

# The Impact of Social Media on The Interaction Patterns of The Community in Rujak Ngalun, Mekar Sari Village, Praya Barat District, Central Lombok



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## ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of technology has led to a decline in verbal communication activities, impacting many aspects of daily life, particularly social interaction. The researcher assumes that social media serves as a platform for interactive engagement, both personally and in groups. Consequently, this study aims to examine the impact of social media on the interaction patterns of the community in Rujak Ngalun, Mekar Sari Village, Praya Barat District, Central Lombok. This research employs a qualitative method grounded in positivist philosophy. The data analysis is qualitative in nature, emphasising meaning over generalisation. Social media is a platform that provides various features enabling users to engage in digital activities in their daily lives. In the Rujak Ngalun community, social media serves as a comprehensive and user-friendly medium for social interaction, facilitating long-distance communication.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human beings are creations of the Almighty, endowed with superior qualities compared to other beings. Gifted with intellect and the ability to interact both personally and socially, humans cannot live in isolation; they require others for discussions, exchanging ideas, seeking and receiving information, as well as collaborating to meet their needs. As observed, much of human life revolves around fulfilling needs through communication, whether by exchanging opinions, reading newspapers, or accessing the internet, among others. With advancements in communication, humans learn and apply various methods to address the issues arising in social life (Mulyana in Syahyudin, 2019). This underscores the significance of interaction in human life, where interaction constitutes the essence of human existence. Communication is often understood as the activity of conveying information in the form of messages, ideas, and concepts, typically conducted verbally, either spoken or written, facilitating mutual understanding between parties. Besides being conveyed verbally, communication can also occur through body gestures.

However, with the rapid technological advancements today, verbal communication activities have diminished, as many individuals prefer to use social media for interaction. The popularity of social media has increased over time, allowing individuals to establish digital social networks to interact and share information, news, or opinions effectively and efficiently (William & Helena in Ayub, 2022). Technology is inseparable from societal life; various information occurring around the world can now be accessed instantly, thanks to technological advancements. We currently witness that information and communication technology (ICT) is evolving rapidly and impacting many aspects of daily life, particularly social interaction.

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Numerous factors influence social interaction today, resulting in social changes, one of which is social media. Social media provides a cyberspace where social interaction cannot be directly perceived by humans but can be felt and observed as a reality. The impact of social media also contributes to changes in societal interaction.

The Rujak Ngalun hamlet in Mekar Sari Village is a small village located in the southern part of Central Lombok, near Selong Belanak Village. This hamlet possesses customs and norms that the community should uphold. However, with the development of information technology, the people of Rujak Ngalun do not wish to fall behind in utilising social media. In recent years, the community has experienced an addiction to social media, resulting in a decrease in direct interactions. Preliminary observations by the researcher noted a group of youths interacting with others through their respective social media platforms, engrossed in their online activities, leading to a lack of direct interaction.

The Rujak Ngalun community has integrated social media into their daily lives, both for communication and information-seeking. Undeniably, the use of social media has both positive and negative impacts. The positive impact of social media includes ease of information access and expanding networks with others, whereas its negative impact lies in the unrestricted access to information, which influences the interaction patterns of the community (According to Sumardi & Rispawati, 2017). Among the numerous negative impacts arising from information technology, the most concerning is the degradation of national behaviour.

The interaction patterns of the Rujak Ngalun community in Mekar Sari Village have transformed alongside the advancement of information technology, characterised by increased online interactions through social media. (Budiman in Putri et al., 2023) states that new technologies such as social media significantly influence societal interaction. The positive effects of social media interaction include expanding friendship networks and facilitating communication, thus making it easier for the community to interact with one another. However, there are negative effects of social media, including an increasing tendency for individuals to become lazier in gathering and conversing. Survey findings indicate that two out of five individuals worldwide check their social media accounts first upon waking up before commencing any activities, with the average person spending approximately two hours on social media. Consequently, individuals are less inclined to interact with those around them and prefer to engage with acquaintances on social media.

Nevertheless, preliminary observations reveal that nearly all segments of the community, including the elderly, adolescents, and children, utilise social media. Children begin accessing platforms such as YouTube from the age of nine, while adolescents start using TikTok at the age of twelve, and adults engage with Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp from the age of twenty. All actions and footprints on social media become the researcher's findings, indicating a shift in interaction patterns. The scattered information on social media feeds contributes to altering the social interaction behaviours of the community, leading to social change.

This indirectly leads the Rujak Ngalun community in Mekar Sari Village to consume social media content that influences both real life and virtual life. According to the researcher's observations, the Rujak Ngalun community frequently uses social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Thus, the changes in the community's interaction patterns are influenced by social media, as the previous face-to-face interactions, which often included greetings upon meeting, have now shifted to more frequent greetings through social media. Additionally, the Rujak Ngalun community, which previously visited markets and interacted there, now prefers to stay at home and order items they wish to purchase through cash on delivery (COD), which is typically done in person.

From the explanations above, the researcher assumes that social media serves as a platform for interactive engagement, both personally and in groups. Social media is also utilised to share information publicly in a timely manner, thereby altering community interaction patterns. Prior to the advent of social media, communities interacted face-to-face; however, with the rise of social media trends, many individuals have become more individualistic due to their engrossment in online communication. Therefore, the focus of this research is to investigate the impact of social media on the interaction patterns of the Rujak

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Ngalun community in Mekar Sari Village, Praya Barat District, Central Lombok. Through this study, the researcher aims to explore aspects of community interaction change.

Currently, social media can be regarded as an essential aspect of life for individuals across the globe. The abundance of information and functions provided by social media makes it a primary necessity in confronting the currents of globalisation today. The term social media itself comprises two syllables: media and social. Media can be defined as the means or tools of communication that can be utilised by anyone. Meanwhile, the term social derives from the Latin word "socius," meaning to grow and develop within communal life (Kurnia, 2018-1-17).

The positive impact of social media on social interaction is closely intertwined. The presence of social media facilitates faster and easier communication between individuals, allowing interactions to occur anytime and anywhere, whether through chat, phone calls, or video calls. Unbeknownst to many, the existence of social media has profoundly affected human life, both as individuals and as a society. The emergence of new information and communication technologies has transformed human behaviour in utilising technology. This has led individuals to discover new methods of seeking information. This is not merely a two-way communication process but a symmetrically intertwined communication process (communication members interacting can directly communicate with each participant and act simultaneously as senders and receivers of messages) (Sari et al. in Pratidina et al., 2023).

The positive effects of social media at least facilitate the desire to learn, as it can be used as a means to discuss school assignments (information seeking). Social media also eases individuals in finding and adding friends or reconnecting with old acquaintances. Additionally, social media can serve as an alternative to alleviate stress. However, social media also has negative impacts, such as reduced study time due to distraction from engaging with social media, disrupting concentration in school, undermining student morals, and spending pocket money on internet access, which can also adversely affect health (Zukria in Kairuni, 2016).

The impact of social media is not only felt by students but can affect anyone who uses it. Technological advancements continue to present various opportunities. In fact, with the advent of social media, many companies have begun seeking and opening job vacancies for individuals skilled in managing social media, such as creating creative and attention-grabbing content and building a company's image on social media. However, the impacts of social media are not without challenges; there are always negative consequences that can be detrimental, such as various scams circulating on social media, ranging from criminal fraud to bank account scams.

## **METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative method grounded in positivist philosophy. In this study, the researcher acts as the key instrument, using triangulation as the data collection technique. The data analysis is qualitative, emphasising meaning over generalisation (Haryono, 2023; Suryadmaja et al., 2015). Therefore, this research is conducted to examine natural objects and emphasise meaning, leading the researcher to utilise qualitative methods. The approach used in this research is descriptive. Descriptive research is a method for studying a group, object, condition, system of thought, or event in the present. Qualitative descriptive research is utilised to develop theories built through data obtained in the field (Lisa Rahmayanti et al., 2020: 74).

In this research, the location chosen for the study is the Rujak Ngalun hamlet, Mekar Sari Village, Praya Barat District, Central Lombok. The researcher selected this location for several considerations, particularly to observe the use of social media among the Rujak Ngalun community, which has increasingly become a fundamental necessity for the community, evident from the frequent use of social media. To obtain accurate data, the researcher must be discerning in selecting data collection techniques that align with the researcher's expectations. The data is expected to meet the established criteria. Therefore, the data collection techniques employed by the researcher include observation, interviews, and documentation.

The validity or credibility of the data is essential for obtaining credible findings, using credibility testing techniques in the form of triangulation. One technique used in data validation is triangulation, which involves verifying data credibility by utilising sources beyond the collected data (Sugiyono, 2013). Data analysis employs the analysis model from Miles and

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Huberman, encompassing the processes of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing (Puratwi, 2017).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mekar Sari Village is one of ten villages in the Praya Barat District, Central Lombok, which was established as a result of the division from Kateng Village in 1996. This development arose from the community's desire to enhance the quality of public services, considering that the centre of the parent village's government (Kateng) is located approximately 18 km from Rujak Ngalun hamlet, encompassing other hamlets such as Bile Tengah, Bangkat Molo, Pedasan, Lancing, Jogor, Tanpah, Pendam, and Mertak Waru. Based on this, community leaders from seven hamlets at the time, namely Rujak Ngalun, Biletengah, Jogor, Tampah, Lanceng, Bangkat Molo, and Pedasan, convened to plan the division of the area or separation from Kateng Village. After conducting discussions with the Kateng Village government, led by Haji Lalu Darmawan, the proposal to divide Kateng Village into three villages was approved: the parent village, Kateng, and the newly formed villages, Banyu Urip and Mekar Sari.

Mekar Sari Village is considered a self-sufficient village when viewed from the livelihood conditions of its residents, where the livelihoods have begun shifting from the primary sector to the industrial sector. The application of technology in agriculture, crafts, and secondary sectors has begun to develop, although recent data indicate economic development within the community. However, from the 1,866 households present, 1,740 households are still classified as poor, representing approximately 93% of the population who are unable to sustain themselves (data sources from Jamkesmas, Jamkesda, and Raskin realisation). According to data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2020, the number of poor households is 892, or approximately 47.8% of the population classified as unable to sustain themselves. This indicates the continued weakness of the community's economic conditions, as evidenced by the low Human Development Index (HDI) and limited sources of livelihood and employment opportunities.

Observational results related to the issues in this research indicate that nearly all individuals in the area are social media users. For the Rujak Ngalun community, social media plays a crucial role in the process of social interaction, particularly as many family members work far away, even overseas. Social media serves as a vital link for maintaining intensive communication. On the other hand, social media also poses threats. With the rapid access to information, it is not uncommon for the community to become ensnared in various types of fake news and misinformation. The community tends to believe the information they receive without verifying its accuracy first.

Essentially, social media can now be regarded as a fundamental necessity for individuals worldwide. The abundance of information and functions provided by social media makes it a primary requirement in navigating the currents of globalisation today. The primary condition for social activity is the presence of social interaction. Social interaction itself is a dynamic relationship, encompassing relationships between individuals, between groups, and between individuals and groups. It is often stated that an individual would struggle to survive without establishing interactions with others. This forms the basis of social processes, namely social interaction. Social media emerges as a communication tool that facilitates the Rujak Ngalun community's rapid communication.

Social interaction is a dynamic social relationship, involving interactions between individuals, between groups, and between individuals and groups. The prerequisites for social interaction are social contact and communication (Bungin, 2009). In daily life, the Rujak Ngalun community is never detached from interactions via social media, as observed by the researcher during data collection. The researcher noted groups of individuals engrossed in their respective social media; some were busy communicating via Facebook, while others were engaged in video calls through WhatsApp with their families. Social media has emerged as a platform for social interaction and has become the largest source of information today. In addition to seeking information, social media is utilised across various aspects of life, including economics, education, politics, and more. Social media is also referred to as the virtual world or cyberspace, where systems and social structures exist within it.

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The Rujak Ngalun community utilises social media according to its functions; social media is employed by the community for communication purposes. The communication conducted by the Rujak Ngalun community on social media varies from personal communication, community interactions, to interest-based communication with connections. All aspects of the Rujak Ngalun community leverage social media as a communication platform, as it is considered easy and quick for communication. A significant change for the Rujak Ngalun community, which previously relied on direct interactions or correspondence, is that with the advent of social media, communication has become much easier, introducing new habits in social media usage. Consequently, the Rujak Ngalun community experiences profound changes when using social media, transitioning from merely a communication tool to a means for seeking information, learning, and fostering creativity.

The community also recognises that through social media, they can easily work and sell products from home without needing to promote their goods in the market. They can simply advertise their products through social media. Previously, the community merely consumed and served as objects of media; however, they have now transitioned into media producers and active subjects on social media. Every second, individuals can see and read new statuses containing information, both personal and public, shared by the community. With social media, the Rujak Ngalun community actively develops their creativity.

### **The impact of social media on community interaction behaviour**

Social media serves as an interactive platform that offers both positive and negative impacts for its users. In this virtual social interaction realm, users typically establish relationships with others or specific groups, which inevitably affects real-life experiences. Social media can lead to issues such as bullying and online violence, which sometimes escalate into real-world violence. As noted by Chukwuere, individuals can become victims of harassment or intimidation in cyberspace, negatively impacting their psychological well-being (Chukwuere, 2021). Active social media usage has resulted in numerous social conflicts occurring in the real world, influenced by virtual social interactions, such as the emergence of hate speech and the spread of misinformation.

The positive impacts of social media usage in the interactions of the Rujak Ngalun community in Mekar Sari Village include providing convenience. Social media is an internet medium that enables users to represent themselves and interact, collaborate, share, and communicate with other users, forming virtual social bonds. Within social media, there are three forms related to social meaning: cognition, communication, and cooperation. Social media facilitates the Rujak Ngalun community in conveying and receiving information. In Rujak Ngalun hamlet, the use of social media is associated with the ease of obtaining and disseminating information, which the community utilises for various aspects, ranging from government information, job vacancies, to social conditions surrounding the Rujak Ngalun community. The use of social media for disseminating and receiving information is perceived as effective by the Rujak Ngalun community, as it allows them to seek information related to their needs and share information with the public.

The social interaction of the community related to the economy lies in the buying and selling process, where this process involves communication interaction between providers of goods or services and consumers in need of those goods or services. The advancement of technology and information has enabled electronic transactions to occur through social media. The community can utilise applications like Facebook, TikTok Shop, Instagram, and WhatsApp to offer products to the public. Additionally, social media presents various forms and types of offers to the public, one of which is providing entertainment for anyone accessing it, such as humorous videos, films, motivational videos, religious videos, games, and much more. For the Rujak Ngalun community, entertainment on social media serves as an escape from family issues or work-related stress.

When discussing social media, the impacts arising from its usage cannot be overlooked, particularly the negative impacts on communities engaging in interactions through social media. Within the scope of social media usage in the interactions of the Rujak Ngalun community in Mekar Sari Village, the researcher outlines the negative impacts, including the acceptance and dissemination of false information (hoaxes). The Rujak Ngalun community

does not verify the accuracy of the information they receive. They easily accept and spread false information, making the community susceptible to unverified news. This can lead to real-world conflicts, as observed by the researcher in the Rujak Ngalun community, where some individuals experienced divorce due to being influenced by potentially false news, indicating that social media information significantly impacts their real lives.

The presence of social media allows the community to access information more swiftly and easily, as it can be done anytime and is accessible to everyone, from adults to youth and children. Consequently, the community has become dependent on accessing information and addicted to using social media. Unbeknownst to many, the existence of social media has profoundly impacted the lives of the Rujak Ngalun community, both as individuals and as a society. The emergence of new information and communication technologies has transformed societal behaviour in utilising technology. Interactions that were previously conducted face-to-face can now be accomplished through social media. For instance, during data collection, when a child was called by their parent, they did not respond due to being engrossed in social media. This exemplifies how social media negatively impacts the behavioural changes of the Rujak Ngalun community.

## CONCLUSION

Social media is a platform that offers various features enabling users to engage in digital activities in their daily lives. In the Rujak Ngalun community of Mekar Sari Village, social media serves as a comprehensive and user-friendly medium for social interaction, facilitating long-distance communication. Social media has become a necessity for the community due to the abundance of information and functions it provides, serving as a place for learning, shopping, and interacting with others. For the Rujak Ngalun community, social media plays a crucial role as a connector for direct community interactions. The use of social media in community interactions is highly beneficial, particularly regarding work and marketing. Social media also facilitates communication for the Rujak Ngalun community, whether with individuals or groups. However, social media also has significant impacts. According to several informants, the presence of social media allows the community to easily fall prey to hoaxes and misinformation that are received and shared publicly. Additionally, social media can diminish interactions among nearby community members, particularly among youth, as they prefer to engage through social media rather than with those around them.

Based on the discussion regarding the impact of social media usage on the interactions of the Rujak Ngalun community in Mekar Sari Village, it can be concluded that the effects are balanced between positive and negative. Therefore, it is essential to use social media wisely to gain benefits while minimising potential adverse effects. As a recommendation for government institutions, village heads, and youth leaders in Rujak Ngalun, Mekar Sari Village, collaboration is encouraged to promote awareness among the community and children to use social media more responsibly, aiming to mitigate the negative impacts on society.

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