



# The interaction patterns of social media users in general public are based on group chat in media reality and empirical reality

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

Interaction  
Social media  
Group chat  
Media reality  
Empirical reality

This research is set aside from the phenomena of behavior and social interactions that are comparatively reversed between the virtual world and the real world, especially among social media users who actively share lifestyle and daily activities. As for the purpose of this study, it was to deepen observations of the intersection patterns of each member in a particular group chat and compare them with their interactions in the real world based on the theory of media reality and the empirical reality theory. This research, using qualitative research methods and its own research strategy will use a phenomenological approach. The location of this research is in Yogyakarta City with the object of the research is the general public of social media users. Data sources are obtained from library studies, events or activities, places or locations, informants that are members of social media group chats. Data collection techniques use purposive sampling techniques in three ways: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Validity of data is obtained through source triangulation and triangulation methods. The data analysis techniques used are interactive analysis models. Research results show that some sources have similar patterns of interaction between media reality and empirical reality, while the rest show gaps because they do not feel well acquainted with each other as members of the group.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, communication can be done anywhere and anytime, without limitations of space or time. According to Sembiring (Sidik et al., 2019), in the era of globalization, the development of telecommunications and information technology (IT) is already so fast. Technology makes distance no longer a problem when communicating. The Internet is, of course, one of the media. In Indonesia, he also ranked as the world's fifth-largest Twitter user. Indonesia's position is only behind the US, Brazil, Japan, and Britain (Wibowo, 2022). According to the Association of Internet Service Organisers of Indonesia (APJII), the number of Internet users in Indonesia in 2016 was 132.7 million, or about 51.5% of the total population of 256.2 million. The phenomenon of social media use among the public has had a significant impact. According to (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), social media is a group of Internet-based applications built on the basis of Web 2.0 ideology and technology that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. (Nihayah et al., n.d. 2021). Some of the most widely used applications in the community are WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, Messenger, Instagram, and so on. On the WhatsApp app in particular, there are a variety of modern features that can be easily used by the community to communicate. Some features are provided, such as voice calls, video calls, and group chats, where a group chat allows a number of people to easily interact with each other. (Pangestika, 2018).

Other features of the app also make it easy to spread information to members of the group, such as sharing photos, videos, links, and voices. Besides, communication through these applications is also more efficient in all aspects than using the old way of communicating (Hastuti et al., 2022). For example, the **WhatsApp and Line apps** are not less popular these days, and in these apps, users can also create a chat group with a number of people. Seeing the various features offered by WhatsApp,

WhatsApp groups have become a unique feature as a medium for communicating and exchanging various files between participants in one group. (Pustikayasa, 2019) Generally, the users of WhatsApp mention that the reason for choosing this application is the availability of various amenities that are in it, besides not charging alias free (Pranajaya et al., n.d. 2018). Line itself is a popular messaging app in the world. The use of this app is said to be cheap because you do not have to pay the cost of sending messages, like when using SMS. This application uses the Internet network in its use; it is assessed to make users feel more comfortable because it is more efficient and data services become more accessible (Rahimsyah et al., 2021).

In previous discussions, it has been explained that in a group of chats, a number of people with different backgrounds and characteristics are incorporated. It's not uncommon for group members to present themselves differently on social media. In short, media reality, or symbolic reality, is the reality that is displayed through the media and is the result of media construction that is framed in this way (Yulia Wildayani, 2012). In the case that will be raised in this study, for example, people who are often involved and appear active in a group chat rather become very quiet when found in the real world. Other examples are people who often share various pieces of information in group chats, who seem not to be so careful about their surroundings in the actual world, or even people who are often found to showcase expensive lifestyles or their extraordinary daily activities, which are rather simple in the real world (Qinyu & Zhuang, 2023).

It shows that there is a gap between the media reality and the empirical reality shown by social media users, in particular, who are integrated into a group chat. The word empiric itself comes from *empeiria*, which means experience or attempt (Kholili & Wijiharto Tunggal, 2023). Finding empirical evidence is closely related to the five human senses. An empirical understanding based on Sugiyono is a method of observation that is done using human senses. So the result of the method used before can also be known and observed by others who want to do it (Sugiyono, 2012). Empiricism, according to (Adang, 2008), is a science based on sound reasoning, not speculative, and must be based on reality. (Adang, 2008). Empirical reality itself has meaning as a reality that can be inferred from observations carried out with the sensory and repetitive panels, depending on the experience or observation itself, and can be determined by experiment. Therefore, it does not exclude the possibility that every member of the chat group is experiencing this either consciously or unconsciously.

This research also draws on previous research that had similar topics in order to add research and reference to the author. Some of the previous studies were also studied by the author, such as the research conducted by Reski Amelia (2021) from Makassar State University with the title "Implementation of Group Chat Social Media as Communication Media Courses Seminar on Educational Technology Problems and Education Technology Exhibition on the Education Technology Study Programme T.A. 2018/2019 of the State University of Makassar" and the research carried out by Venska Novellia in the same year as the previous research, namely, in 2022 from Tarumanegara University titled "Pola Social Interaction Selebgram: Comparison Between Patterns of Social Interactions in Social Media Instagram With In the Real World".

The two previous studies had differences with this study; the differences lie in the subject of the research, whereas in this study the subject being the general public of social media users focused on their interaction in the chat group and their behaviour in the real world. The other thing that makes a difference is the theory used in every study, where this study uses media reality theory and empirical resuscitation (Sabri & Adiprabowo, 2023). The source of these differences can be found in many studies that address human behaviour in online and offline contexts. Research in sociology, psychology, and communication science often explores these differences through surveys, experiments, and data analysis of interactions in both contexts. Many scientific journals and academic publications cover this topic. Besides, observations and personal experiences are also important sources of information for understanding these differences.

In this study, the authors focused on learning more about the interactions of social media users when communicating within the group chat of an app with their interactions in the real world. Some people have very comparative lives between the real world and the virtual world, whose abilities they frame on social media and show to others. But we can't give a judge to that person. The

researchers assume that the person may be faced with two choices: being himself or wanting to be impressed.

Based on the background of the above issues, this study is important to observe the behavioral phenomena shown by social media users who experience gaps in media reality with empirical reality, in particular in communicating using group chat on various applications. In order for research to run well and correctly, one of the things a writer should pay attention to is choosing the method of research or the way research is carried out. In this study, researchers use a qualitative method, which means that research is conducted in depth as well as using phenomenological approaches to develop an understanding or explanation of the meaning of an event experienced by a particular person or group. (Susila, 2015).

## 2. Method

According to (Mulyana, 2000), methodology is the process, principle, and procedure used to approach problems and find answers. In other words, methodology is a general approach to studying research topics. This study uses the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz's thinking, which is more systematic, comprehensive, and practical, as a useful approach to capturing the various symptoms (phenomena) in the social world. (Nindito, n.d. 2005). The research will be carried out in Yogyakarta City and its surroundings, especially for a group of public users of social media, and integrated into one of the many social media applications.

The data sources for this research are obtained from literature studies, sources or informants, and field activities. The selection of sources or informants in this research is done using purposive sampling techniques. As for the methods used to collect data from informants, there are three: observation, semi-structured, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique in this study is an interactive analysis technique model with a phenomenological study approach to develop an understanding or explanation of the meaning of an event experienced by a particular person or group. (Susila, 2015). Validation of data is obtained through source triangulation and triangulation methods.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Nowadays, society is inseparable from the technology that exists, including the development of social media. Developing technology has offered a lot of ways to access news or just exchange news with each other. Some of them are like an extensive range of instant messaging applications and other applications. This technology was later better known in society as "social media". With social media, it's easy for people to interact at unlimited distances and indefinite times. Not only that, with some social media apps, people can simultaneously hang out or even meet a group of people in a chat room, called a group chat. Here's a percentage of the standard appearance of chat group members from some popular social media sites in Indonesia.

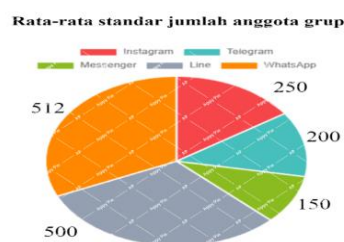
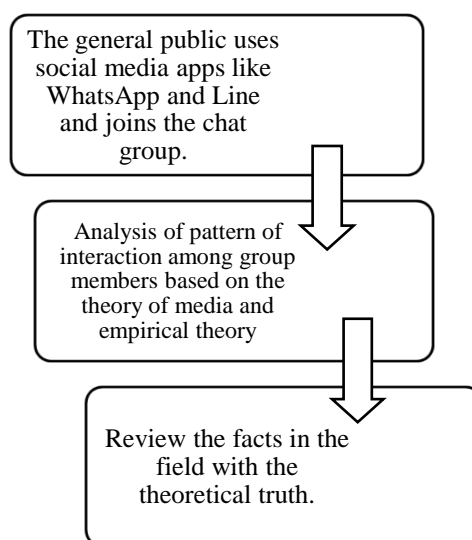


Fig. 1. Percentage of group members' adhesive power

Based on the presentation above, the average Indonesian population uses WhatsApp and Line social media platforms compared to other apps. Within WhatsApp groups, people can also easily express themselves with various features available, such as stickers, emoticons, and more. However, many users of these applications cannot express the same thing in the real world. There are different types of users with different patterns of interaction between the real and virtual worlds.

Here are some descriptions of WhatsApp users within groups and their interaction patterns: Group administrators are users who have full control over WhatsApp groups; they are responsible for managing group members, moderating conversations, and setting rules. In the real world, administrators are often individuals who are active and have power in their social groups. Active users: Active users are individuals who frequently participate in group conversations. Observer: An observer is a user who prefers to read a message rather than send it. Silent user: There are users who are completely passive and rarely interact in both the real world and the virtual world. Spammers: Some users tend to send repeated messages or spam within groups. Users Who Always Give Advice: These users tend to give their suggestions or opinions on a variety of topics. Users who always trigger a debate: Some users like to trigger debate and debate within groups. Therefore, this research is focused on looking at the phenomenon of gaps in the behaviour of the general public in the virtual world compared to the real world. Here is the form of the theoretical framework of this study:



**Fig. 2.**Theoretical framework

#### 4.1. Presenting the Results

The results of a study conducted in early October in the area of Yogyakarta with a number of general public social media users, in particular WhatsApp and Line, to find out how the interaction patterns between social network users are based on group chat show that there are facts that relate to the theory, but there are also some gaps between the pattern of their interaction in media reality and empirical reality. It is based on the findings of observations and semi-structured interviews with societies that are generally students and workers. Basically, most of the sources interviewed are more likely to use the WhatsApp app as a medium that makes it easier for them to communicate with others. Even as many as four sources represent groups of students and employees, all merged into a few or even dozens of specific WhatsApp groups. Nevertheless, the source also uses other social media that also support their communications and activities in everyday interactions. According to statements from sources related to the early start of their merger in the group, the answers vary depending on why the group is needed. For example, a student who has a class group or a group of courses must join because of the need for information shared in it, whether it is by a lecturer or another student about the course.

The interesting thing is that their patterns of interaction are also varied. Some sources stated that he was quite actively engaged in responding to other members if the topics being discussed in the group were of interest, but some other sources also revealed that they were more actively interacting if within the group there were superiors or lecturers who shared information, because to them, all members of the group had the same rights as other members, either in answering or sharing information. Based on the statement, the authors concluded that the interlinked patterns of communication between members of each other matched the topic and anyone involved in it; for

example, in a more formal WhatsApp group, the source would use a raw word or sentence, even with a discreet expression. This is because he will keep an eye on his counterpart and with whom he interacts; if it is with his peers, then a connected interaction will be more relaxed than when interacting directly with a lecturer or superior, and there are limits to be guarded.

A narasource who is an active user of the WhatsApp social media platform and an admin who forms a group that includes members of his high school friends also said that in order for the group to remain active and not quiet, he created a friendly and supportive atmosphere so that friends who rarely interact in the group feel more motivated to join without feeling stressed. For example, giving a friend who is rarely involved in a discussion an opportunity to express his opinion also provides a comfortable space for them to interact. He believes it is important to show understanding and support, which will help build a better relationship with them.

One of the sources with the NH initials also revealed that he is more comfortable communicating in private or in a personal chat than taking part in a group discussion. He believes that when he responds to a chat in private, he can be more expressive and comfortable without worrying if his opinions are not seen or accompanied in the discussion. It's because once he asked in his classroom, where all the members were his classmates, but unfortunately no one answered his question in the group. Since then, he's been more likely to listen to the group talk and only come back once in a while. He also added that the situation differs from the group chat with his three friends; he is much more active in interacting with them, even with random chats. They respond in a variety of ways, with various features provided by WhatsApp, so they can send voice messages or stickers to interact with other members of the group.

Similarly to sources that use WhatsApp social media as a tool for interfacing with each other, some sources that prioritize Line as an interaction tool also stated that they are joined in many groups by Line to facilitate online communication with other members of the group, the author has also conducted observations and interviews directly with users of social media Line. This is because in Indonesia itself, Line became a favourite application for online interaction after WhatsApp. Of the 3 sources, active users of Line Messenger were interviewed by the author, who stated that they also have dozens to dozens of active groups comprising at least 3 people and the most dozens of people. The group line itself is also formed because of the different interests of each individual, so a group line is formed to meet those interests.

One source revealed that he was more comfortable using Line because, since he sat on the high school bench, he's been using Line as a messenger app, making it easier for him to communicate with his friends. Regarding the patterns of interaction within the group both in the virtual world and in the real world, one of Line's users' sources explained that, according to him, the pattern of interactions cannot be said to be the same. It's happening because he's going to fit the members of each group. If you're in a classroom group, then the interaction will be more awake and will also filter what should be answered there or what shouldn't be talked about. While with a group of close friends, the patterns of communication tend to be the same as in the real world. According to him, if you communicate with close and long-known friends, then the limits are not too high, so it's more free to express.

Based on the results of interviews with sources of either active social media users WhatsApp or Line, we found another fact: in some group chats, there are also members of groups that appear to be prone to passive responses to speech topics or information provided by other members, or by other terms known as silent readers. Almost all the sources reveal the same thing: that there are one or more members of the group who become silent readers, who are usually in class groups without lecturers, or in certain organisational groups whose group members alone reach tens or even hundreds. Responding to this, one of the sources mentioned that this is a logical thing because some groups have sufficiently wide coverage that it is not possible for each member to know each other well. Furthermore, according to him, the other cause of the group members being only readers or just wanting to talk can be due to some factors; for example, if he is the one who has an introverted and quiet personality, then of course we cannot blame him if the situation is so. The source also revealed that the person may have other occupations in his world, so his time is limited and he cannot participate in the chat group. It's important to remember that being a silent reader isn't always negative, especially if it's someone's natural prevention.

One of the other sources who used Line Messenger also stated that there was a friend of his who joined a group that was quite passive in responding to information given by other members, but in real life, he was a pleasant enough individual to be invited to interact, even being very active in answering every speech. According to him, we can't judge how a person's personality is just by the way they interact on social media and what they show, because it could be people we think are familiar with social media but have different sides in the real world. The source also mentions that sometimes a member who feels relieved to interact in a chat group, if his interference leads to offensive and even joking negotiations, chooses not to interfere. At the end of the interview session, the author asked each source about their reaction to whether a group member framed and tried to impress other members of the group with their lives on social media, but in real life, the fact is quite the opposite of what he tried to show. Almost all sources revealed that such a thing is very common these days, and they think it's normal to also be glorious because he might be trying to get validation. However, there are other sources who feel relieved by the matter but keep it as long as it does not interfere with their private sphere.

#### 4.2. Create a Discussion

Based on the results of previous research, it can be analyzed back into the theory of media reality and empirical reality, where media reality, according to (Yulia Wildayani, 2012), or what can also be called symbolic reality, is the reality shown through the media and is the result of media construction framed in such a way. Whereas empiric reality, according to Yesmil Anwar and Adang, is a science based on sound reasoning, is not speculative, and must be based on the reality that happens. (Adang, 2008), if associated with research, shows two main results, the first of which is that there are facts that match and support the theory of media reality and empirical reality related to the patterns of interaction of a person within his social media chat group with the pattern of his interaction in the real world. Based on the information obtained directly from the sources that participated in the study, there are no significant differences in the way they interact with the other group members, only more in the adjustment with their interlocutors. For example, when interacting with a lecturer or superiors in a group chat, they tend to pay more attention to grammar and decency, and when meeting in person and engaging in interaction, they will also keep that attention. Similarly, with the patterns of interaction with members of the group who are familiar and familiar for a long time, as in the case of peers, the interaction in the group will also be more relaxed, and there will be no specific limitations such as how they communicate in everyday life or meet in the real world.

The second finding of this study was that there was a gap between the theory of media reality and the empirical reality of the source with its group members, where some sources interviewed admitted that there were members of their group who, when responding to information or discussion, seemed passive and alone, but when they met and communicated in the real world, their conversations were very enjoyable, so one of the sources mentioned that he was happier communicating directly than engaged in group conversations because he could see and judge the enthusiasm of the interlocutor when asked to interact. From the statement, it can be seen that the people who joined a chat group did not necessarily demonstrate their authenticity there. Some of them show a genuine nature by communicating only with relatives or close friends. It's also because the source feels there's still a barrier wall that needs to be guarded when interacting with strangers or unknown people. The research also revealed a variety of responses from each source to a phenomenon where there are one or more members of a group who do not often perform an act of flexing or are also known by showing their personal lives into the group, so harvesting a lot of opinions from each member, some of them consider it a good thing, the rest feel that it is not worth doing and can make other members feel relieved of it.

In a previous study by (Nurdiarti, 2018) that raised discussion about social media, interaction patterns, and social relationships in WhatsApp groups that used the social-cyber relativity model to observe and understand how relationships and interactions of SD alumni groups were psychologically influenced by childhood memory, then embedded in an emotional construction in interpersonal relationships, friendship until adulthood also showed results that there were no significant changes in their interactions and relationships both when in the chat group and in the real world. In the results of the study mentioned, social relations are present in the space and time dimensions of social media, consisting of the interrelationship between reconstruction, visibility, and practice of interaction and communication between members. Meeting again after decades does not

erase childhood memories, so the forms of the relationship come back through reunions, routine arisan, and basketball periodically.

Based on the analysis of previous studies, this study also demonstrates the justification of the results obtained about the facts on the ground and the theory of media reality and empirical reality. In addition to the validation of the findings, the study also has some similarities between the subjects and social media, such as WhatsApp and chat groups. The findings also have the potential to change from time to time because the research uses a qualitative approach, where the research proposal is seen as tentative. Other things are also influenced by the discovery of new facts by other researchers as well as the influence of the field of science. But briefly, the authors have described the actual state of each member's interaction patterns in a particular group chat and compared them to their interactions in the real world based on the theory of media reality and the empirical reality theory in particular on the WhatsApp and Line Messenger apps.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of the research, two conclusions can be drawn that can meet the purpose of this research, namely: 1. Source speakers who represent social media users and join a particular chat group either from WhatsApp or Line have a large number of active chat groups, both formal and non-formal, to support the need for remote interaction with each other. The chat groups are also formed on their own based on the needs of each of their members. The way the source responds to any statement or information received from within the group also varies depending on who communicates it. 2. The discovery of the interaction patterns of the source as a chat group member in media reality and empirical reality shows that some of them have the same way of interacting either in the virtual world or in the real world because they feel that they have known each group member well so that they do not need to pay too much attention to grammar.

It is important to remember that each person is unique, and often individuals use a combination of these styles depending on the context and specific needs. By understanding and appreciating the differences in communication styles, we can build better and more effective relationships when interacting with others.

#### 5. Acknowledgement

This journal article was written by Kiki Muhidin of the Faculty of Literature, Culture, and Communication Sciences of Ahmad Dahlan University, based on the results of the research "Group Chat" in Media Reality and Empirical Reality. Thanks to all the sources that have participated in this research, as well as to the reviewers and readers, as well as all the parties involved, for providing support while the research is ongoing. The content is entirely the responsibility of the author.

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