CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the research; it presents the background and an overview of the study, constituting the research questions, aim and significance of the study, data collection and analysis, as well as clarification of key terms. The chapter closes with an outline of the organization of the paper.

1.1. Background

Globalization has become "the modern or post-modern version of the proverbial elephant, described by its blind observers in so many diverse ways" (Jameson 1998 in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 31). Globalization cannot be separated from the processes and results of global interconnections. It, consequently, is frequently associated with the idea of global citizenship, where people around the world are connected, constantly engaging with the cultural others. Globalization has changed the face of many cultures and transformed many aspects of human life—both at the individual and the societal levels, affecting the socio-cultural, linguistic, economic, political, technological, ecological, and even the individual levels. The impacts of globalization are simply far-reaching.

In relation to technological development that globalization has brought about in recent times, the Internet appears to play a crucial role in improving communication across borders. The Internet has also been considered as the core of all the technological products. One of the most influential products of the Internet is social media. Back then, people had to buy goods, such as clothes, books, shoes and the like, from shops or department stores, and they had to go there physically. Now, people have the choice to buy those products via social media, such as advertisements on Instagram, Facebook, LINE, or Twitter. The social media have also provided individuals with easy and instant access to obtain information from different places across the globe and connect with people in distant locations. In light of this, social media can change not only people's lifestyles but also the way they see the world through different information

and ideas—or 'cultural flows'—they are exposed to. Lindgren (2017) argues that the Internet made it possible for people to make believe that they were anyone or anything they liked. Social media is one of the most influential products of the Internet. Another example of the power of the Internet is that it enables us to be connected to people in distant places, even to those on the other side of the globe. We can be connected via social media, such as Instagram and Facebook, and communicate with them in real-time, albeit the far-away distance.

On a personal level, social media has impacted me tremendously. It opens my horizons and enables me to access information regarding my hobby, playing basketball. Because of social media, especially Facebook, I have become quite knowledgeable about the NBA (National Basketball Association), which is an American basketball league. Facebook serves much information about what is currently happening in the NBA. However, there have also been times when social media created insecurities within me. For instance, I sometimes feel anxious when I post things on Instagram because I feel that the quality of my posts is not as good as others; I sometimes feel unconfident when I see an account that shares a variety of great photos. For example, I posted a picture where I used a layering technique on that photo, but I did not get many comments and likes on that picture. That post made me even more anxious when I then saw a picture using the same technique posted by someone on Instagram, and he got more likes than I did. Taking social media to a religious context, I am sometimes confused when some people share posts dealing with religion, as I then become unsure which actually reflects the true values; there is too much information on social media, but identifying which information is false and invalid can be quite challenging. Because of the rapid traffic of information, ideas and values on social media, I sometimes become unsure of who I really am, being ambivalent about my own stance.

Identity, according to Hall (1992), is a complex entity, and it is even more so in today's postmodern world. As globalization accelerates the spreading of ideas and values, most notably through the Internet, individuals thus may constantly be faced with the challenges of making sense of these 'foreign' thoughts. The bombardment of

new ideas, sometimes, can put individuals in a state of ambivalence, not knowing which position to take, as I have illustrated with my own case above. This state of in-betweenness, in turn, can lead to a 'crisis of identity' (Hall, 1996), which has been defined as the loss of a stable sense of self.

A number of research studies have suggested that social media can indeed affect an individual's identity. Nurhantoro and Wulandari (2017) explored the use of English on Instagram and its influence on Indonesian users' identity. They pointed out that language can be the first identity they have since they think, speak and communicate through it (p. 43). The study shows that the use of English give a positive influence to the respondents as they can communicate what is on their mind to all Instagram users all around the world. Also the respondents of this study thinks that they do not feel worry about their identity even though they often use English to communicate. Guta and Karolak (2015), for example, explored how social media affect Saudi women in expressing and negotiating their identities. Saudi women, as the study pointed out, tend to adhere to strict boundaries because of the cultural and societal norms. The study revealed that social media was able to help these Saudi women reclaim their voices, as the social media provided them with space to express their opinions without fear. They felt 'liberated' and also protected because they could use nicknames and multiple accounts on social media. Van Dijck (2013) also explores how social media, in this case Facebook and LinkedIn, can shaped users' public identities, how both platforms interfaces can construct users' personal and professional identities. The study shows that different social media somehow affect a person to present a different persona on each social media. In the study, users on Facebook tend to stimulate 'social' identity and prioritize self-expression more than self-promotion, meanwhile on LinkedIn, user will be focus more on self-promotion and build professional identity. The study suggests that both social media appear to be important parts in forging users' normative behavior.

Due to the aforementioned phenomenon, where one's identity may be altered or even transformed due to social media, I was therefore intrigued to explore my peers'

opinions regarding the matter. Consequently, this study aims to inquire into a group of university students' perceptions of and experiences in engaging with social media, while also exploring how these perceptions towards social media use affect their sense of self by which those two aims of this study become the gap between those two mentioned studies above.

1.2. Research questions

This research is conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. How engaged are Indonesian university students with social media?

2. What are their perceptions towards social media use?

1.3. Significance of the study

This research is expected to provide an understanding into how globalization can impact people, especially young adults, at the individual level. The study intends to provide insights into the views and experiences of some Indonesian university students on social media and how their identities may be affected by it. In so doing, this research is expected to raise awareness of the 'hidden powers' embedded on social media to the extent that it can alter, transform or even put one's identity into crisis. At the same time, this research is expected to widen and promote research possibilities in our study program because research studies on cultural studies, globalization and identities are still scarce. This research, hopefully, sheds light on the importance of developing critical thinking skills as one engages with the various ideas and values on social media.

1.4. Clarification of key terms

- Cultural flows

  Cultural flows refer to multidirectional movements and re-allocations of human beings, artifacts and ideas within global, national and regional contexts (Tzanelli, 2011).

- Identity

Identity, according to Gee (2000), is how we are being recognized as a certain "kind of person" in a given context. Delfanti and Arvidsson (2019) suggest that certain kinds of identity can also be formed through social media since this space is one of the "theaters" where individuals represent their own self in public.

- Social media

Social media are web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by sharing and consuming information (Nations, 2019). Social media provides a mechanism for people to connect, communicate, and interact with each other and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites (Correa, Hinsley, Zúñiga, 2009).

1.5. Organization of the paper

This paper is organized into five chapters as follows:

1. **Introduction**

   This chapter introduces the research by providing the background of the study, the research questions and the significance of the study. The chapter also presents clarification of key terms and an outline of how the paper is organized.

2. **Theoretical Review**

   This chapter reviews the fundamental literature employed in the study to reveal the connection between social media and identity. It presents an elaboration of the concepts of globalization and its characteristics, globalization and the emergence of the Internet and social media, globalization and identity, and previous studies conducted related to the present research.

3. **Research Methodology**

   This chapter describes the approach used in this study to collect and analyze the data in order to answer the research questions. It starts with

a description of the qualitative research and case study, followed by the research questions, data source, data collection, and ends with the data analysis.

4. **Findings and Discussion**

    This chapter presents the findings and discussion in relation to the themes emerging from the data. The main purpose of this chapter is to answer the research questions.

5. **Conclusion**

    The final chapter of this research presents the conclusion that have been drawn from the overall findings in the previous chapter. Suggestions for future research in the area are also included in this chapter.