The use of Facebook for national integration by Bina Nusantara University students

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Abstract. A number of young people in Indonesia has Facebook account as their social media. It is used not only to link to their friends but also to obtain information. However, the rapid development of Facebook use has not only a positive impact but also a negative one. One that should be a concern is that the truth of the information posted in Facebook is not always accountable. Several users are likely to trust the information posted even though it is not reliable. As a result, it is not uncommon that the information on Facebook can actually make the disintegration on the nation. Therefore, this study is conducted to describe how Facebook can be used by young people to make Indonesian nation more integrated. The informants are nine students of Bina Nusantara University who are selected randomly. The data are collected using interview technique based on nine relevant questions. Then the data are analyzed using the theory of Uses and Gratifications. The results show that social media such as Facebook can be used by university students as a tool to maintain and develop Indonesian’s national integration. They can also manage not to allow such media to make the nation disintegrated. This result implies that when social media is used wisely and positively, it supports the nation for sustainable integration.

1. Introduction

Facebook is a social media that has become popular since 2004 and has been developing since then. Indonesia is the country with the fourth largest number of Facebook users (82 millions) in the world, [1]. Indonesia’s teenagers were found most often accessing Facebook [2]. Facebook has a number of features in which the users can communicate with friends and other users through private or public messages. They can also find and read any information shared by others. Young people in Indonesia assume that being unconnected to Facebook will make them miss information.

However, the rapid development of Facebook use has not only a positive impact but also a negative one. One that should be a concern is that the truth of the information posted in Facebook is not always accountable. Some information contains a hoax. It frequently happens that the information contains misleading one and causes hatred among Facebook users who happen to have different opinions or aspirations. In fact, the information often contains things that may offend SARA (Suku-tribe, Agama-
religion, Ras-race, Antar golongan-intergroups). A number of Facebook groups and Facebook pages are loaded with elements of hatred against a particular ethnicity or religion or even against those who disagree. This has an effect on the nerve war which can be troubling. As a matter of fact, such conditions can make Indonesian nation disintegrated.

Based on these backgrounds, this study is conducted to describe how social media such as Facebook can be used by young people, in this case university students, for maintaining national integration.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Theory of Uses and Gratifications

“Uses and Gratification Theory is considered to be one of the most influential theories in media research. It acknowledges individual use and choice and that different people can use the same medium for different purposes. Uses and gratification are the motivations behind why an individual makes a media selection and the satisfaction that the individual obtains from this choice. Motives are a fundamental component of audience activity and are the universal disposition defined by uses and gratification theorists that influence an individual’s action.” [3]

This theory can be applied in nowadays media – internet and mobile phones. It is effective since the internet involves interactivity and active audience. One finding suggested that Facebook is used to cultivate friendship and maintain relationships with friends, not to mention seek information. [3]

In U & G (Uses and Gratifications) theory if the motive is associated with media consumption it refers to all factors and stimuli in human beings that cause people to use the media and the purpose of using the media. The selection of media is conducted by people in accordance with their needs and motives. The use of media is caused by the need arising from the social and psychological environment, and people use the media to satisfy their needs. The cause or the encouragement is called a motive. The user motive in using Facebook is focused on the use of media which is cited from McQuail’s suggested typology, they are: 1) information, 2) identity, 3) integration, 4) entertainment [4].

2.2 Social Media Facebook

Kim, Chang, Senz & Park stated:

“SNSs, which include social networking activities occurring on the Internet, can be defined as Internet-based services that enable individuals to generate, share, and search for content, while also communicating and cooperating with others. Boyd and Ellison identified SNSs’ core functions as follows: (1) construct a personal profile, (2) articulate a list of other connected users, and (3) view and traverse their connection list and the lists that other users are making……Boyd and Ellison stated Facebook is a website that allows users to interact and collaborate within a pre-defined virtual community. Often termed a social networking site, Facebook is an online communication tool allowing users to construct a public or private profile in order to connect and interact with people who are part of their extended social network.” [5]

2.3 National Integration

National integration is an awareness and form of association that causes various groups with their own identity to perceive themselves as a whole: the Indonesian nation. National integration occurs as a result of the formation of groups united by a common issue: ideological, economic, or social. National integration basically contains the sense of bringing together the vision and mission of a nation from different interests of each member of society. The concept of national integration is basically in line with Indonesia’s current condition [6].
3. Methods
This research is descriptive since it is specifically intended to portray the influence of the use of social media such as Facebook for maintaining national integration. The study was conducted in 2017 using qualitative-quantitative approach. The informants for this study were students of Bina Nusantara University who have already taken a ‘citizenship’ course. There were nine students who were selected randomly. Written interviews and FGDs were created, asking about the informants’ opinion on the use of social media Facebook for national integration. Then the informants described their opinions based on several interview questions. After the data were collected, they were interpreted and analyzed using the indicators of ‘use & gratification’ theory as well as national integration theory.

4. Research Findings
In this section, the findings are presented based on the five interview questions.
1. Do you think Facebook is a very good cyberspace medium of increasing knowledge about nationality and national integration?
For this question, the nine informants stated that Facebook is a cyberspace medium that can be used to increase knowledge and various information about nationality and national integration. According to one informant, through a ‘fanpage’ on Facebook he could get knowledge about nationality. Two informants stated that Facebook is a very good medium of knowledge enhancement about nationality and national integration because Facebook has a complete feature for its users. According to them additionally, most of Indonesian people, old and young, have Facebook account so that they can use it for enhancing knowledge about nationality and national integration. Furthermore, five informants stated that through Facebook they can take advantage of the chat feature to discuss with other friends about nationality and national integration. Meanwhile, one informant stated that Facebook users come from different cultural backgrounds, who sometimes post their daily activities along with their own cultures. According to him, this can provide knowledge about nationality and national integration through a cyberspace medium. Other informants added that Facebook would be excellent as a medium of knowledge enhancement on nationality and national integration if it is used wisely. Otherwise, it would make the nation disintegrated.

2. Is Facebook a good medium of community communication to understand the sense of national unity and integration?
This question revealed several answers. Seven informants stated that Facebook is a good medium for community communication in order to understand the sense of unity and national integration. According to three informants, Facebook makes it easy to communicate in the community, for both young and old people, as well as those with different religious, ethnic and racial backgrounds. Three informants stated that Facebook is a good communication medium to understand the sense of national unity and integration because it is considered to give flexibility or freedom to express opinions, as well as to obtain information. One informant argued that Facebook should be used carefully. According to him, both negative and positive impact could appear when people use it. Interestingly, two informants stated that Facebook is not a good medium for community communication in order to understand the sense of national unity and integrity. According to them, sometimes the communication through Facebook can cause misunderstandings.

3. With Facebook, can someone establish/maintain friendships with old friends, family, colleagues and exchange ideas and share experiences in the life of the nation?
The nine informants stated that by using Facebook they can run silaturrahim (establish/maintain friendships) with old friends, family, colleagues and can exchange ideas and share experiences in the life of the state. According to two informants, Facebook can be accessed by all types of people so that it can be used to establish/maintain friendships with old friends, family, colleagues and exchange ideas and share experiences in their state lives. An informant said that Facebook can be used to send
messages and write status to be shared with everyone. Facebook has the features mentioned. For them, these features are useful in maintaining friendships. In addition to tagging and inserting pictures, users can comment on each other’s posts or give a ‘like’ in certain pictures or comments. Even they can share pictures or comments through their profile page so their friends can see and comment on it. Thus, those who spread the content are able to know the opinions of others, and this would be continued by users interacting with each other. Other informants argued that the advantages of Facebook compared to other social media is that Facebook can be used to bridge and connect old friends.

4. Can Facebook maintain the pre-existing community social relationships in order to strengthen the national integration?

Eight informants said that Facebook can maintain the existing social relations of the communities so as to strengthen the integration of the nation. One informant stated that the national integration is begun by social integration where Facebook plays a role in connecting each user; this is one way to maintain the social relations of the community. By adding someone as his/her friend on Facebook, they already have relationships with others and this is facilitated by Facebook. Two other informants asserted that as long as Facebook is used wisely and with full of awareness, it can maintain existing social relations of the community so that it strengthens the integration of the nation. However, another informant added that because communication on Facebook is not done in a face-to-face way, a number of users communicate without paying attention to ethics. Therefore, it can lead to quarrels and separations. Other informants affirmed that Facebook can maintain social relations but it would be better if the existing social relationships in the real world such as in urban villages were reinforced first so that the good values could be better absorbed.

5. Can the need for social interaction facilitated by a very good system that can share information enhance national integration?

Eight informants argued that the need for social interaction facilitated by a very good system that can share information is able to enhance the national integration. However, three informants stated that users should be careful in receiving information through Facebook because not all the information on Facebook can be justified. Meanwhile, other informants argued that Facebook is one fully-featured social media, thus it is very good for social interaction. Two other informants added that the information obtained from Facebook can be spread using other applications, thus it is not limited on Facebook only. Therefore, the information can be shared to others who do not have Facebook account. In addition, Facebook has a live chat feature that provides opportunities for each user to share information directly to other user as generally done in discussing through a face-to-face way.

5. Discussion

The students argued that Facebook can be used as a medium in cyberspace to increase knowledge and obtain various information about nationality and national integration. Facebook has a variety of features that can be used by users to do a number of things. Ellison stated that social media basically has the following functions: (1) construct a personal profile, (2) articulate a list of other connected users, and (3) view and traverse their connection list and the lists that other users are making [6]. Facebook meets these three basic functions. One of the findings in this study stated that Facebook users come from different cultural backgrounds; they sometimes post various activities of their daily life with their own culture. This means that through the development of user profiles and their interconnections Facebook can be used as a medium to increase knowledge and information on nationality and national integration. National integration is closely related to nationalism, through the introduction of inter-cultures in the society so that Facebook users can get to know each other's culture. They can also discuss with each other through the available chat feature. Therefore, the national identity can be formed through such activities. Users can understand and realize that the Indonesian nation consists of different cultures. It is comprised of different races, tribes, religions, and customs. According to Hatta, national awareness can be utilized as the basis of the belief of national integration which is able to maintain and develop national self-esteem and dignity of the nation as an
effort to release the nation from subordination (dependence, subjection, humiliation) to foreign nation [6]. National integration as an awareness and form of association causes various groups with their respective identity to feel themselves as one unity, the Indonesian nation [6].

However, Facebook as a medium of communication for the society should be used with caution and wisdom. Although considered to provide flexibility or freedom to express opinions, as well as to obtain information, Facebook has to be used carefully and wisely because misunderstandings among users are much likely to occur. If misunderstanding occurs, it can lead to disintegration. Disintegration itself poses a threat to the Indonesian nation which is full of diversity.

Furthermore, the findings suggested that Facebook is very useful for building communication both inter-personally and within the community. Moreover, those who spread certain content, news or any information are able to know the opinions of others. It can even then develop with further interaction. It makes the effort to build communication become easier. Thus, establishing and maintaining relations with old friends, family, colleagues as well as exchanging ideas and sharing experiences in a nation life can be done through Facebook.

One of the experiences shared by the informant said that he was connected with one of his old friends through a post on Facebook which discussed a political event happening at that time. They were reconnected afterwards. The process of interaction like this will certainly add to one's experience in the nation life. In addition, sharing opinions and ideas can be done through a group feature in which a user can create a group forum in order to discuss and express opinions on various discourses of nationality, whether political, social, cultural or economic. Besides, the citizen’s right of freedom to express opinions can be fulfilled through Facebook.

With regards to the role of Facebook as a communication medium that facilitates the occurrence of national integration process, Facebook is considered as a social media that a number of people love to use for interacting with others. One finding suggested that the national integration begins with the existence of social integration. Social integration occurs because there is an awareness to cooperate based on people’s respective functions. Social integration is successful when community members feel successful in fulfilling one another's needs; consensus on social norms and values is reached [7]. Other findings pointed out that a number of young and old people uses Facebook as a medium of communication since it has complete features. Observed from the theory of ‘uses and gratification’, Facebook is a social media that is considered to meet the desires and needs of its users. Through Facebook, users not only meet the needs of communication, but also fulfil a number of other needs.

The selection of the media by users is adjusted based on the needs and motives. The use of media is caused by the needs arising from the social and psychological environment. Users choose media that can satisfy their needs. The cause or the impulse of needs is called the motive. If the motive is associated with the consumption of media, it refers to all the factors and encouragement within human beings that cause people to use the media and the purpose of using the media. The motives of users in using Facebook as a medium of communication are focused on the motive of media use cited from McQuail’s suggested typology, namely: 1) Information, 2) Personal identity, 3) Integration and social interaction, and 4) Entertainment [4]. The four categories of motives are as follows:

| Kinds of motives                     | Description                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Information (Surveillance)        | Much information and knowledge related to national discourse are found: nationalism through Facebook. |
| 2. Personal Identity                 | There is a realization that the Indonesian nation basically consists of various dimensions of differences. This raises self-awareness that Indonesian people are part of a unique nation, based on Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. |
| 3. Integration and social interaction| Informants gain a range of knowledge about others;                          |
empathize by providing social support ‘like’ or comment on pictures, videos or news; enhance the sense of belonging to the nation and country of Indonesia by giving opinions about things that happen; connect with relatives, old friends or other communities who are members of a discussion group or fanpage in Facebook or other social media; have social solidarity with other citizens.

4. Entertainment (Diversi) [5]
Using Facebook can be an entertainment in the leisure time. Chatting with friends, relatives, or new acquaintances is a fun thing to do.

6. Conclusion
In general, the use of Facebook for maintaining national integration by university students runs well. Facebook can be used as a medium in cyberspace to increase knowledge and obtain various information about nationality and national integration, specifically through the development of user profiles and inter-connection. Further, it can build nationalism and the national identity which then results in national awareness that can be used as the basis of the belief of national integration that is able to maintain and develop national self-esteem and dignity of the nation. On the other side, Facebook must also be used carefully and wisely so as not to cause disintegration of the nation.

Based on the theory of ‘uses and gratification’, Facebook is a social media that is considered to meet the desires and needs of its users. Through Facebook, users not only meet the needs of communication but also a number of other needs. The motives of users in using Facebook as a medium of communication fulfil McQuail’s ideas about the motive of media usage: Information motive, the motive of personal, the motives of integration and social interaction, and the entertainment motive.

All in all, social media such as Facebook can be used by university students as a tool to maintain and develop Indonesian’s national integration. Thus, they can also manage not to allow such media to make the nation disintegrated. Further implication is that when social media is used wisely and positively, it supports the nation for sustainable integration.

7. References
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