

The Impact of Social Media on Self-Identity and Interaction Generation Z in Indonesia

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INFO ARTIKEL

Riwayat Artikel:

Received : 29-05-2026

Revised : 19-06-2026

Accepted : 25-06-2026

Keywords: Generation Z,
Impact of Social Media, Self-
Identity

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62335>

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of social media on the formation of self-identity and interaction patterns among Generation Z in Indonesia using a qualitative approach through a literature review. As a generation that has grown up in a digital ecosystem, Generation Z views social media as an integral part of daily life whether for communication, self-expression, or building a self-image. The findings reveal that social media plays a dual role. On one hand, it serves as a space for self-expression, self-exploration, expanding social networks, and a means of obtaining emotional support from online communities. On the other hand, social media also creates social pressure through a culture of comparison, unrealistic beauty standards, and a tendency to form identities that are out of sync with one's true self. Excessive use of social media also affects interaction patterns, particularly the decline in the quality of face-to-face communication, reduced empathy, and the rise of brief, instant, and symbolic communication patterns. Research findings also indicate that algorithms, curated content, filter bubbles, digital ads, and the influence of virtual communities are key factors shaping Generation Z's self-perception and interaction behaviors. In addition, heavy use of social media can have an impact on mental health, leading to anxiety, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction with oneself. Therefore, digital literacy, self-control, and educational guidance are necessary to ensure that Generation Z can use social media wisely and in a balanced way. In this way, social media can serve as a valuable tool without compromising the quality of one's self-identity and real-world social relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Mass communication in the 21st century has undergone a fundamental shift from the conventional unidirectional pattern to highly interactive mass communication. Mass communication in the digital era has undergone a significant transformation along with the dominance of social media as the main means of community interaction. Social media not only functions as a tool for disseminating information, but also as an arena for the formation and expression of public identity, both individuals and groups. From the perspective of communication psychology, these changes present important questions about how privately produced mass messages affect the structure of self-perception, social relationships, and patterns of everyday interactions.

Social media plays a dual role in identity formation, namely as a space for self-exploration as well as a source of social pressure. Studies of adolescents and young people have found that social media increases self-confidence through acceptance, support, and appreciation, but on the other hand it also triggers social comparisons, the pressure of aesthetic standards, and distortion of body image. Within the framework of mass communication psychology, this phenomenon shows that repeated exposure to mass content can cause complex cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects, ranging from changes in self-identity to psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression.

Generation Z, who were born between 1997 and 2012, are the first generation to grow up fully in the digital ecosystem and make social media an integral part of their daily lives. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube have not only served as a means of entertainment, but have become the primary means of communication that have replaced traditional face-to-face communication. This phenomenon presents a profound transformation in the psychological pattern of mass communication, where social media acts as a symbolic field where adolescents design and negotiate their social identities on an ongoing basis.

On the other hand, social media has also changed the nature and dynamics of mass interaction. If in conventional mass communication the flow of communication tends to be consistent, on social media communication becomes more interactive and participatory, so that individual identities are increasingly formed through responses, likes, comments, and belonging in virtual communities. In the context of identity formation, social media serves as a space of self-representation where Generation Z displays a consciously constructed identity according to the norms of a particular social group. Interactions with peers, influencers, and digital communities greatly influence how they view themselves and others, so the social identities that are formed are dynamic and often differ between the virtual world and real life. However, the culture of "likes" and "followers" fuels inauthentic imagery behaviors, where many individuals feel the need to conform to certain social standards, resulting in communication becoming less

honest and more self-image-oriented.

Reliance on social media often reduces the quality of face-to-face communication, where Generation Z tends to feel awkward or lack confidence when it comes to speaking in person. Short, informal communication patterns can also affect their ability to compose clear and formally structured sentences. This phenomenon emphasizes the urgency of digital literacy and critical awareness of the influence of social media in the formation of Generation Z's identity. In fact, positively social media allows Generation Z to connect with individuals from various cultural and geographical backgrounds, broaden their horizons as well as improve their digital communication skills.

Academically, social media raises the problem of identity distortion, where individuals often build idealistic identities that are not in harmony with their real selves-, resulting in conflicts between online and offline identities. This issue is interesting from the point of view of communication psychology because it relates to how mass messages (content, lifestyle, aesthetic standards) on social media affect self-perception, body image, and self-confidence, especially in adolescents and the younger generation. trapped in digital social life due to the excessive use of social media in living a variety of lifestyles. The presence of social media turns the private environment into a public environment. Generation Z does everything on social media to define and shape their identity. This has an impact on the formation of the Influence of Social Media on Self-Perception and Generation Z Identity Formation in Indonesia, Generation Z's self-concept and their self-confidence. They will spend time blaming themselves and comparing their experiences to those of others. A crisis of confidence in how a person interacts and communicates with others is influenced by their experiences with themselves.

A teenager's self-perception and self-identity can be influenced by the way they interact with social media. The use of social media must be used wisely by teenagers so that they are not exposed to the negative effects that can be caused. Therefore, in this article, we will discuss what influences social media has in shaping a person's perception and identity.

METHOD

This article applies qualitative research methods with a literature research approach. Special characteristics that are used as the basis for the development of research knowledge include: the researcher is directly confronted with the data or text that has been presented, not with field data or events through eyewitnesses; The researcher only accesses resources that are already available in the library or data that are ready-to-use; as well as the use of secondary data.

Literature research is carried out through literature review and analysis of relevant topics which are then combined. Literature search utilizes various sources such as

journals, books, dictionaries, documents, magazines, and other sources without the need to conduct field research. According to Miles and Huberman, there are three main data analysis techniques in writing this scientific paper. First, data reduction, which is the process of analysis to summarize, select the most important themes and patterns, and remove irrelevant information. Researchers only select information that is truly important to include in scientific papers.

Second, data display (data presentation), which is the preparation of data sets so that conclusions can be drawn. Qualitative data can be presented in the form of narrative or descriptive texts. Third, conclusion, namely the results of the analysis that can be used as a basis for acting. Qualitative research produces new findings, in the form of a description or explanation of something that was previously unclear, so that after the research it becomes clearer and more understood.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The impact of social media on self-perception and social interaction is a complex topic with results varying depending on the context and individual. On the positive side, social media strengthens identities and empowers individuals through platforms to voice values, interests, and beliefs. The platform also increases independence and self-confidence by providing opportunities to share achievements, experiences, and aspirations. However, social media also has a negative impact on shaping self-perception and identity. One of them is related to *body image* and *self-esteem*, where social media often displays certain beauty and lifestyle standards that affect self-perception and cause pressure on physical appearance, especially for Generation Z. In addition, social comparisons cause users to tend to compare themselves with others, which has the potential to cause feelings of inadequacy or jealousy.

Social media has changed from a private space to a public space for teenagers. Young people are experiencing a cultural shift where they use social media accounts to share personal and impersonal activities to create self-identity. Currently, people cannot be separated from social media. Instagram is becoming the most in-demand platform, especially for uploading and sharing photos with other users. Based on Cuponation data until April 2019, Instagram users in Indonesia reached 56 million people or 20.97% of the total population, ranking fourth largest in the world. The United States leads with 110 million users, followed by Brazil (66 million) and India (64 million). In Indonesia, the most Instagram users are 18-24 years old.

Social interaction patterns have undergone fundamental changes in the context of social media, as digital spaces replace or at least reduce the role of face-to-face interaction as absolute. Communication that was once limited in space, time, and limited networks can now take place anytime, anywhere, and with anyone connected online. These changes

not only change the way we communicate, but also the meaning of relationships, the quality of empathy, and the depth of social exchange between individuals.

Social media allows individuals to connect with a much wider social network, across cities, countries, and cultural backgrounds, thus patterns of social interaction. Research on social change in Indonesia shows that social media expands associations, facilitates the dissemination of information, and reduces cost and time barriers in maintaining relationships. However, this vast network is often a "broader but shallower" relationship, as interactions are dominated by short posts, quick comments, and likes, rather than in-depth dialogue.

Communication patterns in social media tend to be shorter, more symbolic, and asynchronous: chat messages, stories, comments, and emoji/meme reactions have largely replaced verbal and face-to-face conversations. A study of Generation Z found that social media increases the frequency of communication, but also shifts language patterns towards short, typically online, and reduces the practice of direct communication skills such as body language, intonation, and direct management of emotional situations. In this context, the pattern of social interaction changes from a contextual-kinesthetic- verbal to a more fragmented textual-visual-, so empathy and understanding of social nuances can be reduced.

Although social media strengthens long-distance relationships, a number of studies show that the intensity of face-to-face interactions tends to decrease as reliance on digital communication increases. In the Indonesian context, social media does facilitate the delivery and reception of information, but on the other hand, it weakens the intensity of direct communication in family, neighbors, and daily associations. This condition opens up the possibility of hidden social isolation: a person may have many "friends" on social media, but feel lonely because the remaining interactions are superficial and do not meet the needs of deep social affect. On the other hand, social media gives rise to new patterns of social interaction based on virtual communities formed from a certain common interest, profession, religious movement, or ideology. Interactions within groups, fanbases, or online communities are often so intense that they share information, support, and shared narratives so that patterns of social interaction increasingly shift from the physical-spatial circle to the symbolic-deological circle.

Overall, the pattern of social interaction is changing as social media offers unlimited access while simultaneously threatening the depth of relationships. On the one hand, social media strengthens long-distance ties, expands learning opportunities, and facilitates participation in social and religious activities; On the other hand, more empathetic and contextual face-to-face interactions are at risk of being eroded, so that social interaction patterns experience fragmentation between the digital world and the real world. Therefore, the challenge ahead is how to build a balance: using social media

to expand networks, without sacrificing the quality of in-person social interaction that is deep, empathetic, and physically present-based.

Social media also causes a change in identity for a person. The occurrence of digital identity construction, social media provides space for the construction of digital identities, which may be different from a person's offline identity. Social media can also have an impact on the risk of multiple identities. In some cases, individuals may have difficulty separating online and offline identities, leading to the risk of dual identity. The influence of social media on self-perception and identity formation is a complex and ever-evolving topic. Here are some aspects to consider: First, Social Exposure and Comparison, Social media influences self-perception through content that is often edited or engineered. People can feel depressed or inadequate when comparing themselves to the picture of life that others show on social media.

Second, Self-Concept and Self-Identity According to Brook, self-perception is a person's thoughts and feelings about himself, which are shaped by physical, social, and psychological factors. Social media helps shape self-concept by providing a platform to share and express interests, values, and identities. However, social pressure to "conform to the norm" can also affect identity formation. Third, Social Support and Interaction: Social media can support emotional well-being and self-identity through positive social interactions, peer support, and online communities. Conversely, social media can also create social pressure and *cyberbullying* that damages self-perception.

Fourth, the Bubble Filter Effect, which is that social media algorithms tend to display content that matches existing preferences and views (*filter bubble*), thus limiting the diversity of perspectives and influencing the way a person understands themselves in a broader context. Fifth, Advertising and Marketing Influence: Advertising and marketing through social media are the most common types of marketing communication in the digital age. Consumers are interested in buying because of the experience of using the product. Items and services in online stores or social media are more accessible at any time, often free, and make it easier to find customer needs. Companies use social media to market products, and constant exposure to certain body images or lifestyles can affect self-perception as well as shape identity. Sixth, Mental Health is the result of the growth, development, and maturity of individuals who accept responsibility, find adjustments, as well as participate in maintaining social rules. Overuse and negative interactions on social media can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and dissatisfaction. Social media is usually used to foster good feelings, but without realizing it, it can backfire and cause bad things, affecting users' behavior and mental health. Seventh, Personal Control: Social media users play a role in managing and controlling the influence of social media on themselves. Awareness of its impact and the ability to filter information help maintain a positive self-perception. The influence of social media

varies between individuals depending on factors such as personality, offline social support, and self-awareness. Further research and personal awareness are required.

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CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION

Social media has a huge influence on the formation of self-identity and interaction patterns of Generation Z. On the one hand, social media provides space for individuals to express themselves, build personal image, expand social relationships, and gain support from the digital environment they follow. The presence of social media also allows Generation Z to participate in various virtual communities that can reinforce their sense of belonging and enrich their social experiences. However, on the other hand, social media also brings consequences that cannot be ignored. Exposure to curated content, unrealistic beauty standards, and a culture of social comparison can negatively affect self-perception and lower self-confidence. In addition, interaction patterns that are increasingly shorter, instantaneous, and based on digital responses tend to reduce the depth of face-to-face communication, so the quality of social relationships can shift. In certain contexts, this condition also has the potential to cause psychological distress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with oneself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank our faculty members from the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication at UIN Walisongo Semarang for their academic support in the completion of this research.

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