CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design adopted in this study to answer the research questions: (1) How engaged are Indonesian university students with social media? and (2) How may their engagement with social media affect their sense of self? The chapter starts with a description of the qualitative research and a case study research design, followed by the research participants and data sources, data collection, and ends with the data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

The present study applied a qualitative research method to discover a group of university students' experiences on social media and how these experiences may affect their sense of identity. Qualitative research, according to Mohajan (2018), is a form of social action that stresses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals. Qualitative research data are typically collected in the participants' setting, and that they are analyzed inductively, building from general to particular themes, with the researcher making interpretation of what the data means (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study specifically employed a qualitative case study research design, as elaborated below.

Case study, is a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011). A case study usually analyzes a limited number of events or phenomena deeply; as Devare (2015) argues, the case study is based on the investigation of the comparatively fewer people, sometimes confined to a minimal number of cases only. In Merriam (2009), the case study can be characterized as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Particularistic means that the case study focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. Descriptive here refers to the analyses that are detailed, providing a complete description of the

phenomenon being studied, while the word heuristic signals that the case study should illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The case under study in this research inquiry is the use of social media by a group of Indonesian university students and how they perceive their engagements on social media to affect their sense of self.

3.2. Research Questions

This research has been 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?

3.3. Participants and Data Sources

The participants involved in this study was a group of students that belong to a class. This group consists of thirty undergraduate university students, who were in their final year of study. All of them were (and still are) actively engaged on social media. Their ages ranged from 20 to 23, and, out of the thirty participants, nine were males and twenty-one were females.

This research employed two data collection techniques: distribution of an online questionnaire and individual interviews with six of the participants. These participants had been chosen due to their insightful responses given on the questionnaire. Each of these data collection techniques are elaborated below.

3.3.1. Online Questionnaire

Questionnaires have been regarded as a structured way of collecting "simple, factual information" (Gillham, 2000, p. 59) In this study, the questionnaire was written in *Bahasa Indonesia and was* distributed online with the purpose of gathering the participants' basic profiles, such as names, age and hobbies, and information needed for the study. The names given in Chapter Four, however, are pseudonyms. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section dealt with questions that would reveal their social media engagements; it consisted of four questions, namely: (1) how long have you been using the Internet?, (2) which social media platform(s) do

you usually visit?, (3) for what purpose(s) do you use social media?, and (4) how long do you spend daily on social media? With each of these questions, a number of choices were given. The second section covered ten Likert-scale items (strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, strongly agree) as follows:

1. *Saya secara rutin menggunakan media sosial*. (I regularly use social media.)
2. *Media sosial merupakan bagian penting dari hidup saya*. (Social media is an important part of my life.)
3. *Dengan bermedia sosial saya merasa menjadi bagian dari komunitas global*. (Being on social media makes me feel become part of a global community.)
4. *Media sosial memperluas wawasan saya.* (Social media broadens my horizons.)
5. *Media sosial terkadang memunculkan kebingungan*. (Social media sometimes creates confusion.)
6. *Media sosial mempengaruhi cara pandang terhadap diri saya sendiri*. (Social media influences the way I see myself.)
7. *Media sosial mempengaruhi cara pandang saya terhadap orang lain/budaya lain dan lingkungan sekitar.* (Social media influences the way I see other people/cultures and my surrounding.)
8. *Media sosial terkadang menimbulkan pertentangan dalam diri saya.* (Social media sometimes creates inner-conflicts.)
9. *Media sosial mampu mengubah nilai-nilai dan keyakinan saya*. (Sosial media can change my values and beliefs.)
10. *Saya merasa lebih mampu berekspresi di media sosial.* (I feel I am more expressive on social media.)

The third section of the questionnaire consisted of three open-ended questions: (1) *Apa yang biasa anda ikuti atau baca di media sosial*? (What do you usually follow or read on social media?); (2) *Apa dampak positif yang paling anda rasakan dari penggunaan media sosial?* (What do you feel to be the most positive impact(s) of social media use?); and (3) *Apa dampak negatif yang paling anda rasakan dari penggunaan media sosial?* (What do you feel to be the most negative impact(s) of social media use?). The first research question regarding the student participants' engagements on social media have been mostly drawn from the responses obtained through the questionnaire.

3.3.2. Interviews

According to Gillham (2000), the interview is commonly employed in case studies; interviews can help provide further insights into phenomenon being studies,

suggesting explanations of critical events, as well as the insights reflecting the participants' point of views (Campbell & Yin, 2018). In this research, I adopted an in-depth semi-structured interview to gain further information from the participants. In-depth semi-structured interviews are verbal interchanges where one person, the interviewer, attempts to obtain information from another person by asking questions in a conversational manner (Longhurst, 2009). This method offers the researcher to explore issues from the participants in as much depth and from many angles. In-depth semi-structured interviews are usually conducted individually.

I interviewed six participants individually. The number of participants selected was based on the consideration of doability within the timeframe given for conducting the research. Further, the selection of the participants took into account the insightfulness of the responses they gave on the questionnaire. The questions posed in the interview sessions tended to highlight the impacts of social media on self. The interview protocol consisted of seven questions:

1. *Apakah media sosial merupakan suatu kebutuhan? Mengapa?* (Is social media a need? Why so?)
2. *Bagaimana cara anda berekspresi di media sosial?* (How do you express yourself on social media?)
3. *Apakah anda merasa lebih percaya diri berekspresi di media sosial?* (Do you feel more confident on social media?)
4. *Apakah anda merasa memiliki kepribadian yang berbeda ketika berekspresi di media sosial?* (Do you feel you display a different personality on social media?)
5. *Apakah anda pernah merasa bingung dan mengalami pertentangan batin dikarenakan pengaruh media sosial? Dalam konteks apa?* (Have you ever experienced confusion and inner conflicts because of social media?)
6. *Apakah anda merasa lebih kritis dengan keberadaan media sosial? Mohon dijelaskan.* (Do you feel you become more critical because of social media? Please explain.)
7. *Apakah kekritisan di atas lebih berpengaruh positif atau negatif terhadap diri anda sendiri?* (Do you think the above critical stance affects you positively or negatively?)

Each of the participants were given pseudonyms, and the interviews with them, which was conducted mostly in *Bahasa Indonesia*, were then transcribed. Relevant

excerpts from both interviews and questionnaire presented in Chapter Four were translated into English by myself.

3.4. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, two steps major steps were taken: the first deals with simple numerical analysis and, the second, content analysis dealing with statements uttered and responses given by the participants.

The data analysis in this study was rigorously done after the questionnaire and interviews were completed. In analyzing the data, simple numerical analysis was involved in processing the responses from several questions in Section 1 of the questionnaire. Another simple numerical analysis was also done in processing the Likert-scale items. Content analysis, however, were employed when dealing with the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the interview responses.

In responding to the first research question, which sought to find out the student participants' social media use, three major categories emerged: duration (the time they have been engaged with the Internet), platforms frequently visited and reasons for being on social media. With regard to the second research question, which inquired into the impacts of social media on self, two major categories emerged: positive and negative impacts. The positive impacts were further categorized into four, that is social media being perceived as a tool (1) to connect with others, (2) to develop one's self, (3) to relieve one's stress and (4) to express one's self. Likewise, the negative aspects were also sub-divided into four: (1) social media reduces real communication, (3) social media productivity, (3) social media creates 'busybody culture', and (4) social media triggers confusion, ambivalence and inner conflicts. These categories are elaborated in the next chapter and are discussed in light of the theories adopted.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explained the research method that I used in this study. It has also provided justification for adopting the case study. Descriptions of how the data

were collected and analyzed have also been discussed. The findings are discussed in Chapter Four.