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## Motives for Using Reddit Social Media on Members of the r/Indonesia Community

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### ABSTRACT

The presence of social media provides many conveniences for its use. The many types of social media make the motives for using social media varied, and each individual has their own motives regarding the reasons for using social media. One of them is the social media Reddit. Reddit is a social media in the form of forum that was blocked by the Indonesian government in 2015. This study aims to find out the motives for using Reddit social media in Indonesia, especially for members of the largest Indonesian community on Reddit, namely the r/Indonesia community. This study uses Blumer's theory of motives for using social media and the concept of social media. The method used is qualitative with netnography techniques. Data were collected using in-depth interview techniques and participant observation. The informants in this study are Reddit social media users as well as members of the r/Indonesia community. The results obtained in this study are that the motives behind the use of Reddit social media are divided into three factors, namely motives to obtain information, motives for entertainment, and motives to avoid irrelevant information or spam.

### 1. Introduction

The presence of social media brings many conveniences for the user, such as being able to communicate without distance limits. Communication can be done without any distance limit. It means that communication can be done anywhere, even though they are not in the same area. Establishing communication with foreigners from foreign countries is something that has been possible since the advent of social media. Social media also makes it easy to spread and receive news or information. The public can easily get news or actual information from an event that has occurred.

According to Kurniawan (2017) in Sari et al. (2020), social media is online media that allows users to easily share, participate in, and create content, including

blogs, social networks, wikis, virtual worlds, and forums. Social media continues to experience changes from time to time, and the emergence of social media Tiktok has had an impact on many existing social media. This, of course, will continue to grow over time. Each social media has its own characteristics or characteristics. These characteristics make social media easy to recognize because of its uniqueness. For example, Facebook is known as a social media for making friends, YouTube is a social media for sharing videos, and Kaskus is a social media in the form of a forum or community.

One social media with a forum or community format is Reddit. Reddit is an American social media network founded in 2005 by Steve Huffman and Alexis Ohanian. (Moloney et al., 2019). There are many



things on this social media, ranging from news, entertainment, information, and interesting communities. Communities on Reddit are called subreddits. Subreddits or communities on Reddit are marked with "r/" in front of them and followed by the name of the community, for example, r/news, r/indonesia, r/dankmemes, and others. The number of subreddits on Reddit is enormous because to create a community on Reddit, you only need to create a Reddit account. Its user can freely create a community according to their wishes as long as it is in accordance with the existing rules on Reddit. This makes the types of communities on Reddit very diverse, ranging from news, entertainment, information, and others.

It is from this diverse community that Reddit's social media is rich in information through uploads and discussions in the comments column. Reddit, as a place for discussion, is often used as a place to find answers to a problem that is experienced. Reddit users often upload posts just to ask questions or ask other users for advice. Because Reddit is a social media in the form of a forum, a discussion occurs on the forum. Sometimes, an answer to the problem lies in the discussion that occurs in the forum.

In 2015, Reddit was blocked by the Indonesian government because this social media contains a lot of pornographic content. Blocking Reddit causes not many people to know about this social media. We Are Social collects data on the most used social media in Indonesia in January 2023. Based on this data, of the 15 existing social media, Reddit's social media is not visible in that ranking. This indicates that not many people know about Reddit's social media.

Because Reddit is blocked by the Indonesian government, accessing it requires a VPN or DNS. VPN (virtual private network) works by encrypting Internet traffic and also the location of users of the service. So that it allows the user to appear as if he were in the selected location or country, even though it has been blocked by the government, Redditt users in Indonesia can be said to have a fairly large base, one of which is

that there is the largest Indonesian community on Reddit, namely the r/Indonesia community. The r/indonesia community is an online community where Reddit users can discuss or discuss many things about Indonesia, such as politics, social issues, trending news, and others. This community has 194,000 members, and active users can reach 1,000 per day. (Accessed on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023)

The reason behind someone using social media is related to what motive is behind it. Everyone has their own motives for using social media. Motives for using social media related to the goals or reasons that make someone use social media. For example, when you want to get the latest information, you can use social media, Facebook or Twitter. If we want to get entertainment, such as watching videos, we can use YouTube social media. With so many existing social media, more social media can be chosen to meet needs. Based on this background, the formulation of the problem for this research is what are the motives for using Reddit social media among members of the r/Indonesia community.

## 2. Literature Review

### Computer-mediated communication

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) can be simply interpreted as communication that occurs between people using computer media or through computers (Herring in Arnus, 2018). The word computer in CMC theory does not only refer to computers or laptops but also includes all devices that have computers in them, such as tablets and smartphones. Besides, according to Herring, CMC, according to Barnes, is defined as the use of various kinds of technology that paved the way for human interaction and information sharing through interconnected computer networks, including email, discussion groups, newsgroups, and real-time chat (Amin, 2020).



According to Walter (1996) in Juditha (2015), CMC theory has three perspectives, the three perspectives are impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal. Impersonal in CMC places more emphasis on transactional communication, not too personal and more formal. Impersonal communication is generally carried out through indirect communication channels such as email, text messages, or other online communications without much personal interaction or showing strong emotions. The impersonal perspective tends to be impersonal or less emotionally attached.

Interpersonal in CMC places more emphasis on communication that is more intimate, personal and leads to the formation of a relationship between individuals. With the help of technology, an individual can communicate directly, exchange messages quickly, and interact more deeply. This perspective is concerned with elements such as intimacy, emotional attachment, and understanding between individuals. Therefore, an individual can share feelings, views, and thoughts in more depth.

The hyperpersonal perspective emphasizes the reduction or loss of the individual's presence as a personal entity. In this perspective, communication that occurs often uses anonymous identities or does not use real identities. The hyperpersonal perspective on CMC pays attention to elements such as deindividuation, the use of pseudonyms, and reduced responsibility and empathy in online communication.

All forms of communication that occur on CMC are within the scope of cyberspace. Cyberspace, according to Piliang (2012), is an imaginary space in which everyone can do what is usually done in the original world in a new way, that is, in an artificial way.

## **Social media**

Kaplan et al. (2010) in Anwar (2017) define social media as a collection of internet-based applications based on Web 2.0 ideology and technology to enable the creation and exchange of content by its users. Social media knows the system's user-generated

content (USC). Where content is created by users, not by editors like in the mass media. Social media recognizes the user-generated content (USC) system. Where content is created by users, not by editors like in the mass media. According to Khan et al. (2014), social media has many uses, including social connectivity, social participation, information gain, and entertainment purposes.

Social connectivity on social media can be interpreted as an individual who is connected to one another with the help of the internet or social media. Socializing is a necessity for humans. With social media, social connections can be expanded without knowing distance boundaries. Social participation is defined as the level of participation of an individual in a group or society. In the context of social media, social participation in cyberspace includes discussing or exchanging opinions, conveying news, and providing support to other social media users. Social participation is useful for building interpersonal relationships and socializing with others.

In social media, the attainment of information is a process or result obtained from obtaining or disseminating information on social media. Information gain includes sharing an article, uploading a status, commenting, and sharing content with others.

Entertainment is an activity to get pleasure, joy, liking, and enjoyment. Whitty et al. (2007) in Khan et al. (2014) mention three forms of entertainment that use the internet, namely: computer-based entertainment, facilitated offline entertainment, and obtaining information and entertainment from around the world. Social media is widely used by people to get entertainment. Social media as a means of entertainment leads to the role of social media to provide various kinds of entertainment through its content and features.

## **Reddit**

Reddit is a social media in the form of a large forum created in 2005. Reddit is an interesting social media



in the form of a forum: social media Reddit allows users to share text and media, such as photos and videos, as posts that invite votes and comments. Reddit social media is also often used as a source of information submitted by its users (Choudhury et al., 2014). A study conducted by Weninger et al. (2013) mentions the basic framework in Reddit, such as Subreddit, posts, comments, votes, and karma.

Communities or forums on Reddit are called "subreddits". Subreddit is a forum or community that has a certain theme or content. Subreddits can be recognized by the "r/" sign in front of them, such as r/science, r/askreddit, r/memes, and others. Reddit users generally don't follow an account but follow content in a community or subreddit. Reddit users who have registered their accounts can also freely create their own community according to their wishes, as long as it complies with Reddit's rules and regulations. Therefore, there are a very large number of subreddits or communities on Reddit.

Even though there are lots of subreddits or communities that you can join, to upload a post on a subreddit, you don't need to join that community. Users who have registered their accounts can upload posts to any community. There are various formats for uploading, such as images, links, and posts of up to 10,000 characters. Comments can only be made for Reddit users who have registered their accounts. Comments on Reddit are hierarchically threaded.

Apart from uploading posts and comments, Reddit users who have registered their accounts can vote on uploads or comments. The voting system on Reddit is known as upvote and downvote. The popularity of a person's upload or comment in a subreddit is determined by the voting feature. This feature is similar to the likes and dislikes feature on YouTube. By upvoting and downvoting, the account that comments or uploads posts will get "Karma".

Karma on Reddit is a score or points obtained when someone presses the upvote and downvote buttons on any uploaded post or comment. The karma system

enables its users to upload interesting content, make comments and provide useful feedback. A high karma score indicates how active a Reddit user is and how interesting a comment or post has been. The karma system encourages its users to upload good content, make useful comments, and also provide useful feedback (Anderson, 2015).

Like most communities, communities or subreddits also have a moderator whose job is to maintain and manage a subreddit. These moderators can only perform various actions within a managed subreddit, such as deleting and approving posts or comments, modifying the appearance of a subreddit, and banning users who are members of the managed subreddit (Li et al., 2022).

### **Motives for using social media**

Motives are drives in humans that arise as a result of the needs that humans want to fulfill. All human behavior includes drivers, reasons, or impulses in humans that cause humans to do something (Innova, 2016). Motive, according to Gerungan (2004) (Pramiyanti, 2017), is an understanding that completes all drives of human reasons that cause him to do something.

Blumer in (Pramiyanti, 2017) categorizes motives into three orientations, namely, mentioning that there are three orientations, namely cognitive motives, diversion, and personal identity. Cognitive motives are the need for actual information, social surveillance, or exploration of reality. An individual who, based on cognitive motives, will try to find the information needed through the help of the media. The diversion motive is an urge from within a person to fulfill the need for entertainment and release from pressure. The personal identity motive is the need to use media content to highlight or amplify something important in the lives and situations of the audiences themselves.

### **3. Methods**

This research uses a qualitative method, a qualitative method according to Moelang (2007) in



Sinaga et al. (2021). A qualitative method is a research method that involves the use of qualitative data, such as documentation, interviews, and observations, to understand and explain social phenomena. The purpose of qualitative research is to reveal the deepest meaning of an event, symptom, fact, incident, problem, or reality. Qualitative research is not research to prove or study the existence of a causal relationship or correlation of an event or problem (Raco, 2018). Qualitative research has advantages over quantitative research, namely gaining a deeper understanding of human experience, gaining different perspectives, and capturing aspects of a social phenomenon.

This study uses netnographic techniques. Netnography, according to Nasrullah (2018) in Annisa (2019), is a research method that is carried out online by adapting ethnographic research methods that are applied to understand social interaction in the context of digital communication. Netnography is used when you want to do research on online-based communities that exist in cyberspace. The netnographic method, according to Kozinets (2019) in Dwiarsianti (2022), is a method used to study culture from digital media users, which can be observed through online traces. Netnography is said to be pure netnography when the resulting data is obtained online through computer-mediated communication or other interactions using communication technology such as observation, interviews, downloading data, and participation. Meanwhile, mixed netnography is carried out when data collection is not only done online but also face-to-face (Adnan et al., 2020).

The subjects to be examined in this study were Reddit social media users who came from Indonesia and joined into Indonesian r/community. In comparison, the object of this research is the motives of Reddit users who are members of the r/Indonesia community. Data collection techniques will be carried out using in-depth interview techniques and participant observation.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

From the results of research related to the motives for using Reddit's social media among members of the r/Indonesia community, the informants' reasons for using Reddit's social media were obtained. There are three motives or reasons that make members of the r/Indonesia community use Reddit social media, including to get information, to get entertainment, and to avoid irrelevant information or spam.

Reddit makes it easy for its users to get information. The amount of information that can be found on social media is the main attraction for informants to use Reddit. In addition to a lot of information, the information available on Reddit's social media is also diverse. This is also related to the large number of communities or subreddits that are very large. With the many and varied communities on Reddit making, this social media a social media that is unique when compared to the others. The most common form of information found on social media is information in the form of news. There are many subreddits or communities that specifically share news, both news globally and in certain countries. Examples are r/news, r/upliftingnews, r/politics, and many more. So it's very easy to get news on Reddit social media.

The information obtained is not only contained in uploads. With social media in the form of forums, it allows discussion to occur in the comments column of an upload. Information in the form of news or information on Reddit can be an answer to a problem. Not infrequently, many people are looking for answers to a problem they are experiencing and see the answer on Reddit social media. For example, if you want to find answers about a specific problem on Google, the most common example is fixing certain errors on a laptop or computer device. So on average, Reddit appears as a Google search recommendation that contains various responses or answers. Not only problems with computer equipment but questions about household problems such as fixing faucets,



fixing doors, how to wrap gifts, and so on. Even on social media, Reddit, there is a subreddit or its own community related to how to fix something, namely r/howto.

In addition to getting information, the reason for getting entertainment is also the reason conveyed by the informant. Subreddits or communities on Reddit don't have to be formal. There are lots of non-formal subreddits that aim to provide entertainment to Reddit users. One of the most popular forms of entertainment on Reddit is memes. Reddit is famous as a social media for sharing memes. The memes that exist on Reddit vary greatly depending on the community, so memes of any format have their own place and fans. Examples are r/dankmemes, r/MemeEconomy, r/me\_irl, and others.

Entertainment in the form of videos is also a type of entertainment that is quite popular on Reddit. There are many subreddits or communities dedicated to uploading funny, unique, and interesting videos. An example is r/unexpected, where the subreddit contains videos that have unexpected things in them. Another example is r/documentaries, where this subreddit contains documentary videos on many things, such as science, culture, nature, and history, that have informative and entertaining value. Apart from entertainment in the form of memes and videos, entertainment on Reddit social media is also related to the hobbies or preferences of its users. For example, music, photography, and film.

Entertainment on Reddit's social media can also be in the form of interpersonal interaction use. Interaction between Reddit users generally occurs in the comments column of an upload. Reddit has various features that can be used when lining up a comment. Such as adding GIFs, photos, making letters bolder (bold), inserting links into writing, and so on. These features make the discussions that occur in the comments column more dynamic and varied. Apart from that, Reddit users can also send messages to other fellow Reddit users using the direct message

feature.

The third reason behind the use of social media, Reddit, among members of the r/indonesia community is to avoid irrelevant information or spam. This irrelevant information, according to one informant, is often found on other social media, for example, on social media Twitter. According to informants, the type of spam information that is on Twitter, such as affiliate product links and comments, is not in accordance with the context or topic (out of topic). In terms of the information provided, the informants considered Reddit's social media to have advantages when compared to other social media. This is influenced by the existence of moderators who oversee discussions on comments or uploads on a subreddit or community. If there is an upload or comment that does not comply with community rules, the moderator can delete the upload or comment. This affects the quality of relevant information in uploads and discussions. For example, the r/Indonesia community has tags/flairs for serious discussion, whereas uploads with the tag or flair require serious comments. Otherwise, the moderator will delete comments that are irrelevant or not serious. The dance example is like a filter to generate relevant and useful information.

While data collection was in progress, news about Indonesia's cancellation as host for the U-20 World Cup was hotly discussed on all social media in Indonesia. This issue is also widely discussed on Reddit's social media, especially the r/Indonesia community, as the largest Indonesian community on Reddit. According to the informants, discussions around the cancellation of Indonesia as host for the U-20 World Cup on various social media have differed. Where discussions about the cancellation on Facebook social media are filled with buzzers. On the other hand, on social media, and Twitter, discussions around the cancellation are filled by affiliates who often include a product link and comments that are weightless or worthless. This became different when





the issue of Indonesia's cancellation as the host of the U-20 World Cup was brought up on Reddit, especially in the r/Indonesia community. According to the informants, discussions around this issue in the r/Indonesian community were colored by comments that provoked a discussion, such as, "Who do you think is the cause", "What are the further impacts", "Have there ever been cases of similar to this before", and so on.

Even though Reddit social media users tend to be anonymous, informants feel that information or discussions submitted by other users are more valuable than other social media where users tend to use real names, although it is possible that there are many anonymous accounts.

The results of this study indicate that there are three motives or reasons that encourage someone to use social media Reddit, especially for members of the r/Indonesia community, namely reasons to get information, get entertainment, and avoid irrelevant information or spam. The need for information is a need that must be met by an individual. Someone will try to meet the information needs by finding the information needed through the help of the media. Cognitive needs are needs that come from a person to learn, find out, develop, and fulfill self-actualization. The information on Reddit is considered to be of higher quality compared to other social media. This is related to the role of the moderator in each community, whose job is to supervise and manage uploads and comments in the community.

Reddit allows its users to choose or determine their own community so that the information received can be in accordance with what the user wants. In previous research, according to Fatmawati (2015) in Khairiyah et al. (2022), the need for information is related to problems experienced or faced by an individual. When these individuals feel a lack of information, they fill the lack of information by seeking information from the knowledge they do not have in the selected media. This is consistent with the results

and findings of this study, where one informant said that at first, he used Reddit social media to find a solution to a problem he was experiencing.

Entertainment and social media are inseparable. This is in accordance with one of the functions of social media, according to Khan (2014), namely entertainment. Entertainment on Reddit social media takes many forms, ranging from writing, images, videos, or other creative content. These forms of entertainment have their respective places and fans. Reddit users can freely choose the type of entertainment or entertainment format they want to get. Entertainment such as memes on Reddit is a type of community-based entertainment in the sense that memes are made by the community and for the community. This is also what causes memes to become very popular on Reddit and has lots of meme communities on social media, such as r/historymemes, r/memeconomy, r/dankmemes, r/me\_irl, and others. There is a crosspost feature that makes it possible to share uploads from one community to another. It can be a useful feature for spreading memes from one community to another

Interacting with fellow users is also a type of entertainment that can be found on this social media. Like other social media, Reddit has a DM or direct message feature that allows Reddit users to send messages privately. Apart from being a source of information, discussions that occur on Reddit, such as those that occur in the r/indonesia community, are a plus for its members because the discussions that occur can also contain entertainment.

The blocking of Reddit by the Indonesian government is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, this blocking causes less information that can be found on the internet, considering that Reddit has a lot of useful information on social media for people in need. But on the other hand, according to some informants, the blocking of Reddit in Indonesia seems to be a separate filter. An example is the issue of canceling Indonesia as the host of the U-20 world cup.



Where according to the informants, the discussion around the cancellation issue has differences between social media commonly used in Indonesia, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and Reddit social media, especially the r/Indonesia community. Blocking Reddit in Indonesia can avoid the emergence of bot or buzzer accounts that can disrupt or disrupt existing discussions so that the information obtained becomes less valuable or weightless.

Of the three reasons for members of the r/Indonesia community to use social media, Reddit, there are differences in the motives or reasons for using social media as stated by Blumer, where Blumer stated that motives for using social media are divided into three categories, namely cognitive motives or motives to obtain information, diversion motives. Or motives for entertainment and personal identity motives. From the results of the research above, it is known that only two motives are appropriate, namely cognitive motives or motives to get information and diversion motifs or motives to get entertainment. Meanwhile, the third motive, namely the personal identity motive, is not the motive used as a reason for members of the r/Indonesia community to use Reddit.

This difference is based on the different characteristics of the social media users. Personal identity motives are motives related to the use of the contents of a media to highlight or strengthen something important in the lives of audiences, and these motifs are related to forms of self-expression when using social media. Social media is used as a medium to voice and strengthen one's identity. The individual may feel the need to use a medium to highlight important things in their life, such as interests, values, and beliefs. The identity of a person on Reddit's social media is not an important thing. Reddit's social media users tend to be anonymous or do not display their real identities. So, personal identity motives are not things that make someone use this social media.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the reasons for the use of Reddit social media among members of the r/Indonesia community are divided into three categories, namely to get information, get entertainment, and avoid irrelevant information or spam. Cognitive motives or motives for the need for information can be easily fulfilled because getting information on Reddit's social media is very easy, considering that Reddit has a very large and specific community. Reddit, as a social media in the form of a large forum, allows its users to exchange information regarding a problem they are experiencing. This also adds to the wealth of existing information. Apart from being rich in information, Reddit's social media also presents a lot and varied entertainment, one of which is well-known in Reddit is memes. The large number of memes that exist on Reddit causes this social media to be often referred to as the source of memes on the internet. Apart from memes, entertainment on social media can also be in the form of videos. Reddit also has many subreddits or communities specialized in uploading videos that are funny, interesting, or even videos that are weird and ridiculous. Entertainment can also be obtained through interaction between users through the comments column or direct messages.

The blocking of Reddit's social media by the Indonesian government seems to be a filter to screen its users, especially for Reddit users in Indonesia. This blocking can avoid the emergence of bot accounts that can disrupt or disrupt ongoing discussions so that the information obtained becomes more valuable and avoids spam information. The difference in the results of the research with the theory used, namely the theory of motives for using social media by Blumer, is caused by differences in the characteristics of the social media used, where in this study, there was no personal identity motive. This is because users of social media, Reddit, tend to be anonymous or don't





use real identities so the motive of personal identity is not the underlying motive of a person using Reddit.

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