

ADOLESCENT DIGITAL LITERACY AND ETHICS

Rafly Aulia Lubis^{1*}, Risky Sinaga², Aan Fauza³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Asahan

E-mail: ¹⁾@gmail.com,

Abstract

Language is a means of communication among individuals. Along with the development of social media, aspects of communication using language are increasingly diverse. This diversity appears according to general agreement in community communication patterns. The tendency to produce new terms is very possible where communities have diverse backgrounds, both educational, economic, family and so on, as factors that produce new languages. This study uses a qualitative approach that presents research on the use of language in social media. The finding shows that new media and adolescence are both seen as something that is taking shape. The instability of these two things has a tendency to be mutually beneficial or even detrimental on the one hand. Early awareness of the characteristics of the new digital ethical world media in relation to adolescent users is expected to reduce the negative excesses of the impact it causes. Hence, literacy and ethics towards new media are the keys for teenagers to be able to enrich their identities and maintain their privacy.

Keywords: Adolescent, Social Media Development, Digital Literacy, Ethic

1. INTRODUCTION

This digital age has brought about an evolution in media technology, which, along with the development of increasingly advanced technology, has resulted in the younger generation becoming increasingly spoiled by the rapid development of technological advances that make it easier and faster to access technology and information. When confronted with the global competition map, the younger generation must be well-prepared in terms of knowledge of telecommunications innovations and their application in various fields.

As well as bringing us closer together, technology also separates us. In fact, technology was originally designed to make it easier for humans to meet all of their demands (Ngafifi, 2014). Examples include telephones that let us to hear the voices of people across the world, or web-based chats that let us "speak" without making a sound. As a result, we find it difficult to picture a world without media, technology, and accidental communication. This serves as another proof that technology truly does enable us to do anything. We can gain a great deal, but we can also incur a great deal of loss.

In the twenty-first century, often known as the digital era, science and technology are becoming increasingly vital in all spheres of existence. Where humans no longer need to manually operate the majority of the instruments they use on a daily basis (Sujana & Rachmatin, 2019). The introduction of novel innovations such as e-commerce, e-learning, online shopping, and other cyber lifestyles. This raises concerns about the future of children and adolescents who grow up surrounded by such exciting electronic. According to Livingstone (2002), there are numerous speculations about this phenomenon, including the

'digital generation,' youngsters in the 'information age,' 'computer nerds,' 'innocent on the Internet,' the 'digital divide,' and 'addicted surfers' (Kurnia, 2020).

Diversity, disagreement, and healthy debate can all be fostered, in the eyes of optimists, through democratic involvement and community participation that promotes creativity, self-expression, and an endless supply of knowledge (Livingstone, 2002). This, of course, creates both euphoria and worry at the same time. Eagerness to learn more about our surroundings and the world around us, as we are given the chance to see more and learn more. The "happiness" of technology becoming more widely available. However, worries about negative things also haunt at the same time.

The influence of technical advancements on many facets of life, including education, lifestyle, family, consumerism, and even culture. A person can live a private and public life concurrently using technology. While social media allows for the expression of emotions, not everything can be shared publicly. This perspective causes adolescents to get addicted to social media in comparison to expressing their feelings to family, friends, and others in their immediate circle (Herlina et al., 2018).

Thus, this article will examine adolescent digital literacy and ethics, where current use of digital technology has both positive and negative effects on adolescents. As a response, teenagers must be cautious about the consequences of digital technology usage. As for other objectives, such as expanding our understanding and awareness of the impact of digital youth on society, which is expected to be beneficial.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive study using qualitative methods. According to Sugiyono (2013), qualitative methods are research methods based on the philosophy of postpositivist. The approach used in this research is pragmatics which focuses on description; The data collected is in the form of words in sentences and article. In addition, this article discusses digital literacy and ethics of adolescents, especially for adolescents in this digital era, and also the positive and negative impacts of digital literacy and ethics adolescents.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the ethical issues above, the author will only discuss two major themes, identity and privacy. These two things are considered to be the basis for youth literacy and ethics when dealing with new media.

3.1. Identity

Adolescence is a time when one seeks or, more properly, forms one's identity. Erikson emphasizes in (Desmita, 2008) that one of the developmental objectives during adolescence is to resolve the identity crisis, therefore it is hoped that by the conclusion of adolescence, a stable self-identity will be developed. Adolescents who succeed in establishing their identity will have a clear understanding of themselves. Failure to address this issue, on the other hand, will threaten the future of youth. As a consequence, the selection of imitation models in adolescents will be a predictor of the teenager's success in developing their identity.

Self-expression, self-reflection, and feedback from others aid in exploration and identity construction (James, 2009). Teenagers express themselves in a variety of ways in the real world. They strive to notify those around them about the kind of identity they want to develop through the way they dress, their haircut and hair color, and their activities. This form of identification, however, cannot be freely expressed. Boundaries are established by norms, regulations, and religions. Boys who enjoy dancing may be unable to express their feelings due to their parents' prohibition, which states that dancing is just for girls.

Adolescent identity exploration can take place in a "safe space" provided by new media. According to Turkle in James (2009), the internet offers a productive arena for adolescents to free themselves from physical, social, and economic limitations in the actual world; individuals can experiment with numerous identities in a "low risk" environment. Adolescents can use unique names, write in their own style, and express themselves in ways that they cannot in the real world. The Internet provides additional avenues for self-expression and room for introspection (James, 2009).

Feedback from other people in the digital space can help shape the identity of teenagers. If in the real world, they only get feedback from those closest to them, on the internet, feedback can come from many people, who are their digital followers or friends. From this feedback, adolescents can see how other people react, positive or negative and can easily change decisions based on that feedback. As a result, online feedback also becomes a validation of one's identity (Japelidi, 2019). Human development occurs in a social context and is supported by feedback that helps individuals unite their self-conceptions with societal approval of themselves (Stern in (James, 2009)).

Freedom of self-expression with various identities does not always bring positive effects. Differences in identity that exist in the online and real world can confuse people who know our identity in the real world. Identity games can deceive and lead "online friends" to wrong conclusions about our true identities. For a teenager, he will find two different identities and find it difficult to combine the two. Although evidence shows that most teenagers use online identities that reflect key elements of their real identities (Huffaker in James, 2009), there will still be differences between the two. According to Erikson in James, (2009), the main goal in the exploration of adolescent identity is a coherent, unified, rather than a fragmented set of identities. Dependence on other people's feedback can also reduce the confidence of adolescents to make their own decisions.

Without the new media, self-identity is already something complex. Adolescence is the most vulnerable period in the stages of individual development. New media provide "assistance" in the formation of adolescent identity. Such assistance should be used wisely to avoid unnecessary things. Understanding of the use of multiple identities offered by new media becomes something useful for teenagers. Without a deep understanding of the various selves that are expressed virtually, we cannot use our experiences to enrich our real identities (Turkle in (James, 2009)).

3.2. Privacy

Privacy refers to how one's personal data and information about others are handled in a social context (James, 2009). When identity is a collection of various information about a person, then privacy determines which information should be shown and which is hidden. Privacy is related to self-disclosure, the self-disclosure that a person has, what a person will

communicate about himself to others. Self-disclosure includes: values and beliefs, behavior, and self-quality (DeVito, 2001).

Privacy rights that are often mentioned include a person's financial condition, health/medical records, and relationships with other people (James, 2009), where generally only the closest people, groups are considered entitled to obtain information disclosure. This causes the issue of privacy on the internet to be important. Privacy settings are things that must be considered when someone wants to "live" in the digital world. When sites provide a space to present identity, one must determine what information will be communicated and be aware of the effects of disclosure of that information in cyberspace. For example, if someone includes the year of birth or relationship status (single/in relationship/it's complicated), hence the person concerned must be ready to receive various views or responses from others who access the information.

For many teenagers, privacy is not about hiding personal information but more about managing it carefully over what is shared, how it is presented, and who has access to it (Woo in (James, 2009)). Likewise, this is accommodated by privacy settings, such as on Facebook, where we can determine, not only what information we want to show, but also who can access that information. For example, photos, notes, or statuses that are set to be seen only by certain people. This can not only control someone's privacy, but also regulate what their privacy looks like.

Many adolescents have their own assumptions about the public from their digital life. Weber in James (2000) says that:

"Public is the new private: young people often realize that their blogs and homepages are public and accessible, but they trust that only their peers are interested enough to view them. Adults are supposed to know where they are not welcome and act accordingly."

The degree of openness to one's privacy is seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the feedback obtained from the information communicated to others can lead to self-confidence or a solution to a problem (Wijayanto et al., 2019). On the other hand, the danger of private information posted in cyberspace can make our real life possible

Privacy does not always relate to information about yourself, but also with other people. The tag feature on Facebook allows us to show photo/note content to the public. The speed and ease of sharing information like this often disturbs other people's privacy. And when a photo has been uploaded, we can be sure that we can no longer control its accessibility.

"We need to be close, but not too close, distant but not too distant", as Silverstone said (James, 2009). By setting the right distance between oneself and the public one can maintain one's privacy while maintaining openness. A wise decision to determine what information will be communicated can make teenagers avoid fatal problems that may be caused. This online self-disclosure can improve adolescent privacy ethics by training them to present themselves and information about their close people responsibly (de Abreu, 2011).

3.3. Digital Adolescent

"Babies with superpower" is a call for teenagers who have the ability and activities with new digital media who do not fully understand the meaning and effects of their actions.

3.3.1. Teen Period

The word "adolescence" describes a stage of development between childhood and adulthood or about 12-21 years (Desmita, 2008), which is characterized by general physical

changes as well as cognitive and social development. According to Mussen, adolescence is a period of life in which the capacity to acquire and use knowledge efficiently reaches its peak (Desmita, 2008).

Moreover, Piaget explained that "Psychologically, adolescence is the age where individuals integrate with adult society, the age when children no longer feel below the level of older people, but are on the same level, at least in terms of rights, and transformation. The intellectual characteristics peculiar to this adolescent way of thinking enable it to achieve integration in adult social relationships, which is in fact a common feature of this period of development." (Elizabeth, 2016).

Youth or adolescents are considered by experts as a universal social category. Adolescence is understood as a culturally constructed relative concept (Osgerby, 2020). Further, Sheila Allen in Osgerby (2020) says that:

"Age relations (including youth) are part of the economic relations and the political and ideological structure in which they take place. It is not the relations between 4 ages which explain the changes or stability in society, but changes in societies which explain the relation between ages"

A new analysis of the relationship between youth and ethnic identity. Les Black, Paul Gilroy, and Sanjay Sharma (Osgerby, 2004) have explored the relationship between class structure and racism in late modern society, and the strategies by which adolescents negotiate their identities not only regarding differences in age, gender, and social class, but also through the discourse of ethnicity and race. Teenagers basically have no clear place. They are not included in the child category, but also not included in the adult or old category. Adolescents are still not able to master their physical and psychological functions. From this perspective, they still belong to the group of children, where they still find their place in society (Monks, 1982).

Research by Trommsdoff has shown how support and social interaction that is fostered in the family will have a very important influence on the formation of a teenager's future orientation, especially in fostering an optimistic attitude in looking at his future (Desmita, 2008).

Adolescents are a distinct and significant cultural group, as a market segment, a subculture and who are leading the way in the use of new media. Families with children usually have more communication technology media. Adolescents are the point at which they seek to establish identities, to form social groups, and to negotiate cultural meanings that they have. Thus, among all, the media is the focal point (Osgerby, 2004). Teenagers become potential commodification objects for media producers who have transgenerational marketing goals (Plaisance, 2013).

3.3.2. Teenagers and media users

The study entitled "Digital Citizenship Safety among Children and Adolescents in Indonesia" aims to provide important information about the ways in which this age group uses social media and digital technology, their motivations for using media, these communications, and the potential risks they face in the digital world (Kominfo, 2014). At least 30 million children and adolescents in Indonesia are internet users, and digital media is currently the main choice of communication channel they use. The results of the study found that 80 percent of respondents surveyed were internet users, with evidence of a strong digital divide between those living in urban areas and being more affluent in Indonesia, and those

living in rural (and less prosperous) areas. The use of social and digital media is an integral part of the daily lives of young Indonesians. The study found that 98 percent of the children and adolescents surveyed knew about the internet and that 79.5 percent of them were internet users. Children and adolescents have three main motivations for accessing the internet: to search for information, to connect with friends (old and new) and for entertainment. The search for information that is done is often driven by school assignments, while the use of social media and entertainment content is driven by personal needs. In addition, regarding privacy issues, in general this study found that there are many children and adolescents who provide personal information such as home addresses, telephone numbers, or school addresses (Kominfo, 2014).

Further, as explained by Lasswell in Osgerby (2004) provides a metaphor for contemporary thinking about media:

1. As a conduit. To transmit a certain meaning. This metaphor is often behind the public's attention to unwanted or harmful content. Placing the audience at the last point of the influence process.
2. As a language. Technologists and semioticians will ask about media channels, code or 'grammar', which rhetoricians consider a persuasive effect.
3. As an environment. This raises questions about the possible interactions, relationships and rituals of different media, with media being seen as framing social contexts for communicating and transmitting meaning.

3.3.3. New media

The word “new media” appeared to express the rapid development of world media and communication at the end of the 1980s. The media in question is always in a state of technological, institutional, and cultural change, never ending. Following are the circumstances of social, economic, and cultural change in which new media are associated (Lister et al., 2009):

- a. The change from modernity to postmodernity. Attempts to characterize the depth and social change in society and the economy from the 1960s onwards, correlated with cultural change. In aesthetic and economic terms, new media are usually seen as a sign of this kind of change.
- b. Intensify the process of globalization. Combining countries and their boundaries at the level of trade, organization, customs and culture, identity and belief, where new media are seen as contributing elements.
- c. A replacement, in the Western world, for the industrial age with the 'post-industrial' information age. A turnover of employees, expertise, investment and profits, in the production of materials for service and information industries where the use of new media is seen as promising.

New media is used to refer to the following (Lister et al., 2009):

- a. New textual experiences: new genres and forms of text, entertainment, and media consumption patterns (computer games, simulations, special effects cinema).
- b. New ways to represent the world: media that are not always clearly defined, offer new representational possibilities and experiences (virtual environments, interactive multimedia).

- c. The new relationship between subjects (users and consumers) and media technology: changes in the use and acceptance of images and communication media in everyday life, and in the meanings placed on media technology.
- d. New experiences in relation to personification, identity, and community: changes in social and personal experiences in time, space, and place (on a global and local scale) that have implications for the way we experience ourselves and our place in the world.
- e. A new conception of the relationship of the biological body to media technology: the challenge of accepting the distinction between human and non, natural and technological, body and (media as) technological surrogates, real and virtual.
- f. New patterns in organization and production: wider regulation and integration in media culture, industry, economy, access, ownership, control, and regulation.

3.4. New Media Literacy

It is undeniable that this new media is more familiar to young people than parents or teachers. Where prohibiting is no longer an option. Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness to be able to carry out critical dialogue in order to help them (teenagers) to better understand the meaning of their digital experience (Plaisance, 2013).

However, there are groups who see that adolescents can acquire media literacy without help from others. They have mastered the complex knowledge of 9 new media and are still doing social practices. According to Jenkins (2009) there are three weaknesses of this view:

- 1. Gap participation. All youth do not have equal access to new media technologies and opportunities to participate in them.
- 2. Transparency problems. Adolescents are assumed to actively reflect on their media experiences and can communicate what they learn from their participation.
- 3. The ethical challenge. Adolescents are assumed to be able to develop, on their own, ethical norms to deal with complex and diverse social environments.

Youth literacy on new media must begin with an emphasis on these three things. There are several stages in new media literacy (Jenkins, 2009):

- 1. Print media cultural literacy.

At least teenagers have the ability to write and read in print media. Writing blogs, journals, expressing opinions and replying to other people's comments are the initial ways to hone skills in print culture. Conventional media literacy becomes a "sense of sight" for new media consumption.

- 2. Research ability.

The ability to be able to access books, articles, combine and analyze information, distinguish between facts and opinions, build arguments is a second skill that must be possessed. The world is presented to us in language, symbols that have not only first-order meaning. The ability to conduct research makes teenagers have analytical competence, making them not only able to read but also "investigate" something.

- 3. Technical expertise.

Include digital media skills such as logging on, search, editing and technical knowledge related to new media operations. Knowledge of technicalities should not be taken for granted. The rapid development of technology leads to a rapid adaptation of media operational capabilities as well. High mastery of this technical ability should also

be complemented by knowledge of the terms of service that are usually owned by new media, such as Facebook.

4. Media studies.

Knowledge of how the media operates, media economy, politics, and all the aspects that accompany it are also important for youth literacy. In this regard, we are treated to media that has been constructed by the communicator. The world is presented to us in perceptions that have been structured according to the interests of the owners of capital. Therefore, it takes the ability to be able to position themselves as a message producer that can make teenagers more aware of the media they consume.

These four abilities form the foundation of literacy, which youngsters must grasp as they connect and communicate with new media. Given the significance of all this, media literacy instruction should be included in the school curriculum or through a media literacy workshop.

3.5. Ethical Mind

Ethical Mind or the ability to think for others for the common good. Thinking about the mind as a set of cognitive abilities, this helps us to distinguish it from the other four thoughts that we need to explore to be successful as individuals, communities, and humans (Gardnes, 2007), while the ethical mind needs to be focused, such as:

1. Discipline mind. The abilities we get from school. Over time, we become experts in more than one field, management, music, and others.
2. Synthesizing mind. A mind that can survey multiple sources, determine what is important and worthy of attention and relate the information coherently.
3. Creating minds. Generate some new idea, innovation, invention, or take a risk.
4. Respectful mind. An open mind that seeks to understand and form relationships with others. People with a respectful mind feel comfortable opening up to different types of people.
5. Ethical mind. A wider respect for others into more abstract things.

Thus, the Ethical mind focuses more on community than the other four minds. Therefore, the development of an ethical mind should be implemented through the following:

1. Starting at home. Where children see whether their parents are proud of what they are doing, whether they are cheating, and so on. Children also absorb the religious and political values of their parents.
2. Playmates. When children start to grow up, their playmates have a big effect.
3. Environment. Refers to how the environment treats its citizens. Are young people and old people being cared for? Are there cultural and social activities to learn about and participate in? (Gardnes, 2007))

Even though a teenager has grown up with strong ethical values, the bad behavior of others can still affect them. This shows that ethics is something that must be continuously studied and maintained.

In this regard, discussions of ethics in new digital media are still very rare. As a result, this false barrier of new media leads to an ethical gray area. Some outlines regarding digital

media ethics include the nature of personal identity formed online, one's privacy in an environment where various kinds of information can be obtained, the meaning of authorship in a space where various anonymous contributors produce knowledge, intellectual status and other forms of accessible property by the public at large, the way in which individuals (known or not) interact and treat others in cyberspace, and the credibility and trustworthiness of individuals, organizations, and the impact that the internet usually has (James, 2009; Prabowo, 2019).

4. CONCLUSION

Both new media and adolescence are viewed as things that are just beginning to take shape. When these two items are unstable, they have a tendency to be mutually useful or even damaging to one another on the one hand. It is anticipated that early awareness of the characteristics of new digital ethical world media in connection to adolescent users would help to decrease the negative excesses of the impact it has on their lives. Adolescents' ability to enrich their identities while maintaining their privacy is dependent on their ability to read and understand new media and to apply ethical principles to it.

REFERENCES

- de Abreu, B. S. (2011). *Media Literacy, Social Networking, and the Web 2.0 Environment for the K-12 Educator. Minding the Media: Critical Issues for Learning and Teaching. Volume 4*. ERIC.
- Desmita. (2008). *Psikologi Perkembangan Peserta Didik*. PT Remaja Rosda Karya.
- DeVito, J. A. (2001). *The interpersonal communication book*. Longman Publishing Group.
- Elizabeth, B. (2016). *Psikologi Perkembangan: Suatu pendekatan sepanjang rentang kehidupan*.
- Gardnes, H. (2007). *Different Voice: The Ethical Mind*. Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Herlina, D., Setiawan, B., & Adikara, G. J. (2018). *Digital Parenting: Mendidik Anak di Era Digital*. Yogyakarta: Samudra Biru.
- James, C. (2009). *Young people, ethics, and the new digital media: A synthesis from the GoodPlay Project*. The MIT Press.
- Jaringan Pegiat Literasi Digital (Japelidi). (2019). *Pemetaan Literasi Digital Masyarakat Indonesia 2019. Paper dipresentasikan pada Seminar Nasional Seminar Nasional Literasi Digital Dalam Membangun Perdamaian dan Peradaban Dunia. Diselenggarakan oleh ComTC UIN Sunan Kalijaga*.
- Jenkins, H. (2009). *Confronting The Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. MacArthur Foundation.
- Kominfo. (2014). *Riset Kominfo dan UNICEF Mengenai Perilaku Anak dan Remaja Dalam Menggunakan Internet*.
https://kominfo.go.id/index.php/content/detail/3834/Siaran+Pers+No.+17-PIH-KOMINFO-2-2014+tentang+Riset+Kominfo+dan+UNICEF+Mengenai+Perilaku+Anak+dan+Remaja+Dalam+Menggunakan+Internet+/0/siaran_pers

- Kurnia, N. (2020). WhatsApp Group and Digital Literacy Among Indonesia Women. *Yogyakarta: Prodi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi Fisipol UGM*.
- Lister, M., Dovey, J., Giddings, S., Grant, I., & Kelly, K. (2009). *New Media: a critical introduction 2nd Edition*.
- Livingstone, S. (2002). *Young people and new media: Childhood and the changing media environment*.
- Ngafifi, M. (2014). Kemajuan teknologi dan pola hidup manusia dalam perspektif sosial budaya. *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan: Fondasi Dan Aplikasi*, 2(1).
- Osgerby, B. (2020). *Youth culture and the media: Global perspectives*. Routledge.
- Plaisance, P. L. (2013). Virtue Ethics and Digital 'Flourishing': An Application of Philippa Foot to Life Online. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality*, 28(2), 91–102. <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1080/08900523.2013.792691>
- Prabowo, H. (2019). *Banjir Kasus Pasal Karet UU ITE Sepanjang 2019*. <https://tirto.id/banjir-kasus-pasal-karet-uu-ite-sepanjang-2019-eo4V>
- Sugiyono, D. (2013). *Metode penelitian pendidikan pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif dan R&D*.
- Sujana, A., & Rachmatin, D. (2019). Literasi digital abad 21 bagi mahasiswa PGSD: apa, mengapa, dan bagaimana. *Current Research in Education: Conference Series Journal*, 1(1), 3–13.
- Wijayanto, X. A., Fitriyani, L. R., & Nurhajati, L. (2019). *Mencegah dan Mengatasi Bullying di Dunia Digital*. Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (LPPM) LSPR.