=highly unsuitable to me to 7=very suitable to me). An example of the statements was, "I feel satisfied with social life in the campus." In the agreement with the original adaptive version of SACQ (Malay &

Rifameutia, 2016), the social adjustment scale used in this study also has a high-reliability index (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.909$) with correlation scores of each item to total items (rit) range from .371 to .784.

After collecting the data, we tested our hypothesis using a Pearson's Product-moment and Multiple Linear Regression analysis with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows Version 22 as a statistical analysis tool.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics analysis, as shown in Table 1, showed that participants in this study had a quite high social adjustment ($M = 84.74$, $SD = 17.17$). Among four uses of Instagram, participants in this study rated maintaining social connections (MSC) as the function of Instagram they use most often ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .62$). Meanwhile, pursuing a romantic or sexual relationship (PRSR) served as the use that they most seldom utilize ($M = 1.94$, $SD = .84$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation among Social Adjustment and Instagram Use Patterns

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. IG Use-SSPI	2.69	.64				
2. IG Use-GAME	2.41	.92	.45 (p=.00)			
3. IG Use-MSC	3.12	.62	.58 (p=.00)	.36 (p=.00)		
4. IG Use-PRSR	1.94	.84	.37 (p=.00)	.31 (p=.00)	.14 (p=.09)	
5. Social Adjustment	80.69	16.55	.27 (p=.00)	.27 (p=.00)	.39 (p=.00)	.06 (p=.46)

In Table 1., we could also see the correlation among all variables measured.

Social adjustment was significantly related to three patterns of IG use. Those were Sharing

and Seeking Personal Information (SSPI) ($r=.27$, $p=.00$), Gaming (GAME) ($r=.26$, $p=.00$), and Maintaining Social Connection (MSC) ($r=.39$, $p=.00$). On the other hand, social adjustment and IG use for pursuing romantic and sexual relationships (PRSR) were not significantly correlated ($r=.06$, $p=.46$).

Based on the previous result, only three of four IG use patterns (SSPI, GAME, and PRSR) that were calculated in the multiple regression analysis for hypothesis testing. The

result of the multiple linear regression analysis, as shown in Table 2., indicated that there was a significant collective effect from IG use for SSPI, GAME, and MSC on first-year college students' social adjustment ($R^2= .173$, $F(3,133) = 9.25$, $p=.00$). Altogether, the three patterns of IG use could explain about 17.3% of the variance in the first-year college students' social adjustment. Additionally, I examined the influence of each of these IG use patterns.

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis Result

Variables	Social Adjustment				
	R^2	F	B	t	P
IG Use-SSPI	.173	9.25	.41	.15	.88
IG Use-GAME		($p=.00$)	2.56	1.60	.11
IG Use-MSC			8.88	3.40	.00

As presented in Table 2., when first-year college students use their IG for all of the patterns altogether, only MSC acted as a significant contributor on the variation of their social adjustment ($b=.52$, $t=3.40$, $p=.00$). Meanwhile, the contribution of the other two patterns of IG use (SSPR and GAME) to their social adjustment was not significant ($p>.05$). Therefore, for every upsurge in the frequency of using IG for maintaining a social connection (MSC), the students' social adjustment would also increase by .52 units. The rise happened when all other variables were held constant. Meanwhile, any changes in the frequency of using IG sharing and seeking personal Information (SSPI) and gaming (GAME) would not change the first-year college students' social adjustment significantly.

DISCUSSION

Even though unable to establish a firm causal relationship between variables, this study provided additional evidence to previous research. It proved that SNS use, more specifically IG use, could predict the first-year college students' social adjustment. Mainly, this research suggested that specific purposes of IG would help students feel more connected to the college. IG, as a form of SNS, could act as a medium for students to interact with their social networks. The networks could consist of people from their college or people from outside of the college. As pointed out by Yang and Brown (2015), developing new social life in the college while sustaining the social network they have previously had is an essential task of college students. Therefore, using IG could

relate to college students' social adjustment. However, not all use patterns in using IG would affect their social adjustment.

This study showed that first-year college students' social adjustment positively related to IG use when they use it for several patterns. Namely, the patterns were sharing and seeking personal information (SSPI), playing a game (GAME), and maintaining their social connection (MSC). Meanwhile, when students use IG to pursue romantic or sexual relationships (PRSR), IG use did not connect with their social adjustment. Furthermore, only IG use for MSC that had a significant influence on students' social adjustment. These results were partially different from the previous findings on Facebook as SNS platform (Yang and Brown, 2015). In their previous research, among four patterns of SNS use, MSC and PRSR had a relationship with social adjustment.

According to Yang and Brown (2015), MSC had a positive relationship with social adjustment because they would have to communicate with on-campus friends if they want to MSC. Similarly, this study had also shown that MSC could help increase first-year college students' social adjustment. When students utilize IG for MSC, they would connect to all of their social networks. They could communicate with friends and acquaintances, both from the same college they were attending and from the previous environment where they've lived. IG would also help them to stay connected to their closest people. As stated by Ellison, Wohn, Khan, and FewinsBliss (2012), SNS may help college students avoid drastic disruption of their existing networks by facilitating

communication with old friends. It may also help them establish a sense of belonging in college by facilitating communication and access to new people. Remaining connected with off-campus or pre-college associates and forming new relationships in college are both crucial to students' adaptation (Buote, Pancer, Pratt, et al., 2007; Swenson et al., 2008). These social networks of theirs could provide social support for them. Perceived social support is the social resources that individuals view to be available or offered to them when they need it (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). In the end, perceived social support would positively affect first-year students' adjustment.

Meanwhile, this study showed different from the findings of Yang and Brown (2015). In the previous study, PRSR had a negative relationship with social adjustment. However, the recent result demonstrated that IG use for PRSR had no significant association with students' social adjustment this research. Yang and Brown (2015) explained that PRSR related negatively to students' social adjustment in college because students would tend to use the SNS to communicate with strangers. In the end, this communication would disrupt students from adjusting to their social life at campus. In this research, PRSR was the IG usage pattern that first-year students most seldom utilized compared to other IG use patterns. As there is a possibility of first-year students do not use their IG for PRSR, their social adjustment may increase or decrease independently. Another alternative explanation is that, when students use their IG for PRSR activity, they would still communicate with their peers and friends, both on-campus and off-campus.

Other results from this study were also different from previous research (Yang & Brown, 2015) as this study showed that IG use for SSPI and GAME had a relationship with social adjustment. The last research suggested that these two activities had no connection with social adjustment because these usage patterns were more passive and one-way direction/not interactive (Pempek et al., 2009). However, these activities had a relationship with first-year students' social adjustment in this research. Even though there was no direct communication with friends in IG, these activities (SSPI and GAME) were still allowed some forms of interaction. In SSPI activities, when students showcase what was happening to them, the facility provided by IG enables their friends to post a comment or other reactions (such as "like/love"). In turn, this could give emotional support for the students. The same mechanism might also happen in IG use for GAME. When students play games in IG, they could showcase the picture of their result and received feedback from their friends in IG. They could also view and comment on another person's. Therefore, students may link with on-college friends who also play the same games. However, the relation of social adjustment with these two patterns of IG use was. Both modes had no significant influence on the students' social adjustment. Further research could explore more factors that may have more impact on students' social adjustment.

Future research should also explore how each pattern of IG use related to first-year college students' social adjustment. This investigation would give a better understanding of this topic. It could be conducted by involving one or more mediating or moderating variables,

such as perceived social support or social capital (Gray et al., 2013). We should perform a comparison of a different platform of SNS. For example, among the top three social media platforms in Indonesia: Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram (Pertiwi, 2019). As discussed in the previous section, the different results yielded by this study compared to the previous one may be caused by the nature of the SNS platform. Therefore, comparing different social media platforms might give meaningful insight. Besides that, involving a more extensive number of first-year college students in the research, with the various origin of college, would provide more representative results of Indonesian college students' adjustment, especially in the relationship with IG use.

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