# Post-Pandemic Media Engagement: Understanding Student Communication Practices in a Transformed Educational Landscape

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**ABSTRACT**

The pandemic has globally become a turning point for social change. Including, the learning process and communication practices becoming more integrated with digital media. This study aims to understand undergraduate students' engagement with media in the post-pandemic era in Indonesia. Drawing on mediatization, this study uses surveys, interviews, and students' daily notes to collect data. The researcher then visualizes data using Nvivo. Informants are 92 undergraduate students who wrote a daily note from 16th March to June 6th, 2024. The findings show an interrelation between undergraduate students' social dynamics, communication practice, and media engagement. This study reveals distinct patterns in media engagement among Indonesian students that were not previously documented, particularly regarding their adaptation to hybrid learning environments. Government regulations regarding social restrictions do not limit students' social interaction and learning process. Students' social interaction and communication practice become more embedded into media usage. The communication practices that are increasingly engaging with media keep continuing even after the pandemic is over. Media are converged so that students do not adopt or are dominated by one type of media. Likewise, students can get information from different types of media.

**Keywords:** *Media Engagement, Mediatization, Transmedia, Post-Pandemic*

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a social transformation for the global society. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommended health protocols to limit virus transmission, one of which was by organizing online distance learning (World Health Organization/WHO, 2020). The WHO recommendation became a reference for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in Indonesia to order the implementation of online learning. The ministry instructed interactions between students and teachers to be carried out online, for example through the Zoom or Google Meet platforms. At the university level, the instruction

was even accompanied by a call from the university for students to study from their respective homes.

The government's decision received both support and protest. Some people complain because their area did not have an adequate internet network (Sikirit, 2020). Meanwhile, some students felt that learning was not effective, because they did not understand the teacher's exposure through the media, or only received assignments without explanation. Some parents also opposed the government's decision because they did not have time to accompany their children to study, did not master the material, or did not have cell phones (Bebasari & Silalahi, 2020). Despite all the protests, Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim evaluated the results of online learning and assessed that the community was able to adapt and be creative in integrating technology in learning activities. Makarim discussed the possibility of integrating online systems for learning activities to be carried out permanently after the COVID-19 pandemic is over (Shofa, 2020).

However, public protests over the limitations of media infrastructure are inversely proportional to the high number of internet usage in Indonesia. In 2018, Indonesia Internet Network Information (Indonesia Internet Network Information/APJII, 2019) recorded that 64% of Indonesia's total population were internet users. Likewise, slow internet speeds and high prices (Alfarizi, 2019), contrast with the number of Indonesian internet users (171 million users) which occupies the fourth-highest position in the world (Figure 1).
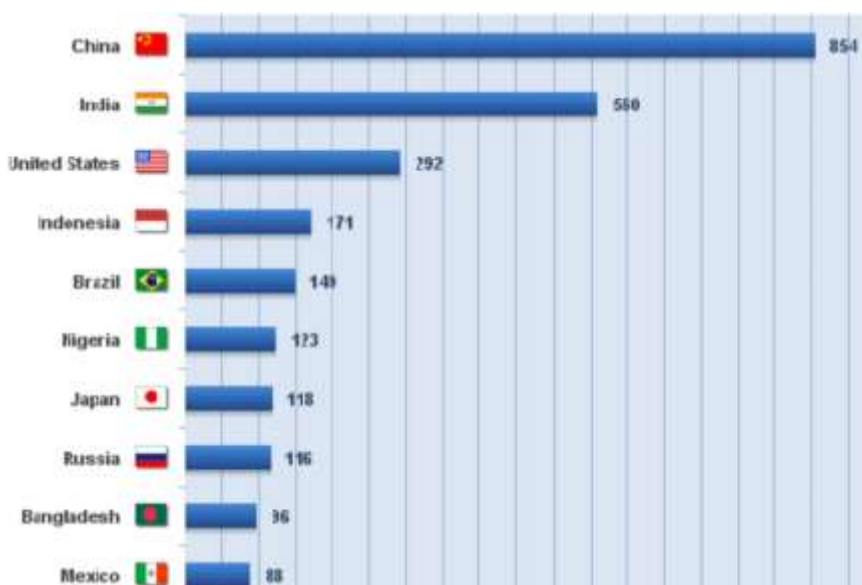


*Figure1. Countries with The Highest Number of Internet Users*

In Indonesia, the development of internet technology-based media first emerged in 1980 from the academic environment (Laoebela et al., 2023). The previous study related to internet use shows that the character of internet users is correlated with the level of education (Prayitno & Khoirunurrofik, 2020). Based on data, Indonesian youth are one of the highest social media users in Asia (Kharisma, 2022). The category of youth 16-30 years means covering the age of undergraduate students aged 19 years and over. Therefore, this study selected undergraduate students as research informants.

Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, research shows that social distancing rules have increased public engagement with the media, especially internet-based media (Fuchs, 2020). In Indonesia, previous studies have shown that other social activities such as political events (Candra et al., 2023), managing social problems (Amelia et al., 2023), and even religion

conflicts (Santoso & Djauhari, 2019) are also closely related to the use of media. Although the digital divide is still a major issue in the study of society and media in Indonesia (Oktavianoor, 2020), the limitations of internet-based media have contributed to the advancement of micro-scale economies (Eliana et al., 2023), community empowerment (Lidiati et al., 2023), mass mobilization (Lubis, 2019), and social movements (Kartika, 2021).

In June 2023, the Indonesian president lifted the pandemic status and revoked several regulations such as the implementation of social distancing. People returned to social interactions as before the pandemic, including freely engaging in face-to-face learning activities. Therefore, this study aims to understand how the post-pandemic situation is interrelated with students' media engagement, namely communication practices and types of media. Conceptually, this research also aims to demonstrate the mediatization concept as a comprehensive approach to media and social research.

This study refers to two theoretical thoughts related to the existence of media in society. First, each community has a different engagement with the media, because it is related to social dynamics in their respective environments (Yudha, 2021). Second, society is a *figuration*, that is an entity consisting of various elements and social actors who keep moving and negotiating (Ampudia de Haro, 2022). From these two thoughts, this study builds the argument that the transformation of a complex society requires the contribution of various communication media. In other words, society members use various types of media to create social integration. Therefore, the complexity of society is impossible to be dominated by one type of media platform. Instead, each person has the authority to choose certain types of media and form media engagement according to their respective situations or social needs.

Scholars state that people use the media as an intermediary for interaction (Aulia & Putri, 2024) or a tool to gain knowledge indirectly (Pentury & Anggraeni, 2021). Media as a *material vehicle* (Sorokin, 1947; Sri Rizki, 2023) has a physical form (movement, light, newspaper, TV), symbolic elements (social meaning or value), or both. Therefore, people can create social relevance to the external environment through the media, such as the relation with war situations (Astuti et al., 2022), disasters (Samatan et al., 2020), or pandemics (Fuchs, 2020).

There are two theoretical approaches to understanding the relationship between humans and the media, namely the mediacentric approach and the socio-centric approach (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). Mediacentric scholars place the media as the dominant aspect of societal change (Shehata & Strömbäck, 2021; J. Strömbäck, 2021). Research with a mediacentric approach became a trend in the 1960s along with the rapid development of media technology. Mediacentric scholar argues, the novelty of media formats has a significant impact on society (Livingstone, 2019). While socio-centric, seeing the media only reflects the reality of social life (Skey & Waliaula, 2021). That is, humans remain in control and authority over social dynamics. Instead, human-created social situations have fueled the development of media (Couldry & Hepp, 2016; Andreas Hepp, 2019).

Apart from being media-centric and socio-centric, some scholars have begun to pay attention to and discuss mediatization approaches (Ampudia de Haro, 2022; Lövheim & Hjarvard, 2019; Miller, 2019; Švelch, 2020). Sholars termed mediatization as an advanced approach or a key concept (Lundby, 2014) that is relevant to understanding the interrelationship of society with the media today. Mediatization scholars argue that socio-cultural transformation is closely related to the development of media and communication practices (A Hepp, 2019). That is, mediatization considers the dynamics of society as an accumulation of various social aspects -including the media in it-, and recognizes the ability of the media to shape and direct life(Jesper Strömbäck & Esser, 2014).

Mediatization studies see that the function of media is growing so that people use it to provide information to help service various social institutions (Lövheim & Hjarvard, 2019). Some mediatization scholars use a material approach to explore the impact of the technical

development of media (Bolin, 2024) or an institutional approach to understanding the adaptation of social institutions to media logic (Jiang et al., 2022). However, mediatization can also use a reality construction approach to examine people's practices in constructing media discourse (Pajnik et al., 2020) and using media (Krotz, 2017). Reality construction is also an approach to understanding the interplay between community interactions, reality, and media development. Mediatization approaches are not separate paths because in the end all three will be interconnected. For example, studies that use a material approach to understanding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) (Bolin, 2024), can then use a social constructivist approach to understand how participants' communication practice and meaning construction.

From the three approaches above, this study refers to mediatization as a concept to understand the relationship between society and the media. This study argues the media is just a tool or a means (Sri Rizki, 2023) even though it has developed so sophisticatedly. The practice of communication, values, and use of media is closely related to social situations formed by society (Krotz, 2017). Therefore, this study argues that needs, resources, and social situations have shaped student engagement in the media.

Previous mediatization studies emerged and explored the political sphere in Western countries (Campus, 2020) as those researchers argue that Western countries have become the center and reference for the development of media technology globally (Celinski, 2018). However, in the last two decades, mediatization researchers have penetrated the social and cultural fields (Kramer, 2011; Hjarvard, 2008) in developing countries and even rural areas (Jansson, 2010). In Indonesia, mediatization studies have been carried out in the fields of culture (Handayani et al., 2020), politics (Maryani et al., 2019), and even religion (Kansong et al., 2022).

The broad scope of the concept of mediatization has drawn criticism from several scholars. Deacon & Stanyer (2014) for example, assess mediatization as an abstract concept that is out of focus. Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby (Hepp, et al., 2015) answer this criticism by arguing that mediatization is a comprehensive concept that can be understood through various approaches, fields of study, and is even still open for researchers to present their thoughts (Lunt & Livingstone, 2016). From the perspective of Communication and Media Science, for example, Hepp, Hasebrink, and Breiter (Hepp, et al., 2018) offer communicative figurations as a conceptual framework for unraveling mediatization research. The communicative figuration focuses on exploring media types, theme relevance, actor relations, and communication practices as communication elements in a mediatization.

In contrast to previous studies on communicative figurations, which focused on social aspects in general (Kannengießer, 2018), this study investigates the daily context of students. Research with a specific focus will offer more contextual findings and enrich insights into communicative figurations. In contrast to Kannengießer, (2018) who utilized observational methods, this study uses a qualitative approach through diary entries to capture students' various experiences during the post-pandemic period.

Despite the pandemic being over, the topic of media engagement among students remains relevant for several reasons. First, research about media engagement among students has long-term impact. The pandemic has fundamentally altered communication practices and media consumption habits. Understanding these shifts can provide insights into how students adapt to new norms in a post-pandemic world. Second, research about media engagement among students also has ongoing media evolution. As technology continues to evolve, it is crucial to investigate how these changes affect student interactions with media, especially as they transition back to in-person learning. Third, research about media engagement among students becomes educational insight. This research can inform educational institutions about effective media strategies that enhance learning and social interaction, which is vital for future curriculum development.

This study surpasses previous research by focusing specifically on the post-pandemic context in Indonesia, providing insights into how students' media engagement has evolved in response to both technological advancements and changes in educational practices. Previous research on students' media engagement in Indonesia after the Covid-19 pandemic using *daily notes* has also never been done. This study can be an insight for the government, agencies, or educational institutions to organize distance learning with the proper media and format. This study also enriches mediatization research in the realm of daily life from a non-Western perspective.

**METHODS**

The data in this study are the types of media, communication practices, and students' daily experiences when dealing with the media in the post-pandemic. This study initiates data collection with a survey method to map students' general communication practices. Data mining was then continued with a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of undergraduate students regarding their media engagement in a post-pandemic context. By utilizing diary entries and in-depth interviews, this approach allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective experiences and perceptions (Alamri, 2019).

The daily diary method involves participants recording their media usage and experiences on a daily basis, allowing for an in-depth exploration of their engagement patterns over time (Alamri, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2017). This method is particularly effective for capturing subjective experiences and has been employed in various studies to gather rich qualitative data. Researchers understand qualitative research as a (systematic) bridging process (Gioia, 2021) to understand the complexity of social phenomena into a scientific, contextual, and subjective explanation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This study collects diaries so as not to limit the breadth of the informant's experience and asks open-ended questions in the interview to make the informant's experience irreducible when written in text form.

The interview guide used in this study was developed based on an established framework in qualitative research. Expert research in the field of mediatization has used the communicative figurations framework as an interview guide (Andreas Hepp, Simon, et al., 2018; Kannengießer, 2018).

The researcher refers to Hamidi who explains that the selection of informants purposively (Sukmawati et al., 2023) must pay attention to the selection of research locations that have clarity of place, social phenomena, and location specifics (Hamidi, 2004). As a study related to the Covid-19 post-pandemic, this research was located in Depok as the hometown of the first COVID-19 patient in Indonesia. Depok has also been recorded several times as the area with the highest transmission rate of Covid-19 patients in Indonesia. In addition, as a study of the use of media for students, Depok is an educational city that has two major universities, namely the Universitas Indonesia and Gunadarma University.

This study then observes Gunadarma University as the research site because it has become a university that has conducted information and communication technology (ICT)-based learning with more than fifteen campuses spread across big cities such as Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi. This study collects data from 92 undergraduate students. As qualitative research, this study does not emphasize sample size for generalizability. However, this qualitative research focuses on achieving data saturation, where no new information is being obtained from additional respondents. In this study, data collection continued until saturation was reached, ensuring a rich understanding of students' media engagement experiences.

The researcher determined the informants based on the criteria of understanding and willingness to provide information honestly, consistently, and disciplined by writing daily notes. Researchers asked students to write activities related to media, types of media, and the

purpose of using media from March 16th to June 6th, 2024. Researchers provided flexibility and openness of formats (McLeod, 2019) so that students were free to write down personal experiences. The researcher then conducted another interview through a virtual class on June 27th 2024, to explore the experiences and practices of student media communication during the government implementing social restrictions. In addition to gaining deeper experience, interviews are an attempt to test the validity through the triangulation of data and sources. The validity test was also carried out by assessing the consistency of the informants' diaries which were continuously collected until the researcher felt bored and enough to conclude.

Researchers conducted a study discussion based on display data that had been processed using NVivo software. NVivo has been tested to process unstructured data or information through data collection, processing, analysis, and presentation methods (Limna, 2023). Researchers use NVivo only as a tool to process and visualize data. As for data analysis, it is entirely the work of the researcher. This study employed data triangulation by utilizing multiple sources of data—diary entries and interviews—to ensure a comprehensive understanding of students' media engagement practices.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
### Results

This sub-chapter conceptualizes the interrelation between student social life and engagement with the media during a pandemic using communicative figurations. Scholars state, communicative figuration has four elements as the focus of analysis, namely media ensembles, theme relevance, actor constellation, and communicative practice (Andreas Hepp, Breiter, et al., 2018). The original findings of this study highlight that students utilized multiple forms of media not only for educational purposes but also for socialization and entertainment. This multifaceted engagement indicates a shift in how students perceive and interact with media in their daily lives.

The results below processed through NVivo software provided visualizations of thematic connections among students' media engagement practices. These outputs facilitated a clearer understanding of how different media types influenced communication practices during the post-pandemic period.

Figure 2 below shows media engagement, where it appears that each student accesses several types of media (Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, TV streaming, Line, TV, Twitter/X, book, online game, google). This means that there are no students who only access one media. Likewise, there is no single medium that dominates students. Students' communication practices are then centered on four contexts, that are seeking for information, entertainment, lectures, and socialization.
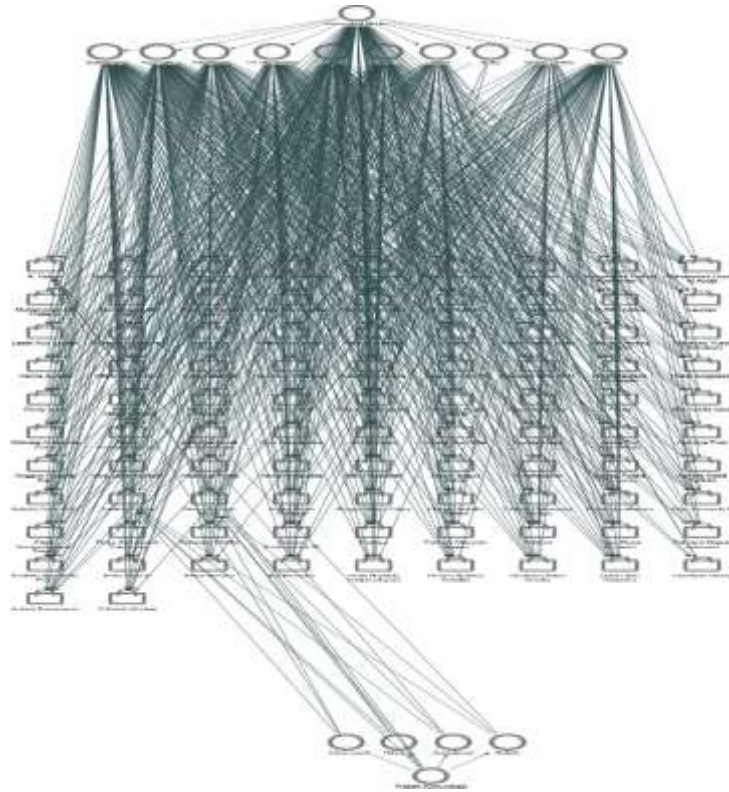
*Figure 2. Students Engagement on Media*

To analyze engagement more clearly, the researcher enlarged the interrelation between three randomly selected students (AR, AM, and AF) and the media as shown in Figure 3.
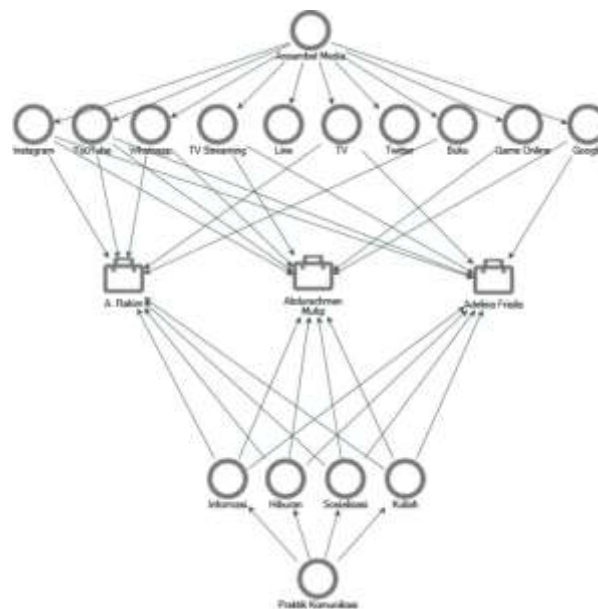


*Figure 3. Detail of Students Engagement on Media*

*Ansambel media*

Chart 1 below shows the media accessed by students. Even though students access more than one media, they have their motivations and practices when using certain media.

Instagram and WhatsApp are the most accessible medium because many student relations are connected in them.

*Chart 1. Media Ensemble*
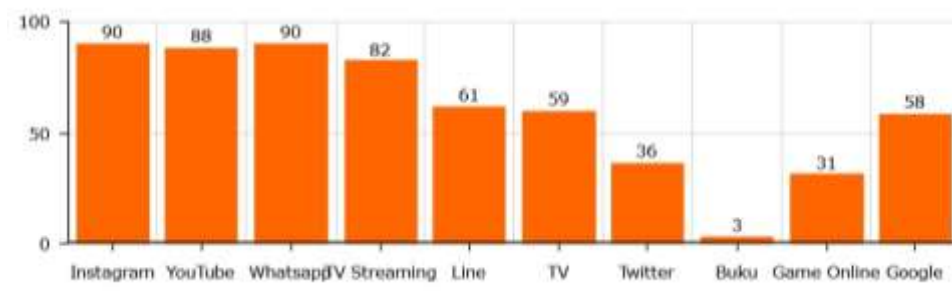


Students AF choose WhatsApp because it seems more personal, so messages are faster responded to. "WhatsApp feels like a direct call or message. WhatsApp is different from other media such as Instagram or Facebook which can be searched by many people. For WhatsApp, we must know directly to know the number. Well, usually because it is more personal, our messages will be responded to more quickly," (AF, personal interview, July 2024).

AF's opinion is similar to AR's reasoning: "It seems all my friends use. For other media, sometimes we forget passwords or can create multiple accounts, including fake accounts. However, people tend to use numbers longer because they are integrated with cellphone numbers. We also can't change cellphone numbers carelessly because we have to register using a population identity number," (AF, personal interview, July 2024).

The second medium that is widely used by students is Instagram. Students YP claims to be happy with Instagram because they can edit and share photos easily. "Nowadays there are many *Instagram-able* places, such as tourist attractions, places to eat, parks, airports, cafes, and even various corners of campus. People now also love to share photos of food, makeup, or fashion looks. Usually, after cooking, dressing up, or going to those places, I share photos using Instagram," (YP, personal interviews, July 2024).

Meanwhile, YouTube is the third most accessible media for students because it can see a lot of detailed information, complete with visual displays, can be arranged, and directly. Student FK states: "Almost every day I watch YouTube listen to songs, get lecture material, or listen to podcasts in between meals, showers, or driving. The good thing about YouTube is that we can skip the ads and immediately look for the spectacle we want. Compared to radio, we have to wait for the announcer to play a song. But for YouTube, we are free to choose or repeat," (FK, daily notes, July 2024).

Student AF agrees with FK: "I learned a lot from YouTube because I can see a process visually and there are voice directions. We can also slow down the speed or repeat the video. So, watching YouTube as if taught directly. I learned to cook, apply makeup, make lecture presentations, and learn some webinar documentations from YouTube," (AF, daily notes, July 2024).

Meanwhile, books have become a slightly accessible medium because students prefer to seek information directly and for free through digital journals or blogs. "We have to spend money to buy books. There are many free books, journals, or blogs on the internet as sources of information. For a student like me, using resources on the internet is enough," (AM, personal interviews, July 2024).

However, there are still students who choose books because they get pleasure when reading in print. Student AA explains: "I prefer to buy certain books. For example, biographies or best-selling fiction from famous authors. Reading books also seems classic. I used to read

books at home, on the train, or in class. I feel there is a special pleasure in owning, reading, and storing these books," (AA, personal interviews, July 2024).

*Theme of Relevance*

The theme of relevance data sources include diary entries collected from 92 undergraduate students over a three-month period, alongside follow-up interviews conducted to deepen understanding of their media engagement practices. These sources provide rich qualitative insights into how students navigate their media usage in relation to their social contexts.

The theme of relevance is the topic that makes media users connect. This study groups students' media engagement into four broad themes; seeking information, entertainment, lectures, and socialization as shown in Figure 4.



*Figure 4. Theme of Relevance*

Many students look for information about the social dynamics, politics, government policies in the post-pandemic, or daily news in the city of Depok -such as accidents, restaurant promos, or other social issues. "I am looking for a lot of information about the situation after the pandemic, the latest government regulations, or campus policies in the post-pandemic. Now I understand a little about health science, knowledge about viruses, even government figures. Before the pandemic, I only cared about information or sources of lecture materials," (YP, personal interviews, July 2024).

Students AM finds entertainment such as watching movies, listening to songs, watching funny memes or the following gossip on public figures through various media. "During pandemic, I felt bored faster because I only did activities at home. I spent a lot of time watching movies, joining online gaming communities, and playing games. After pandemic, that behavior become my habits," (AM, personal interviews, July 2024).

Student AM's statement is in line with AF's experience: "Before the pandemic, I didn't use the media for entertainment. But during pandemic, while I was at home and there was nothing to do, so I joined online forums for girls. The forum was quite entertaining because I could learn to cook, get tips on how to dress up, tell stories about married life, share diet experiences, and even know celebrity gossip. Now, I keep doing that, just like addictions," (AF, personal interviews, July 2024).

In addition, students use the media for lectures. For example, students look for materials, attend lectures, complete administration, or coordinate with friends and lecturers through the media. "Now all college matters are really through the media. We keep studying online also. Coordination, work sharing, and group presentations are also through the media," (L, daily notes, July 2024).

Informant AP adds, "Before the pandemic, campuses already had virtual classroom facilities. But in the past, only 30% used virtual classes. During pandemic, 100% of lectures are online. Even the matters of paying, examinations, study planning, taking grades, and even scientific writing guidance are also done through the media. We use virtual class around 50% after pandemic," (AP, daily notes, July 2022).

In terms of socialization, students still carry out social interactions through direct messages on WhatsApp and Instagram; comment on Instagram or Facebook status; or chat through online forums, even online games. However, students still feel the difference between face-to-face interaction and through the media. Students feel a longing to interact and joke directly. Especially, in matters of lectures, students' AM claim to understand better when the lecturer explains the material directly. "I still prefer face-to-face meetings. For example, in lectures, I understand the lecturer's explanation more directly. Joking is also more fun when sitting together. Sometimes there are funny facial expressions or facial expressions of our friends. Things like that only exist when we meet face to face," (AM, daily notes, July 2024).

*Actor Constellation*

Data about actor constellation were derived from both qualitative interviews and diary entries collected from participants. Quotations from interviews are included as evidence of findings. The constellation of actors shows the relationship of the communication participants; whether as competitors, friends, or groups. Students use various media to accommodate these social relations. For example, students L forms study groups to coordinate on assignments, join online forums to exchange opinions, and look for colleagues who have similar hobbies through online communities. "During the pandemic, our study groups often coordinated via WhatsApp. Unlike before the pandemic, we can still group or meet at campus, cafes, or parks. After pandemic, we use media just to arrange face-to-face meetings," (L, daily notes, July 2024).

Student L's statement is similar to AR: "I feel like I have made a lot of new virtual friends and groups during the pandemic. I join a lot of forums or online communities. I also can still communicate with friends or groups that previously could be met face to face. So, I feel like I'm not losing old friends, I'm getting more new friends. Now, after pandemic, sometimes wee meet in the caffe or park," (AR, daily notes, July 2024).

Interesting, the use of online games is as a medium to get allies in the match while looking for opponents in the game. "When playing and joining online game friends, we can cooperate and compete with each other. Sometimes because we often play opponents, we get to know each other and ask for advice so that our game is good. Rarely we become enemies in offline meetings with our online enemies. The point is, from playing opponents, we can become real friends. We friends in real life as we understand, the context of our competition is only in the game," (AM, personal interview, July 2024).

*Communicative Practice*

Communication practice describes the form or context of the situation in which messages are placed. Quotations from interviews are included as evidence of findings. The student explained that the pandemic changed their content and the way they use media. Previously, many students used Instagram to share photos. They upload photos of hanging out, activities with friends, culinary, make-up, or outfits.

However, the pandemic condition that requires staying at home makes students AF no longer often upload outdoor activities or hanging out photos with friends. "The pandemic has made me upload photos less frequently. At that time, I thought, it's only at home. So, what's there to photograph? But now, as I can travel free, I upload photos of traveling, hanging out with friends, or cool outfits," (AF, daily notes, July 2024).

The pandemic limited and decreased the activeness of students in using the media. The students were more passive and just enjoying other people's content for a longer duration. Then after pandemic students L state that she become active and often upload more activities on social media. "During the pandemic, the frequency and duration of accessing my media increased. After the pandemic, I used social media more often even though the duration was intermittent. Maybe only about 10 to 20 minutes when I wake up, between meals, on the train, or between lessons. I may stop holding the gadget only when going to the bathroom, eating, or when helping my parents," (L, daily notes, July 2024).

Student DH also has the same reason with L: "In the past, during pandemic, I only watch YouTube, see movies, or watch artists' posts, celebrities' status, or vloggers' videos. Watching various artist activities, vloggers, or movies makes me not bored at that time. But now, I upload status or photos on social media such as Instagram or Twitter because of many activities," (DH, daily notes, July 2024).

**Discussions**

This discussion will compare the findings with previous studies, illustrating both consistencies and divergences that highlight new trends in student media engagement. Several important points can be underlined from the findings. First, technological developments create media converge and intertwine. Therefore, secondly, the convergence and the existence of the new media do not eliminate other or old media. Third, governments' policy of social restrictions does not eliminate social relations. Before, during, and after pandemic; social relations are only transformed in the form of interactions using particular media. Fourth, students relate to various types of media and choose certain media because of the social context in their respective environments.

The findings show that media users understand the message uploaded to one media can spread easily to various media. However, users must understand the character of each medium or media platform and adjust the format when uploading messages. This study also shows that one type of media does not dominate, be accepted, and adopted by a group or a society. Students -as part of the society figuration- have certain characters and complexities. Thus, in a social transformation during a pandemic, students will be involved with various media with their respective communication practices.

The social contexts are also closely related to media engagement. Despite the various experiences and arguments about communication practices and media engagements, the results show that social life has been mediated. This means that various community activities are increasingly integrated with the media (Livingstone, 2019). After the pandemic, mediatization in the context of undergraduate students' appears as a situation where various media have been intertwined (transmedia) more comprehensively (Jansson, 2013) and are related to various social aspects (Yudha, 2021) to be able to shape and construct discourse (Wohn & Bowe, 2014) and community communication practices (Lilleker, 2006).

Communication practices through media become the focus mediatization. However, the social dynamics are not only determined by the media itself (Lundby, 2014). The society is a large complex entity with various relations and social elements in it. Thus, community change - as part of communicative figurations- will be achieved through a long and complex process (metaprocess) (Lunt & Livingstone, 2016) that involves all social elements. In that communicative figurations, people will use various types of communication media to create relationships and move together (Firdausi et al., 2022).

However, several mediatization studies focus on one medium (Baviera et al., 2019). This is possible because mediatization can examine micro to macro phenomena. However, these studies need to emphasize the existence of various types of media in society (Bjur et al., 2014). In other words, mediatization research that focuses on one media should not create an

understanding that only one media dominates society. I'm afraid that this research seems to reduce social relations or break the ties between media in today's society.

Mediatization emphasizes that the existence of one (new) media does not necessarily eliminate the existence of another (old) media (Jenkins & Plasencia, 2006). Instead, different types of communication media are interrelated (Yudha, 2021), convergent (Firdausi et al., 2022), and hybrid (Aslinger & Huntemann, 2013), especially when the internet emerged (Kharisma, 2022). For example, people can use the internet to watch TV streams on their mobile phones, just as TV shows someone's personal YouTube channel. Therefore,  scholars said that the internet has become a revolutionary media technology (Rahmawati & Sujono, 2021). This means that not only people can use the internet in various aspects of social life (Livingstone, 2019), but the internet can also integrate all communication media (Latzer, 2013).

The presence of the internet that can integrate various types of media makes people understand that public communication intermediaries are not only limited to conventional mass media such as newspapers, radio, or TV. Instead, all media users, both individuals, governments, and even the global community can interact with each other in a network and network between internet-based media (Miller, 2019). The internet also allows users to manipulate messages (Woolley & Howard, 2019), even offering certain information based on media usage data (Wohn & Bowe, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

In summary, this study addresses the critical issue of media engagement among undergraduate students in Indonesia during the post-pandemic era. Students exhibit diverse media usage patterns influenced by their social contexts and experiences. This research not only enriches existing literature on media engagement but also provides valuable insights for educational institutions seeking to enhance online learning strategies.

This study concludes that post-pandemic media engagement among undergraduate students reflects significant shifts influenced by technological advancements and changing educational practices. This research underscores the need for adaptive learning strategies that consider students' diverse media usage patterns.

As interpretive research, the findings of this study are subjective, contextual, and specific. The findings can be discussion material on media and social study, but cannot be generalized to other societies, research, or social situations. For further study, researchers are suggested to explore the digital divide and media literacy that is becoming social problems in Indonesia in the field of education. I assume the digital divide and media practice are related to the diversity of technological development, socio-culture, and structure of society. I suggest that studies in the field of media and society can also further discuss various social and cultural contexts in Indonesia to become an enrichment of mediatization study from a non-Western perspective.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared that they have no conflicts of interest.

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