

Uses and Gratifications of Live Streaming Apps amongst Indonesian Youth: An Exploratory Study of Periscope

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Abstract

Indonesia, with a total online population of 93.4 million people in 2015, is one of key regions to watch in the development of digital ecosystem. Social media has been an integral part in Indonesian daily digital activity. APJII found that 87.4% of surveyed Indonesia internet users use social networks. That, coupled with the exponential growth of mobile and smartphone penetration create a promising future for industry practitioners as well as an area for further investigation for academics.

Social media evolves. In Indonesia, despite over 60 million users are connected to Facebook, there are always new space to tap into. One of which is live streaming apps that is in trend recently, Periscope. Globally, Periscope apps user is primarily youth aged 16-34 (81%) reported GWI which is very similar to the majority of Indonesia internet users (83% aged 18-35 year-old, according to APJII).

Non-probability, convenience sampling is used to reach out the 81 samples via online survey. Primary gratifications sought to use Periscope include passing time, entertainment, and coolness. Gratifications obtained by using Periscope include entertainment, information seeking, and relational maintenance.

Keywords: Periscope, social media, social networking sites, uses and gratifications.

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Introduction

As many as 93.4 million Indonesians are online today, eMarketer forecasted (Q2 2015). With total population of around 250 million people in the same year, the online population is approximately 37 per cent of all Indonesians. Indonesia online population size has been growing rapidly since 2013. From only around 72.8 million in 2013, it has grown 28% today, and is expected to remain growing in the years to come. The same source (eMarketer, Q2 2015) forecasted a 10 per cent CAGR of online which predicts a 133.5 million online Indonesian population in 2019.

Such rapid internet population growth, one of the reasons, is a result of the increased penetration of mobile and smartphone in the country. In 2015, eMarketer (July 2015) noted there are 149.2 million units of mobile phones in Indonesia, 55.4 million of which (or 37% of total mobile) are smartphones. This, with government initiative of developing and launching the 4G LTE infrastructure and services in December 2015 (Ngazis and Haryanto, 2015) are told to be the accelerator of internet population growth in Indonesia.

Association of Indonesia Internet Service Provider (APJII) researched 2,000 online Indonesians in 2014 and found that the profile of Indonesia online population is majorly (49 per cent) coming from young generation of 18-25 year-old (2015). With such a young generation dominating the online world, it comes with no wonder that one of leading online activities is using social media. APJII reported that 87.4% of Indonesia online population use social media daily.

Starcom MediaVest Group (SMG), in its new research report, found that in average Indonesians are online 67 minutes daily on social media (2015). If focused in the young generation of 18-25 year-old only, the number gets slightly higher. This group spend 74 minutes daily or 517 minutes a week on social media. This shows young generation is very active social media users.

Social media landscape in Indonesia itself changes very fast. After its rising use in 2012, Facebook saw a microblogging rival—Twitter—growing exponentially in 2013-2014. Path, which offers a more exclusive friendship circle, and Instagram started growing its user base in the country as well from late 2014 to recently.

SMG report (2015) noted that as many as 38.4 per cent of 18-25 year-old Indonesian accessed Facebook in the past 7 days. 11.6 per cent, 11.4 per cent, and 4.9 per cent of the same group of people respectively accessed Twitter, Instagram, and Path in the past 7 days.

The content of the aforementioned social media platforms is mainly images and text. YouTube, in other hand, provides an avenue for video content to grow. The site was accessed by 18.1 per cent of 18-25 year-old Indonesians in the past 7 days. Bigger than Path, Instagram, and even Twitter. Looking at the figure, marketers believe that video-based social platform like YouTube holds the opportunity for the future of marketing. In recent development, aside from YouTube, a video live streaming social media platform, Periscope, emerges.

Periscope as a platform allows its user to broadcast a live stream to followers as well as following live streams from users across the globe. Globally, a Global Web Index report, mentioned that the penetration of Periscope is 1%; slightly higher than its competitor Meerkat (i.e. 0.9% penetration worldwide). Like other social media, Periscope users are mainly youngsters. 81 per cent of its global users (including Indonesia) is of 16-34 year-old, where 32% of which is 16-24 year-old (2015).

Despite its new development in the country, it is interesting to explore and map the opportunity of the future as early as possible. With that perspective in mind, researcher posed the following research questions to be addressed in this study:

RQ1. What is the profile of current users of Periscope in Indonesia?

RQ2. How are Periscope users making use of its functions?

RQ3. What are the perceived gratifications sought and obtained by using Periscope?

Research Methodology

This study is an applied, exploratory study as this primary objective is to understand the uses and gratifications of Periscope, a new and growing live streaming social media platform in Indonesia. This study deploys quantitative approach in data collection and analyses.

Sampling method used in this study is non-probability, convenient sampling to get Periscope active users who are registered to the platform for at least a month. The data is collected through an online survey distributed to a set of mobile panel across Indonesia using JakPAT services from mid-October to 1 December 2015. The survey received 81 valid responses for analysis.

The variables explained in this study cover:

1. Profile of Periscope users
 - a. Sex
 - b. Age
 - c. Education
 - d. Monthly household expenditure
 - e. Social media ownership
 - f. Social media access
 - g. Uses of social media in general
2. Uses of Periscope
 - a. Frequency of Periscope access
 - b. Length of registered to Periscope
 - c. Uses of Periscope features
3. Gratifications sought and obtained (as defined by Ballard, 2011):
 - a. Relational maintenance
 - b. Passing time
 - c. Entertainment
 - d. Coolness
 - e. Information seeking
 - f. Expression

Results and Discussions

Profile of Current Periscope Users & Its Social Media Behavior

The study from 81 samples of current Periscope user in Indonesia reveals that majority, demographically, the users are females (54%), 16-25 year-old (77%), have attained degree from high/vocational school or bachelor degree (94%), with monthly household expenditure of <USD 100-300 (87%).

The result yields with general characteristic of social media user in Indonesia in general. They are young in age which makes them primarily first-jobber/early in their professional career.

Demographic Profile	N	%
Female	44	54%
Male	37	46%
16-20	16	20%
21-25	46	57%
26-30	15	19%
31-35	3	4%
>35	1	1%
High/Vocational School	37	46%
Diploma	5	6%
Bachelor	39	48%
< USD 100	28	35%
USD 101 - 200	22	27%
USD 201 - 300	20	25%
USD 301 - 500	7	9%
USD 501 - 750	2	2%
> USD 750	2	2%

Figure 1: Profile of Periscope Users in Indonesia

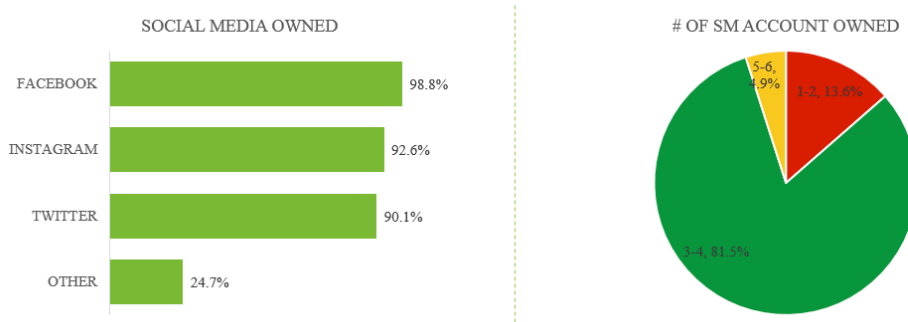


Figure 2: Social Media Account & Number of Account Owned

Most Periscope users are also active in Facebook. 98.8 per cent of them are active in Facebook, followed by Instagram (92.6%) and Twitter (90.1%). Other social media were also mentioned by the respondents including Path, LinkedIn, and Google+ (aside from Periscope).

Majority of respondents claimed to own 3-4 social media accounts (81.5%) in which they are active. There are 4.9 per cent who claimed to be active in 5-6 social media accounts. In average, respondents have at least 3 accounts of social media they are active in. This shows that regardless the pace of change of social media landscape in the country, consumers will remain active in the accounts they previously own prior to the birth and development of the new social media platform.

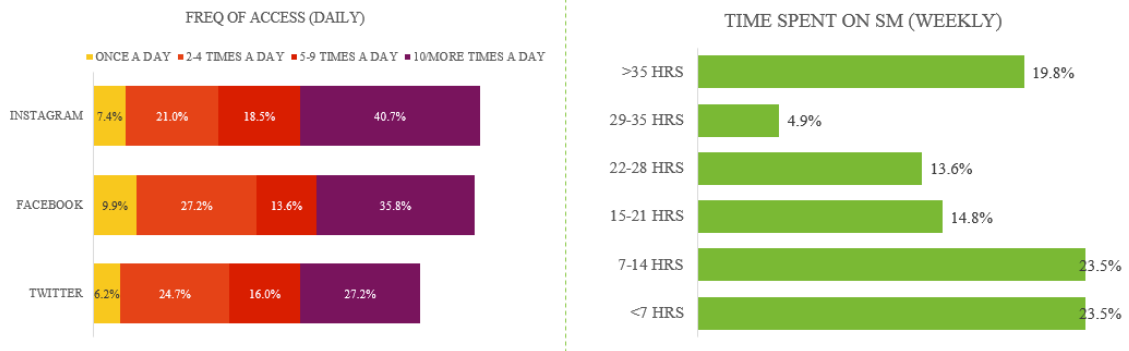


Figure 3: Frequency of Social Media Access & Time Spent on Social Media Weekly

Weekly, respondents reported to spend <7-28 hours (75.4%) on social media. This equals to around one third of a day to 1.2 day a week. If seeing at yearly level, thus, respondents would spend around 52-62 days on social media; a considerable amount of time. This is in line with the findings in APJII report capturing that majority of Indonesia online population is active in social media.

Next interesting thing to explore is that which social media they use most often in daily basis. The study uncovers that Instagram has been a platform increasingly important for the respondents, followed by Facebook and Twitter. As for Instagram (88%) and Facebook (86%), around nine out of ten respondents check it on daily basis, where 40.7% of respondents are checking Instagram and 35.8% are checking Facebook very actively (10 times/more a day). Unlike the two, Twitter has been in a way left behind by the users. Respondents claimed to be active in Twitter in this study is only 74% with only 27.2 per cent checking very actively; relatively far behind of its two rivals.

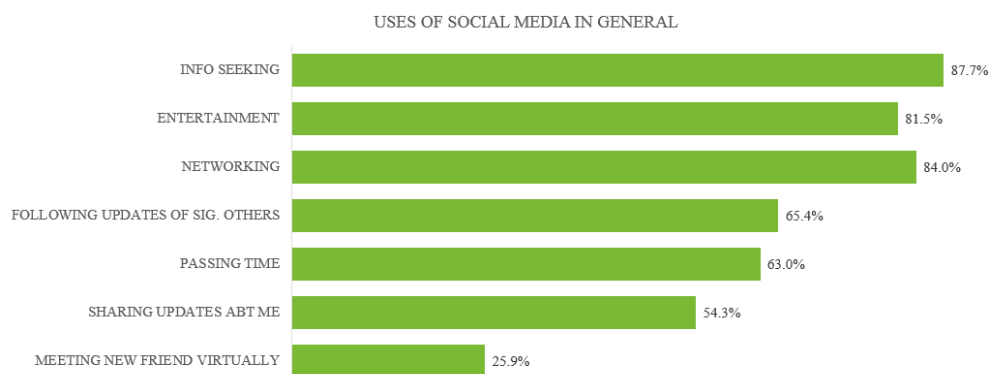


Figure 4: Uses of Social Media in General

Before analyzing further specifically for Periscope, analysis of uses of general social media is done to get an understanding on users' motivation on using social media in general. In the above figure, five key uses of social media include: (1) information seeking, (2) networking, (3) entertainment, (4) following updates of significant others, as well as (5) passing time. This indicates that respondents are only *consuming* the content of social media. They are less *expressing* themselves in the social media. Rather contrary to the aim of social media presence—which is to express self, opinion, or point of view freely—the actual motivation that drives the use of social media are of passive functions.

Periscope Uses & Gratifications

As a growing social media in the country, it comes with no wonder that respondents are mostly rarely accessing Periscope. 71.6 per cent of respondents reported so. In other hand, it is less than twenty per cent of the respondents (14.8%) who checked the platform regularly in daily basis.

Slightly over half of the respondents have been registered in Periscope for 2-3 months, while it is only 12.4 per cent who claimed to have been using the platform for 4 or over 5 months. This shows that Periscope is still in the stage of growing its user base in Indonesia presently. The future growth opportunity is there for the social media platform if looking at the number of respondents registered for 1-3 months.

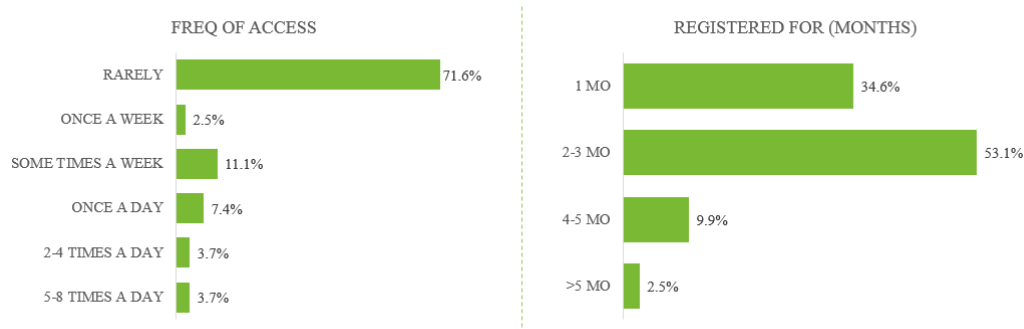


Figure 5: Frequency of Access & Length of Using Periscope

As a livestreaming social media platform, Periscope offers a wide range of features. Key features that are used by the most (41%) of respondents regularly include watching live broadcast and interacting in live broadcast. Of the two features used the most by respondents, interacting in live broadcast is done slightly more frequently by the respondents with 11.1 per cent of respondents reported to interact in live broadcast 5-10 or more times daily. Interaction currently made possible in Periscope is only commenting to and sending *love icons/stickers* during a live broadcast.

In other hand, 40% of respondents reported to have done a live broadcast. It is interesting to see this figure and the aforementioned information pertaining interactivity in Periscope as they indicate that users are using Periscope for a more active function in comparison to the social media in general.

This may be a result of the age Periscope in Indonesia (which is young) and the content currently available in Periscope (which is relatively limited—if compared to current big social media like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). Under such

condition, users are, in a way, *pushed* to be active with features that are more engaging than other social media—i.e. live streaming capability. This assumption can later be tested by comparing the present a

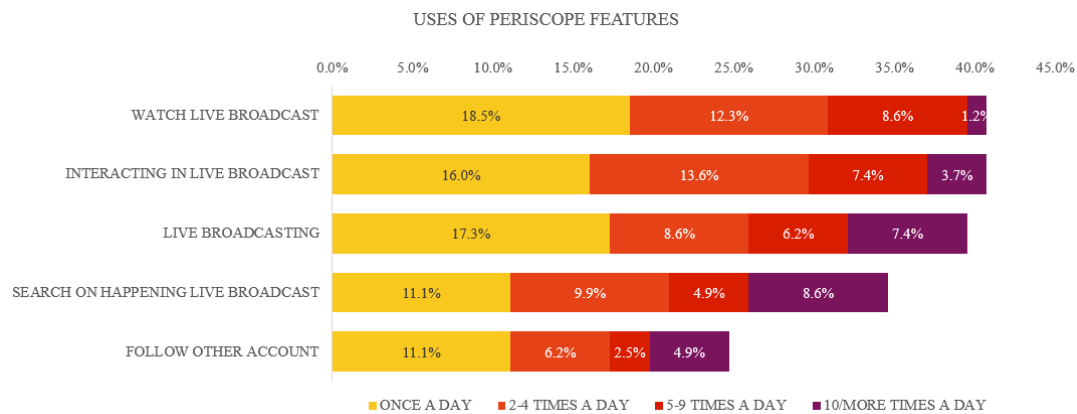


Figure 6: Uses of Periscope Features (detailed by frequency of daily use)

Despite being the less frequent feature of Periscope used by the respondents in daily basis, 25% repondents still use the follow function daily. Below figure shows the account or user they will follow on Periscope.

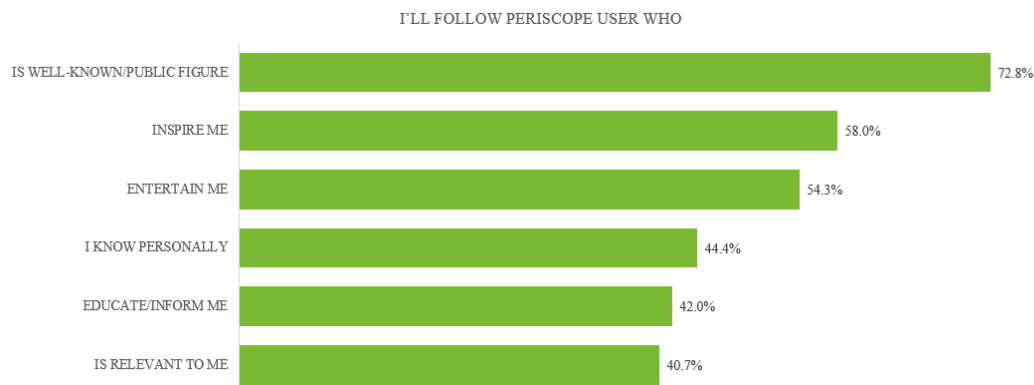


Figure 7: Account or User to Follow on Periscope

Seventy three per cent of respondents mentioned that they would follow a well-known individual or a public figure on Periscope. Other than that, respondents would follow the accounts or profiles who inspire (58%) and entertain (54%) themselves. This should reflect the type of content which motivate them to use the platform.

Having known the uses (of Periscope features) and profile or account respondents will follow above, in the following part of this paper, the gratifications from using Periscope are discussed. Below is a figure depicting the means (average) of gratifications sought and obtained of Periscope users.

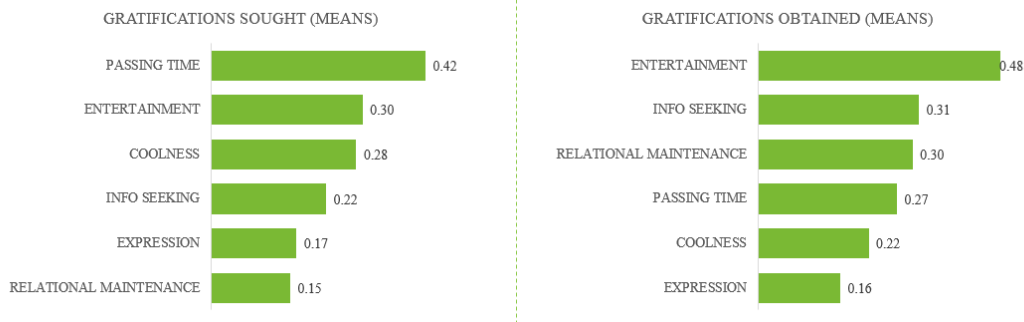


Figure 8: Gratifications Sought & Gratifications Obtained from Using Periscope

Top three gratifications sought by users to use Periscope include: passing time, entertainment, and coolness. According to this, free time or nothing time people have daily is the key motivator for people to use Periscope. In between commuting from home to school or work or lunch time, for instance, people would have time to check on their social media, or in this case, Periscope.

Aside from motivation to pass time or fill up free time, Periscope use is driven by entertainment gratification. This means respondents would look for entertaining content (live broadcast/stream) to use Periscope. This is in line with the nature Periscope has as a video-based social media platform. It is equally believed by researchers and marketers that video content conveys better message, thus more engaging and entertaining for the consumers. This is well captured in this finding.

Interesting gratification sought by users to use Periscope is the gratifications for coolness. From the above figure, it is safe to say that to the respondents, even only using or registered an account in the platform brings value to them. Periscope, a young, currently growing social media platform drives a perception of coolness to the users as they are seen as early adopters—which are cool, in their point of view.

Despite live broadcasting feature being one of prominent uses of Periscope, the respondents are not really motivated to use the platform to express themselves—including the self, opinion, and point of view.

In other hand, when seeing the gratifications obtained by users after using Periscope, similarity and difference in order are identifiable. Gratifications obtained, say some researchers, are better predictors for media consumption than gratifications sought. Three gratifications obtained leading the list include: (1) entertainment, (2) information seeking, and (3) relational maintenance.

This explains that respondents' entertainment gratification or motivation is met by using Periscope. This may reflect the perception of current content available in Periscope—i.e. entertainment content. Unlike to gratifications sought, information seeking has become one of gratifications obtained by users in Periscope. Users can access news stories, information on film, hobby, and interest in Periscope.

Lastly, Periscope can really satisfy the relational maintenance need of the users. Periscope helps facilitate communication to others and connect the users to people

they know. This can include friends, family, relatives, as well as people they are aware about but do not know personally—e.g. actors, actresses, politicians, or government workers.

As seen and discussed above, it is reflective that however frequent the respondents use the more *active* function of Periscope, they remain as a passive consumers of content in Periscope. Expression is less of a motivation for the respondents to use Periscope—seen in both gratifications sought and obtained.

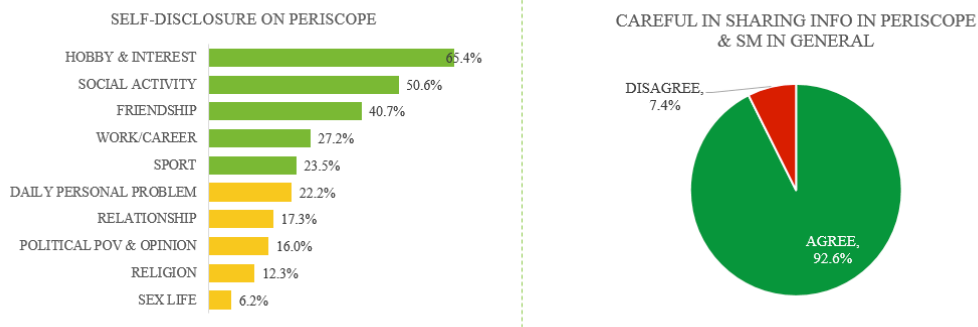


Figure 9: Information of Self Disclosed in Periscope & Perception of Carefulness in Sharing Personal Information in Social Media in General

When asked about information of personal that they are willing to disclose in Periscope, respondents put the *less-intimate* or *less-personal information* in the top of the list. Respondents are willing to share information regarding their hobby & interest (65.4%), social activity they do (50.6%), friendship (40.7%), work or career life (27.2%) and sport interest (23.5%) that are more *surface* than deeply personal information such as sex life (6.2%), religion (12.3%), political point of view and opinion (16.0%), romantic relationship (17.3%), and personal problem faced daily (22.2%).

This is because people are increasingly aware to be more careful in sharing personal information in social media in general. In above chart, it is seen that almost all respondents (92.6%) agree that they are careful in sharing personal information in social media.

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