

## Optimizing Commenting Ethics on Social Media: "Efforts to Create a Positive Digital Environment"

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### ABSTRACT:

As the use of social media platforms increases, unethical commenting often leads to conflict and creates a hostile atmosphere in cyberspace. Optimizing the ethics of commenting on social media is essential to creating a positive digital environment. This socialization activity aims to build a digital communication culture that is more civilized, respectful, and beneficial to all—creating a positive social media space where every comment is a reflection of wisdom and empathy as a user. The methods used are talk, games, and focus group discussions regarding the ethics of commenting on social media. This event was attended by 30 Dasawisma XVI mothers aged 30-40 years. This activity results in Dasawisma XVI mothers actively using social media to understand and continue to practice valuable things in their comments. This results from Mrs. Rini conveying messages and impressions as Chair of Dasawisma XVI. The Dasawisma XVI mothers can also properly sort through or use media and behave appropriately if there is a risk of encountering hoaxes or false news.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Ethics, Comment, Digital Environment, Communication Culture*

### PENDAHULUAN

In the digital era, life is getting more accessible, and all information can be accessed digitally. Understanding the use of social media is undoubtedly very important for society. Social media is now essential to everyday life, with increasingly sophisticated, modern technology and various features. New media was created to facilitate communication and social interaction,

overcoming obstacles such as distance and time. In new media, users have an active role in creating and spreading messages. A significant difference can be seen from conventional media, where the audience is more passive, which often causes problems such as the spread of fake news, cyberbullying, and hate content.

Social media is one of the tools for communicating, finding, and receiving the latest and most up-to-date information, both nationally and internationally. Social media also acts as a unifying tool that allows people far apart to stay connected, but if not used efficiently, it can cause relationships to become increasingly distant. Along with many social media users, few use these platforms to spread fake news (hoaxes), violent videos, and immoral content without considering the negative impacts that may arise (Santosa et al., 2021).

In 2020, the number of social media users in Indonesia increased to 160 million, an increase of 10 million from the previous year. Users in Indonesia spend an average of 3 hours and 26 minutes per day on social media, which is used by almost all levels of society (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Today's development of social media platforms allows its members to network and share text, images, videos, and other digital media easily and quickly (Santosa et al., 2021). There, we can talk to friends, share pictures or stories, and see what other people are doing. It is like playing in the park and talking to friends, but this is done through a screen.

In social media, comments are inseparable from every post of images and videos, where everyone has the right to comment. *Comments* are opinions or responses given by someone to a topic or information posted on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and others. The comment facility on electronic media allows for a reciprocal relationship between writers and readers, facilitating interaction and comments with each other. Comments can be in words, sentences, or discourses written by social media users. Social media, as a means of public communication, has an open nature that triggers high levels of hate speech. The comments we write in the comments column on social media can reflect the principles of polite language that are adhered to or violated by netizens (Yanti, 2021). However, with the freedom of expression provided by social media, significant challenges also arise regarding the ethics of commenting. Unwise comments often cause conflict, spread misinformation, and create a hostile atmosphere

in cyberspace. In this context, optimizing the ethics of commenting is very important to create a positive digital environment. Commenting ethics covers various aspects, from awareness of the impact of every word spoken to respect for the opinions of others. Everyone is responsible for considering how their comments may affect others and the environment around them. By implementing these ethical principles, social media users can contribute to forming healthier and more constructive online communities. For example, instead of engaging in heated debates or personal attacks, individuals can discuss more civilly and openly. This not only helps to defuse tensions but also encourages more productive dialogue.

Furthermore, education on commenting etiquette should be a shared concern. Raising awareness on commenting appropriately and correctly can help shape a generation of more responsible social media users. Through educational campaigns, seminars, outreach, or workshops on digital ethics, individuals can learn to recognize and avoid negative behavior and understand the value of empathy and tolerance in interacting online.

Socialization is a long process that is very important in a person's life. Direct socialization or counseling to the community is one of the right ways to provide knowledge and share understanding to strengthen the community regarding the material to be delivered. Socialization is a complex learning process that involves understanding and studying the values and norms that apply in the community. Socialization can be carried out in organizations or groups that are formed to increase knowledge in the community, especially discussions among household families.

The Dasawiswa Group, a group of women who are close to each other between Neighborhood Associations, helps in the smooth running of the main tasks of the PKK Program (Nurdewanto et al., 2015). Often, using social media among mothers makes learning challenging because it is too complicated or requires more experience. This process is called community empowerment, especially for women among mothers. They are optimizing the socialization activity program to improve women's welfare in the Dasawisma group. This socialization activity was carried out with the target of the Dasawisma Housewives of Sanggarahan Village, Banyuraden, Gamping, Yogyakarta. The Dasawisma XVI homemakers group is considered very

active in using social media. However, according to the Chairwoman of Dasawisma XVI, social media is still relatively new to them. In this case, the Dasawisma XVI Housewives are susceptible to being easily influenced by fake news and giving less positive comments. This socialization activity was carried out with their routine activities, including the *arisan* and PKK groups, attended by around 30 wives. The purpose of this socialization activity is to provide an understanding of the use of new media, especially social media, as well as the importance of giving positive and valuable comments.

## METHOD

This socialization activity for the community has the theme "***Comment Wisely so that Social Media is Enjoyable***" and is implemented using a qualitative method with a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach. This approach was chosen to ensure the effectiveness of the material delivery and increase participants' understanding of the importance of commenting wisely on social media.

Forum Group Discussion collects in-depth qualitative data through a group discussion on a social issue or specific topic (Sugarda, 2020). The aim is to explore socialization participants' attitudes, views, and perceptions regarding commenting ethics. The FGD method can explore in depth the perceptions and experiences of social media users, especially the mothers of Dasawisma XVI. In the discussion, participants can share experiences regarding the ethics or behavior of commenting.

With the FGD method, interaction between participants can bring up perceptions that have not previously emerged. Participants can express their opinions, enriching and exploring their understanding of social media ethics from various perspectives. This can help participants find out how to behave on social media with ethics in commenting. Group discussions can identify what factors drive or inhibit the application of ethics in commenting. FGD can provide flexibility in exploring topics related to social media ethics. With the Focus Discussion Group (FGD) method, the data obtained is descriptive and interpretive, which helps the Mothers of Dasawisma XVI

understand how users interact on social media and how ethics can be optimized in a digital environment. The methods used in this activity are:

1. **Lecture Method:** The lecture method is used as an initial step to provide participants with a basic understanding of the material. In this session, the speaker delivers structured material on the definition of comments and the Constitution that regulates freedom of opinion, Netiquette in commenting, Effects and influences of wrong comments, Case Studies, and practical tips for communicating effectively and positively on social media. This lecture method is complemented using visual media such as PowerPoint presentations, infographics, and real case examples to improve participants' understanding.
2. **Game Method:** Several educational games are integrated into the activity to strengthen understanding and increase participant involvement. These games are specifically designed to reflect the theme of the activity. The first is "Comment Role Play," in which participants are divided into small groups and then asked to be social media users in various scenarios. They must respond to the given situation with wise and constructive comments. Second is "Comment Detective": Participants are given several examples of comments on social media and asked to identify which are wise comments and which are not and to provide reasons for their choices. Through these games, participants learn and experience firsthand how to apply the concept of wise commenting in situations that resemble actual conditions on social media.
3. **Q&A Method:** A Q&A session is held to allow participants to clarify their understanding of the material presented, ask questions, and share personal experiences related to the theme of the activity. This method aims to Facilitate interactive dialogue between presenters and participants, Explore more particular issues that participants may face in using social media, Provide practical solutions to challenges identified by participants, Encourage participants to think critically about their behavior on social media, Build collective awareness about the importance of creating a positive and respectful online environment.

This socialization activity was carried out with the target of the Dasawisma XVI mothers of Sanggarahan Village, Banyuraden, Gamping, Yogyakarta. This socialization activity was carried out with their routine activities, including *arisan* groups and PKK, and was attended by 30 people. In this socialization activity, there were several sessions; the first session was a lecture, and the speaker continued by providing case studies and hypothetical scenarios to be discussed together. This allows participants to apply the knowledge they have gained in more concrete situations. The integration of these three methods, lectures, games, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), was created to create a holistic learning experience and involve various learning styles of participants. This approach allows participants to gain theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills in commenting wisely on social media. In addition, throughout the activity, the speaker consistently emphasized the importance of self-reflection and empathy in communicating online. The speaker emphasized that participants should consider the impact of their words on others and how they can contribute to creating a more positive and inclusive online environment. The mothers of Dasawisma XVI also participated in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) related to the case study of negative comments presented by the speaker. With the combination of these methods, the author hopes that the socialization activities the community that have been carried out can provide a significant and sustainable impact in increasing the awareness and skills of participants to comment wisely on social media so that, in the end, it can create a more comfortable and positive online environment for all users.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This socialization activity was conducted on June 12, 2024, in Sanggrahan Village RT 007 RW 009 Padukuhan Dukuh. The PKK Dasawisma XVI mothers looked very enthusiastic during this activity. Mr. Tommy Satriadi Nur Arifin attended this event as a media and information literacy lecturer. In this socialization activity, in the form of a discussion, the speaker used the following topics: wise use of the comment feature, the Constitution that regulates freedom of opinion, commenting etiquette and netiquette, and crimes in commenting. The socialization activity began

by introducing the audience to the definition of social media and comment features, types of comments, and a brief explanation of what platforms are included in social media. This socialization process went smoothly when the speaker explained the presence of new media (the Internet) we currently use. Based on the results of the speaker's questions, the audience stated that almost all Dasawisma XVI mothers in Sanggarahan Hamlet have and use smartphones as a means of communication. They then continued with a discussion about social media that is also present to facilitate human interaction and explained several platforms that are included in social media, such as YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, X, and so on. Then, the speaker asked whether the mothers of Dasawisma XVI also used one of the social media mentioned earlier, and several mothers answered that they often use TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp. The explanation of the material was then continued regarding freedom of opinion as regulated in the Constitution Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads:

1. *Setiap orang berhak untuk berpendapat tanpa campur tangan. Yang dimaksud dalam ayat (1) ini, bahwa setiap individu berhak dalam mengutarakan pendapatnya tanpa takut akan intervensi atau ancaman dari pihak manapun.*
  2. *Setiap orang berhak atas kebebasan berekspresi; hak ini akan mencakup kebebasan untuk mencari, menerima, dan memberikan informasi dan gagasan dari segala jenis, terlepas dari batasan, baik secara lisan, tertulis atau cetak, dalam bentuk seni, atau melalui media lain pilihannya.*
1. Everyone has the right to express their opinions without interference. What is meant in paragraph (1) is that every individual has the right to express their opinions without fear of intervention or threats from any party.
  2. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of their choice.

Although the law stipulates that freedom of speech is a fundamental human right, individuals or communities who understand ethics must still consider it carefully when giving opinions or comments on social media. For example, you must pay attention to the language used when commenting. Have you used excellent and correct language? Will such language not hurt others or vice versa? Is giving comments or opinions like this correct? Although this freedom of speech has been regulated in the Constitution, as citizens, every individual must not abuse this right to give arbitrary comments on social media.



**Figure 1.** Presentation of discussion material by the first facilitator, Mei Aditya Pratiwi Saragih, regarding social media and the Constitution that regulates freedom of speech.

Source: Personal Photo, 2024

The PKK Dasawisma XVI mothers looked very focused on listening to the material presented next regarding comments on social media, where currently there are many types of negative comments. The facilitator explained that negative comments are provocative comments, offend other people's feelings, and contain anger. Then, the speaker asked whether the mothers often encounter this type of comment, and their answer was yes. Furthermore, the speaker gave examples of negative comments and an understanding that emphasized to the participants that they should not carelessly provide negative comments because it will hurt the feelings of others or the account owner. The speaker also said that all forms of hate speech spread on social media, whether intentionally or not, can harm oneself and others, which in this case can also be caught in the criminal act of the ITE Law Article 27 concerning the creation and distribution of content that insults and defames, as well as blackmailing and threatening. Indonesian netizens' civilization level could be better, so the speaker emphasized and hoped that the PKK Dasawisma XIV mothers would not comment negatively on the posts they encountered. The following material presented in this activity is about Netiquette, which is closely related to the most appropriate way to communicate online. According to Utoro et al. (2020), many people abuse the ethics of socializing

on social media without considering the risks of their uploads. This is a reminder always to be careful when expressing opinions in cyberspace and real life and avoid verbal violence. The speaker explained that there are at least 10 Netiquettes that must be understood and applied in communicating in cyberspace:

- a. Remember there is a person behind the account
- b. Please adhere to the same online behaviors we follow in natural life
- c. Know where we are in cyberspace
- d. Respect other people's time and bandwidth
- e. Make ourselves look good online
- f. Share expert knowledge
- g. Help keep flaming under control
- h. Respect others' privacy
- i. Please do not abuse our power
- j. Forgive others' mistakes.

Then, the speaker also explained what needs to be considered when wanting to comment in cyberspace. Etiquette in commenting, namely:

- a. True (is the fact accurate?)
- b. Helpful (is it useful?)
- c. Inspiring (can it inspire?)
- d. Necessary (need to be conveyed?)
- e. Kind (is the comment good?)

The five etiquettes that need to be considered explain that individuals or communities must pay more attention to the truth and obtain every piece of information. Refrain from giving opinions or information if each individual is still relatively new to what will be conveyed.



**Figure 2.** The second facilitator, Agus Salim, presented discussion material regarding netiquette and cyberbullying and its case study.

Source: Personal Photo, 2024

In the 2020 Digital Civility Index (DCI) report from Microsoft, Indonesian netizens are ranked lowest in Southeast Asia or are stated as the most impolite country when communicating on the internet; this shows a shallow level of civility or politeness of netizens. The civility or politeness in question is related to surfing behavior in cyberspace or social media, including the risk of spreading fake news or hoaxes, hate speech, discrimination, or deliberate actions to provoke anger, acts of harassment against particular ethnic or religious groups, women, disabled groups, LGBT groups, and others to fraud. According to L.P.F. Yanti (2021), many people now comment on social media without considering the politeness of language, often expressing excessive emotions. This causes inappropriate words to appear in the comments column, showing a decline in politeness in communicating in society. Legally, malicious comments such as cyberbullying can be prosecuted under the ITE Law, especially Article 27, which regulates insulting and defamatory content. Digital ethics and responsibility are essential foundations of healthy and safe online behavior. Implementing these principles will help build a better online community and actively support the development of positive technology (Aksenta et al., 2023).

Then the facilitator also explained body shaming in social media, then referred to as cyberbullying. Body shaming, or the act of belittling someone's physical appearance, can be about one's own body or someone else's. Meanwhile, this body shaming is done using social media. In that case, it is included in cyberbullying activities or bullying that occur through the use of digital devices such as cellphones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying activities include sending, posting, or sharing damaging, dangerous, hoax, or insulting content to others. Suppose someone gets these comments on social media and feels insulted, tarnishing their good name. In that case, that person can report the commenter to the authorities, and the perpetrator will be charged with Article 45 paragraph (3) of the ITE Law and its amendments. Article 27, paragraph (3). The perpetrators of body shaming will also receive sanctions in the form of a maximum prison sentence of 4 (four) years and a maximum fine of IDR 750 million.



**Figure 3.** Q&A session with the audience, which will have two opportunities for the audience to ask questions. Source: Personal Photo, 2024

Then, this socialization activity was continued with a game session or reflection; here, the facilitator showed content containing videos or photos about the ethics of commenting on social media. This game session explains how the audience provides answers according to the material that the speaker has given. The guide gave two games, the first of which was a flash comment

game from one of the video contents. Flash comments here: The facilitator showed a Tiktok video about the close behavior of a mother and child. Moreover, in this first game, the facilitator asked the mothers to provide responses or comments related to the video by reflecting on previously presented material. The audience selected to answer this game session was very enthusiastic and immediately gave answers and responses that should be related to the content. The second game was about commenting etiquette, such as seeing negative comments, how the audience can respond to a comment, and how they position themselves as netizens to be wise in commenting. In this second game session, the facilitator showed a comment clip from one of the Tik Tok accounts, where there was a negative statement and inappropriate language choice in the comment. The facilitator asked the mothers to respond to the comments on whether they were appropriate and their reasons for giving the answers. The provision of this game session was nothing more than to find out whether the mothers of Dasawisma XVI had understood the material presented; the facilitator hoped that they could apply the material in their daily lives, especially when they wanted to give their opinions on social media.



**Figure 4.** A game session with the audience guided directly by facilitators Eka Miftahul Jannah and Syafira Purba Kinanthi by providing 2 types of games: a flash comment game and a commenting etiquette game. Source: Personal Photo, 2024

Based on the results of a joint discussion on "commenting wisely so that social media becomes enjoyable" conducted by the facilitator with the mothers of Dasawisma XVI Dusun Sranggahan. The provision of material on the 5 ethics in commenting that have been explained. In the results of the joint discussion, understanding and commenting wisely also need to be practiced. In this socialization, mothers active in social media can understand and continue to practice useful things in commenting. With the increasing number of social media users, many misuse it to spread hoaxes, violent videos, and inappropriate content. Many users comment without paying attention to the situation and use impolite words, which are unsuitable for public consumption, especially considering the large number of children who also access social media. As for the supporting factors in the spread of hoax news, violent videos, and unclear content that can cause unrest and become hatred in certain circles, the excitement of anxiety, fear, and belief in hoax news will be even greater. So, it is essential to understand and comply with ethics or behavior when using social media and online media. Mothers can also sort or use media correctly and behave well if there is a risk of hoaxes or incorrect news.

The mothers of Dasawisma XVI have succeeded in implementing or directly applying what they have obtained in this socialization. Several participants gave their responses through games provided by the facilitator. They responded well to the content with various unique and varied opinions; mothers can position themselves wisely as netizens and account owners. Not only that, but they were also pleased to welcome us and pay close attention to the material every time the facilitator conveyed it. In this socialization, each session felt exciting because of the enthusiastic response from every mother who attended the event.

## **CONCLUSION**

Optimizing the ethics of commenting on social media is crucial in creating a positive and constructive digital environment. Through a combination of lecture, game, and Q&A methods, this article has presented a comprehensive approach to increasing user awareness and skills in interacting ethically on digital platforms. In social media, especially "comments," we interact with real people, not just a series of profiles, characters, and letters. Therefore, checks must be carried

out regarding the truth of the information obtained, use good language, avoid SARA elements, and respect the work of others. It is important to remember that creating a positive digital environment is an ongoing process that requires long-term commitment. By implementing and promoting good commenting ethics, we can together form a healthier and more beneficial digital culture for all parties.

Socialization with the theme "comment wisely so that social media becomes enjoyable" has achieved significant results in increasing the awareness and behavior of mothers in using social media. The socialization process that was carried out effectively has helped them understand the importance of wise comments on social media. Socialization begins with a clear and in-depth introduction to "wise comments." The explanation of how wise comments can improve the quality of interactions on social media has provided a strong foundation for participants to understand what "wise comments" mean. This socialization also explains the Constitution Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which regulates freedom of opinion, netiquette, and etiquette that must be understood and observed when communicating or commenting in cyberspace. In addition, using real examples of wise and nasty comments has helped the mothers of Dasawisma XVI clarify the differences between the two. These examples provide a clear visual image and allow mothers to identify for themselves what is considered a wise comment.

Interactive discussions are also an essential part of this socialization process. Participants can ask for their opinions and experiences by opening interactive discussions. This allows mothers to share and learn from each other, increasing their awareness and understanding of the importance of wise comments. Various media, such as videos, images, and articles, have also been used to convey messages. This makes the information more exciting and more accessible for mothers to understand. Thus, the socialization process that has been carried out has been effective in conveying messages and understanding the needs of participants. The results of the socialization achieved were very significant. Mothers showed an increased awareness of the importance of wise comments on social media. They began to understand that wise comments can improve the quality of interactions and make the online environment more comfortable. In

addition, many mothers thought hard before commenting on the content displayed by the facilitator during the game session. This shows that socialization has changed their attitudes and made them more aware of the importance of wise comments. Mothers have also learned how to develop skills to make wise comments. They understand that wise comments are positive and constructive and do not offend others. Thus, the results of this socialization increase awareness and develop their skills in using social media wisely.

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