

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DEVELOPING  
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE OF  
IAIN PAREPARE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**



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**A THESIS**

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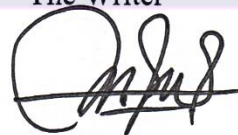
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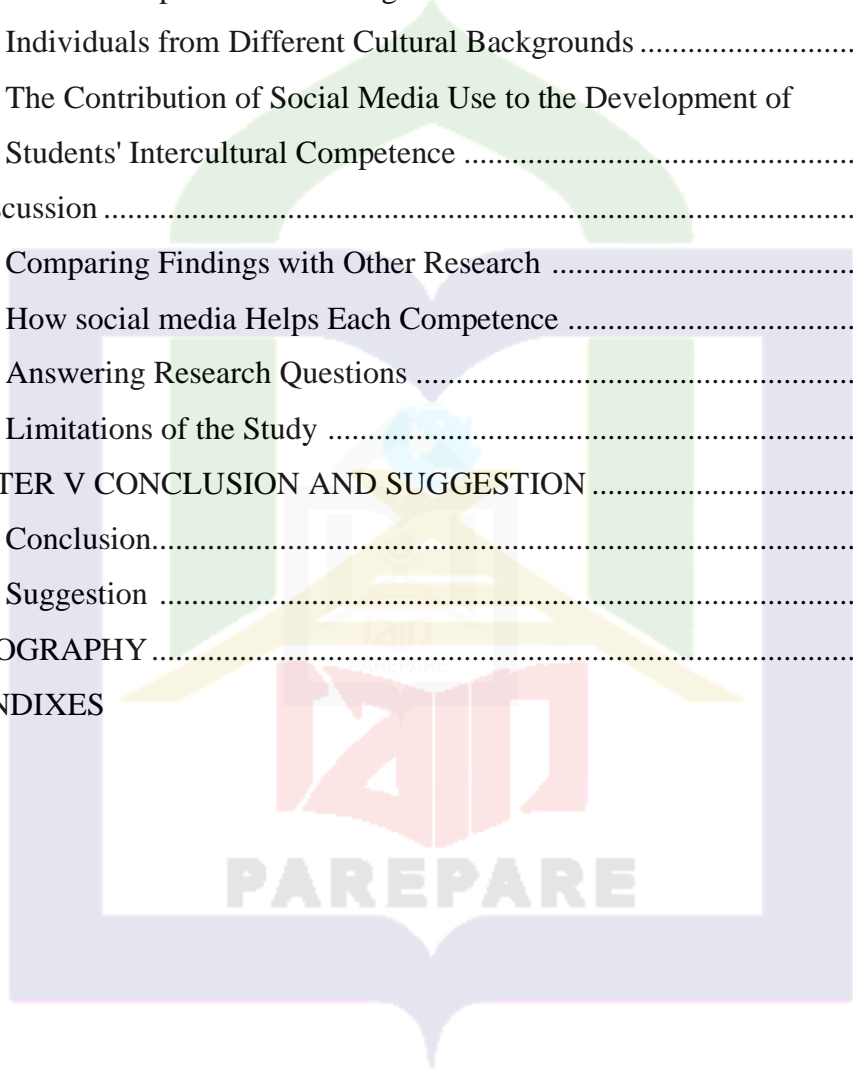
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## TRANSLITERATION

### A. Transliterasi Arab-Latin

Daftar huruf bahasa Arab dan transliterasinya ke dalam huruf Latin dapat dilihat pada tabel berikut:

#### 1. Konsonan

Huruf Arab	Nama	Huruf Latin	Nama
ا	alif	tidak dilambangkan	tidak dilambangkan
ب	ba	b	be
ت	ta	t	te
ث	sa	Ṣ	es (dengan titik di atas)
ج	Jim	j	je
ح	ha	ḥ	ha (dengan titik di bawah)
خ	kha	kh	ka dan ha
د	dal	d	de
ذ	zal	Ẓ	zet (dengan titik di atas)
ر	ra	r	er
ز	zai	z	zet
س	sin	s	es
ي	syin	sy	es dan ye
ص	ṣad	Ṣ	es (dengan titik di bawah)
ض	ḍad	ḍ	de (dengan titik di bawah)
ط	ṭa	ṭ	te (dengan titik di bawah)
ظ	Za	Ẓ	zet (dengan titik di bawah)
ع	'ain	'	apostrof terbalik
غ	gain	g	ge
ف	fa	f	ef
ق	qaf	q	qi
ك	kaf	k	ka
ل	lam	l	el
م	mim	m	em
ن	nun	n	en
و	wau	w	we
هـ	ha	h	Ha
ء	hamzah	'	apostrof
ي	ya	y	Ye

Hamzah (ء) yang terletak di awal kata mengikuti vokalnya tanpa diberi tanda apa pun. Jika ia terletak di tengah atau di akhir, maka ditulis dgn tanda (').



## 2. Vokal

Vokal bahasa Arab, seperti vokal bahasa Indonesia, terdiri atas vokal tunggal atau monoftong dan vokal rangkap atau diftong.

Vokal tunggal bahasa Arab yang lambangnya berupa tanda atau harakat, transliterasinya sebagai berikut:

Tanda	Nama	Huruf Latin	Nama
اَ	<i>fath}ah</i>	a	a
اِ	<i>kasrah</i>	i	i
اُ	<i>ḍammah</i>	u	u

Vokal rangkap bahasa Arab yang lambangnya berupa gabungan antara harakat dan huruf, transliterasinya berupa gabungan huruf, yaitu:

Tanda	Nama	Huruf Latin	Nama
اَيّ	<i>fath}ah dan yā'</i>	ai	a dan i
اَوّ	<i>fath}ah dan wau</i>	au	a dan u

Contoh:

كَيْفَ : *kaifa*

هَوَّلَ : *hauḷa*

## 3. Maddah

*Maddah* atau vokal panjang yang lambangnya berupa harakat dan huruf, transliterasinya berupa huruf dan tanda, yaitu:

Harakat dan Huruf	Nama	Huruf dan Tanda	Nama
اَ...   اِ...   اُ...	<i>fath}ah dan alif atau yā'</i>	ā	a dan garis di atas
يِ	<i>kasrah dan yā'</i>	ī	i dan garis di atas
وِ	<i>ḍammah dan wau</i>	ū	u dan garis di atas

Contoh:

مَاتَ : *māta*

Contoh:

رَمَى : *ramā*

قِيلَ : *qila*

يَمُوتُ : *yamūtu*

#### 4. *Ta marbūtah*

Transliterasi untuk *tā' marbūtah* ada dua, yaitu: *tā' marbūtah* yang hidup atau mendapat harakat *fathah*, *kasrah*, dan *dammah*, transliterasinya adalah [t]. Sedangkan *tā' marbūtah* yang mati atau mendapat harakat sukun, transliterasinya adalah [h].

Kalau pada kata yang berakhir dengan *tā' marbūtah* diikuti oleh kata yang menggunakan kata sandang *al-* serta bacaan kedua kata itu terpisah, maka *tā' marbūtah* itu ditransliterasikan dengan ha (h).

Contoh:

رَوْضَةُ الْأَطْفَالِ : *raudah al-atfāl*

الْمَدِينَةُ الْفَاضِلَةُ : *al-madīnah al-fādilah*

الْحِكْمَةُ : *al-ḥikmah*

#### 5. *Syaddah (Tasydīd)*

*Syaddah* atau *tasydīd* yang dalam sistem tulisan Arab dilambangkan dengan sebuah tanda *tasydīd* ( ّ ) dalam transliterasi ini dilambangkan dengan perulangan huruf (konsonan ganda) yang diberi tanda *syaddah*.

Contoh:

رَبَّنَا : *rabbānā*

نَجَّيْنَا : *najjainā*

الْحَقُّ : *al-haqq*

نُعَمُّ : *nu“ima*

عَدُوٌّ : 'aduwwun

Jika huruf *ى* ber-*tasydid* di akhir sebuah kata dan didahului oleh huruf *kasrah* (ـِ), maka ia ditransliterasi seperti huruf *maddah* menjadi *ī*.

Contoh:

عَلِيٌّ : 'Alī (bukan 'Aliyy atau 'Aly)

عَرَبِيٌّ : 'Arabī (bukan 'Arabiyy atau 'Araby)

## 6. Kata Sandang

Kata sandang dalam sistem tulisan Arab dilambangkan dengan huruf *ال* (*alif lam ma'arifah*). Dalam pedoman transliterasi ini, kata sandang ditransliterasi seperti biasa, *al-*, baik ketika ia diikuti oleh huruf *syamsiyah* maupun huruf *qamariyah*. Kata sandang tidak mengikuti bunyi huruf langsung yang mengikutinya. Kata sandang ditulis terpisah dari kata yang mengikutinya dan dihubungkan dengan garis mendatar (-).

Contoh:

الشَّمْسُ : *al-syamsu* (bukan *asy-syamsu*)

الزَّلْزَلَةُ : *al-zalزالah* (*az-zalزالah*)

الفَلْسَفَةُ : *al-falsafah*

الْبِلَادُ : *al-bilādu*

## 7. Hamzah

Aturan transliterasi huruf hamzah menjadi apostrof (') hanya berlaku bagi hamzah yang terletak di tengah dan akhir kata. Namun, bila hamzah terletak di awal kata, ia tidak dilambangkan, karena dalam tulisan Arab ia berupa alif.

Contoh:

تَأْمُرُونَ : *ta'murūna*

النَّوْعُ : *al-nau'*

سَيِّءٌ : *syai'un*

أُمِرْتُ : *umirtu*

## 8. Penulisan Kata Arab yang Lazim Digunakan dalam Bahasa Indonesia

Kata, istilah atau kalimat Arab yang ditransliterasi adalah kata, istilah atau kalimat yang belum dibakukan dalam bahasa Indonesia. Kata, istilah atau kalimat yang sudah lazim dan menjadi bagian dari perbendaharaan bahasa Indonesia, atau sering ditulis dalam tulisan bahasa Indonesia, atau lazim digunakan dalam dunia akademik tertentu, tidak lagi ditulis menurut cara transliterasi di atas. Misalnya, kata al-Qur'an (dari *al-Qur'ān*), alhamdulillah, dan munaqasyah. Namun, bila kata-kata tersebut menjadi bagian dari satu rangkaian teks Arab, maka harus ditransliterasi secara utuh. Contoh:

*Fī Zilāl al-Qur' ān*

*Al-Sunnah qabl al-tadwīn*

## 9. Lafz al-Jalālah (الله)

Kata “Allah” yang didahului partikel seperti huruf *jarr* dan huruf lainnya atau berkedudukan sebagai *mudāf ilaih* (frasa nominal), ditransliterasi tanpa huruf hamzah.

Contoh:

بِاللهِ *billāh* دِينُ اللهِ *dīnullāh*

Adapun *tā' marbūtah* di akhir kata yang disandarkan kepada *lafz al-jalālah*, ditransliterasi dengan huruf [t]. Contoh:

هُمُ فِي رَحْمَةِ اللهِ *hum fī rahmatillāh*

## 10. Huruf Kapital

Walau sistem tulisan Arab tidak mengenal huruf kapital (*All Caps*), dalam transliterasinya huruf-huruf tersebut dikenai ketentuan tentang penggunaan huruf kapital berdasarkan pedoman ejaan Bahasa Indonesia yang berlaku (EYD). Huruf kapital, misalnya, digunakan untuk menuliskan huruf awal nama diri (orang, tempat, bulan) dan huruf pertama pada permulaan kalimat. Bila nama diri didahului oleh kata sandang (al-), maka yang ditulis dengan huruf kapital tetap huruf awal nama diri tersebut, bukan huruf awal kata sandangnya. Jika terletak pada awal kalimat, maka huruf A dari kata sandang tersebut menggunakan huruf kapital (Al-). Ketentuan yang sama juga berlaku untuk huruf awal dari judul referensi yang didahului oleh kata sandang al-, baik ketika ia ditulis dalam teks maupun dalam

catatan rujukan (CK, DP, CDK, dan DR). Contoh:

*Wa mā Muhammadun illā rasūl*

*Inna awwala baitin wudi ‘a linnāsi lallazī bi Bakkata mubārakan*

*Syahru Ramadān al-lazī unzila fih al-Qur’ān*

Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsi

Abū Nasr al-Farābi

Al-Gazāli

Al-Munqiz min al-Dalāl

Jika nama resmi seseorang menggunakan kata Ibnu (anak dari) dan Abū (bapak dari) sebagai nama kedua terakhirnya, maka kedua nama terakhir itu harus disebutkan sebagai nama akhir dalam daftar pustaka atau daftar referensi. Contoh:

Abū al-*Walīd* Muhammad ibn Rusyd, ditulis menjadi: Ibnu Rusyd, Abū al-Walid Muhammad (bukan: Rusyd, Abū al-Walid Muhammad Ibnu)

Nasr Hāmīd Abū Zaīd, ditulis menjadi: Abū Zaīd, Nasr Hāmīd (bukan: Zaīd, Nasr Hāmīd Abū)

## B. Daftar Singkatan

Beberapa singkatan yang dibakukan adalah:

swt.	= <i>subhānahū wa ta‘ālā</i>
saw.	= <i>sallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam</i>
a.s.	= <i>‘alaihi al-salām</i>
H	= Hijrah
M	= Masehi
SM	= Sebelum Masehi
l.	= Lahir tahun (untuk orang yang masih hidup saja)
w.	= Wafat tahun
QS .../...: 4	= QS al-Baqarah/2: 4 atau QS Ali ‘Imrān/3: 4
HR	= Hadis Riwayat

## ABSTRACT

Name : Nurfadil Arham  
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This phenomenology study employs interviews into 10 undergraduate students of English education program at IAIN Parepare as participants. This research aims 1) to explore the experiences of the students regarding the usage of social media to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, and 2) to investigate how the use of social media contributes into development of students' intercultural competence. In this research, structured interviews with open-ended questions were chosen as the main instrument in collecting data. The findings display that utilizing social media plays an important role in exposing students to the numerous cultural practices and traditions, thereby improving their knowledge and recognition of various cultures. Students described learning about various cultural celebrations and customs through communication in social media. Furthermore, social media facilitates them adapt their communication effectively when interacting with people from different cultures, maintaining improved sensitivity and awareness into cultural variations. The students emphasized the significance of understanding cultural distinction and avoiding misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. However, this research still perceives few limitations including a small sample size and potential for self-reporting bias, indicating the necessity in validating and advancing upon these insights for further studies.

Keywords: *social media, intercultural communication, undergraduate students, cultural diversity, intercultural competence*

## ABSTRAK

Nama : Nurfadil Arham  
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Judul Tesis : Peran Media Sosial dalam Mengembangkan Kompetensi Komunikasi antar Budaya Mahasiswa IAIN parepare

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Penelitian fenomenologi ini mengaplikasikan instrument wawancara terhadap 10 mahasiswa program pendidikan bahasa Inggris di IAIN Parepare sebagai narasumber. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk 1) mengeksplorasi pengalaman para mahasiswa terkait penggunaan media sosial untuk berinteraksi dengan orang-orang dari latar belakang budaya yang berbeda, dan 2) menyelidiki bagaimana penggunaan media sosial berkontribusi pada pengembangan kompetensi antarbudaya mahasiswa. Dalam penelitian ini, wawancara terstruktur dengan pertanyaan terbuka dipilih sebagai instrumen utama dalam mengumpulkan data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media sosial memainkan peran penting dalam memperkenalkan mahasiswa pada berbagai praktik dan tradisi budaya, sehingga meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kesadaran mereka terhadap keragaman budaya tersebut. Mahasiswa menggambarkan pembelajaran tentang berbagai perayaan dan adat istiadat budaya melalui komunikasi di media sosial. Selain itu, media sosial memfasilitasi mereka untuk mengadaptasikan komunikasi secara efektif saat berinteraksi dengan orang-orang dari budaya yang berbeda, dengan tetap mempertahankan sensitivitas dan kesadaran antarbudaya. Mahasiswa menekankan pentingnya memahami perbedaan budaya dan menghindari kesalahpahaman dalam komunikasi lintas budaya. Namun, penelitian ini masih memiliki beberapa keterbatasan termasuk ukuran sampel yang kecil dan potensi bias dalam pelaporan, yang menunjukkan perlunya validasi dan pengembangan lebih lanjut dari temuan ini untuk penelitian berikutnya.

Kata kunci: *media sosial, komunikasi antarbudaya, mahasiswa, keragaman budaya, keterampilan komunikasi*

## تجريد البحث

الإسم : نور فاضل أرحم  
رقم التسجيل : ٢٠٢٠٢٠٣٨٧٩١٠٢٠١٢  
موضوع الرسالة : دور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في تطوير الكفاءة الثقافية لدى الطلاب الجامعة الإسلامية الحكومية بارى برى

طبق هذا البحث الفينومينولوجي أداة مقابلة عداطلاب من قسم تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة بارباري الإسلامية الحكومية كأشخاص مصدرين. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى ١٠ استكشاف تجارب الطلاب فيما يتعلق باستخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي للفاعل مع أشخاص من خلفيات ثقافية مختلفة، و٢ استكشاف كيفية إسهام استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في تطوير الكفاءة بين الثقافات لدى الطلاب. في هذه الدراسة، تم اختيار المقابلة المنظمة ذات الأسئلة المفتوحة كأداة رئيسية في جمع البيانات. وتظهر النتائج أن استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي يلعب دورًا مهمًا في تعريف طلاب الجامعات بالممارسات والتقاليد الثقافية المختلفة، وبالتالي زيادة معرفتهم ووعيهم بهذا التنوع الثقافي. ووصف الطلاب معرفتهم بالاحتفالات والعادات الثقافية المختلفة من خلال التواصل على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، سهلت وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي عليهم تكيف التواصل بفعالية عند التفاعل مع أشخاص من ثقافات مختلفة، مع الحفاظ على الحساسية والوعي بين الثقافات. وأكد الطلاب على أهمية فهم الاختلافات الثقافية وتجنب سوء الفهم في التواصل بين الثقافات. ومع ذلك، لا تزال هذه الدراسة تعاني من بعض القيود بما في ذلك صغر حجم العينة والتحيز المحتمل في إعداد التقارير، مما يشير إلى الحاجة إلى مزيد من التحقق من صحة هذه النتائج وتطويرها في البحوث المستقبلية.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الكفاءة بين الثقافات، طلاب الجامعة، التنوع الثقافي، مهارات التواصل



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Research

In brand new interconnected and globalized global, intercultural competence has gained extensive interest as a critical ability for individuals to navigate diverse cultural contexts effectively. Intercultural competence refers to the capacity to understand, communicate, and engage successfully with humans from exclusive cultural backgrounds. It includes having the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes important to engage in respectful and meaningful cross-cultural interactions. Developing intercultural competence is specifically relevant for undergraduate college students at IAIN Parepare, as they prepare to go into a globalized staff and have interaction with individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

With the appearance of virtual technologies, social media platforms have become prominent equipment for communication, information sharing, and constructing digital groups. In 2020, the common daily time spent by way of global customers on social media reached 2,24 hours, which became one of the highest intervals in comparison to nearly some other form of media. These platforms provide precise opportunities for intercultural interactions, allowing people to connect with people from exclusive cultural backgrounds globally. As an end result, social media has the capability to play a great function in facilitating the improvement of intercultural competence among undergraduate students.

Winda Monika, in her research, had explored about the Role of Social Media on Intercultural Communication Competences which primarily focuses on the motivations of individuals using different social media platforms for

intercultural communication.<sup>1</sup> However, it does not extensively explore the specific intercultural competence outcomes or skills that are developed through social media use. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the specific aspects of intercultural competence, such as cultural knowledge, intercultural sensitivity, or communication strategies, that can be fostered through social media interactions among IAIN Parepare undergraduate students.

Additionally, previous studies examine the influence of popular social media platforms on cross-cultural communication abilities, specifically investigating foreign students in Japan, including those enrolled at Kyoto University and Tsukuba University. Therefore, conducting research on how social media affects the enhancement of intercultural competence in undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare is important. This will provide insight into how social media can influence intercultural competency in a different cultural environment. The fresh research will address gaps in studies by exploring how social media enhances intercultural skills among IAIN Parepare college students, providing a more detailed understanding of its influence on growth in a specific academic environment.

Social media is an online platform that enables users to interact, share content, and connect with others in a virtual environment.<sup>2</sup> Understanding the role of social media in developing intercultural competence is essential for educators, researchers, and policymakers in designing effective strategies and interventions to enhance students' intercultural learning experiences. By examining the use of social media among undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare, we can gain insights

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<sup>1</sup>Winda Monika, Nasution, A. H., and Nasution, S, "The Role of Social Media on Intercultural Communication Competences" International Conference on Sustainable Environment and Energy (ICOSEE), 2020, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup>Sheldon, P., Bryant, K., and Griffore, R., "The Role of Social Media in Everyday Life", *A review and introduction*, 2021, p. 27.

into how these platforms are utilized for intercultural interactions and their potential impact on students' intercultural competence development.

Moreover, investigating the challenges and opportunities associated with social media use in intercultural contexts is crucial for addressing potential pitfalls and maximizing the benefits of incorporating social media into educational practices. It is important to identify the factors that influence students' engagement with social media for intercultural interactions, their attitudes towards the integration of social media in intercultural learning, and the perceived impact of social media on their intercultural competence.

By exploring the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among IAIN Parepare undergraduates, we can contribute to the existing body of knowledge on intercultural communication and digital media in education. This research will provide valuable insights into the experiences, perspectives, and practices of undergraduate students in utilizing social media platforms for intercultural interactions. The findings will inform educators and policymakers in designing effective educational interventions that leverage social media to enhance students' intercultural competence and prepare them for an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.

In conclusion, investigating the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare is crucial in enhancing their intercultural learning experiences. This research will shed light on the opportunities, challenges, and impact of social media use in fostering intercultural competence, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to incorporate digital technologies into the curriculum and prepare students for successful cross-cultural interactions.

## **B. Focus of the Research**

The focus of this research was to investigate the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare. The study aims to explore the experiences of IAIN Parepare undergraduates students regarding the use of social media to interact with the people from different cultural backgrounds and how the use of social media contributes to the development of intercultural competence, identify the types of social media content or activities most frequently utilized by the students to enhance their understanding of culture and diversity, and examine the challenge and benefit regarding the use of social media in expanding their networks and interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

## **C. Research Question**

The research questions are essential element of the research because it would lead and frame the process of the research. In accordance with the background, this research elaborates with research question:

1. How are the experiences of IAIN Parepare undergraduates regarding the use of social media to interact with the people from different cultural backgrounds?
2. How does the use of social media by IAIN Parepare undergraduates contribute to the development of their intercultural communication competence?

#### **D. Objective of Research**

The objectives of this study are to explore the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare. The research aims to:

1. To assess and analyze the experiences of IAIN Parepare undergraduates in utilizing social media as a platform for interacting with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, focusing on their patterns of engagement, challenges faced, and perceived benefits in cross-cultural communication.
2. To investigate and evaluate the contribution of social media among IAIN Parepare undergraduates into the development of their intercultural competence, examining the influence of various social media platforms, frequency of usage, types of interactions, and the perceived impact on enhancing their intercultural communication skills and understanding.

#### **E. Significance of Research**

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding and advancement of the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among undergraduate students. The findings of this study have several implications:

1. **Academic Contribution:** This research adds to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the specific role of social media in fostering intercultural competence. It contributes to the field of intercultural communication and education by exploring the impact of social media on students' cultural understanding, communication skills, and conflict resolution abilities.

2. **Practical Implications for Education:** The findings of this research can inform educators and educational institutions about the potential benefits and challenges of integrating social media into intercultural learning initiatives. It provides practical recommendations on how to leverage social media platforms effectively to enhance intercultural competence among students, promoting cultural sensitivity and effective communication in diverse settings.
3. **Enhancing Intercultural Competence:** By understanding the role of social media in developing intercultural competence, this research aims to empower undergraduate students to navigate multicultural environments more effectively. It equips students with the necessary skills to engage in respectful and meaningful intercultural interactions, fostering understanding, empathy, and collaboration.
4. **Future Research Direction:** This study opens avenues for further research on the influence of social media on intercultural competence development. It encourages scholars and researchers to explore different aspects of social media usage, such as specific platforms, content types, and communication strategies, to deepen our understanding of how these factors impact intercultural competence.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature in this research focuses on understanding the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among undergraduate students. Several studies have examined the relationship between social media use and intercultural competence development.

#### **A. Previous Related Research Findings**

Previous research conducted by Kismiyati El Karimah titled "The Impact of Social Media on Intercultural Communication in Indonesia" delved into the effects of digital communication, particularly social media, on intercultural interactions. In this era of advanced digital technology, the concept of distance has been diminished, creating a sense that local, national, and global spaces have become interconnected. Social media platforms have played a transformative role in shaping people's thoughts, behaviours, and lifestyles. The research focused on three main areas: the influence of national/ethnic culture on social media development, the impact of social media on cultural and social identities, and the effects of social media on various aspects of intercultural communication.<sup>3</sup> The study employed qualitative research methods, including observations, interviews, and document analysis, to gather data. Through descriptive data analysis techniques, the research explored the trends in studying the relationship between social media and intercultural communication. The findings highlighted the intricate connection between social media and intercultural communication in Indonesia. It was argued that social media not only provides a platform for

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<sup>3</sup>Kismiyati El Karimah, "The Impact of Social Media on Intercultural Communication in Indonesia". Annual Conference of Communication, Media and Culture (ACCOMAC), Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018, p.109.

individuals from diverse cultures to freely express their opinions and establish relationships, but also poses challenges to communication within intracultural and intercultural contexts due to its distinct characteristics that significantly differ from traditional media.<sup>4</sup>

In a study conducted by Winda Monika titled "The Role of Social Media on Intercultural Communication Competences," the focus was on the impact of social media platforms on intercultural communication. The widespread use of social media cause people increasingly interacted with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Although most social media platforms offer various communication features, research has shown that people tend to utilize multiple social media platforms for different purposes. Social media serves as a powerful online tool that enables communication, interaction, connectivity, sharing, and the expression of ideas and thoughts. The study specifically examined the role of five popular social media platforms in fostering intercultural communication competences. The research conducted a survey among international students at Kyoto University and Tsukuba University in Japan to understand their motivations for using each social media platform in intercultural communication. The findings revealed that the majority of participants were active on Facebook, driven by the motivation to connect and learn more about their international friends who were already on the platform. Additionally, participants utilized social media for supporting social interaction, profiling, information sharing, and communication tools. The study concluded that social media platforms enhance participants' communication competence by facilitating effective communication among international friends,

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<sup>4</sup>Kismiyati El Karimah, "The Impact of Social Media on Intercultural Communication in Indonesia". Annual Conference of Communication, Media and Culture (ACCOMAC), Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018, p.109.



aiding in faster adaptation to different cultures, and improving English reading skills. These findings suggest that social media plays a crucial role in developing intercultural communication competences by fostering stronger ties among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.<sup>5</sup>

The study conducted by Nouredine Mouhadjer titled "Social Media and Its Impact on Intercultural Communication," focusing on the influence of social media on intercultural communication. With the advent of the Internet and social media, it has become more affordable and accessible for individuals to engage in intercultural communication. Social media platforms provide learners with opportunities to directly connect with the target culture, allowing them to access authentic publications and participate in online chat rooms, discussion boards, and video conferences. By engaging in these interactions, learners have the potential to develop intercultural competence, enabling them to understand and appreciate the specific concepts of perception, thinking, feeling, and acting within different cultural contexts. The study highlights the significant impact of social media on intercultural communication. It emphasizes that social media platforms create a context where people from around the world can communicate, exchange messages, share knowledge, and interact with one another regardless of geographical distance. The impact of social media on intercultural communication is constantly increasing, as these platforms have become integral to our social interactions. Instead of having direct conversations with individuals, a simple mouse click can provide insights into their activities and thoughts.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Winda Monika, Nasution, A. H., and Nasution, S, "The Role of Social Media on Intercultural Communication Competences" International Conference on Sustainable Environment and Energy (ICOSEE), 2020, p. 283.

<sup>6</sup>Nouredine Mouhadjer, "Social Media and Its Impact on Intercultural Communication." IJAEDU-International E-Journal of Advances in Education 4.10, 2018, p. 68-71.

In a study conducted by Tessa Shasrini titled "The Role of Social Media in the Intercultural Adaptation of Pekanbaru Immigrants," the focus was on the influence of social media in the cultural adjustment process of immigrants. Immigrants to distant societies have utilized various tools to assist them in their social adjustment and acculturation processes. In recent years, social media has emerged as a widely used and valuable platform for newcomers, allowing them to connect with individuals worldwide and share information and social norms. This research aimed to explore the role of social media in the intercultural adaptation of immigrants in Pekanbaru. The study utilized a qualitative approach, specifically conducting interviews with employees at Pekanbaru Rudenim, to gather insights into the experiences of immigrants. The results indicated that the adaptation process undertaken by immigrants involves several phases, including vacation stages, culture shock, settlement, and integration. Social media played a significant role in these phases, allowing immigrants to maintain contact with family members and friends in their home countries.<sup>7</sup>

The previous study "The Influence of Social Media towards Multicultural Experience and Cultural Intelligence" conducted by Alexander Hridaya Bhakti in 2018 aimed to examine the correlation between social media usage and individuals' multicultural experience and cultural intelligence. The research employed a quantitative approach and utilized an online questionnaire administered to 105 university students. However, certain measurement variables, such as multicultural experience and social media usage for socialization, could not be further analyzed due to reliability issues. Nonetheless, the analysis revealed

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<sup>7</sup>Tessa Shasrini, and Yudi Daherman, "The Role of Social Media in the Intercultural Adaptation of Pekanbaru Immigrants." *International Journal of Media and Communication Research* 2.2, 2021, p.35-43.

a weak correlation between social media usage for informational purposes and individuals' cultural intelligence.<sup>8</sup>

Overall, the previous findings from the aforementioned studies shed light on the significant role of social media in the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and intercultural adaptation. Through the research conducted by various scholars including Alexander Hridaya Bhakti, Kismiyati El Karimah, Winda Monika, Noureddine Mouhadjer, and Tessa Shasrini, valuable insights have been gained regarding the relationship between social media and communication competence as well as intercultural adaptation.

Those studies indicate that social media plays a crucial role in the enhancement of intercultural communicative competence. By utilizing social media platforms, individuals can connect with diverse cultures and engage in interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds. Social media facilitates access to a broader range of intercultural information, understanding, and perspectives, enabling individuals to enrich their knowledge of other cultures, enhance their cross-cultural communication skills, and develop more open and inclusive attitudes.

In the specific context of Indonesia, particularly at IAIN Parepare, the use of social media also holds significant implications for the development of communication competence and intercultural adaptation. Students at IAIN Parepare can leverage social media to connect with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, expand their knowledge of other cultures, and deepen their understanding of cultural differences. Social media can be an effective tool in developing intercultural communication competence within the Indonesian higher education context. However, it is crucial to remember that the use of social media

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<sup>8</sup>A.H. Bhakti, "The Influence of Social Media towards Multicultural Experience and Cultural Intelligence", *Journal of Intelligence* 10.1, 2018.

should be approached responsibly and wisely to ensure optimal benefits in the development of intercultural communication competence.

#### *A. Some Pertinent Ideas*

##### **1. Social Media Application and Features**

The definition of social media can vary depending on the perspective and approach of different experts. Here are some definitions of social media according to several scholars:

- a. Social media can be defined as Internet-based platforms that enable individuals and communities to share, participate, and modify content online, as described by Kaplan and Haenlein. This definition emphasizes the collaborative and participatory nature of social media, where users can interact and contribute to existing content.<sup>9</sup>
- b. Boyd and Ellison defined social media as web-based services that allow individuals to create public or semi-public profiles within a limited system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share connections, and explore networks of connections within the system. This definition highlights the construction of digital identities and the social networks formed through social media.<sup>10</sup>
- c. In a more recent definition by Kaplan and Haenlein, social media is described as internet-based platforms that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This definition reflects the latest

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<sup>9</sup> A. M. Kaplan, and Haenlein M, "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities Of Social Media" *Business Horizons*, 2020, p.53.

<sup>10</sup> D. M. Boyd and Ellison, N. B., "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship" *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2017, p.13.

developments in social media and emphasizes the role of users in creating and sharing content through the platforms.<sup>11</sup>

- d. According to Danah Boyd, social media is a networked system consisting of individuals connected through various social ties, allowing them to interact through various forms of online activities. This definition emphasizes the social relationships formed through social media, where individuals can connect, communicate, and share experiences virtually.<sup>12</sup>

In conclusion, social media is an online platform or digital space that allows individuals and communities to connect, communicate, and share information, ideas, and multimedia content. It serves as a virtual networking tool that enables users to create and exchange user-generated content, engage in discussions, and interact with others in real-time or asynchronously. Social media platforms have gained immense popularity and have become an integral part of people's lives worldwide.

Overall, these definitions provide a comprehensive understanding of social media. Social media platforms facilitate interaction, information sharing, and collaboration among individuals and communities. They empower users to actively participate in creating and sharing content. Social media has transformed the way we communicate and interact in the digital era, enabling individuals and communities to connect online and engage in a collaborative environment. The impact of social media extends beyond personal connections and communication. It has transformed the way individuals and businesses interact, market, and

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<sup>11</sup>A. M. Kaplan, and Haenlein M, "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities Of Social Media" *Business Horizons*, 2020, p.53.

<sup>12</sup> Danah Boyd, "Social Network Sites as Networked Publics: Affordances, Dynamics, and Implications." IZ. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*, (Routledge), 2019, p.39.

collaborate. Social media has given rise to new forms of digital activism and social movements, allowing individuals to voice their opinions, raise awareness, and mobilize support for causes. It has also become a powerful marketing tool for businesses, enabling them to reach and engage with a wide audience, promote their products or services, and gather valuable consumer insights.

Social media platforms provide a range of advanced features and functions that facilitate social networking, enabling users to share ideas, information, knowledge, and more within a network. Certain social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, are primarily used for chatting. On the other hand, platforms like Facebook and Twitter are categorized as microblogging platforms, allowing users to post, exchange, and share small content such as sentences, posts, photos, and videos. These platforms often include communication features like instant messaging, phone calls, and video calls. Among some popular social media and networking sites commonly utilized for intercultural communication are Facebook, Line, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, Youtube, TikTok, Discord, etc.

a. Facebook

Facebook is a social media platform launched by Mark Zuckerberg and his college roommates in 2004. It allows users to create profiles, connect with friends, and share various types of content such as photos, videos, and status updates. With billions of active users, Facebook has become a prominent platform for social networking and communication.<sup>13</sup> Facebook is a widely used social media platform that allows individuals to connect and communicate with friends, family, and acquaintances. It provides various features for users to engage in social interactions, such as creating

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<sup>13</sup>Chugh, Ritesh, and Umar Ruhi. "Social Media in Higher Education: A Literature Review of Facebook." *Education and Information Technologies* 23, 2018, p.605-616.

a personal profile, sharing posts, photos, and videos, and connecting with others through friend requests. Facebook also offers features like groups and pages, where users can join communities or follow businesses, organizations, and public figures of interest.

b. Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging platform established in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams. It enables users to share short messages, called tweets, with a character limit of 280.<sup>14</sup> Twitter is known for its real-time nature and is widely used for sharing news, opinions, and engaging in public conversations. Twitter enables users to follow other accounts and receive updates from them in their timeline. It also incorporates features like hashtags for categorizing and searching tweets based on specific topics. Users can engage with tweets by retweeting, liking, and replying to them, fostering discussions and interactions.

c. WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a messaging application founded by Brian Acton and Jan Koum in 2009. WhatsApp is a messaging application that allows users to send text messages, make voice and video calls, and share various media files.<sup>15</sup> It offers both individual and group chat functionalities, enabling private conversations and collaborative discussions. WhatsApp also provides features like status updates, where users can share temporary posts that disappear after 24 hours, and end-to-end encryption for secure and private communication. WhatsApp gained widespread popularity due

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<sup>14</sup>Tamara Ćurlin, Božidar Jaković, and Ivan Miloloža. "Twitter Usage in Tourism: Literature Review." *Business Systems Research: International Journal of the Society for Advancing Innovation and Research in Economy* 10.1, 2019, p.102-119.

<sup>15</sup>E Coleman and E. O'connor, "The Role of Whatsapp® in Medical Education; A Scoping Review and Instructional Design Model." *BMC medical education* 19, 2019, p.1-13.

to its ease of use and availability across different mobile platforms. It has become one of the most popular messaging apps globally.

d. Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social networking service created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. It was launched in 2010 and gained popularity for its focus on visual content. Instagram is a visual-centric social media platform focused on sharing photos and videos.<sup>16</sup> Users can upload and edit their visual content, apply filters and effects, and share them with their followers. Instagram features a Stories function for sharing temporary posts that vanish after 24 hours, as well as an Explore page to discover new content and accounts based on user interests. It also allows users to engage through likes, comments, and direct messaging.

e. LINE

LINE is a messaging application that originated in Japan and was launched in 2011. LINE is a messaging application popular in Asia, offering a wide range of features for communication and social interactions.<sup>17</sup> Users can exchange text messages, make voice and video calls, and share multimedia content. Line is known for its extensive collection of stickers and emojis, enhancing expressions and interactions in conversations. It also provides features like a timeline for sharing updates, official accounts for businesses and celebrities, and Line Pay for mobile payments.

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<sup>16</sup>Yang, Chen Yang, "Research in the Instagram Context: Approaches and Methods." *The Journal of Social Sciences Research* 7.1, 2021, p.15-21.

<sup>17</sup> Katrin Weller, "Trying to Understand Social Media Users and Usage: The Forgotten Features of Social Media Platforms." *Online Information Review* 40.2, 2016, p.256-264



f. YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing platform that turned into created in 2005 and has in view that end up one of the most popular websites globally. It allows customers to upload, percentage, and view movies on a giant array of subjects, starting from enjoyment and schooling to private vlogs and expert content material.<sup>18</sup> The platform operates on a freemium version, providing unfastened access to content with advertisements, and a top rate subscription provider known as YouTube premium that removes advertisements and gives additional capabilities like offline downloads and access to YouTube music. YouTube's set of rules recommends motion pictures to customers based totally on their viewing records, selling engagement and prolonged use. The platform also supports live streaming, allowing actual-time interplay between content material creators and their audiences. It has turn out to be a critical device for influencers, educators, and groups to attain massive audiences, construct communities, and monetize their content material through advertisements, sponsorships, and merchandise sales. The huge variety of content and its international attain have made YouTube an imperative part of net lifestyle and a effective medium for data dissemination and amusement.

g. TikTok

TikTok, released in 2016 by using the chinese language organisation ByteDance, is a social media platform that permits users to create, share, and discover quick-shape videos, usually set to music. Acknowledged for its noticeably engaging and addictive nature, TikTok has gained massive recognition, particularly among younger audiences. TikTok's set of rules is

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<sup>18</sup>Kapil Chalil Madathil, et al. "Healthcare Information on Youtube: A Systematic Review." Health Informatics Journal 21.3, 2015, p.173-194.

specially adept at curating a personalized feed referred to as the "For You page" (FYP), which showcases content material tailor-made to person user options, primarily based on their interactions and engagement styles. This personalized content shipping machine has been a massive aspect in TikTok's speedy boom and high person retention rates. The platform has also come to be a hub for viral traits, demanding situations, and memes, influencing popular culture and the music enterprise considerably. moreover, TikTok offers diverse opportunities for monetization through its author Fund, brand partnerships, and in-app purchases. The community-pushed nature of TikTok encourages collaboration and interaction, making it a dynamic and interactive platform for customers round the world.<sup>19</sup>

h. Discord

Discord is a communication platform in the beginning designed for gamers, but it has seeing that increased to serve a much wider audience. launched in 2015, Discord lets in users to create and be part of servers, which might be network spaces wherein members can have interaction through textual content, voice, and video channels. Each server can host a couple of channels committed to specific topics or sports, allowing prepared and targeted discussions. Discord's voice and video chat capabilities are specially robust, low-latency verbal exchange that is right for gaming, streaming, and different collaborative activities. The platform also helps integration with diverse other offerings, such as Twitch, YouTube, and Spotify, enhancing its utility for content material creators and groups. Discord's Nitro subscription service presents extra perks, together with better-excellent streaming, larger upload limits, and custom

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<sup>19</sup>Sarah Jerasa and Trevor Boffone, "Booktok 101: Tiktok, Digital Literacies, and Out-Of-School Reading Practices" *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 65.3, 2021, p.219-226.

emojis. The platform's flexibility and considerable customization alternatives have made it popular now not handiest amongst game enthusiasts however also among educators, hobbyists, and expert corporations searching for a reliable and flexible communicate device. Discord's emphasis on network and actual-time interaction fosters an experience of belonging and engagement amongst its users, making it an effective medium for building and preserving on line groups.<sup>20</sup>

These social media platforms have revolutionized the way people communicate and connect across cultures. They provide opportunities for individuals to interact, share information, exchange ideas, and learn about different cultures. In the context of the research theme on intercultural communication, studying the usage and impact of these platforms can provide valuable insights into how social media facilitates intercultural understanding, enhances communication competence, and contributes to the development of intercultural communicative competence among individuals in diverse cultural contexts.

## **2. Theory of Intercultural Communication Competence**

The term "intercultural" is derived from the combination of two words: "inter" and "cultural." The prefix "inter-" means "between" or "among," indicating interaction and communication between different entities. "Cultural" refers to the characteristics, beliefs, values, practices, and behaviours associated with a particular group or society.<sup>21</sup> Thus, "intercultural" refers to the interactions, relationships, and dynamics that occur between individuals or groups from

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<sup>20</sup>Muhammad Arifianto and Iqbal Izzudin. "Students' Acceptance of Discord as An Alternative Online Learning Media." *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)* 16.20, 2021, p.179-195.

<sup>21</sup>Darla K. Deardoff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization" *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10.3, 2006, p.24.

different cultural backgrounds. The term "Competence" refers to the possession of knowledge, skills, abilities, and qualities required to perform a task or succeed in a particular area. It signifies having the capability, proficiency, or expertise in a specific domain. In the context of intercultural competence, it refers to the ability and aptitude individuals have to effectively and appropriately engage, communicate, and interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.<sup>22</sup> The combination of "intercultural" and "competence" forms the term "intercultural competence." It refers to the set of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours that enable individuals to navigate, understand, appreciate, and effectively interact with people from different cultures. Intercultural competence involves having awareness and respect for cultural differences, being able to communicate effectively across cultures, and adapting one's behaviour to different cultural contexts. It encompasses the ability to engage in meaningful dialogue, resolve conflicts, build relationships, and collaborate across cultural boundaries.

Intercultural competence refers to the ability of an individual to effectively interact with individuals or groups from different cultures. It involves understanding and respecting cultural differences, as well as the ability to communicate, collaborate, and adapt in multicultural contexts. Intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important in a globally interconnected world, where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds can meet and interact.

According to Milton Bennett, a renowned scholar in the field of intercultural communication, intercultural competence consists of three developmental stages: ethnocentrism, ethnorelativism, and intercultural communication competence. Ethnocentrism is the initial stage where individuals perceive their own culture as superior and judge others based on their own cultural norms. Ethnorelativism, on

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<sup>22</sup>Alvino E. Fantini, "Assessing Intercultural Competence." *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, 2009, p.456-476.

the other hand, is a more advanced stage characterized by cultural relativism and the recognition of multiple perspectives. Intercultural communication competence is the highest stage where individuals possess the skills and attitudes necessary to effectively navigate cross-cultural interactions.<sup>23</sup>

Research has highlighted the importance of intercultural competence in various domains. In the workplace, Thomas stated that individuals with intercultural competence can collaborate more effectively with colleagues from diverse cultures, enhancing productivity and innovation.<sup>24</sup> In education, intercultural competence helps students develop a deeper understanding of the world and enhances their global perspectives. Moreover, intercultural competence is crucial for promoting tolerance, appreciation of cultural diversity, and peaceful conflict resolution in increasingly multicultural societies.<sup>25</sup>

To develop intercultural competence, individuals can engage in activities that promote cross-cultural understanding and experiences. Learning a foreign language, participating in cultural exchange programs, attending intercultural training, or engaging in community activities that embrace cultural diversity are valuable steps in enhancing intercultural competence.<sup>26</sup>

In conclusion, intercultural competence is essential in our interconnected world. It involves understanding and respecting cultural differences, effective communication, and the ability to adapt in multicultural contexts. Developing

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<sup>23</sup> Milton J Bennett, "A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity." *International Journal Of Intercultural Relations* 10.2, 2016, p.179-196.

<sup>24</sup>Thomas, David C, "Cultural Intelligence: People Skills For Global Business" (<http://www.readhowyouwant.com> accessed on June 22, 2024).

<sup>25</sup>Darla K. Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10.3, 2006, p.241

<sup>26</sup>Darla K. Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization" ..., p.87

intercultural competence benefits individuals and society at large, facilitating collaboration, promoting understanding, and fostering peaceful coexistence in diverse environments.

### 3. Dimensions of Intercultural Competence

To develop a comprehensive understanding of intercultural competence, it is essential to examine its key components. There are four fundamental dimensions of intercultural competence: intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, and intercultural adaptation.<sup>27</sup> Understanding these dimensions and its components are crucial for individuals to enhance their intercultural competence and successfully navigate the complexities of intercultural interactions.

- a. **Intercultural Awareness:** Intercultural awareness involves developing a deep understanding of different cultures, including their values, beliefs, customs, and communication styles.<sup>28</sup> It requires individuals to acquire knowledge about diverse cultural practices and norms, enabling them to recognize and appreciate cultural differences. This component also includes being aware of one's own cultural biases and assumptions, which helps individuals avoid imposing their own cultural perspectives on others. Intercultural awareness forms the foundation for effective intercultural interactions, as it allows individuals to approach intercultural encounters with sensitivity and respect.

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<sup>27</sup>Darla K. Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization"..., p.241

<sup>28</sup>Mohamed Akharraz, "The Impact of Project-Based Learning on Students' Cultural Awareness." *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies* 3.2, 2021, p.54-80.

For instance, someone with high intercultural awareness would know that in a particular culture, showing respect such as bowing is a revered way to greet others. By being aware of these differences, the individual can avoid misunderstandings and show respect for others' cultures.

Components of Intercultural Awareness:

- 1) Cultural Knowledge: it refers to the ability to understand and possess adequate knowledge about the culture and values of specific ethnic or religious groups. It involves being familiar with cultural norms, traditions, customs, history, and social practices of different cultures.<sup>29</sup>
  - 2) Difference Awareness: it focuses on the awareness of cultural differences and similarities in a global society. It involves recognizing and appreciating the diversity of cultural practices, beliefs, and values, while avoiding stereotypes and prejudices.<sup>30</sup>
  - 3) Cultural Stereotypes: it pertains to the understanding of common cultural stereotypes and the ability to avoid excessive generalizations or prejudices towards specific cultural groups. It involves recognizing that cultural groups are diverse and not all individuals within a culture adhere to stereotypes.
- b. Intercultural Sensitivity: Intercultural sensitivity refers to the ability to perceive and appreciate cultural differences and respond to them appropriately and effectively. It involves being attuned to cultural

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<sup>29</sup> Darla K. Deardorff and Lily A. Arasaratnam-Smith. "Intercultural Competence in Higher Education." *International Approaches, Assessment and Application*, 2017, p.27.

<sup>30</sup> Tzu Yiu Chen. "Developing an Intercultural Competence Instrument in Foreign Language Teaching Context: A Study Of Chinese Students Of Spanish as a Foreign Language." *Journal of Intercultural Communication* 22.4, 2022, p.44-55.

nuances, demonstrating empathy, and avoiding ethnocentric judgments.<sup>31</sup> Individuals with high intercultural sensitivity are able to recognize and respect diverse perspectives, values, and practices. They exhibit curiosity and openness to learning about other cultures, and they strive to build bridges of understanding between people from different backgrounds. Developing intercultural sensitivity requires individuals to challenge stereotypes, biases, and preconceived notions they may hold about other cultures. By cultivating intercultural sensitivity, individuals can foster inclusive and respectful interactions, contribute to positive cross-cultural relationships, and promote cultural diversity and inclusion. For instance, someone with high intercultural sensitivity would respect and accept the values and beliefs of other cultures without judgment or expressing prejudice. They might take the initiative to learn about other cultures, ask curious questions, and build mutually beneficial relationships based on mutual understanding.

#### Components of Cultural Sensitivity

- 1) Perspective Understanding: it refers to the ability to understand and appreciate different cultural perspectives, values, and beliefs. It involves being able to see situations from multiple viewpoints and empathize with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.<sup>32</sup>
- 2) Difference Sensitivity: it focuses on sensitivity to cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal behaviour and the recognition of the

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<sup>31</sup>Elahe Moradi and Zargham Ghabanchi. "Intercultural Sensitivity." *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 6.3, 2019, p.134-146.

<sup>32</sup>Elahe Moradi and Zargham Ghabanchi. "Intercultural Sensitivity" *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 6.3, 2019, p.134-146



importance of these differences. It involves being attentive to and respecting the unique ways different cultures express themselves.<sup>33</sup>

3) Openness to New Perspectives: it involves being open to new experiences and perspectives originating from other cultures. It includes the ability to consider different viewpoints and challenge one's own cultural assumptions.<sup>34</sup>

c. Intercultural Communication: Intercultural communication is a fundamental component of intercultural competence. It refers to the effective exchange of information, ideas, and emotions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This includes verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as the ability to interpret and navigate cultural nuances in communication. Proficiency in intercultural communication involves being able to adapt one's language use, tone, and communication style to fit the cultural context. It also requires individuals to develop active listening skills, empathy, and the ability to manage potential misunderstandings or conflicts that may arise due to cultural differences. Strong intercultural communication skills foster mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation between individuals from different cultures.<sup>35</sup>

For example, someone with strong intercultural communication skills would take into account language differences, communication norms, and non-verbal interpretations when interacting with people from

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<sup>33</sup>Elahe Moradi and Zargham Ghabanchi. "Intercultural Sensitivity" ..., p.134-146

<sup>34</sup>Elahe Moradi and Zargham Ghabanchi. "Intercultural Sensitivity" ..., p.12.

<sup>35</sup>Yunita Reny Bani Bili, "To What Extent Does Language Encourage Cross Cultural Problems in Intercultural Communication?" International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation 3.6, 2020, p.152-155.

different cultures. They might use simpler language, avoid ambiguous expressions, or adopt appropriate body language to foster better understanding.

Components of Intercultural Communication:

- 1) **Effective Communication:** it refers to the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultures. It involves utilizing appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication skills, adapting communication styles, and demonstrating clarity, empathy, and respect in intercultural interactions.<sup>36</sup>
  - 2) **Communication Adaptation:** it focuses on the ability to adapt communication styles and language appropriately to different cultural contexts. It involves modifying one's communication approach to accommodate cultural norms, values, and expectations.<sup>37</sup>
  - 3) **Accurate Interpretation:** it emphasizes the skill of accurately interpreting messages and providing appropriate responses in intercultural communication situations. It involves understanding cultural nuances, avoiding misinterpretations, and effectively navigating intercultural misunderstandings.<sup>38</sup>
- d. **Intercultural Adaptation:** Intercultural adaptation refers to the ability to adjust and adapt one's behaviours, attitudes, and communication styles in order to navigate and function effectively in different cultural

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<sup>36</sup> Yunita Reny Bani Bili, "To What Extent Does Language Encourage Cross Cultural Problems in Intercultural Communication?" ..., p.13.

<sup>37</sup>S. Yang and W. B. Gudykunst, "Developing an Adaptation Model of Intercultural Communication Competence for Social Network Sites", *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 2021, p.471.

<sup>38</sup>Maria Iosifina Avgousti, "Intercultural Communicative Competence and Online Exchanges: A Systematic Review" *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 31.8, 2018, p.819-853.

contexts. It involves being flexible, open-minded, and responsive to cultural differences.<sup>39</sup> Successful intercultural adaptation requires individuals to be willing to step out of their comfort zones and embrace new cultural experiences. It also involves learning to interpret and respond appropriately to cultural cues, non-verbal communication, and social norms. Developing intercultural adaptation skills enables individuals to navigate unfamiliar cultural environments with ease, build rapport with individuals from diverse cultures, and establish a sense of belonging.

For instance, when someone moves to a new country, they may need to learn and respect new social norms such as dining etiquette, greetings, or language used in everyday conversations. With successful adaptation, the individual can integrate well into the new cultural environment.

Components of Intercultural Adaptation:

- 1) Successful Adaptation: it refers to the ability to adapt and interact successfully in different cultural environments. It involves adjusting to new cultural norms, values, and practices, as well as developing strategies to cope with cultural challenges and navigate cross-cultural transitions.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Dreama G Moon, "Critical Reflections on Culture and Critical Intercultural Communication" *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, 2023, p.57-71.

<sup>40</sup>Basim Alamri, "The Role of Social Media in Intercultural Adaptation: A Review of the Literature" *English Language Teaching* 11.12, 2018, p.77-85.

- 2) Cultural Flexibility: it emphasizes the ability to respond to cultural changes and overcome cultural challenges. It involves being open-minded, resilient, and adaptable in diverse cultural contexts.<sup>41</sup>
- 3) Relationship Building: it focuses on the skill of building relationships and establishing connections with individuals from different cultures. It involves developing trust, empathy, and rapport across cultural boundaries.<sup>42</sup>

These four components – intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, and intercultural adaptation – are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Developing proficiency in all four components is essential for individuals to navigate and thrive in diverse cultural settings, engage in effective intercultural interactions, and foster mutual understanding and respect across cultures.

#### **4. The Role of Social Media in Intercultural Communication Competence**

The role of social media in intercultural competence is significant as it provides individuals with opportunities to engage, connect, and learn about different cultures. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for promoting intercultural understanding and fostering communication across cultural boundaries.

Social media platforms enable individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to connect and engage in cross-cultural communication. Through features such as messaging, video calls, and group discussions, people can interact

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<sup>41</sup>Basim Alamri, "The Role of Social Media in Intercultural Adaptation: A Review of the Literature" ..., p.11.

<sup>42</sup>Basim Alamri, "The Role of Social Media in Intercultural Adaptation: A Review of the Literature" ..., p.180.

with others from different cultures, exchange ideas, and share experiences. This helps develop intercultural communication skills by providing a platform for dialogue and understanding.<sup>43</sup>

Social media also exposes individuals to a wide range of cultural content and perspectives. People can follow individuals, organizations, or groups that represent different cultures, thereby expanding their knowledge and understanding of various cultural practices, traditions, and beliefs. Exposure to diverse perspectives promotes intercultural awareness and fosters a more inclusive mindset.<sup>44</sup>

In addition, social media platforms break down geographical barriers and facilitate connections between people from different cultures. It allows individuals to engage in virtual communities and participate in discussions related to cultural topics. By providing a space for cultural exchange and collaboration, social media bridges cultural divides and promotes intercultural understanding.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, social media can enhance individuals' cultural sensitivity by exposing them to different cultural expressions, values, and norms. Users can observe and learn about cultural nuances through various forms of content, such as photos, videos, articles, and personal stories. This exposure to diverse cultural representations helps develop empathy and appreciation for cultural differences.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Dhoha A. Alsaleh, et al. "Cross-Cultural Differences in The Adoption of Social Media" *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing* 13.1, 2019, p.119-140.

<sup>44</sup>Serino, Marco. "Culture and Networks in Online Social Fields. Studying the Duality of Culture and Structure in Social Media Through Bourdieu's Theory and Social Network Analysis" *Italian Sociological Review* 11.4S, 2021, p.369-369.

<sup>45</sup>L Hjorth and O. Kim, "Mobile Communication and the Ethics of Social Networking (Routledge), 2017.

<sup>46</sup>Marzena Sobczak-Michalowska, et al, "Factor Analysis of the Intercultural Sensitivity, Ethnocentrism, Social Media by the Means of Structural Equation Modelling." *Applications of Synthetic High Dimensional Data*. IGI Global, 2024, p. 94-106.

The role of social media in intercultural competence is multifaceted, as it significantly influences each of the four components mentioned earlier: intercultural awareness, intercultural adaptation, intercultural communication, and intercultural sensitivity.<sup>47</sup>

**Intercultural Awareness:** Social media platforms provide a vast amount of information and content representing diverse cultures from around the world. Users can follow accounts, join groups, and access resources that expose them to various cultural practices, traditions, and perspectives. This exposure enhances intercultural awareness by allowing individuals to learn about different cultures, their values, and their ways of life. Social media facilitates the sharing of cultural experiences, stories, and insights, contributing to a broader understanding of cultural diversity.

**Intercultural Adaptation:** Social media offers a virtual space for individuals to connect with people from different cultural backgrounds. It enables users to engage in discussions, ask questions, and seek advice regarding cultural norms, traditions, and customs. By connecting with individuals who have experienced cultural adaptation first-hand, individuals can gain valuable insights and guidance for adjusting their behaviours and attitudes to fit into new cultural contexts. Social media communities and forums provide a supportive environment where individuals can learn from others' experiences and share their own challenges and successes in intercultural adaptation.<sup>48</sup>

**Intercultural Communication:** Social media platforms serve as channels for intercultural communication, allowing individuals to engage in direct

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<sup>47</sup>Darla K Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10.3, 2006, p.241.

<sup>48</sup>Y. Y. Kim, and Gudykunst, W. B, *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*, (United States: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018) p.56.

conversations with people from different cultures. Through text-based messages, video calls, and multimedia content sharing, individuals can bridge geographical and cultural distances to exchange ideas, collaborate, and build relationships. Social media's immediacy and accessibility facilitate real-time communication, enabling individuals to practice their intercultural communication skills, such as being mindful of cultural differences in communication styles, adapting language use, and interpreting non-verbal cues in a digital context.

**Intercultural Sensitivity:** social media plays a crucial role in fostering intercultural sensitivity by exposing individuals to diverse perspectives, experiences, and narratives. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow people from different cultures to share their stories, challenges, and successes. By following and engaging with diverse voices, individuals can develop empathy, understanding, and appreciation for cultural differences. Social media also offers opportunities for individuals to challenge stereotypes, debunk misconceptions, and confront biases by engaging in respectful dialogue and exchanging cultural viewpoints.<sup>49</sup>

Overall, social media acts as a catalyst for intercultural competence by providing a global platform for cultural exchange, learning, and understanding. It enhances intercultural awareness, supports intercultural adaptation, facilitates intercultural communication, and promotes intercultural sensitivity. However, it is essential for individuals to critically evaluate the information and perspectives they encounter on social media, as the platform's open nature can also perpetuate misunderstandings and reinforce stereotypes. Active engagement, cultural

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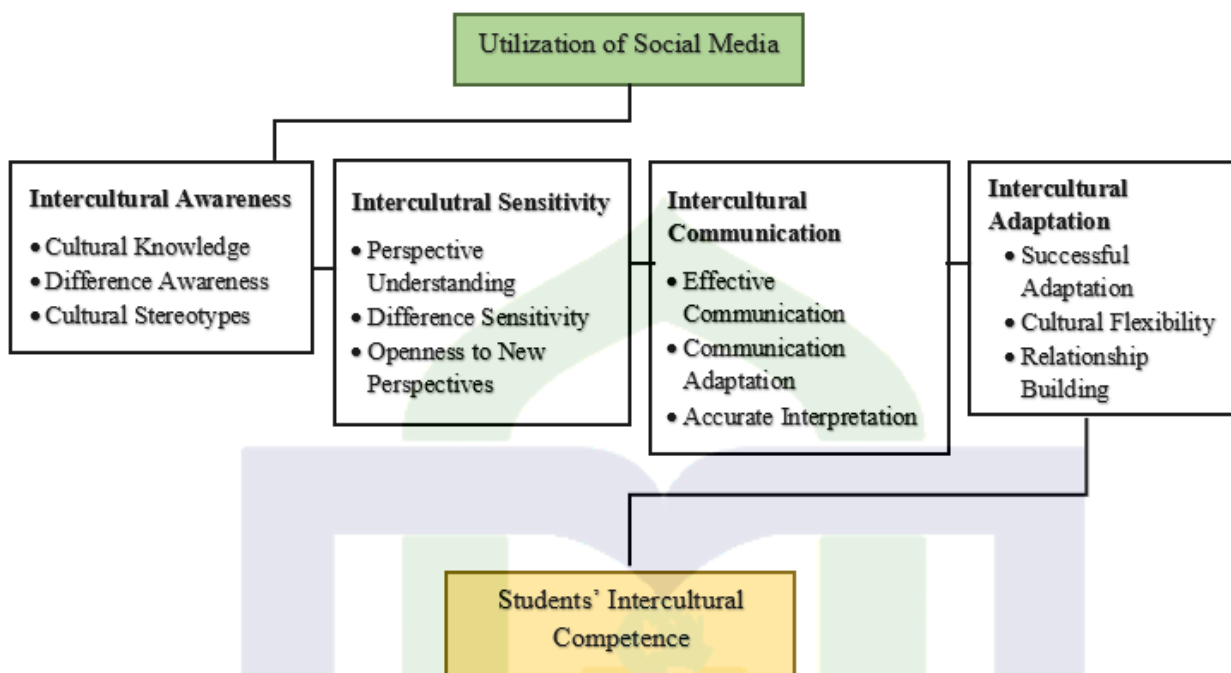
<sup>49</sup>Seçil Tümen Akyıldız, and K. Ahmed. "The Importance of Intercultural Sensitivity in EFL" *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 2021, p.232.

curiosity, and a willingness to learn are crucial in leveraging the potential of social media for intercultural competence development.





## 5. Conceptual Framework



In the conceptual framework, there are several variables related to the development of intercultural competence through the utilization of social media. The following are the variables in the conceptual framework:

1. Independent Variable: Utilization of social media

This variable represents the level of social media usage by IAIN Parepare undergraduate students. It includes how students utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others to interact, share information, and engage in cross-cultural content.

2. Dependent Variables:

a. Intercultural Awareness: This variable reflects the level of students' awareness of cultural differences. It involves understanding the norms, values, beliefs, and practices of different cultures.

- b. Intercultural Sensitivity: This variable describes the level of sensitivity that students have towards cultural differences. It involves the ability to appreciate, respect, and empathize with other cultures.
- c. Intercultural Communication: This variable encompasses students' ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures.
- d. Intercultural Adaptation: This variable represents students' ability to adapt to cultural differences. It involves adjusting their behaviours, values, and practices when interacting with individuals from different cultures.

The independent variable, "Utilization of Social Media," influences the dependent variable, "Intercultural Awareness," which, in turn, influences "Intercultural Sensitivity." "Intercultural Sensitivity" contributes to the development of "Intercultural Communication," and ultimately, "Intercultural Communication" contributes to the development of "Intercultural Adaptation." Overall, intercultural awareness, sensitivity, communication, and adaptation form the construct of intercultural competence.

In this study, the independent variable is the factor that influences the development of intercultural competence through social media, while the dependent variables are indicators of intercultural competence itself.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **A. Research Design**

The research employed a phenomenology study. It focuses on understanding the experiences subjectively and the meaning of individual attribute to the particular phenomenon.<sup>50</sup> In investigating 'The Role of Social Media in Developing Intercultural Communication Competence of IAIN Parepare Undergraduate Students', the study begins by selectively identifying participants based on criteria encompassing their social media usage, intercultural experiences, and academic engagement. A meticulously crafted interview protocol, consisting of open-ended question, facilitates comprehensive discussions about their social media practices, experiences in intercultural interactions fostered by these platforms, perceived influences on their intercultural competency, and encountered challenges. Through one-on-one interviews with chosen participants, qualitative data was collected, allowing for a nuanced exploration of individual perceptions and experiences. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts were subsequently uncover recurring patterns and key insights, cross-referencing responses to validate findings and interpret them within the context of relevant intercultural competence theories.

#### **B. Location and Duration of the Research**

This research was conducted at the English Education Department in IAIN Parepare. IAIN Parepare is an Islamic higher education institution located in Parepare, a city in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The English Education Department

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<sup>50</sup>Sadruddin Bahadur Qutoshi, "Phenomenology: A Philosophy and Method of Inquiry." *Journal of Education and Educational Development* 5.1, 2018, p.215-222.

at IAIN Parepare aims to produce graduates who are competent in English language teaching and have a deep understanding of cultural aspects.

The multicultural context of IAIN Parepare added richness to the research setting. The university attracts students from diverse cultural backgrounds, allowing for a diverse sample of participants for the study. This provided an opportunity to explore the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among students who come from different cultural perspectives.

The research was conducted over a period of one month. This timeframe allows for a comprehensive data collection process and analysis within a reasonable time frame. The duration included various stages of research, such as literature review, data collection through surveys or interviews, data analysis, and report writing.

During this one-month duration, the researcher had sufficient time to gather data from a representative sample of undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare. The research process involved conducting interviews to assess the students' intercultural competence and their utilization of social media platforms. The data analysis phase involved analyzing the collected data to identify patterns, themes, and correlations related to the role of social media in developing intercultural competence.

### **C. Research Paradigm**

In this research, the research paradigm employed is constructivism. This paradigm views reality as a construction or product of human beings themselves. The constructivist paradigm sees the reality of social life not as natural reality, but as formed through construction. Therefore, the focus of analysis in the

constructivist paradigm is to discover how events or realities are constructed, and in what ways these constructions are formed.<sup>51</sup>

This paradigm emphasizes the subjective construction of knowledge by individuals based on their experiences in interaction with social and cultural environments. With this approach, the study acknowledges that social reality, including the development of intercultural competence through social media, is shaped not only by objective factors but also by individuals' subjective interpretations of their experiences. Through structured interviews with open-ended questions, the constructivist paradigm allows researchers to understand how students construct their understanding and intercultural skills through interactions on social media, and how this shapes their knowledge construction about culture and cross-cultural interactions.

#### **D. Population and Sample**

The population for this study comprises undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language Education program at IAIN Parepare, chosen for their involvement in language learning and potential for cross-cultural interactions in academic and social contexts. From this population, a purposive sampling method was employed to select a sample of 10 individuals with experience using social media for cross-cultural interactions. In seeking a sample that meets these criteria, several challenges were occurred. Not all students have sufficient experience using social media for this purpose, potentially limiting the number of eligible participants. Additionally, challenges include identifying and connecting with students willing to actively participate in structured interviews, as well as factors such as busy schedules or lack of interest in research participation. Nevertheless,

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<sup>51</sup>Lexy J Moleong, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017), p.47.

with careful approach and effective communication, these challenges are able to be overcome in obtaining a representative sample that supports the objectives of this research.

### ***E. Data Sources***

In this research, the researcher utilized two types of data sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was gathered through structured interviews with undergraduate students from the English Language Education program at IAIN Parepare. These interviews are designed to gain deep insights into how the use of social media influences their understanding, skills, and intercultural sensitivity.

Additionally, secondary data was obtained from relevant literature and previous studies, which will support the identification of theories and findings related to the impact of social media on the development of intercultural competence among students. By integrating these two types of data sources, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in enhancing intercultural competence among undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare.

### **F. Research Instrument**

#### **1. Unstructured Interview Guide**

The primary research instrument for this study was an unstructured interview approach. Participants engaged in open-ended discussions about their experiences with social media and how it influences their intercultural competence.

These interviews explored various dimensions of intercultural understanding, including knowledge acquisition, skill development, cultural awareness, and sensitivity to cultural differences. By engaging directly with participants, the researcher aimed to uncover their perspectives and insights, capturing the nuanced ways in which social media impacts their intercultural competence development. The use of open-ended questions provided participants with the freedom to express their thoughts and experiences fully, revealing the complexities of their interactions across cultural boundaries. This approach is integral to the phenomenological framework, which emphasizes a thorough understanding of individual experiences and their social contexts.

## **2. Documentation**

In addition to the unstructured interview approach, documentation serves as another essential research instrument. This involves collecting and analyzing artifacts or records that document social media interactions among students and their cultural implications. Examples include screenshots of online exchanges, social media posts, or personal reflections on intercultural experiences through social media platforms. These documents provide supplementary evidence and context to enrich the interview data, offering a holistic understanding of how social media facilitates intercultural learning and development among students.

## **3. Researcher as an Instrument:**

Furthermore, the researcher themselves plays a pivotal role as an instrument in this study. As a qualitative researcher, the role involves facilitating unstructured interviews, interpreting participants' narratives, and ensuring the integrity of the study findings. The researcher also should be expertise in qualitative inquiry and intercultural communication guides the data collection process, including

establishing rapport with participants, actively listening during interviews, and upholding ethical standards

### **G. Data Collection Procedure**

Effective data collection is crucial in understanding the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare. The following points outline the structured approach used in this study, ensuring clarity, thoroughness, and ethical considerations throughout the research process.

1. Preparation Phase:
  - a. Identify and select potential participants from the English Language Education program at IAIN Parepare.
  - b. Obtain necessary permissions and approvals to conduct the research.
  - c. Develop an unstructured interview guide containing open-ended questions.
2. Execution Phase:
  - a. Schedule interviews with selected participants based on their availability.
  - b. Conduct unstructured interviews using the prepared guide, focusing on participants' experiences with social media and its impact on their intercultural competence.
  - c. Record interviews with participants' consent to ensure accuracy and clarity of the collected data.
3. Final Phase:
  - a. Transcribe interviews verbatim to facilitate data analysis.
  - b. Analyze qualitative data by identifying main themes and patterns emerging from the interviews.



- c. Write the research report or paper outlining the key findings based on the collected data.
- d. Formulate conclusions and interpret research findings summarizing the main findings and their implications in the context of developing intercultural competence through social media among undergraduate students.

## H. Data Collection Techniques

In this study, a combination of data collection techniques had been employed to gather comprehensive data from undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare regarding their intercultural competence development through the use of social media. The Data collection was important because it provided the necessary information and evidence to address the research questions and objectives of the study. It allowed researchers to gather empirical data directly from the participants, enabling a systematic and rigorous investigation of the topic at hand.<sup>52</sup> The following data collection techniques were utilized:

### 1. Interviews

In this research, structured interviews with open-ended questions were chosen as the main instrument in collecting data. These interviews allowed for a deep investigation of undergraduate students' experiences in using social media for intercultural interactions.<sup>53</sup> In this research context, experiences refer to the types of social media commonly used by students for cross-cultural interactions, as well as the benefits gained and challenges faced in these activities. Furthermore, the interviews aim to ascertain how social media contributes in enhancing students'

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<sup>52</sup>R. Kumar , “Research methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners”, SAGE Publications, 2019, p.87.

<sup>53</sup>Laila L. Hlass and Lindsay M. Harris. "Critical Interviewing." Utah L. Rev., 2021, p.683.

intercultural competence. By engaging directly with participants, the researcher aimed to uncover their perspectives and insights, capturing the nuanced ways in which social media impacts their intercultural competence development.

## 2. Documentation

The documentation served to collect data or information found in specific documents relevant to the research topic. This instrument was employed to gain deeper insights into how the use of social media can influence the development of intercultural competence among IAIN Parepare students. Various types of documents can be utilized, including learning materials such as syllabi and textbooks related to intercultural competence development through social media, records of student activities on social media reflecting intercultural interactions, and university policies or guidelines concerning the use of social media in the context of intercultural competency. The documentation instrument aims to investigate the context of social media usage and analyze interactions on these platforms to better understand their role in shaping cross-cultural competence.

### I. Technique of Analysis Data

In this research, the researcher employed an interactive model for data analysis, which was developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The model encompasses several steps, including data collection reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.<sup>54</sup> The researchers followed this methodology to streamline the analysis process and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the data.

#### 1. Data Collection

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<sup>54</sup>Elmar Hashimov, "Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook and The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers: Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014, p.381.

For this study, data was collected through structured interviews with ten undergraduate students from the English Language Education program at IAIN Parepare. Additionally, participants' social media activities and profiles were observed and analyzed to provide context and corroborate their responses. The collected data was then thematically analyzed to identify key patterns related to the development of intercultural competence through social media use.

## 2. Data Reduction:

Data Reduction is the process of reducing the number of variables or cases in the data to be analyzed. Its objective is to simplify the data and improve analysis efficiency. Data reduction techniques include variable selection, case grouping, and data transformation. In this stage, the researcher eliminates irrelevant variables, merge variables with similar meanings, or remove extreme outliers. In the context of this research, data reduction could involve selecting relevant variables related to social media usage and intercultural competence. For example, variables such as frequency of social media usage, types of social media platforms used, intercultural communication experiences on social media, and self-perceived intercultural competence could be considered.

## 3. Data Display:

Data display involves visually representing the processed data. Its goal is to intuitively understand patterns, trends, and relationships among variables. Common techniques for data display include tables, charts, diagrams, and maps.<sup>55</sup> Data display techniques can help visualize the relationship between social media usage and intercultural competence. This could involve creating graphs or charts to

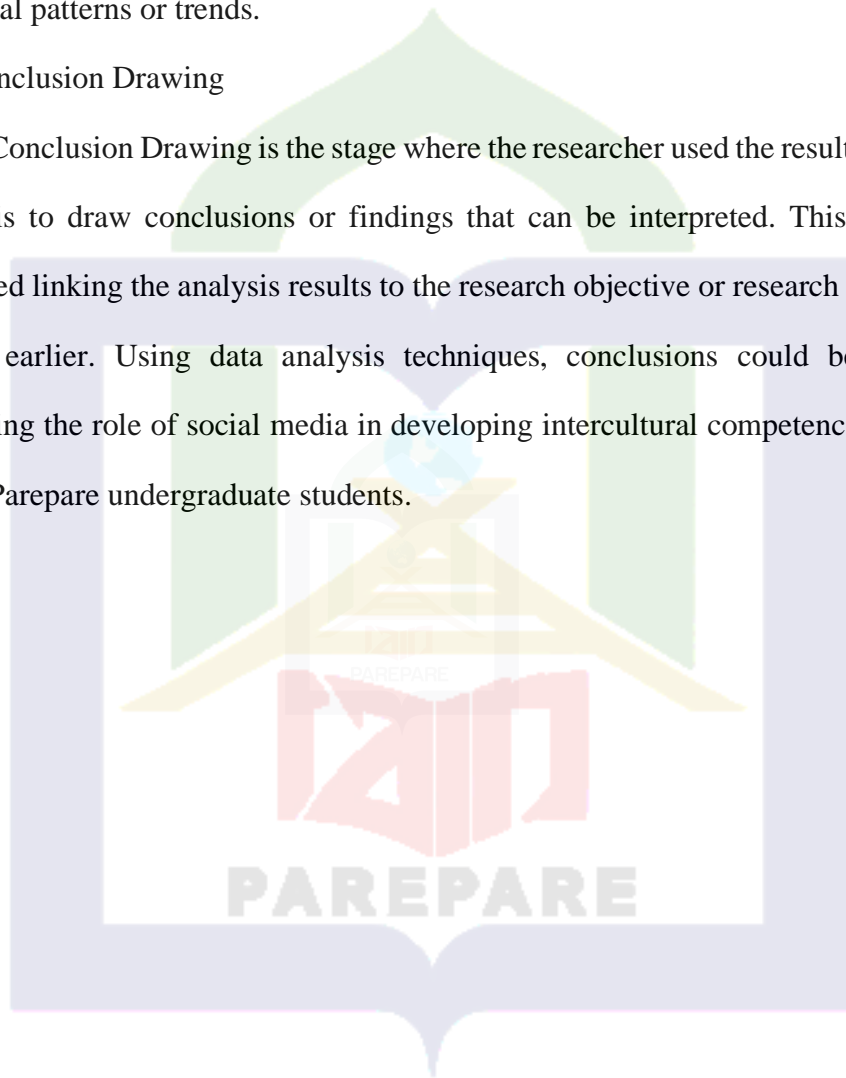
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<sup>55</sup>Holger J. Schünemann, et al, "Interpreting results and drawing conclusions." Cochrane handbook for systematic reviews of interventions, 2019, p.403-431.

display the frequency of social media usage, the types of social media platforms preferred by students, or comparing intercultural competence scores before and after engaging with social media. Visual representations can provide insights into potential patterns or trends.

#### 4. Conclusion Drawing

Conclusion Drawing is the stage where the researcher used the results of data analysis to draw conclusions or findings that can be interpreted. This process involved linking the analysis results to the research objective or research question posed earlier. Using data analysis techniques, conclusions could be drawn regarding the role of social media in developing intercultural competence among IAIN Parepare undergraduate students.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Finding

In this section, the focus was on exploring how social media platforms contribute to the intercultural experiences and competence development of undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare. Understanding the nuances of students' interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds through platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Discord, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat is pivotal.<sup>56</sup> This investigation delved into the platforms students predominantly use, the benefits they derive, and the challenges they face in navigating cultural differences. By examining these aspects, we gain insights into how social media serves as a medium for cultural exchange and personal growth, shaping the intercultural competence of students in meaningful ways.

#### 1. Students Experiences in Using social media to Interact with Individuals from Different Cultural Backgrounds

##### a. Platforms Used for Interaction

Participant A: "I mostly use Instagram and WhatsApp to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds." Participant A preferred Instagram and WhatsApp due to their widespread use and ease of communication, allowing for direct messaging and sharing of multimedia content, which facilitates cultural exchanges.

Participant B: "I usually used Instagram and Facebook for interacting with friends from various cultural backgrounds." Participant B utilizes Instagram and Facebook, platforms known for their social networking capabilities, to maintain

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<sup>56</sup>Shantanu Tilak, "Design Insights from User Perceptions of the Functionality of Learning Management Systems and Social Media for College Classrooms of the Internet Age" The Ohio State University, 2023, p.24.

connections with friends from diverse cultural backgrounds through posts, comments, and private messaging.

Participant C: "I prefer platforms like TikTok and Discord, where cultural exchanges happen through creative videos, live chats, and group discussions that bring cultures alive." Participant C engages on TikTok and Discord for their interactive features, such as creative video content and live chats, which foster dynamic cultural interactions and community engagement.

Facebook and Twitter

Participant D: "I mostly use Facebook and Twitter, where I see diverse perspectives, though I'm not very active in engaging directly." Participant D utilizes Facebook and Twitter to observe diverse perspectives and cultural insights shared by others, although their interaction level remains passive compared to active engagement.

Participant E: "I use Instagram and Snapchat a lot. It's cool to see clips of people's lives from all over." Participant E finds Instagram and Snapchat appealing for their visual storytelling capabilities, enabling them to view snapshots of cultural diversity and daily life across different regions.

Participant F: "Instagram and Twitter are my platforms for connecting with individuals worldwide. They offer spaces where cultural dialogues can be established, allowing me to learn and engage." Participant F actively uses Instagram and Twitter for their interactive nature, participating in cultural discussions, sharing perspectives, and learning about diverse cultural traditions through multimedia content.

Participant G: "I use Instagram and Twitter mainly for connecting with various cultural perspectives." Participant G utilizes Instagram and Twitter to connect with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, leveraging visual

content on Instagram and discussions on Twitter to broaden their cultural understanding.

Participant H: "I often used Instagram and Facebook to connect with friends and influencers who share insights into Islamic culture." Participant H focuses on Instagram and Facebook to engage with friends and influencers who provide insights into Islamic culture, fostering cultural exchanges through posts and conversations.

Participant I: "Instagram and Twitter are my primary platforms for interactions." Participant I prioritize Instagram and Twitter for their active engagement in cultural interactions, using visual media on Instagram and discussions on Twitter to connect with diverse cultural perspectives.

Participant J: "I mainly use Instagram and Twitter for connecting with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Instagram allows me to engage visually with cultural traditions through photos and stories, while Twitter enables me to participate in discussions about global issues and cultural practices." The participant J primarily utilizes Instagram and Twitter as platforms to connect with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Based on interviews with 10 students, it was found that the use of social media to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds is predominantly through platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, Discord, and Twitter. Each platform offers different features that facilitate cultural exchange through visual content, direct conversations, and group discussions, enhancing students' understanding and engagement in intercultural interactions. Thus, the use of various platforms provides diverse avenues for students to engage in intercultural interactions through social media.

## b. Benefits Found

### 1) Learning about Cultures

Based on the interview data, many students expressed that using social media allows them to learn first-hand about various cultures worldwide. For example, participant I explained,

Social media has been a valuable tool for me to explore and learn about diverse cultures. Through platforms like Instagram and YouTube, I've immersed myself in the traditions, cuisines, and lifestyles of people from around the world. For example, following travel bloggers has not only allowed me to virtually visit different countries but also understand their cultural practices on the first place.

By observing and engaging with such content, students deepen their understanding of cultural norms, values, and practices that may differ from their own culture. This reflects how visual platforms like Instagram provide direct insights into global cultural diversity, enriching their cross-cultural learning experiences. Participant H stated “Using social media has been great for exploring other cultures. Seeing my friends' posts about their traditions has been really eye-opening.”

The participant's response highlights how social media served as a valuable tool for exploring and understanding different cultures. By engaging with friends' posts about their traditions, the participant gains first hand insights into diverse cultural practices and customs. This experience was described as "eye-opening," suggesting that it broadens their perspective and enhances their cultural awareness. Social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, allow individuals to share personal stories, photos, and videos that showcase their cultural backgrounds. Through these posts, users can learn about traditions, celebrations, daily life, and values from around the world, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of global diversity. Thus, the participant's use of social media facilitates cultural



exploration and learning, promoting intercultural understanding and connectivity across borders.

## 2) Communication Skills

Students also reported that using social media enhances their communication skills, especially in cross-cultural contexts. For example, one participant mentioned,

Social media has greatly helped me develop intercultural communication skills. I've learned to speak more politely and respectfully when communicating with friends from various cultures on WhatsApp.

Another participant noted, "It has improved my ability to communicate respectfully and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds." These responses underscore how social media serves as a platform for enhancing communication skills across cultural boundaries. Participants highlight learning to adjust their communication styles to be more respectful and effective in diverse contexts. They also note gaining awareness of cultural sensitivities, which is crucial for fostering successful intercultural communication. These experiences illustrate the role of social media in facilitating practical learning opportunities that contribute to the development of interpersonal skills in multicultural settings.

## 3) Awareness and Understanding

Social media not only enhances communication skills but also promotes awareness and understanding of cultural diversity. As participant H reflected, "It's helped me learn how to communicate better with people from different backgrounds. I've become more aware of cultural sensitivities."

This sentiment highlights the educational value of social media in fostering sensitivity towards cultural differences. Through interactions on platforms like Instagram and Twitter, individuals gain exposure to diverse viewpoints and cultural practices, expanding their understanding of global perspectives. This increased

awareness allows for more respectful and empathetic interactions across cultural boundaries, contributing to the development of a more inclusive and interconnected global community. Thus, social media serves as a catalyst for promoting cultural awareness and understanding among users worldwide. Participant G shared a nuanced perspective, stating,

I believe it's helped me become more aware of different communication styles, but I'm not sure how much it has improved my skills in real conversations.

This insight highlights the dual nature of social media's impact on communication development. While users gain exposure to diverse communication styles and cultural nuances through online interactions, translating these insights into effective face-to-face conversations presents challenges. Social media platforms provide valuable opportunities for observing and adapting to various cultural norms and preferences, fostering cross-cultural understanding and empathy. Despite the uncertainties expressed, these experiences contribute significantly to enhancing interpersonal communication skills and promoting cultural sensitivity in global interactions.

Engaging with social media has been instrumental in fostering respectful and sensitive communication across cultures for many individuals. As participant H noted, "It's taught me to communicate respectfully and sensitively across cultures." This statement underscores the educational value of social media in promoting intercultural understanding and empathy. Participant H also highlighted, "... engaging with diverse perspectives has enhanced my communication abilities." This perspective emphasizes how exposure to a variety of viewpoints on platforms like Instagram and Twitter enriches one's ability to navigate cultural differences in communication effectively. By actively participating in discussions and sharing experiences with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, users develop a

deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and learn to adapt their communication styles accordingly. These experiences not only enhance interpersonal skills but also contribute to creating inclusive and harmonious global interactions.

c. Challenges Faced

1) Language Barriers

Navigating language barriers is a common challenge reported by users engaging in cross-cultural interactions on social media. As participant E expressed, "Language can be tricky sometimes, but I use translation tools and ask for clarification when needed." This approach highlights the participant's proactive strategy in overcoming linguistic challenges encountered during online interactions. Social media platforms often facilitate communication between individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds, but differences in language proficiency can lead to misunderstandings or difficulty in expressing nuanced ideas. Utilizing translation tools helps bridge these gaps, enabling users to communicate more effectively and accurately across languages. Despite these challenges, users recognize the value of clear communication in fostering meaningful connections and mutual understanding across cultural boundaries.

One participant shared, "Language barriers have been tough. I try to use translation tools, but sometimes get lost, and it's hard to deliver my thoughts accurately." This sentiment reflects the complexities of relying on automated translation tools to bridge linguistic gaps. Despite efforts to facilitate communication, nuances in language and cultural context can be lost in translation, leading to misunderstandings or incomplete exchanges of information. Users navigating these challenges often find themselves grappling with the balance between conveying their thoughts accurately and respecting cultural differences. However, these experiences underscore the resilience and adaptability required to

communicate effectively in diverse online settings. By acknowledging these limitations and seeking alternative means of clarification, users strive to foster clearer and more inclusive cross-cultural dialogues on social media platforms. Thus, while language barriers pose obstacles, ongoing efforts to improve communication strategies contribute to building stronger intercultural connections in digital spaces.

## 2) Misunderstandings

Based on the interview, cultural misunderstandings present significant challenges for individuals engaging in cross-cultural interactions on social media. As participant H reflected,

One of the biggest challenges I've faced is cultural misunderstandings. For example, during a discussion about gender roles with friends from Malaysia, there were moments of miscommunication due to difference of cultural perspectives. To overcome this, I approached the conversation with humility, asked clarifying questions, and trying to understand their cultural context better.

This experience highlights the complexities of interpreting cultural norms and values that can lead to misinterpretations or conflicts in online discussions. Addressing misunderstandings requires participants to adopt a patient and empathetic approach, actively seeking to bridge cultural gaps through open dialogue and mutual respect.

In addition, understanding humour and sarcasm across cultures can be particularly challenging in online interactions. As participant C noted, "Navigating humour and sarcasm across cultures was tricky actually." This statement reflects the difficulties in conveying and interpreting subtle forms of communication that heavily rely on cultural context and linguistic nuances. Humour, especially sarcasm, can easily be misinterpreted or misunderstood when shared among individuals from

different cultural backgrounds.<sup>57</sup> These challenges often require individuals to exercise caution and clarity in their communication styles to avoid unintended offense or confusion. Over time, users may develop strategies such as explaining cultural references or using emojis to clarify tone and intention. By navigating these complexities with sensitivity and awareness, individuals can foster a more inclusive and respectful online environment that acknowledges and respects diverse cultural expressions of humour and communication styles. Thus, while humour can enhance interactions, its effective use across cultures on social media requires awareness and adaptation to promote mutual understanding and positive engagement.

### 3) Limited Cultural Representation

Limited cultural representation poses a significant challenge when interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds on social media platforms. As participant A pointed out,

One of the biggest challenges I've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media is the limited cultural representation. Social media often portrays a stereotypical view of cultures.

This observation highlights the disparity between the nuanced complexities of real-world cultures and the often oversimplified or misrepresented portrayals seen online. Such limited representations can perpetuate stereotypes, overlooking the diversity within cultural groups and failing to capture authentic cultural experiences. Consequently, users may encounter difficulties in forming accurate perceptions and meaningful connections with others from different cultural backgrounds. Addressing this challenge requires platforms to promote more diverse and authentic representations of cultures, encouraging users to engage in genuine and respectful interactions that go beyond superficial stereotypes. By advocating

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<sup>57</sup>Hande Eslen-Ziya, "Humour and Sarcasm: Expressions of Global Warming on Twitter." *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 9.1, 2022, p.1-8.

for inclusive representation and actively seeking out diverse perspectives, social media users can contribute to creating a more informed and culturally sensitive digital environment. Thus, overcoming the barrier of limited cultural representation fosters richer cross-cultural exchanges that promote mutual understanding and appreciation on social media.

## **2. The Contribution of Social Media Use to the Development of Students' Intercultural Competence**

### **a. Knowledge Development**

The use of social media significantly contributes to the development of students' intercultural competence by enhancing their knowledge of different cultures. Through platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, students were exposed to diverse cultural practices, traditions, and perspectives. Participant H mentioned,

I feel my knowledge about other cultures has grown through social media interactions. For example, I learned about Eid Fitri Day of my friend on Instagram. They shared stories and photos about the celebration, which made me understand and appreciate their culture more.

These interactions not only provide factual information but also offer personal insights and real-life experiences that are invaluable for a deeper understanding of cultural nuances. By regularly engaging with content from various cultures, students broaden their horizons and develop a more informed and empathetic worldview.

Social media use also enhances students' knowledge by improving their communication skills.<sup>58</sup> Participant C noted,

I've become adept at training my communication style to connect authentically with people from diverse backgrounds. It's about understanding differences and bridging cultural gaps.

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<sup>58</sup> Utami, A. D., Nurhayati, E., and Setyowati, Y, *The Impact of Social Media on Intercultural Competence and Communication Skills of EFL Learners*. (Scitepress, 2021) 101056

This quote highlights how social media interactions encourage students to adapt their communication approaches to effectively engage with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. Through practice and exposure to diverse perspectives, students develop the ability to navigate cultural differences sensitively and constructively, thereby fostering meaningful intercultural exchanges.

b. Skill Improvement

Based on the interview, participant A reflects,

... I feel more capable of adjusting my communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures. For example, I'm now more cautious about using humour or idioms that may not be understood by friends from other cultures.

This quote highlights a key aspect of skill development—awareness and adaptation. Through social media interactions, students not only learn to recognize cultural differences but also learn to navigate these differences sensitively. They become more mindful of their choice of words, tone, and expressions, ensuring that their messages are clear and respectful across cultural boundaries.

Moreover, social media facilitates continuous exposure to diverse perspectives and communication styles. By regularly interacting with content and conversations from various cultures, students gain insights into different cultural norms, values, and etiquettes. They learn to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity and adapt their communication approaches to foster meaningful connections. This process of skill improvement on social media extends beyond language proficiency, it encompasses the ability to empathize, listen attentively, and convey messages effectively in multicultural settings.

Participant G emphasizes, "It's improved my ability to communicate respectfully with people from diverse backgrounds." This quote underscores the transformative impact of social media in cultivating students' capacity to engage

respectfully across cultural differences. By embracing cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in their interactions, students not only enhance their communication skills but also contribute to fostering a more harmonious and interconnected global community.

c. Increased Awareness and Sensitivity

Social media platforms contribute significantly to enhancing students' intercultural competence by increasing their awareness and sensitivity towards diverse cultural perspectives. Through engagements on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, students develop a deeper understanding of cultural differences and nuances. Participant B noted

It's taught me to communicate respectfully and sensitively across cultures. Engaging with diverse perspectives has enhanced my communication abilities.

This quote reflects how social media interactions encourage students to adapt their communication styles to foster respectful and meaningful exchanges with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. By actively listening and learning from diverse viewpoints, students gain insights into cultural norms and practices, thereby promoting cultural sensitivity in their interactions. Additionally, Participant E emphasize, “It's helped me learn how to communicate better with people from different backgrounds. I've become more aware of cultural sensitivities.”

This quote emphasizes the transformative impact of social media in raising students' awareness of cultural sensitivities. Through exposure to diverse cultural narratives and experiences, students develop a heightened sensitivity to the nuances of communication, ensuring that their interactions are inclusive and respectful.



Moreover, social media facilitates continuous learning and engagement with global perspectives, enabling students to expand their cultural awareness beyond their immediate surroundings. By embracing cultural diversity on social media platforms, students not only enhance their intercultural competence but also contribute to building more inclusive and empathetic communities locally and globally. In summary, social media serves as a powerful tool for promoting increased awareness and sensitivity among students towards diverse cultural perspectives. By fostering respectful communication and deepening cultural understanding, social media plays a crucial role in preparing students to navigate and thrive in an interconnected world.

## **B. Discussion**

In this section, the focus shifts to discussing the findings derived from the research. The exploration of students' experiences with social media in enhancing intercultural competence has yielded significant insights. The study revealed various key themes, including knowledge development, skill improvement, and increased awareness and sensitivity towards cultural differences.

### **1. Comparing Findings with Other Research**

Comparing the findings of this study with existing research on the role of social media in developing intercultural competence reveals both consistencies and unique insights. Previous studies have extensively documented how social media serves as a bridge for intercultural communication and learning. This study aligns with those findings, showing that IAIN Parepare undergraduates similarly benefit from social media interactions in terms of increased cultural awareness, sensitivity, and communication skills.

The findings from Zhou's (2020) research also provide valuable insights into the specific ways social media influences intercultural competence. Zhou's study found that social media interactions contribute to changes and progress in several variables, including knowledge about the variety and subtlety of both home and target cultures, a different worldview, and cultural study methods.<sup>59</sup> Our findings align with Zhou's observations, particularly in how social media interactions have deepened students' understanding of both their own and other cultures. Zhou's study also noted that students' awareness of the importance of differences and similarities between home and target cultures evolved, along with their negative reactions to these differences (e.g., fear, ridicule, disgust, feeling of superiority) and their critical evaluation of both the target and home cultures.<sup>60</sup> Our study similarly found that students became more aware of cultural sensitivities and developed a more respectful approach to intercultural interactions. One student shared,

It's taught me to communicate respectfully and sensitively across cultures. Engaging with diverse perspectives has enhanced my communication abilities.

Zhou highlighted the changes of attitudes from initial excitement or blind admiration of the target culture to confusion, anxiety, or frustration about cultural differences, later leading to toleration and appreciation of these differences, adaptation to the target culture, and eventually openness and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own. However, this progress differed with our findings, where students reported initial curiosity and eagerness to learn about other cultures, followed by challenges in navigating cultural

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<sup>59</sup>Yingli Zhou, "Using Social Media to Promote Intercultural Communication Between Chinese and American University Students." *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* 43.2, 2020, p.169-187.

<sup>60</sup>Yingli Zhou, "Using Social Media to Promote Intercultural Communication Between Chinese and American University Students."...., p.169-187.

differences, and eventually developing a more nuanced and appreciative understanding of cultural diversity.

Furthermore, the findings from Monika, et al., provided additional insights into the specific ways social media influences intercultural competence. Their study examined the role of five widely used social media platforms on intercultural communication competences among international students at Kyoto University and Tsukuba University in Japan. They found that social media is a powerful tool that allows for communication, interaction, connection, and idea sharing. Participants in their study primarily used Facebook to get to know more about their international friends, with the majority of their international friends already on the platform.<sup>61</sup> This aligns with our finding that social media facilitates connections and knowledge sharing about different cultures. The motivations identified in Monika et al.'s study—supporting social interaction, profiling, information sharing, and communication tools—are consistent with the experiences of IAIN Parepare students. Our participants also used social media to support social interaction and share information, which contributed to their intercultural competence development. Additionally, Monika et al. noted that social media enhances communication competence by making communication among international friends more effective, helping them adapt faster and build strong ties, and improving their English reading skills. Similarly, our study found that social media interactions helped students at IAIN Parepare improve their communication skills, adapt to different cultural contexts, and develop a more nuanced understanding of cultural sensitivities. Our student expressed, "It's improved my ability to communicate respectfully with people from diverse backgrounds." This

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<sup>61</sup>Winda Monika, Nasution, A. H., and Nasution, S, "The Role of Social Media on Intercultural Communication Competences" International Conference on Sustainable Environment and Energy (ICOSEE), 2020, p. 283

comparison highlights the universal benefits of social media in intercultural learning while emphasizing the importance of considering local contexts and specific student experiences in such studies.

Additionally, the research conducted by Ngai, Yoshimura, and Doi (2020) explores how interactions on social network platforms can informally aid in developing intercultural competence among international students in higher education. Japanese students studying in the United States participated in this mixed-method study, which included interviews about their social network usage and interactions, along with a structured questionnaire to assess intercultural competence development. The findings revealed that students with higher levels of intercultural competence were more likely to engage actively and socially on these platforms, gaining benefits from their interactions with potential support sources. Conversely, students with lower levels of competence primarily used social media for passive information consumption.<sup>62</sup> This observation aligns with our findings at IAIN Parepare, where active engagement on social media led to notable enhancements in intercultural competence, such as improved communication skills, increased cultural sensitivity, and better adaptation to diverse cultural contexts. As one student mentioned, "I'm motivated by the opportunity to learn about different customs, traditions, and viewpoints directly from people who live them." These insights suggest that integrating social network platforms into higher-education programs can significantly promote internationalization and the development of intercultural competence, as proactive social media use fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

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<sup>62</sup>Phyllis B. Ngai, Stephen M. Yoshimura, and Fumihiko Doi. "Intercultural Competence Development via Online Social Networking: The Japanese Students' Experience with Internationalisation in US Higher Education" *Intercultural Education* 31.2, 2020, p.228-

Another relevant study by Álvarez Valencia and Fernández Benavides (2019) examined the use of social networking sites for language learning and the development of intercultural competence among second-year English students at a university in Colombia. The researchers collected data through screen recordings, student logs, surveys, and focus groups. Their findings revealed that, among the five dimensions of intercultural competence, the aspects of attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction were prominently observed in students' exchanges and reflections. The study suggested that social networking sites for language learning (SNSLLs) have significant potential to enhance intercultural skills, although some pedagogical adjustments and refocusing of activities are necessary to maximize opportunities for intercultural engagement. This aligns with our findings at IAIN Parepare, where active use of social media facilitated the development of similar intercultural skills and competences.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, our research with IAIN Parepare undergraduates found that social media interactions significantly contributed to their intercultural competence development. Students reported improvements in their cultural awareness, sensitivity, and communication skills, paralleling the dimensions highlighted in Álvarez Valencia and Fernández Benavides' study. One student shared, "I feel my knowledge about other cultures has grown through social media interactions." This underscores the importance of intentional and structured use of social media in educational settings to foster meaningful intercultural engagement and competence.

Based on comparisons drawn from various studies on the role of social media in developing intercultural competence, several key insights emerge. Studies

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<sup>63</sup>Álvarez Valencia, José Aldemar, and Alejandro Fernández Benavides. "Using Social Networking Sites for Language Learning to Develop Intercultural Competence in Language Education Programs." *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 12.1, 2019, p.23-42.

such as Álvarez Valencia and Fernández Benavides, Ngai, Yoshimura, and Doi, and others highlight consistent themes regarding the benefits and challenges of social media use in educational contexts. They reveal that social networking platforms offer significant opportunities for students to enhance their intercultural competence by facilitating interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This exposure helps broaden cultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding, as evidenced in both international student settings and local educational contexts like IAIN Parepare. Active engagement on social media platforms is crucial for meaningful intercultural learning; students who actively participate in discussions, share cultural insights, and engage in cross-cultural dialogue tend to experience greater improvements in their intercultural communication skills compared to passive users.

## **2. How Social Media Helps Each Competence**

Social media has become an indispensable tool in fostering intercultural competence among students. It aids in the development of intercultural awareness, sensitivity, communication, and adaptation by providing platforms for real-time, interactive, and immersive cultural exchanges.<sup>64</sup>

### **a. Intercultural Awareness**

Social media significantly enhances students' intercultural awareness by exposing them to diverse cultural practices, traditions, and worldviews. Through platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, students can follow accounts and join groups dedicated to different cultures. These platforms offer a constant stream of content, such as posts, stories, and videos, that showcase cultural festivals,

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<sup>64</sup>Darla K. Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization" *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10.3, 2006, p.241.

everyday practices, and significant events. For instance, a student might learn about Eid al Fitr Celebration through videos shared by Muslims friends, gaining insights into the rituals, food, and significance of the festival. This constant exposure helps students build a broad understanding of various cultures, going beyond textbook knowledge to experience living, breathing cultural expressions. As one student noted, "I feel my knowledge about other cultures has grown through social media interactions." This awareness extends to understanding global issues, social movements, and historical contexts that shape different cultures, making students more informed global citizens.

#### b. Intercultural Sensitivity

The interactive nature of social media enhances intercultural sensitivity by allowing students to engage directly with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Platforms like WhatsApp and Discord enable real-time conversations where students can ask questions, share experiences, and receive immediate feedback. This direct interaction helps students recognize and respect cultural differences in communication styles, values, and social norms. For example, students might learn that certain gestures or phrases are considered impolite in other cultures, prompting them to adjust their behavior accordingly. One participant shared, "I've become more cautious about using humor or idioms that may not be understood by friends from different backgrounds." Through these interactions, students develop empathy and a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity, fostering a more respectful and inclusive attitude. This sensitivity is crucial for building trust and rapport in intercultural relationships, both online and offline.

#### c. Intercultural Communication

Social media platforms provide a fertile ground for honing intercultural communication skills. Students learn to navigate language barriers, interpret non-

verbal cues, and adapt their communication styles to be more effective across cultures.<sup>65</sup> For example, participating in international discussion forums on Reddit or joining multicultural Facebook groups requires students to convey their thoughts clearly and sensitively. A student reflected,

I've become adept at training my communication style to connect authentically with people from diverse backgrounds. It's about understanding differences and bridging cultural gaps.

Additionally, social media's diverse communication tools—such as text, audio, video, and emojis—allow students to experiment with different modes of expression, enhancing their ability to communicate in varied cultural contexts. The instant feedback loop on these platforms enables continuous learning and refinement of communication strategies, making students more adept at handling cross-cultural interactions.

#### d. Intercultural Adaptation

Social media also plays a crucial role in developing students' intercultural adaptation skills.<sup>66</sup> By regularly engaging with diverse cultural content and interacting with people from different backgrounds, students learn to adjust their behaviors and attitudes to fit different cultural contexts. For instance, following international influencers or joining global interest groups on platforms like Twitter or Instagram exposes students to a wide range of cultural norms and expectations. This exposure helps them become more flexible and adaptable in their thinking and behavior. One student highlighted, It's helped me learn how to communicate better with people from different backgrounds. I've become more aware of cultural

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<sup>65</sup>Abdukhalimova Sarvinozkhon, "Errors And Obstacles in Intercultural Communication." *Journal of New Century Innovations* 20.4, 2023, p.108-112.

<sup>66</sup>Adam Komisarof and Chan-Hoong Leong. "Viewing Intercultural Adaptation and Social Inclusion through Constructs of National Identity: An introduction." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 78, 2020, p.1-9.



sensitivities. Furthermore, social media often brings to light cultural nuances that might not be immediately apparent in face-to-face interactions. This deeper understanding enables students to navigate complex social situations with greater ease and confidence. They learn to anticipate and respect cultural differences, making them more effective in multicultural settings, whether in academic, professional, or social environments.

In summary, social media is a powerful tool for enhancing intercultural competence among students. It provides continuous and interactive learning opportunities that promote intercultural awareness, sensitivity, communication, and adaptation. By engaging with diverse perspectives and cultures through social media, students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world. These competencies are essential for fostering global understanding, cooperation, and harmony in the 21st century.

### **3. Answering Research Questions**

#### **a. Experiences with Social Media Interaction**

In this study, one example of intercultural interaction observed is between a student from IAIN Parepare who belongs to the Buginese ethnic group and their friend who is from the Javanese ethnic group. This interaction provides a clear illustration of how social media, specifically WhatsApp, can play a crucial role in developing intercultural competence. Buginese students are known for their culture that highly values bravery, self-respect, and honor. In contrast, Javanese students tend to emphasize politeness, harmony, and high etiquette in their daily interactions. These cultural value differences can be a source of tension but also provide significant opportunities for learning and developing intercultural competence.

The students frequently interact through WhatsApp, discussing their coursework, campus activities, and social and cultural issues that interest them. Through these interactions, they begin to recognize and understand each other's cultural differences.

Development of Intercultural Competence:

1. **Intercultural Awareness:** Through their WhatsApp conversations, the Buginese student begins to understand that their Javanese friend has a different communication style, which is more subtle and indirect. Conversely, the Javanese student learns that directness and high honesty are key traits of Bugis culture.
2. **Intercultural Sensitivity:** Both students develop sensitivity to each other's feelings and perspectives. For example, the Bugis student learns to be more patient and polite when expressing opinions, while the Javanese student learns to be more assertive and direct in communication.
3. **Intercultural Communication:** The use of different languages and symbols becomes clearer to them. They start incorporating expressions that are more understandable to each other's culture. For instance, the Bugis student uses some Javanese terms in their conversations as a form of respect and recognition of their friend's culture and might start incorporating more polite and thoughtful language in their messages to align with their Javanese friend's communication style.
4. **Intercultural Adaptation:** Bugineses students adapt by showing interest in and asking about Javanese cultural practices and daily routines. They might also begin to use more nuanced language in their interactions. Javanese friend adapt by being more open and direct when discussing topics that require clear communication, like academic advice or project work. Both

the Buginese and Javanese students show adaptation in their daily behaviors. The Buginese student tries to be more patient and indirect in giving feedback, while the Javanese student strives to be more assertive and clear in expressing their opinions.

The first research question sought to understand the experiences of IAIN Parepare undergraduates regarding the use of social media to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The findings indicate that social media platforms serve as significant tools for intercultural interaction, providing students with opportunities to engage with diverse cultures beyond their immediate environment. Students reported that social media platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, Discord, and Twitter were instrumental in facilitating these interactions. These platforms offer various features, such as stories, posts, live streams, and group chats, which enable students to connect with peers from different cultural backgrounds in real-time and through multimedia content. This multimedia engagement allows students to experience a more immersive interaction compared to traditional text-based communication.<sup>67</sup>

One student highlighted the role of Instagram in learning about cultural celebrations stating, "I learned about Eid Fitri Day from my friend's Instagram stories, which deepened my understanding and appreciation of their culture." This demonstrates how social media can bridge cultural gaps by providing real-time insights into cultural practices and events. Through visual content like photos and videos, students can see and hear the details of cultural celebrations, making the learning experience more vivid and impactful. This form of engagement helps to

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<sup>67</sup>Abu Elnasr E., Ahmed M. Hasanein, and Ahmed E. Abu Elnasr. "Responses to COVID-19 in Higher Education: Social Media Usage for Sustaining Formal Academic Communication in Developing Countries" Sustainability 12.16, 2020.

humanize and personalize cultural learning, making it more relatable and memorable for students.

Moreover, the ability to comment and ask questions directly on social media posts allows for interactive learning. Students can engage in discussions, seek clarifications, and share their own cultural experiences, fostering a two-way exchange of cultural knowledge. This interactive element enhances students' understanding and encourages them to be active participants in intercultural dialogues. As one participant expressed, "I'm motivated by the opportunity to learn about different customs, traditions, and viewpoints directly from people who live them." This motivation drives students to seek out and engage with diverse perspectives, enriching their cultural learning experiences.

Another student emphasized the impact of social media on their ability to communicate more effectively with people from different cultures. "I've become more cautious about using humor or idioms that may not be understood by friends from different backgrounds," they shared. This indicates that social media interactions help students become more mindful of cultural sensitivities and adapt their communication styles accordingly. The instantaneous nature of social media communication also allows students to receive immediate feedback, helping them to quickly learn and adjust their approaches in real-time.<sup>68</sup>

The diverse nature of social media networks also exposes students to a wide range of cultural perspectives. By following and interacting with people from various cultural backgrounds, students encounter different viewpoints and ways of thinking. This exposure broadens their horizons and challenges them to consider and respect alternative perspectives. It also helps them to recognize and appreciate

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<sup>68</sup>Brooke Auxier and Monica Anderson "Social Media Use in 2021." Pew Research Center 1.1, 2021, p.1-4.

the diversity within cultures, moving beyond stereotypes and simplistic understandings.

Overall, the students' experiences underscore the role of social media in expanding their cultural horizons and providing a platform for meaningful intercultural exchanges. Through these interactions, students are exposed to different cultural perspectives, which enrich their understanding and foster a more inclusive mindset. Social media not only serves as a tool for communication but also as a bridge connecting students to a global community, encouraging them to develop intercultural relationships and competencies that are crucial in today's interconnected world.<sup>69</sup>

#### b. Contribution to Intercultural Competence

The second research question focused on how the use of social media by IAIN Parepare undergraduates contributes to the development of their intercultural competence. The findings reveal that social media significantly enhances students' intercultural competence in several key areas: knowledge development, skill improvement, and increased awareness and sensitivity.

**Knowledge Development:** Social media platforms expose students to a wealth of information about different cultures. By following diverse accounts and engaging with culturally rich content, students gain insights into various traditions, practices, and worldviews. As one participant noted,

I feel my knowledge about other cultures has grown through social media interactions. For example, I learned about Eid Fitri Day of my friend on Instagram. They shared stories and photos about the celebration, which made me understand and appreciate their culture more.

This kind of exposure allows students to access firsthand accounts of cultural events, rituals, and everyday practices that might not be covered in traditional

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<sup>69</sup>Bu Zhong, *Social Media Communication: Trends and Theories* (United States: John Wiley & Sons, 2021), p.56.

educational settings. Furthermore, social media enables continuous and up-to-date learning, as students can regularly see updates and new content that reflects ongoing cultural developments and trends. This dynamic learning environment helps keep students engaged and motivated to expand their cultural knowledge.

**Skill Improvement:** Interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds on social media enhances students' communication skills. They learn to adjust their communication styles to ensure clarity and respect in cross-cultural dialogues. A student reflected,

I've become adept at training my communication style to connect authentically with people from diverse backgrounds. It's about understanding differences and bridging cultural gaps.

This skill improvement is crucial for effective intercultural communication and building meaningful relationships across cultures. Through these interactions, students become more proficient in interpreting and responding to various communication cues, such as language nuances, body language, and context-specific behaviors. The real-time nature of social media also provides students with immediate feedback, allowing them to refine their communication strategies continuously. For example, students might quickly learn which phrases or jokes might be culturally sensitive or how to express empathy and respect in different cultural contexts. This iterative learning process enhances their ability to navigate complex social situations with confidence and cultural competence.

**Increased Awareness and Sensitivity:** Social media interactions heighten students' awareness of cultural sensitivities and foster a more respectful approach to communication. Engaging with diverse perspectives helps students understand and appreciate cultural nuances. A participant noted,

It's taught me to communicate respectfully and sensitively across cultures. Engaging with diverse perspectives has enhanced my communication abilities.

Another added, "It's helped me learn how to communicate better with people from different backgrounds. I've become more aware of cultural sensitivities." This increased awareness is not only about recognizing overt cultural differences but also about appreciating subtle variations in cultural expressions, values, and etiquette. Social media exposes students to a wide range of cultural narratives, helping them develop a more empathetic and inclusive worldview. For instance, by following discussions on social media about social justice issues or cultural celebrations, students can learn about the historical and societal contexts that shape different cultural identities. This knowledge empowers them to engage in more meaningful and respectful intercultural interactions.

Moreover, the ability to interact with people from diverse backgrounds on social media helps students build a global network of contacts, enriching their personal and professional lives. These connections can lead to collaborative projects, friendships, and a deeper understanding of global interconnectedness. The diverse perspectives encountered on social media also challenge students to reflect on their own cultural assumptions and biases, promoting personal growth and a more nuanced understanding of the world.

In summary, the use of social media plays a pivotal role in developing the intercultural competence of IAIN Parepare undergraduates. By providing a platform for continuous learning and interaction, social media enhances students' knowledge, communication skills, and cultural sensitivity. These findings underscore the importance of integrating social media as a tool for intercultural education and promoting a more inclusive and interconnected global community.

#### 4. Limitations of the Study

Every research study has its limitations, and this study is no exception. Understanding these limitations is essential for accurately interpreting the findings and recognizing the scope and applicability of the conclusions drawn.

##### a. Sample Size and Scope

One limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size of participants. The study focused on a specific group of students from IAIN Parepare, which may not fully represent the broader population of students or other educational contexts. While the insights gained are valuable and offer a glimpse into the role of social media in developing intercultural competence, a larger and more diverse sample could have provided a broader range of perspectives and experiences. This could include students from different universities, regions, and educational backgrounds, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how social media influences intercultural competence across various contexts. Additionally, including participants from different age groups and with varying levels of social media engagement could yield more nuanced insights.

##### b. Generalizability

The findings of this study are based on the specific experiences of students from a particular educational institution, IAIN Parepare. As a result, caution should be exercised when generalizing these findings to other student populations or cultural contexts. The unique cultural, social, and educational environment of IAIN Parepare may influence the ways in which social media impacts students' intercultural competence. Therefore, while the study provides valuable insights into this specific context, its conclusions may not be directly applicable to students in different regions, countries, or educational systems. Further research in diverse



settings would be necessary to determine the extent to which these findings can be generalized to other populations.

#### c. Self-Reporting Bias

The data collected for this study relied heavily on self-reported experiences and perceptions of the participants. This introduces the potential for bias or inaccuracies in how participants recalled and reported their experiences with social media and intercultural interactions. Participants might have consciously or unconsciously emphasized positive aspects of their experiences or downplayed negative ones. Additionally, social desirability bias could influence participants to provide responses they believe are more acceptable or favorable. To mitigate this limitation, future studies could incorporate objective measures, such as analysis of social media content or interactions, alongside self-reported data to provide a more balanced and accurate representation of participants' experiences.

#### d. Temporal Factors

The study's findings are also influenced by the current state of social media platforms and cultural dynamics at the time of data collection. Social media is a rapidly evolving landscape, with platforms continually updating features, policies, and user interfaces. Changes in technology, popular platforms, or societal norms over time could impact the relevance and applicability of the study's conclusions in the future. For instance, the emergence of new social media platforms or shifts in user behavior could alter how students engage with different cultures online. Longitudinal studies that track changes over time would be valuable in understanding how the relationship between social media use and intercultural competence development evolves.

#### e. Language and Cultural Barriers

Despite efforts to mitigate language and cultural barriers during data collection, nuances in language and cultural interpretations may still have influenced the results. Participants might have interpreted questions differently based on their cultural backgrounds or language proficiency, leading to variations in responses that could affect the overall findings. Additionally, the researcher's own cultural and linguistic background may have influenced data interpretation. To address this limitation, future research could involve bilingual or multilingual researchers and employ culturally sensitive methodologies to ensure that data collection and analysis accurately reflect participants' intended meanings and experiences.

Acknowledging these limitations is essential for interpreting the study's findings accurately and understanding the boundaries within which the conclusions can be applied. Future research could address these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples, using mixed-method approaches, and considering longitudinal studies to capture changes over time in social media use and intercultural competence development. By addressing these limitations, researchers can build on the insights gained from this study and further explore the complex relationship between social media and intercultural competence.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### A. Conclusion

1. This study aimed to explore the role of social media in developing the intercultural competence of undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare, with a focus on their experiences and the impact on their knowledge, skills, awareness, and sensitivity towards cultural differences. The findings reveal that social media significantly contributes to the enhancement of students' intercultural competence in various ways.
2. Social media facilitates knowledge development by exposing students to diverse cultural practices and traditions. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok offer opportunities for students to learn about different cultures through direct engagement with cultural content shared by users worldwide.
3. The study highlights the role of social media in improving students' communication skills across cultures. Through regular interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds, students learn to adapt their communication styles to ensure clarity and sensitivity.
4. Social media increases students' awareness and sensitivity towards cultural differences. Engaging with diverse perspectives on social media platforms helps students develop a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and fosters respectful and inclusive interactions.
5. The study also acknowledges several limitations, including the small sample size, limited generalizability, potential self-reporting bias, temporal factors, and language and cultural barriers. These limitations highlight the need for further research to validate and expand upon the findings.

## **B. Suggestion**

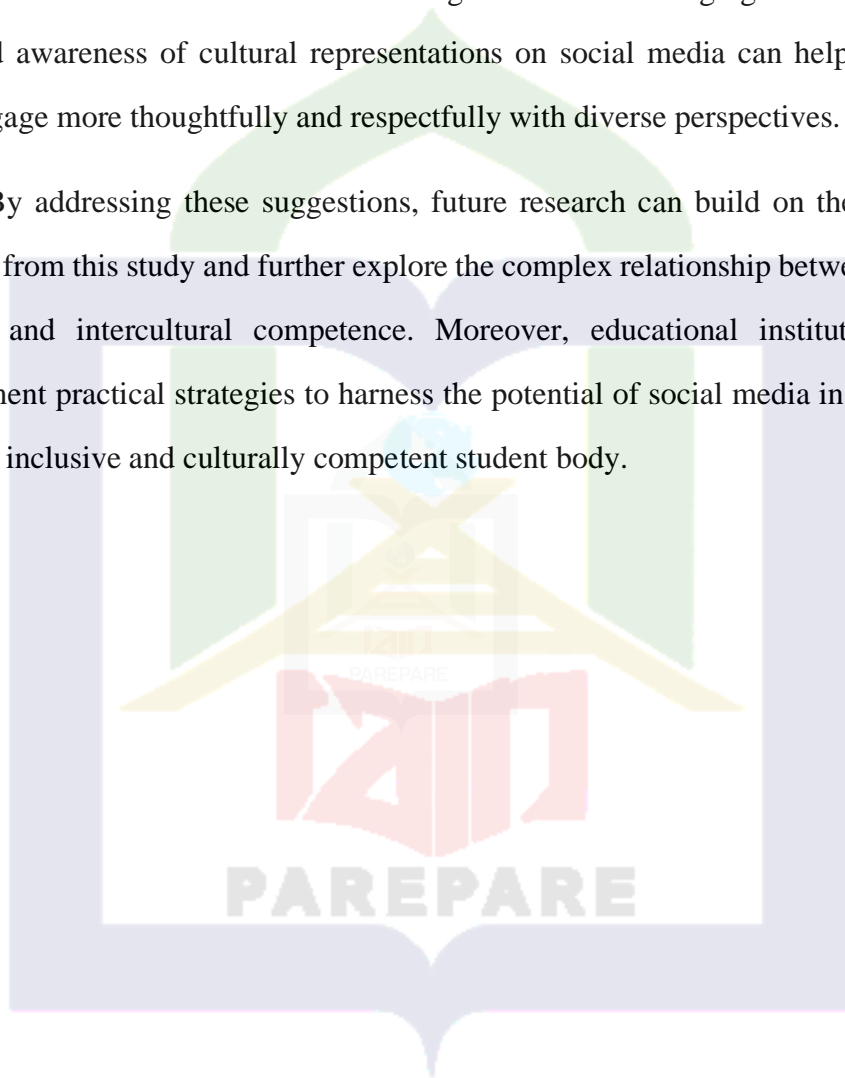
Based on the study's findings and limitations, several suggestions can be made for future research and practical applications:

1. **Expand the Sample Size and Diversity:** Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples to provide a broader understanding of the role of social media in developing intercultural competence. Including participants from different educational institutions, regions, and cultural backgrounds will enhance the generalizability of the findings.
2. **Incorporate Mixed-Method Approaches:** To address potential self-reporting biases and provide a more comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences, future studies should employ mixed-method approaches. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or content analysis of social media interactions can offer richer and more accurate data.
3. **Conduct Longitudinal Studies:** Given the rapidly evolving nature of social media, longitudinal studies are recommended to track changes over time in how social media use impacts intercultural competence. This approach will help capture the dynamic relationship between social media platforms, user behaviors, and intercultural interactions.
4. **Address Language and Cultural Barriers:** Future research should employ culturally sensitive methodologies and involve bilingual or multilingual researchers to ensure accurate data collection and interpretation. This will help mitigate the influence of language and cultural barriers on the findings.
5. **Promote Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Educational institutions should consider incorporating cultural sensitivity training and workshops that leverage social media as a tool for intercultural learning. By providing students with the skills

and knowledge to navigate cultural differences effectively, institutions can enhance students' intercultural competence both online and offline.

6. **Encourage Responsible Social Media Use:** It is essential to promote responsible and mindful use of social media among students. Encouraging critical thinking and awareness of cultural representations on social media can help students engage more thoughtfully and respectfully with diverse perspectives.

By addressing these suggestions, future research can build on the insights gained from this study and further explore the complex relationship between social media and intercultural competence. Moreover, educational institutions can implement practical strategies to harness the potential of social media in fostering a more inclusive and culturally competent student body.



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# APPENDIXES



## INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

**Research Title: The Role of Social Media in Developing Intercultural Competence of IAIN Parepare Undergraduate Students**

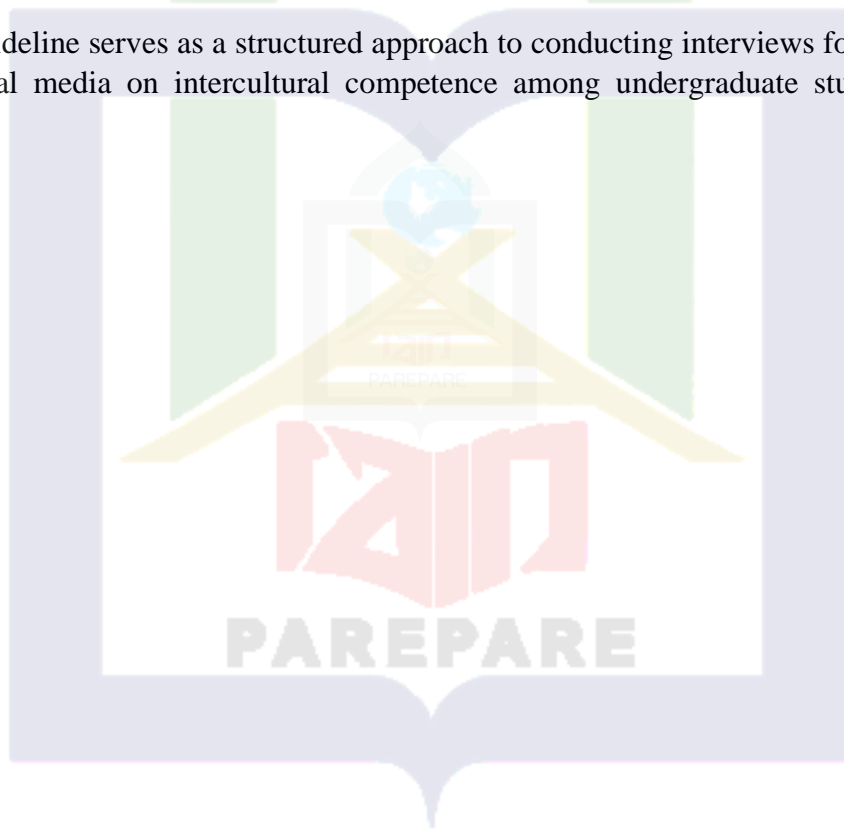
### Research Questions:

1. How are the experiences of IAIN Parepare undergraduates regarding the use of social media to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?
2. How does the use of social media by IAIN Parepare undergraduates contribute to the development of their intercultural competence?

Indicator Type	Sub-Indicator	Interview Questions
<b>Intercultural Awareness</b>	Experience Using Social Media to Learn about Other Cultures	What are your experiences using social media to learn about other cultures?
	Changes in Attitudes or Perspectives towards Cultures	How has your interaction with individuals from other cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?
<b>Intercultural Sensitivity</b>	Development of Empathy and Tolerance towards Other Cultures	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media?
	Positive and Negative Experiences in Interacting with Different Cultures	Have you had positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you describe them?
<b>Intercultural Communication</b>	Development of Intercultural Communication Skills	How has using social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?
	Adaptation of Communication Styles with Different Cultures	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?

<b>Intercultural Adaptation</b>	Challenges in Interacting with Different Cultures	What have been the biggest challenges you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? How did you overcome them?
	Preferred Social Media Platforms for Interacting with Different Cultures	Which social media platforms do you most frequently use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?
	Motivation for Interacting with Different Cultures	What are your main motivations for interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media?

This guideline serves as a structured approach to conducting interviews for exploring the impact of social media on intercultural competence among undergraduate students at IAIN Parepare.



## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

**Participant A : Sashfira**

**Reg Num : 20202003888203060**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"I feel my knowledge about other cultures has grown through social media interactions. For example, I learned about Eid Fitri Day of my friend on Instagram. They shared stories and photos about the celebration, which made me understand and appreciate their culture more."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Yes... because interacting with people from different cultures through social media has indeed influenced my attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences. I've grown to appreciate diversity and understand that differences should be celebrated, not avoided."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"I feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media. For example, I now better understand the struggles of my Muslim friends in non-Muslim countries during Ramadan after seeing their stories on Facebook."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"Social media has helped me a lot to develop intercultural communication skills. I've learned to speak more politely and respectfully when communicating with friends from various cultures on WhatsApp."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Yes, I feel more capable of adjusting my communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures. For example, I'm now more cautious about using humor or idioms that may not be understood by friends from other cultures."

6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"Of course, I've seen a change in my attitude after interacting frequently with friends from other cultures. I've become more open-minded and less quick to judge. For example, I've come to appreciate different perspectives on life."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"The biggest challenge I faced was language differences. However, I overcame it by using translation features on social media and learning basic phrases in my friends' languages. This has significantly helped in building better relationships."
8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I often use Instagram and WhatsApp to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"My primary motivation is to broaden my understanding and appreciate different perspectives. I also want to enrich my experiences by learning about other cultures directly from the source."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"I've had many positive experiences. One of the most memorable was when a friend from Bali invited me to join a video call during their culture celebrations. It was an incredible experience, and I'm grateful to have experienced it virtually."

**Participant B : Nahdah Alfiani Rahman**

**Reg Num : 2220203888203007**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"Yes, I've learned a lot about different cultures through social media. For example, seeing my friends' posts about traditional festivals like Nyepi in Bali gave me insights into their cultural practices."

2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Yes, it has. I've become more open-minded and understanding of cultural diversity through these interactions."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"Definitely. Interacting with people from diverse backgrounds has taught me to appreciate their perspectives and challenges better."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"It has improved my ability to communicate respectfully and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Yes, I've learned to adapt my communication style to better connect with people from diverse cultural backgrounds."
6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"I've learned to see cultural differences as enriching rather than barriers, which has broadened my worldview."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"Language barriers were challenging, but using translation tools and learning basic phrases helped bridge the gap."
8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I primarily use Instagram and Facebook for interacting with friends from various cultural backgrounds."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"I'm motivated by the opportunity to learn about different customs, traditions, and viewpoints directly from people who live them."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"I've had positive experiences, such as learning about new holidays and celebrations, but occasionally, misunderstandings due to cultural differences have also occurred."

**Participant C : Alsa Dzuhijayani Ali**

**Reg Num : 2220203888203007**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"Social media has been actually a global passport for me. I've explored many cultures through virtual tours of festivals, food adventures, and various language shared by friends worldwide."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Absolutely! I now see cultural differences as a tapestry of human uniqueness rather than barriers. Each interaction has added a new color to my worldview."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"Definitely. I have ever seen a video about funeral ceremonial in Toraja, it is very sacred, and it has deepened my empathy and respect for their traditions."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"It's been like a crash course in cross-cultural communication! From emoji diplomacy to navigating cultural differences in discussions, each interaction has sharpened my communication skills."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Absolutely! I've learned to adapt from formal to voice tones, depending on the cultural context, ensuring smoother and more meaningful exchanges."
6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"I've admired cultural diversity as a treasure trove of wisdom. It's like having a kaleidoscope of perspectives that continually challenge and enrich my own worldview."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"The biggest challenge is delivering humor and sarcasm across cultures. I overcame it by asking questions and clarifying meanings, fostering deeper mutual understanding."



8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I prefer platforms like TikTok and Discord, where cultural exchanges happen through creative videos, live chats, and group discussions that bring cultures alive."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"I'm driven by the thrill of discovering new perspectives and forging meaningful connections that transcend borders, enriching both my personal growth and understanding of the world."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"Absolutely! A positive highlight was celebrating Diwali virtually with friends from India, soaking in the festive spirit through live streams and heartfelt messages. Occasionally, language misunderstandings have led to funny moments that brought us closer."

**Participant D : Muhammad Mazhur**

**Reg Num : 2020203888306062**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"I've tried to learn about other cultures through social media. It's been interesting to see snippets of different traditions and lifestyles, though I feel I've only scratched the surface."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"I think so. I've become more aware of cultural diversity, but I'm still navigating how to fully understand and appreciate these differences."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"I'm starting to feel more empathetic, especially when I see friends sharing personal stories or cultural celebrations. It's a gradual process for me."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"I believe it's helped me become more aware of different communication styles, but I'm not sure how much it has improved my skills in real conversations."

5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"I'm trying to adapt, but I often worry about unintentionally causing misunderstandings. It's something I'm still working on."
6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"I think I've become more curious about other cultures, but I'm also more aware of how much I still have to learn."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"Language barriers have been tough. I try to use translation tools, but sometimes nuances get lost, and it's hard to convey my thoughts accurately."
8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I mostly use Facebook and Twitter, where I see diverse perspectives, though I'm not very active in engaging directly."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"I'm interested in learning, but I also feel a bit hesitant because I worry about unintentionally offending someone due to cultural differences."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"I've had positive experiences when friends have shared insights into their traditions. But there have been moments where I've misunderstood cultural references, which made me feel embarrassed."

**Participant E : Mardatillah**

**Reg Num : 2020203888203065**

No	Question	Student 005's Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"Using social media has been great for exploring other cultures. Seeing my friends' posts about their traditions has been really eye-opening."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Definitely! It's made me more open-minded about different cultures. It's cool to learn how everyone does things differently."

3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"For sure! Chatting with people during their festivals has helped me understand and appreciate their traditions and values."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"It's helped me learn how to communicate better with people from different backgrounds. I've become more aware of cultural sensitivities."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Yeah, I've gotten better at it. I try to be respectful and adapt how I talk depending on who I'm chatting with."
6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"I've become more accepting and interested in different ways of life. It's broadened my understanding of the world."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"Language can be tricky sometimes, but I use translation tools and ask for clarification when needed."
8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I use Instagram and Snapchat a lot. It's cool to see snippets of people's lives from all over."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"I'm just curious about how others live. It's interesting to learn about different cultures directly from people who live them."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"Mostly positive! Celebrating festivals with online friends has been fun. Sometimes, though, cultural differences in humor or slang can lead to misunderstandings."

**Participant F : Anugrah Awaltha As**

**Reg Num : 2020203888203064**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"Social media has been my gateway to a kaleidoscope of cultures. I love diving into cultural pages, where each post reveals a new facet of traditions and lifestyles from around the world."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Absolutely! Engaging with people from diverse backgrounds has broadened my horizons and deepened my appreciation for the rich tapestry of global cultures."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"Definitely. Exploring cultural holidays and customs through social media has fostered empathy in me. Each story and celebration shared has taught me to embrace and respect cultural diversity."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"Social media has honed my ability to navigate cross-cultural conversations. It's exposed me to diverse languages, customs, and communication styles, teaching me to communicate with sensitivity and clarity."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Absolutely! I've become adept at tailoring my communication style to connect authentically with people from diverse backgrounds. It's about understanding nuances and bridging cultural gaps."
6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"I've embraced a more open-minded worldview. Engaging with diverse perspectives has not only enriched my understanding but also sparked a curiosity to delve deeper into global cultures."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"Language barriers have posed challenges, yet they've also spurred creativity in communication. Using translation tools and seeking clarification have been crucial in fostering meaningful exchanges."

8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"Instagram and Twitter are my platforms for connecting with individuals worldwide. They offer fresh spaces where cultural dialogues flourish, allowing me to learn and engage."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"I'm driven by a genuine thirst for cultural exploration and understanding. Connecting with diverse voices on social media enriches my perspective and fosters meaningful global connections."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"My experiences have mostly been enlightening, from discovering unique festivals to sharing stories of cultural pride. Occasionally, misunderstandings have arisen, but they've led to insightful conversations that deepen mutual respect."

**Participant G : Magfiratul Hidayah**

**Reg Num : 2020203888203087**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"I enjoy exploring friends' posts about their traditions, giving me insights into diverse cultures."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Yes, it's made me understand and appreciate cultural diversity more."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"Definitely. Seeing cultural celebrations like Maulid from another country has deepened my empathy for different customs."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"It's improved my ability to communicate respectfully with people from diverse backgrounds."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Yes, I've learned to adapt my communication style to connect better with people from different backgrounds."

6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"I've become more appreciative of cultural diversity and have gained a deeper understanding of global perspectives."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"Understanding cultural nuances in communication has been challenging. I've overcome it by asking clarifying questions and being patient in discussions."
8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I use Instagram and Twitter primarily for connecting with diverse cultural perspectives."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"I'm motivated by the opportunity to learn and understand different cultural perspectives firsthand."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"I've had positive experiences learning about new traditions, though misunderstandings have occurred occasionally."

**Participant H : Muh. Asyraf**

**Reg Num : 2020203888203062**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"I've learned a lot about Islamic culture through social media. For instance, following accounts that share daily practices during Ramadan has been enlightening."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Absolutely. Interacting with friends from Saudi Arabia has deepened my appreciation for Islamic traditions, such as Eid celebrations."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"Definitely. Witnessing the dedication of Muslims during Hajj rituals through posts has made me more empathetic towards their beliefs and practices."

4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"It's taught me to communicate respectfully and sensitively across cultures. Engaging with diverse perspectives has enhanced my communication abilities."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Yes, I've learned to adapt my communication style to respect Islamic cultural norms when interacting with friends from Aceh."
6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"I've become more open-minded and appreciative of cultural diversity, especially in understanding the different interpretations of Islamic teachings."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"Understanding the cultural significance behind Islamic greetings and expressions was challenging. I overcame it by asking for explanations and researching further."
8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I primarily use Instagram and Facebook to connect with friends and influencers who share insights into Islamic culture."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"My motivation is to broaden my cultural understanding and forge meaningful connections with people who have diverse perspectives, such as those rooted in Islamic heritage."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"One positive experience was learning about the traditions of Eid al-Fitr from my friends in Indonesia. Occasionally, misunderstandings arise due to cultural nuances, but they encourage deeper discussions and learning."

**Participant I : Izzatul Fariha**

**Reg Num : 2020203888203017**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"Social media has been an invaluable tool for me to explore and learn about diverse cultures. Through platforms like Instagram and YouTube, I've immersed myself in the

		traditions, cuisines, and lifestyles of people from around the world. For example, following travel bloggers has not only allowed me to virtually visit different countries but also understand their cultural practices firsthand."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Absolutely. Interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds has significantly broadened my perspective on cultural diversity. Engaging in discussions about cultural norms, values, and celebrations has taught me to appreciate and respect differences. For instance, learning about the significance of Lunar New Year from my Chinese friends has deepened my understanding and respect for their traditions."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"Yes, interacting with people from various cultural backgrounds has enhanced my empathy and tolerance. For example, seeing posts about the challenges faced by refugees from Syria on social media has made me more empathetic towards their struggles and more appreciative of their resilience."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"Social media has played a crucial role in enhancing my intercultural communication skills. Engaging in cross-cultural discussions and debates has taught me to communicate effectively while respecting cultural differences. For instance, participating in online forums about global issues has allowed me to exchange viewpoints with people from diverse cultural perspectives, improving my ability to articulate ideas diplomatically."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Absolutely. Through interactions on social media, I've learned to adapt my communication style to accommodate cultural differences and preferences. Whether it's using formal language with colleagues from Japan or using emojis to express warmth with friends from Brazil, I've become more versatile in tailoring my communication to different cultural contexts."



6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"Frequent interactions with friends from diverse cultures have led to profound changes in my attitudes and perspectives. I've become more open-minded and curious about different ways of life. For example, discussions with friends from India about their spiritual practices have sparked my interest in exploring mindfulness and meditation techniques as part of daily life."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"One of the biggest challenges I've faced is navigating cultural misunderstandings. For instance, during a discussion about gender roles with friends from Saudi Arabia, there were moments of miscommunication due to differing cultural perspectives. To overcome this, I approached the conversation with humility, asked clarifying questions, and sought to understand their cultural context better."
8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"I primarily use Instagram and Twitter for connecting with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Instagram allows me to engage visually with cultural traditions through photos and stories, while Twitter enables me to participate in discussions about global issues and cultural practices."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"My primary motivation is to foster cross-cultural understanding and friendship. I believe that by engaging with people from diverse backgrounds on social media, I can contribute to building a more inclusive and empathetic global community. Learning about different cultures directly from individuals who live them enriches my worldview and helps me challenge stereotypes and prejudices."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"One positive experience was collaborating with a group of students from Java on a social media campaign about environmental conservation. Despite initial differences in approaches, we worked together to create a campaign that resonated with both Javanese and national audiences. On the other hand, a negative experience involved unintentionally offending a

		friend from Medan by misinterpreting their cultural etiquette during a virtual meeting. However, we resolved the misunderstanding through open dialogue and mutual respect, which strengthened our friendship."
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**Participant J : Nur Fauziyah**

**Reg Num : 2020203888203077**

No	Question	Answer
1	How have you experienced using social media to learn about other cultures?	"I've learned about other cultures through Instagram and YouTube."
2	Has your interaction with individuals from different cultures via social media influenced your attitudes and perceptions towards cultural differences?	"Yes, it has made me appreciate cultural diversity more."
3	Do you feel more empathetic and tolerant towards other cultures after interacting with them through social media? Can you give an example?	"Yes, through discussions with friends from India, I've gained a deeper understanding of their values and traditions."
4	How has the use of social media helped you develop intercultural communication skills?	"It's taught me to communicate respectfully across different cultures."
5	Do you feel more capable of adjusting your communication style when speaking with individuals from different cultures?	"Yes, I've learned to adapt my communication style."
6	Can you describe any changes in attitude or perspectives you've experienced after frequent interactions with friends from other cultures?	"eh... when I talk with friend from other cultures I've become more open to cultural diversity."
7	What has been the biggest challenge you've faced when interacting with individuals from different cultures via social media? How did you overcome it?	"Understanding cultural nuances in communication was challenging. I addressed it by asking for clarification and being patient."

8	Which social media platforms do you most often use to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds?	"Instagram and Twitter are my primary platforms for cultural interactions."
9	What is your primary motivation for interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media?	"To broaden my cultural understanding and connect with diverse perspectives."
10	Have you had any positive or negative experiences when interacting with individuals from different cultures through social media? Could you share one?	"One positive experience was learning about traditional festivals from friends in Japan. Occasionally, misunderstandings occur due to cultural differences, but they lead to learning opportunities."





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Nim : 2020203879102012  
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Telah selesai diterjemahkan dari Bahasa Indonesia ke Bahasa Inggris dan Bahasa Arab pada tanggal 17 Juli 2024 oleh Unit Pelaksana Teknis Bahasa IAIN Parepare.

Demikian surat keterangan ini dibuat untuk dapat dipergunakan sebagaimana mestinya.

Parepare, 02 Agustus 2024  
Kepala,



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Benar telah diterima pada Jurnal International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Science (IJHESS) Volume 6 Issue 4 Oktober 2024 yang telah terakreditasi SINTA 5.

Demikian surat ini disampaikan, atas partisipasi dan kerja samanya diucapkan terima kasih

An. Ketua LP2M

Kepala Pusat Penerbitan & Publikasi



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## Letter of Acceptance

5809/IJHESS/PPTIJUMPALU/VII/2024

Date 29 July 2024

International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences (IJHESS)

Dear Author(s)

Nurfadil Arham<sup>1\*</sup>, Magdahalena Tjalla<sup>2</sup>, Arqam<sup>3</sup>

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It's my pleasure to inform you that, after the peer review, your paper **The Role of Social Media in Developing Intercultural Competence** has been **ACCEPTED** with content unaltered to publish with **International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences (IJHESS)** in **Volume 6 Issue 4 (October 2024)**.

Thank you for making the journal a vehicle for your research interests

With regards  
Yours sincerely



*Dr. Ahmad Yani*  
Editor in Chief

## CURRICULUM VITAE



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1. Syntactical Analysis on Sentence Pattern in the Headlines of TEMPO news.