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Correlation of affiliation needs with intensity of using Facebook in young adulthood

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Abstract

Facebook is geared towards relationship building with others, so individuals who have a high level of need for affiliation, will tend to use it more frequently. This research sets out to examine the correlation between affiliation needs with the intensity of using Facebook in young adulthood. The research uses the quantitative approach and the data was collected using purposive sampling of 122 people. The data collection instrument was a scale of affiliation needs and the scale of intensity of using Facebook. Analysis of the data was done based on descriptive analysis and product moment correlation. Based on the results of correlation between variables, the correlation between variables of affiliation needs with intensity of using Facebook is 0.868 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ (0.05) which demonstrates the significant relationship between affiliation needs with intensity of using Facebook.

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Keywords: Affiliation needs; intensity of using Facebook; young adulthood.

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1. Introduction

The internet has emerged as one of the most popular communication media for all ages and is the most widely used tool for socializing at the moment. Bargh and McKenna (2004) state that communicating with others via the internet can help maintain close relationships with family and friends. Internet-based communication is also called Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) (Thurlow et al., 2004).

Currently, many online media companies promote CMC, as a form of social media to the general public, such as Yahoo, Google, Hotmail, MSN, Friendster, My Space, Facebook, Kaskus, CNN, Gmail, MIRC, Wikipedia, Twitter and others. One example of this form of social media communication or CMC that has become very popular today worldwide, is the social networking site, Facebook. Facebook was designed by Mark Zuckerberg to keep in touch with fellow students in Harvard University in 2004 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The advent of Facebook recorded 21 million users (Needham & Company, 2007). In Indonesia, as much as 47.96182 million people use Facebook, making Indonesia among the top four countries in the world to most frequently use Facebook with the percentage of males at 59.1% (28.42646 million users) and 40.9% of women (19.68732 million users) (www.checkfacebook.com).

Research conducted by Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, and Espinoza (2008) states that today, many adults are starting to use social networks to build intimacy and fulfill affiliation needs by connecting, and reconnecting with friends and family members. This tendency is reinforced by social networking sites such as Facebook often requiring users to create web pages containing information about themselves and information that want to share with other people (Clark & Roberts, 2010). By uploading information, both current and past about themselves, they create a "space" for themselves where they find validation by other like-minded people.

Survey results of studies undertaken by several universities in the US Midwest found that 91% of participants used the website *facebook.com* (Wiley & Sisson, 2006). This shows that prevalence of CMC via Facebook among the general population. Spending time on social networking sites has become so much a part of daily activities among mostly young adults. According to a survey by Nielsen Telecom Practice (Kristo, 2011), five of the most widely performed activities by Facebook users in Indonesia are; sending messages to friends as much as 91%; profile editing as much as 91%; exploring a friend or stranger's profile as much as 86%; updating their status or uploading something on the wall as much as 84%; and uploading photos as much as 79%. The ease of use

facilitates such activities and leads to its users using the internet to open Facebook almost every day.

Facebook has become a part and parcel of everyday life for most people. Williams and Skoric (2007) have studied the tendency of using Facebook and found that a high tendency to use Facebook is associated with age, gender, consumption patterns, behaviors, and relationships between individuals. Through Facebook, people can find out almost everything about a person like the name, date of birth, facial image, address, occupation, and many other personal details like schools studied in, favourite movies and books and so.

The high level of usage of Facebook is caused by certain motivations. The first is the reception by a group of "friends" or fellow users, and the second is interpersonal feedback (comments) to the user himself, where when one gets comments from others about what was said on Facebook, the person will reply to these comments and so on, causing the intensity of the individual using the Facebook to increase (Simatupang, 2011). Facebook utilization refers to the level of intensity of engaging in the various activities in Facebook with more time being spent by the individual on these activities.

Intensity refers to the frequency of performing a certain activity which is usually based on a sense of fun and enjoyment that comes when engaging in such activities. The more often one opens Facebook, the more friends one can make in one's social interactions. One US study reported that people used Facebook for an average of 10 to 30 minutes every day (Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007) while another study found that about half of adolescents between the ages of 12- 17 logging into social networking sites every day: 22% log in to social networking sites several times per day, 26% once a day, 17% three to five days per week, 15% two days per week, and only 20% every few weeks (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Other research conducted by Stern and Taylor (2007) states 49% of Facebook users log in approximately 10 minutes each day, 21% of users between 30-60 minutes each day, approximately 11% of users between 1-2 hours a day while 3% of users use Facebook more than 2 hours a day. These findings reveal the prevalence of and engagement in Facebook by young people.

The availability of Facebook seems to have tapped into the basic human need to be able to socialize with others, revealing themselves virtually to people in the surrounding community. Within the bounds of Facebook, individuals can easily and freely express anything about themselves without ever having to come face-to-face with that other person, which provides a kind

of safe space to say or do anything without having to worry about the consequences. Instant celebrity status is conferred on a person who posts some novel or daring activity that he or she has participated in, by posting up photos of themselves engaged in such activities and obtaining responses from the Facebook community.

Socialization is indeed a basic human need. The sense of socialization itself can be constituted by various motives, namely the urge to find a friend, or even a spouse. McClelland (cited in Munandar, 2006) explains that these socialization needs are part of the affiliation motive. The affiliation motive pushes us to be friendly and warm in trying to relate to others, to keep relations as amicable as possible. According to McClelland (cited in Munandar, 2006), the behavior of seeking friends and relationships is wired in the need to co-exist with others in a community. Affiliation needs refers to the need for warmth and support in relation to others and the need to engage in direct behavior to form intimate relationships with others. Affiliation needs are grounded in the desire to establish and maintain rewarding interpersonal relationships.

Swenson (2000) adds that the need for affiliation is reflected in behavior directed at others. Lestiana (2007) argues that the need for affiliation encourages the forming of social relationships based on loyalty, affection, and empathy. This phenomenon can be deduced from two things: social comparison and emotional support. In terms of social comparison, people need others as a standard for evaluating behavior, while emotional support in relationships comes in the form of attention and affection from others. Relationships can provide other additional rewards; firstly, in the form of closeness or intimacy, friendship, affection, communication, and love; secondly, others can provide various types of attention to the form of awards, recognition, status, and so on. The highly motivated need for affiliation of early adulthood will be very useful for individual social development because it is in this period that the task of early adult social development with regard to seeking out a job or spouse is initiated (Sarwono, 1995).

In this digital age, where so much communication occurs in cyberspace, and with the proliferation of CMC tools like Facebook, young adults can meet their affiliation needs very easily as Facebook provides user-friendly features to build relationships with others. For those having a high level of affiliation, Facebook satisfies this need with the added advantage of not having to meet the others in person. For those having a high level of affiliation, their intensity and duration of using Facebook needs tend to be more greater and longer.

In Facebook, forming interpersonal relationships can be done by way of status updates, looking for and confirming friendship. Maintaining interpersonal relationships on Facebook through updating status, to exchanging comments with other Facebook users brings with it its own reward, namely, providing a positive feeling associated with a sense of intimacy. Once intimacy has been established, the individuals involved will pay closer attention when one party divulges information of a personal nature, thus forming a sense of mutual trust with each other, which are all part of affiliation needs (Hill, 1987).

2. Method

For this study, data was collected using the survey method. Sample selection was done through non-probability sampling method. The criteria for sample selection was young adult male or female who was an active internet user, particularly of Facebook for more than 1 year.

Eighteen items were formulated for this study to assess intensity of Facebook usage, building upon previous work by Ellison et al. (2007). The items asked about the number of friends a user had, the length of time users spent accessing Facebook, emotional connection between users with Facebook, the extent to which Facebook had become a part of the user's daily activities, and making new friends in Facebook.

The questionnaire for affiliation need was based on the work of McClelland (Munandar 2006), touched on aspects like the user preferred being with others rather than alone, like to often interact with other people, desired to be liked and accepted by others, desired to please others, demonstrate and maintain loyalty towards friends, and seeking approval and agreement of others.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of correlation between variables, the correlation between variables Affiliate with intensity of using Facebook is $R = 0.868$ (see Table 1 Model summary and Table 2 Anova) with a significance level of $p = 0.000 (<0.05)$. This shows there is indeed a significant relationship between the variables Affiliate with intensity of using Facebook.

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,868 ^a	,754	,752	8,598

a. Predictors: (Constant), Need of Affiliation

Table 2. Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.	Sig.
Regressive	27169,659	,754	27169,659	367,519	,000 ^a
Residual	8871,268		73,927		
Total	36040,926				

a. Predictors: (Constant), Need Of Affiliation

b. Dependent Variable: Intensity

The results also obtained a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.754. This demonstrates the contribution of affiliate on the intensity needs to access Facebook by 75.4%, while the remaining 24.6% were likely influenced by other factors not examined, for example, external factors or environmental factors and factors in the personality of the individual.

4. Conclusions and Implications

The results show a very significant positive relationship between the need for affiliation with the intensity of using Facebook in young adulthood. This proves that individuals, especially young adults, with high need for affiliation attempt to create friendly relations with other people through the medium of Facebook.

Comments addressed to friends of friends will trigger a response and communication will take place on a reciprocal basis, so affects intensity of the usage of Facebook. The desire to be accepted and recognised is fed by the responses that an individual gets when interacting on Facebook and this leads to more frequent and lengthier duration of usage of Facebook. Besides, the reciprocal relationship created when giving comments, if maintained will provide its own reward, namely, providing a positive feeling associated with intimacy.

People who have a high affiliation motive would have an incentive to make connections with other people, because of the desire to be liked. In attempting to create this mutually-feel good relationship, each person will try to adjust to one another. This can be a positive factor for social development of the young adult, especially in terms of job seeking and building interpersonal relationships.

To maintain a vibrant, extensive network of friends most young adults are turning to Facebook as the CMC tool to achieve and satisfy their affiliation needs. One may challenge this overwhelming influence of Facebook in the lives of young adults as a drawback to creating more face to face relationships. However, it is undeniable that the relationships being established through

Facebook do have their positive benefits where this tool allows and facilitates the building of an extensive network of relationships all over the world which can never happen through a face to face medium of communication. Such networks can build social capital, which in today's global marketplace, is a much-needed asset for social and economic survival. The ability to make friends, socialise, compromise, and maintain relationships is now seen as a crucial 21st century skill and the young adults who will inherit this world need all the tools at their disposal to seek and secure employment and contribute to global and societal development. (Steinfeld et al., 2008)

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