

Social Media as Supporting Media in Online Tutorial: The case of Communication Science Students Program of Universitas Terbuka

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted to various sectors, especially distance higher education. During the pandemic, almost everyone accessed the internet, which reduced performance when accessing online tutorials. In terms of the quantity of students participating in online tutorials tends to increase but in terms of the quality of students' activeness in accessing tutorials is not optimally. This study identifies a number of elements that contribute to the poor quality of online tutorial access. This study uses mix method which starting with online survey and continuing with interviews in focus group discussion in three Regional Offices. The respondents are enrolled in semesters 3, 5, and 7. The results show that over three quarters of respondents use Android smartphones, and they range in age from 18 to 21. The top three social media respondents using are Line, Instagram, and Telegram. The ability to manage learning is quite strong, and access to social media is very high. This condition can help them in improving interaction between students and tutors. In the future it need to develop an tutorial application that is handy and comprehensive one.

Keywords: Social media, Learning management system, Online tutorial, Higher distance education

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in extraordinary changes, including in the education business. It is as if all levels of education are 'forced' to transform to adapt suddenly and drastically to learning from home through online media. This condition is certainly not an easy thing because people are not ready to face it. The problem in education is that the learning process is not yet uniform, both the standard and the quality of the desired learning outcomes.

Since then, Universitas Terbuka has provided learning services in the learning management system (LMS), Moodle, as media for students to conduct their learning process. However, some students who live in some locations cannot access so optimal these services that the participation rate in LMS tends to lower. During the pandemic, almost everyone accesses the internet, making the internet's performance in accessing the LMS itself go down. In fact that the quantity of students participating in online tutorials tends to increase, but the quality of students' participation in accessing tutorials is not enough. The lack of optimal student participation in accessing online tutorials is thought to be due to a lack of student motivation in accessing the online tutorials. The high use of social media among students can be used as a means of supporting student activities and participation in online tutorials.

Social media is increasingly recognized in the few years after its existence. Social media is generally a medium for socializing in the communication process. Social media has now crawled into the boardroom of business organizations and, just like the internet, has changed the buying and selling process (Icha & Edwin, 2016). Although social media is a new phenomenon, it has proven to be practical or even more effective than traditional marketing.

Meanwhile, according to Kwaghga, Okike, and Ramatu (2019) social media is a crucial teaching method and cannot be abused. At the same time, computer literacy is considered a fundamental part of professional skills. Computer literate librarians are more productive and efficient at work than those who are not computer literate (Angeline, 2019).

The research aims to identify several factors that cause not optimal quality in accessing online tutorials, and to identify how social media can support students learn through online tutorials.

Distance Higher Education

The context of this research is the Open University (UT), a state university that implements the most extensive distance education system in Indonesia. The distance learning system is characterized by the absence of a face-to-face between teachers and students. There is a means to bridge the gap between them by utilizing various media in the learning process.

In distance education the selection possibilities are often extremely limited for financial and other reasons. The printed and written word on the one hand and audio-recordings on the other sometimes exhaust the selection opportunities. Suitable combinations of these offer additional choices. For instance, it may be useful to provide recorded instructions on how to study charts and pictures that are presented in printed form, a procedure which has proved profitable for target groups with little reading skill. In other cases, however, the choice can be made among several of the media referred to above. (Holmberg, 1989)

It is obvious that the nature of each communications medium has a direct impact on the extent and quality of dialogue between instructors and learners. For example, an educational programme in which communication between teacher and learner is solely by one-way television, an audiotape, or a teach-yourself book, will have no teacher-learner dialogue simply because these media cannot carry messages back from the learner to the teacher.

Online Tutorials

The learning process in distance higher education at UT uses learning aids in the form of tutorials. The tutorial is emphasized to provide an explanation of course material that students do not understand, as well as what is expected in the implementation of tutoring. At UT before the tuton.

Since its outbreak in January 2020, COVID-19 has rapidly spread around the world and has become a global pandemic. Social media platforms have been recognized as important

tools for health promotion practices in public health, and the use of social media is widespread among the public. Social media is an effective tool to promote COVID-19 prevention behavior among the public.(Li & Liu, 2020)

The rapid outbreak of COVID-19 has opened various problems on social media platforms among school students. This research conducted by Radwan, Radwan, and Radwan (2020) aims to find out how social media affects the spread of panic about COVID-19 among elementary and middle school students in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. The child population is the group most vulnerable to exposure to environmental risk factors. Higher education institutions must equip nursing students with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to respond to this by using blended learning. A quasi-experimental time series study was designed using the Education intervention evaluation. The e-NurSus Children intervention is an effective tool to address this education gap. (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2019). In fact, according to the compensatory model of Internet-related activity, the online environment can be used to relieve negative feelings caused by distressing life circumstances, even though they have the potential to lead to negative outcomes. We found evidence that feelings of loneliness predict excessive social media use and anxiety, with excessive social media use also increasing anxiety levels. However, facilitated and extended access to social media during the COVID-19 pandemic risks further increasing anxiety, generating a vicious cycle that in some cases may require clinical attention.(Boursier, Gioia, Musetti, & Schimmenti, 2020).

According to Berg, Forest, and Stenseng (2020) tested whether a social media intervention could promote harmonious desire and positive emotions associated with sports activities. The intervention did not predict changes in arousal for the activity. However, the intervention predicted more positive emotional outcomes from the activity, statistically controlling for emotions reported at baseline and negative emotions reported at follow-up. The results suggest that digital platforms may be relevant in promoting more physical activity in the population, through the facilitation of more positive emotions associated with exercise. (Berg et al., 2020) The current digital era has led to a surge in the use of social media in academia. The extent of use of social media platforms in various regions is determined by social, economic, religious, political, cultural and ethnic factors, which may limit participation. It also focuses on the linguistic skills of the population and their desire to engage in global discussions.(Gaur & Gupta, 2021). Professional Learning Communities (PLC) have been used in higher education to provide a platform for faculty members to discuss challenges and build professional skills. This study confirms previous research on the benefits of PLC for professional development in academia and the use of social media for professional learning. It extends the research to describe structured VPLC using social media platforms to engage faculty, build relationships, and encourage shared learning. (Bedford, 2019).

While Händel et al. (2020) investigated how prepared higher education students are for emergency distance teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how this affects their socio-emotional perception. The k-means cluster analysis revealed two groups of students

that differed significantly with respect to their readiness for digital learning (in terms of availability of technology tools, previous experience with e-learning, and skills for digital learning). Finally, students' socio-emotional perceptions, i.e., stress-related emotions (worry, tension, excitement, and overload) as well as social and emotional loneliness were significantly different due to cluster membership. Therefore, this study demonstrates the need for higher education student support in order to successfully address the challenges of emergency distance learning.

Social Network Site

Online tutorial is one of the learning services provided by UT. Tuton nowadays is a learning media that is provided free of charge by UT, after a student registers. Learning through the Tuton service is cheap and fast, because accessing email can be done at Warposnet in almost every sub-district, for students who are already working and their offices have LAN (Local Area Network) facilities, students can also access e-mail from office, for students who have their own LAN facilities at home, they can access e-mail from their place of residence and for students who do not have a LAN network or are not working, they can access e-mail from Warposnet in every nearby sub-district. The cost to access e-mail is relatively cheap and the contents of the message that will be asked that day can also reach the UT Center. Studying at UT in general does have several main obstacles, one of which is the high discipline factor in managing study time. In addition, there are several other difficulties such as the absence of emotional ties with fellow students and the absence of a learning atmosphere like that of conventional students.

Icha and Edwin (2016) states that social media has become increasingly known in the years since its existence. It is generally a medium for socializing in business organization processes and just like the internet; has changed the buying and selling process. Although social media is a new phenomenon, it has proven to be just as effective or even more effective than traditional marketing. Meanwhile, according to Kwaghga et al. (2019) states that social media is an important teaching method and cannot be abused. It is suggested that University management should design time and opportunities for the use of social media activities into their course syllabus. Instructors and students must be open to learning and use new social media classroom approaches that expand and enhance instructor-student interactions. University management should encourage all Postgraduate students to use social media for academic purposes. And according to (Angeline, 2019)states Computer literacy, is considered a fundamental part of library professional skills. Computer literate librarians are more productive and efficient at work than those who are not computer literate.

Communication Interaction in Distance Education

According to Moore and Kearsley (2005) stated that in higher education that uses a distance learning system, there is still interaction between students and the teaching staff or administrators, while the interaction is in the following forms:

- Interaction between students and teaching materials; This interaction allows students to gain knowledge and facts from teaching materials.
- Interaction between tutors and students; This interaction plays a role in maintaining or increasing student motivation, providing feedback and dialogue between tutors and students.
- Interaction between students and students; This interaction allows students to exchange information, learn from each other and deepen each other's knowledge that is relevant to the subject being studied.
- Interaction between tutors and tutors; This interaction is primarily intended to facilitate communication between tutors in the context of deepening and enriching learning materials.

METHOD

This study uses mostly in quantitative approach in which data carried out by a survey method using a questionnaire instrument. And for certain reasons this research interviews some respondents to complete quantitative data. The population of this study is all students who have registered for 2021 first and second semester in the Communication Science Program. Data collection techniques carried out through online using Google form via WhatsApp Group and offline using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in the field where students gathered. FGD is accomplished at Yogyakarta and Bogor Regional Offices. Samples were purposively taken of 118 respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographical Data

Diagram 1(a) shows that the characteristics of respondents in terms of gender are more women than men, this informs that women already have the awareness to go to college or continue their studies to university level.

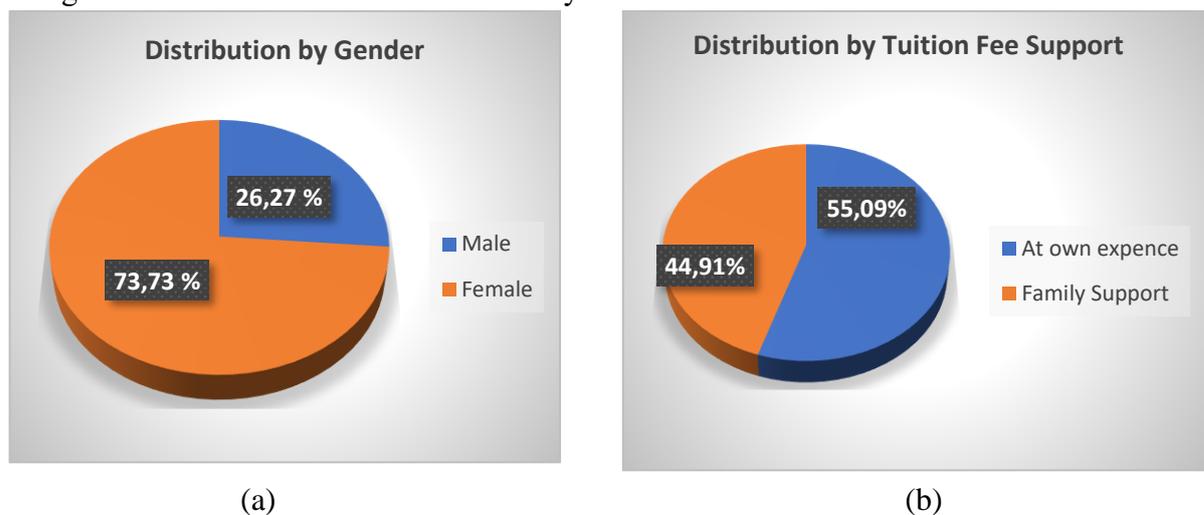


Diagram 1. Respondents' Distribution by Gender (a) and by Tuition Fee Support (b)

Furthermore, to find out the distribution of respondents based on their tuition fee support. Diagram 2 shows that respondents who get family support for their tuition fees are almost 45% and those who are independently getting their tuition fees higher. This informs that more than half of the respondents independent in their own study.

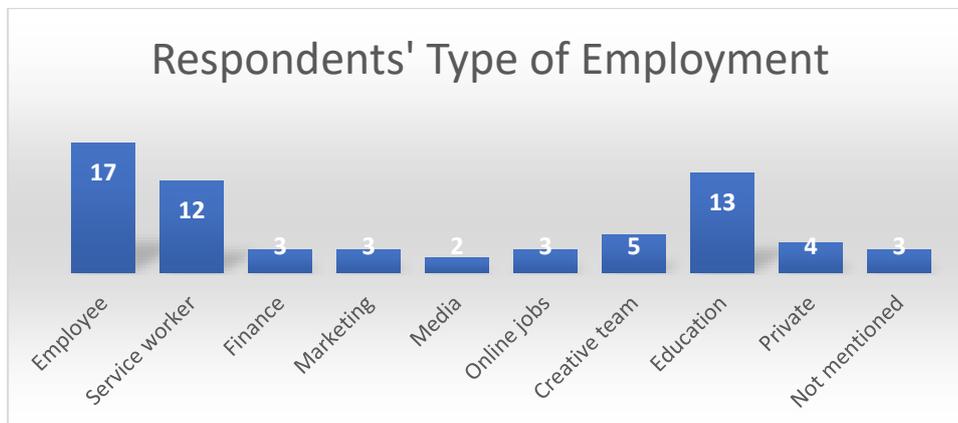


Diagram 2. Respondents' Distribution by Type of Employment

Universitas Terbuka' students who use the distance education system have no age limit, which means that more than half of the respondents in the field have worked in a professional capacity prior to enrolling in the program. Survey respondents have three major types of work: private employees, the education and service sectors, as well as those in the creative industries (creative team, media workers, online media workers, finance workers, and marketing). Since most previous studies have failed, this information is of interest (Diagram 2).

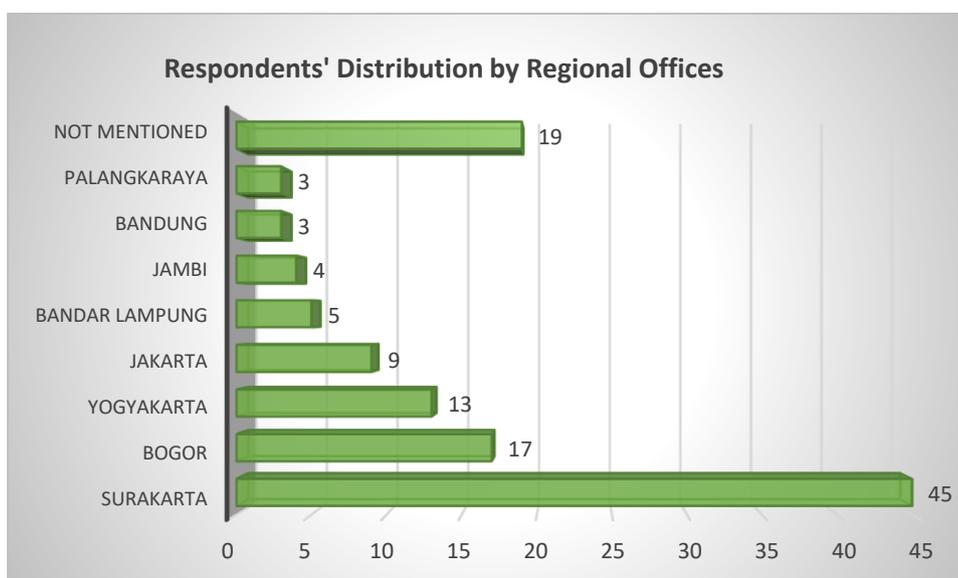


Diagram 3. Respondents' Distribution by Regional Offices

From table 1, it can be obtained information that the types of work of respondents are very diverse and interestingly there are a number of 10 respondents (8.48%) who have

jobs that are very suitable for the field of communication science, namely as media workers, creative teams, online workers.

Table 1. Respondents' Distribution Utilizing of Social Network Site

Utilization of social media	Instagram	WhatsApp	Line	Twitter	Facebook	Telegram
Communication and Socialization	3	114	1	0	0	0
Self- Expression	76	33	0	4	5	0
Studying or Campus interest	14	94	1	0	2	7
Entertainment or Hobby	79	9	1	6	14	9

There are three major social media platforms used by respondents to support and complete information related to student learning i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. It found that several WhatsApp Groups (WAG) of study groups for information and communication facilities related to the learning process, including the Communication Program Student Learning Community (KUBIK), which have activities of discussions among them. The discussions include how to analyze the assignments given Final Assignment Program (FAP), one of Communication Science Program Course, discussion with their tutors in their FAP tutorials, they discuss how to determine the title or theme of a scientific work, formulate, and analyze it.

Information, such as checking important schedules about when students register for classes, begin their online and web tutorials, take their final exams, and get information about student academic and community service activities are all things students use Facebook for on a daily basis. Aside from self-expression through hobbies such as selling batik cloth, clothing, cakes, and other baked goods, students also use Instagram to post academic activities and other content they are involved in.

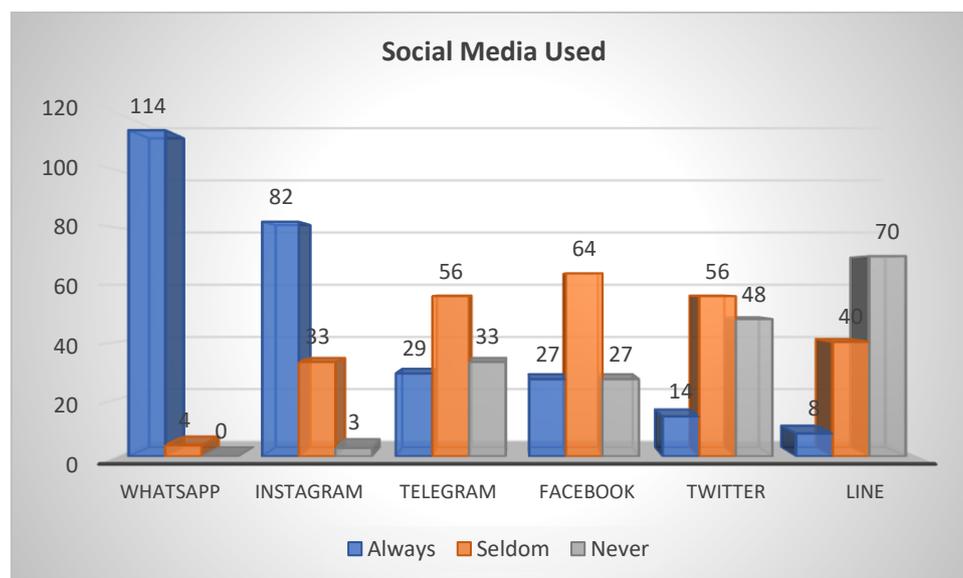


Diagram 5. Respondents' distribution by social media used

According to the frequency with which students use social media, it can be concluded

that WhatsApp is the most popular, which is understandable given the app's flexibility and ease of use, as well as the fact that it's native and can send and receive messages at the same time. Students at the WAG Kubik come from all over Indonesia, including the west coast, Sumatra, and Java islands. They also have a few students from Eastern Indonesia, such as East of Nusa Tenggara and surrounding, in the WAG group who are originally from the Central Indonesia region. While Instagram and Telegram come in second and third. Students love the three social media platforms because they are easy to use and effective.

CONCLUSION

Demographically, majority of Communication Science Program is female students which has 73 percent of total respondents. While students who independently support themselves 55 percent, in which mostly works in private employee 14 percent, education 11 percent and media workers 9 percent.

Participants were drawn from semesters 1 through 8, with the majority confirming from the first semester. In addition, almost half of the respondents were from semester 2. Three most respondents came from UPBJJ Surakarta, UPBJJ Bogor, and UPBJJ Yogyakarta, all of which are in the top three universities in the country.

Social media is essential for the following reasons: WhatsApp is the most popular in students this social media used as communication tool with friends, for studying discussion with campus mate, and self-expression. The second place is Instagram, it mostly used Instagram for entertaining and doing their hobbies. Facebook is used generally for entertainment, hobbies, self-expression, and studying informal short tutorial. While Telegram and Twitter intended for entertaining, and amusing purposes

For further studies, it is suggested to investigate the use of the media for helping or supporting their learning activities so it hopes will be useful for the institution and the student as well.

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