



Adolescents' Perceptions of AI Chatbots as Interpersonal Communication Partners in Bandung

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Abstract. Artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots have increasingly become part of adolescents' everyday communication practices. This research examines how adolescents in Bandung perceive interpersonal communication with AI chatbots and how these technologies are positioned beyond their functional role as digital tools. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach and purposive sampling, this study involved ten adolescents aged 18–23 years who actively use AI chatbots. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis through coding and categorization processes. The findings reveal that adolescents perceive AI chatbots not only as information providers, but also as personal assistants, discussion partners, and emotionally comfortable communication spaces. The speed, flexibility, and non-judgmental nature of AI chatbots responses encourage users to engage in repeated interactions for academic, personal, and daily-life purposes. However, participants also expressed concerns regarding privacy, dependency, and the artificial nature of chatbot empathy. The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of AI chatbots as perceived interpersonal communication partners among adolescents. The study contributes to contemporary communication studies by showing how AI-mediated interaction reshapes communication patterns, openness, and perceptions of social comfort in digital society.

Keywords: AI Chatbots, Interpersonal Communication, Adolescents, Perception, Hyperpersonal Communication

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INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, the development of artificial intelligence technology or known as AI (*Artificial Intelligence*) has emerged. AI is a branch of computer science that allows computers to complete tasks that require human intelligence (Morales Ramírez, 2023). The presence of technological developments in this era has been used to make work easier and meet the needs of an individual (Danuri, 2019). The emergence of AI chatbots such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and DeepSeek has encouraged users to become more communicative and open toward digital technology. This phenomenon indicates a shift in communication patterns, information-seeking behavior, and individuals' trust in technology-assisted decision-making.

The age group that uses AI the most is Generation Z (Pradana et al., 2025; Rahmadani, Rizky and Aini, 2025). Based on research that has been conducted by researchers, most adolescents in Bandung actively use of AI chatbots. AI chatbots are not only used to search for information and support learning, but also as a medium to devote personal thoughts to the encouragement of subjective question asking questions in its actualization. There is a high intensity of AI chatbot use among adolescents, indicating that adolescents increasingly trust AI as a digital companion and integrate it into their daily communication activities. This phenomenon has the potential to cause a degradation of the quality of social interaction and an increase in adolescents' dependence on technology-based communication with AI mechanisms as a non-humanist motor.

This research will focus on the perception of interpersonal communication in the form of discussions with *AI chatbots*. According to Kotler and Keller, perception is a process that occurs in individuals so that they are able to choose, control, and interpret the information obtained so as to create a new view (Silva, 2017). Interpersonal perception is influenced by 2 factors, namely situational and personal. Factors that affect perception can be divided into situational factors and personal factors. Situational factors include various verbal and nonverbal cues such as proxemic, kinetic, facial expressions, and paralinguistics. Meanwhile, personal factors come from within the individual, such as experience, motivation, personality, and intelligence (Rachman, 2021).

The author found various studies conducted previously related to the use of AI and *chatbots* in various activities, ranging from professional activities in *public relations* practice to education as a learning tool with case study methods on Tokopedia and Telkomsel. Based on the study, it was found that *chatbots* are an important tool in building efficient and fast interactions with the public, although adaptation and ethical guidelines are still needed in their use so that the communication carried out is still responsible (Tanti et al., 2025). It was also found that there was a study that analyzed the perception of university students in the city of Makassar by analyzing the effectiveness of the use of *AI chatbots* as a medium that helps interactive learning with quantitative research methods. The findings of the study provide an overview that *artificial intelligence* is able to help students personalize learning, increase confidence, and improve the quality of interaction in discussions (Inayah, Habsy and Nursalim, 2025). *AI chatbots* also have the potential to provide a continuous learning experience for students (A'ini and Khoiriyah, 2024).

Based on the *literature review* that has been conducted, the researcher did not find any research that conducted case studies to explore and understand the reasons why adolescents in Bandung have discussions with *AI chatbots*, the reasons why students in Bandung have discussions with *AI chatbots*, to how students in Bandung position *AI chatbots* In everyday life from a communication perspective (a tool, a discussion partner, or as an emotional listener) so that there is a research gap.

Previous studies have predominantly positioned AI chatbots as functional technological tools that support education, public relations, productivity, or information retrieval. Existing research generally focuses on efficiency, learning outcomes, and technological adaptation in human-computer interaction. However, limited studies have specifically examined how adolescents interpret AI chatbots as interpersonal communication partners capable of providing emotional comfort, validation, discussion companionship, and perceived social interaction. In the context of communication studies, this distinction is important because adolescents are no longer interacting with AI merely instrumentally, but are increasingly developing relational communication patterns with non-human entities. Therefore, this study seeks to fill

the gap by exploring how adolescents in Bandung subjectively perceive AI chatbots within interpersonal communication experiences.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand more deeply how *AI chatbots* can affect human communication patterns, especially among teenagers in Bandung who grow up with digital technology. This phenomenon demands a new understanding in the study of Communication Sciences, because of the creation of a relationship between humans and technology that is no longer purely functional, but also emotional and social. This research is important to be carried out to understand how adolescents, especially in the city of Bandung, interpret their communication or interaction with *AI chatbots* in the context of intellectual discussion. Therefore, this research is also expected to provide an in-depth understanding of *AI chatbots* to form new communication patterns, trust, and self-expression of students in this digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods. This method was used to understand in depth the subjective experiences of adolescents in the city of Bandung in using *AI chatbots* to communicate and get information. Phenomenology focuses on efforts to explore the meaning of an individual's *lived experience* of a phenomenon (Creswell and Poth, 2016; Inayah, Habsy and Nursalim, 2025). Phenomenology describes the structure of consciousness in human experience (Wita and Mursal, 2022). Therefore, this approach can help researchers trace adolescents' experiences in using *AI chatbots* in their lives.

The subjects in this study used *the purposive sampling* technique. The researcher employed purposive sampling using several predetermined criteria in determining the number of samples to be studied. The research informants consisted of 10 teenagers with an age range of 18–23 years who actively use *AI chatbots* and live in the city of Bandung. Generation Z in the city of Bandung has a high percentage level in the use of digital technology (Bandung, 2025). The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with informants who meet the criteria to get in-depth data about their experiences when using *AI chatbots*, both as discussion partners and confidants.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Researchers first transcribed the interview results, then conducted open coding to identify important statements related to adolescents' communication experiences with AI chatbots. Similar codes were grouped into broader categories and interpreted into major themes such as motives of use, perceptions of interaction, emotional comfort, dependency, and privacy concerns. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns of meaning and to understand how participants interpreted AI chatbots within interpersonal communication contexts.

RESULT

The findings showed that all participants who were teenagers in the city of Bandung had diverse perceptions about discussions with *AI chatbots*. This can happen due to differences in the purposes and ways participants use AI chatbots. The following is a presentation of some of the researchers' findings consisting of the perception of the use of Chatbot AI and the interactivity of the use of *Chatbot AI* which is fundamental to the research analysis.

Table 1 Research Participants

No	Gender	Initials	Characteristics
1	M	GG	Students in the City of Bandung
2	M	FA	Students in the City of Bandung
3	M	IH	Students in the City of Bandung
4	F	IS	Students in the City of Bandung
5	F	GB	Students in the City of Bandung

6	M	NI	Students in the City of Bandung
7	M	MS	Students in the City of Bandung
8	F	SI	Students in the City of Bandung
9	F	DA	Students in the City of Bandung
10	F	CG	Students in the City of Bandung

Source: *Processed by researchers, 2025*

A. Perceptions of AI Chatbots Use

Dynamic human beings encourage the creation of different experiences and conditions for each individual. This experience constructs the self-concept to create a perception based on the self-concept. Every perception of physical, social, and psychological can be formed from experiences and interactions that have been passed (Nisa, Hasna and Yarni, 2023). This shows that the way a person acts, makes decisions, and views things is greatly influenced by his past experiences. In using *AI chatbots*, everyone certainly has their own goals, these goals can be created due to the experience or background they have gone through.

Based on *interviews* conducted with 10 teenagers in the city of Bandung, it was found that the majority of the resource persons have used *AI chatbots* since the 1st semester of lectures, which is around 2022–2023. A small percentage of the speakers actually started using *AI chatbots* since the end of high school and some have only started using them since mid-college. However, the reasons why they want to use *AI chatbots* are also diverse. FA said, "*Usually, AI chatbots are used to brainstorm work, copywriting, create content, and do tasks*", while CG said, "*Initially, I used AI to find out the meaning of my own name, then tried to join the trend of editing photos with idols or loved ones with AI*". However, the majority of the speakers use *AI* for task purposes. This findings demonstrate teenagers in the city of Bandung not only use *AI* as a tool to do tasks, but also to find out more about simple things around them. In addition, it also shows that teenagers in the city of Bandung tend to actively use *AI* because of their curiosity about various things, from the meaning of names to trying photo editing trends.

The reasons they start using it are also diverse, ranging from getting logical, helpful and practical answers, being a spark and developing ideas, helping with daily life, being able to give quick answers, or even FOMO. NI argues that "*AI is very convenient. It really makes it easier than it could be 2 hours to do the task, but now it can take up to 10 minutes*". This statement is also further supported by the opinion from MS that "*AI is very helpful for doing tasks, explaining problems, or even material that is still not understood. In fact, AI is also very helpful for finding or even developing ideas*". Apart from being helpful, IH, CG, and DA also said that they were happy with the speed of *AI* in processing information. "*The information obtained from AI can be faster than searching on Google. The answer is more structured and of course also comes from web sources that we can also read to make sure again,*" said IH in an interview that has been conducted. All of these statements show that the ability of *AI* to conduct analysis is very helpful for teenagers in the city of Bandung, especially when they need to do a certain job in a short period of time. In addition, the answers provided by *AI* are also able to help in the development of an idea.

The speakers also shared their experiences during conversations with *AI chatbots*. GG said, "*At that time, I had discussed religion, such as how to perform repentance prayers through ChatGPT*". In contrast to GG, FA actually said that, "*Usually I confide in personal things because I can get a logical answer. In fact, the daily waking up can use AI to set the schedule that will be done that day. In addition, it usually also uses AI to help conclude stock news or analyze other news*

found." IH added that he also uses AI to help in writing *drafts* and discussions such as *skills* that need to be prepared for the next 5 years. However, the majority of the speakers said that all the conversations and discussions they had contained academic needs in lectures.

B. Interactivity in Communication with AI Chatbots

Based on *interviews* conducted with 10 teenagers in the city of Bandung, it was found that each resource person had a different view of the response from the *chatbots* used. GG stated, "*AI initially had a very standard response; Truly a robot language. However, after frequent use and practice, the response began to be more relaxed, even to the point of using the call "bro" or "bang". In addition, the answers are also reasonable and structured, but still use relaxed language.*" FA, NI, and SI, added that the responses given by AI are also good and satisfactory because often, AI provides new *insights*, unexpected, logical, and rational opinions. In fact, it is not uncommon for AI to give answers that are in accordance with what is desired. However, not a few speakers also conveyed the opposite. IH and DA said that it is not uncommon for answers from *AI chatbots* to be unclear and inappropriate. MS added that sometimes there are still answers that are ambiguous and deviate from the discussion. However, the majority of the speakers agreed that there needs to be context in the preparation of the *prompt* in order to get the expected answers or at least not stray too far. Many resource persons do this in prompting until they are finally able to consider *AI chatbots* as personal assistants, discussion partners, mentors, and mentors. The majority of the speakers agreed that *AI chatbots* are capable of being their personal assistants. Therefore, it can be understood that *AI chatbots* can be considered not only as a tool, but also as personal assistants to mentors. However, to achieve this, there needs to be context in each *prompt* so that the responses from the *AI chatbots* can be more targeted and not too wide so that they do not fit the topic being discussed.

However, all the speakers agreed not to share personal matters with AI. MS and SI share the same view that they are still quite limited in telling personal things to AI, considering that AI is able to store all interactions that take place in the system. MS stated, "*So far, I still want to maintain and limit the context of the discussion when discussing daily life because I don't want it to spread. AI is a system that records every answer.*" This is supported by a question from GG, that "*There is still a need to set boundaries when chatting or discussing with AI, such as not wanting to give photos, full addresses, and so on to AI because they are afraid that someone will be a duplicate of us*". In fact, NI also said that he didn't want to mix personal matters with the discussions he usually had because he chose *AI* as a *second brain* or assistant, so it was enough to ask for help with technical matters. However, all the speakers agreed that they were indeed comfortable talking and discussing with *AI chatbots*. FA explained that the *AI's* response to the *prompt* given is often what makes it feel comfortable to discuss with the *AI chatbots*, such as the way they give *treats* to the form of their response that can provide an answer without any empathy and sympathy when asked. This shows that *AI chatbots* are able to provide comfort in discussions because the form of their responses can be adjusted to their needs. However, this sense of comfort still does not give them the confidence to tell private things with an *AI chatbots*.

DISCUSSION

In interpersonal communication studies, communication partners are generally understood as entities involved in message exchange processes that enable interaction, feedback, emotional response, and meaning negotiation. Although *AI chatbots* are technological systems, users increasingly perceive them as communication partners because chatbots are capable of producing conversational responses, adapting language styles, maintaining interaction continuity, and simulating empathy through algorithmic interaction patterns. This condition reflects the emergence of human–AI relational communication, where individuals socially interpret technological interaction as interpersonal engagement rather than purely mechanical exchange.

The findings in the data show that the findings indicate that informants had heterogeneous perception, this is a reflection of how each informant empowers and is involved in *Chatbot* AI-based communication. Based on the results analyzed, the presentation of several findings that include the motive and context of use, the perception of adolescents, and a comparison of communication between humans and *AI*.

A. Motives and Context of the Use of *AI Chatbots* for Bandung City Teenagers

The development of artificial intelligence technology has given rise to a new thing, namely the presence of *AI chatbots* that can allow continuous and instant interaction with *chatbots*. *AI chatbots* not only serve as a supporting technology, but can be a communication partner as an alternative communication in various situations. Students use *AI chatbots* for various communication contexts, ranging from academic discussions, to explore interests or certain things, and even to seek a view on something new. The main motive for using this *AI chatbot* itself is the ease of access, response speed, and communication flexibility that exists in *AI*.

Based on interviews, it shows that students dominate using *AI chatbots* in academic contexts. Most informants use chatbots to understand material, work on assignments, make drafts, brainstorm, *plan* ideas, vent, discuss careers, and others. According to NI informants, using *AI chatbots* can speed up the time to work on tasks, from the original when doing tasks had to take hours, but now in just a few minutes the task has been completed. This is similar to what DA and IS informants who choose *AI chatbots* say because the ability to present answers about tasks is much faster than when having to search for manuals without the help of *AI chatbots*. The use of *AI chatbots* in the student learning process provides many conveniences, for example, students feel easy when discussing their assignments, with structured results and the speed of response from the *AI chatbot* itself (Sinaiyangsih *et al.*, 2017).

In addition to academics, the study also found reasons for using *AI chatbots* in the personal and reflective realms, even though not all informants do so. Some informants, such as FA and MS, use *AI chatbots* as a place to vent, self-reflect, and help in daily activities. According to the informant, chatbots are able to provide logical, structured, and relatively neutral answers and responses, thus creating a sense of security in conveying their personal experiences without any criticism or personal judgment. But on the other hand, DA and SI informants expressly limited *AI chatbots* not to discuss privacy, because of their doubts about *AI chatbots* regarding their personal data. This difference shows that risk perception also influences the selection of chatbots as communication partners.

The process of organizing messages in interactions with chatbots seems different from conventional interpersonal communication. Students tend to draft prompts or statements in a more planned and gradual manner according to their line of thinking. In academic discussions, chatbots are used to develop an idea, explain a concept, and provide an initial overview which is then revised again by students. This is like the statement of IH and MS that uses *AI chatbots* to find an idea and not as a source of final answers. Thus, *AI chatbots* are considered to be a facilitator to get a new idea, not a complete replacement.

The motive for using *AI chatbots* raises a positive evaluation of the informant's experience. Informants consider that interaction with chatbots is efficient, accessible, and minimal social risk, so it can strengthen the tendency to use *chatbots* again. Although *chatbots* have various needs such as the potential for inaccurate answers, this does not reduce the intensity of users, because chatbots still help in providing an initial understanding when they don't know where to start working.

Thus, the motive and context of the use of *AI chatbots* by students are not only related to technical aspects, but are also part of the communication process. In this process, students bring personal perceptions, needs, and judgments. *AI chatbots* are then seen as an alternative

communication partner that complements interpersonal interactions, especially when students need more efficient, convenient, and fully controllable communication.

B. Teens' Perceptions of Interacting with *AI Chatbots*

This finding supports Walther's Hyperpersonal Communication perspective, which explains that computer-mediated interaction can sometimes create stronger feelings of comfort, controllability, and selective self-presentation than face-to-face communication.

In the study of interpersonal communication, the perspective of communication partners has a crucial role in creating a sense of comfort and openness of a person. The presence of *AI-based chatbots* has brought a new change in the way students communicate, where technology is now not just a tool, but also an alternative communication partner in certain situations. In the point of communication, this process can be understood through the phase of understanding and assessment. A person not only takes the message literally, but also gives meaning, purpose, and value to the reaction received. In this study, students considered the reaction of chatbots to be stable, informative, and less biased. This interpretation is then judged as a safe and enjoyable communication experience, even though students consciously realize that chatbots are systems that use artificial intelligence, not humans.

The interpersonal relationships felt by teenagers in the city of Bandung show various unique dynamics. The majority of informants consider *AI chatbots* as mentors, personal assistants, and even discussion buddies who always validate and do not judge users. GG said that *chatbots* are fun to talk to because of their relaxed responses, responses that are considered reasonable and structured to foster a sense of comfort for informants in discussing with *AI chatbots*. It is also equally felt by the NI and MS informants that *chatbots* can adapt our language style and validate so that it feels more familiar like we are talking to a human.

Some informants show a tendency to be idealistic towards *chatbots*. Chatbots are perceived as an always-on, objective, and responsive entities. According to the informant, MS interprets AI chatbots as a mentor, a chat partner, as well as a personal assistant. This idealist reinforces the theory of *hyperpersonal communication* which explains that the experience of communication will feel more comfortable and controlled than face-to-face interaction.

However, despite the sense of closeness, some informants also realize that *chatbots* are not an emotional entity. SI and DA emphasized that a chatbot is just a machine that can follow our communication patterns as users, but the chatbot will never understand our true feelings. This phenomenon is in line with the theory of *hyperpersonal communication* in (Purwati, Pramana and Aziz, 2023) which explains that *AI* creates a pseudo-intimacy that simulates empathy only through user algorithms.

Overall, these findings show that students' positive perceptions of AI chatbots play an important role in shaping comfort and openness in communication. With the framework of interpersonal communication and *hyperpersonal communication*, *AI chatbots* can be understood as an alternative communication space that can control messages, psychological comfort, and selective openness. *Chatbots* do not replace communication between humans, but complement the communication needs of students in today's digital era, especially in situations that demand a sense of security, efficiency, and minimal social pressure.

C. Comparison Between Human Communication and AI Chatbots

After the speakers shared their experiences and perceptions about *AI chatbots*, researchers found various advantages and disadvantages of communicating with *AI chatbots*. GG, FA, GB, and SI are of the view that the answers from *AI chatbots* are more realistic and logical because they will respond to prompts created without being influenced by *their mood*. This results in the response from the *AI chatbot* being able to provide the answers that are in accordance with what is requested.

GB, FA, MS, and GG argue that communication with *AI and human chatbots* also has differences. They have the view that the responses given by humans often still have an element of "unpleasantness" to the point that they are not even in accordance with expectations. However, some of the speakers had contrary views. NI and DA argue that they feel more confident when chatting with humans because they still think that humans (for example, lecturers who study up to S3) have more accurate answers than AI, thus casting doubt on the truth of the answers given by AI. In fact, CG argues that when talking to AI, it feels very good that AI is smarter than us, so it feels less comfortable to talk to *AI chatbots*. Unlike when talking to humans, who still feel comfortable even though there are people who are smarter than us because each of them is a fellow human. SI and MS also added that AI will always support our views and tend to provide validation, while they feel they get more other views by talking to humans. This really shows that there are still many positive and negative sides to talking to *AI and human chatbots*. Each has its advantages and disadvantages in communicating with the speakers.

The researcher also found various impacts resulting from positive and negative impacts from communication with *AI chatbots*. GG and GB said that he became more structured or organized in doing tasks because he was trained from the moment of drafting *the prompt*. IS also said that he has undergone many significant changes in terms of his creativity. In fact, CG also said that there was a change in him when speaking or speaking, namely being more organized and more polite, especially when he wanted to contact lecturers. However, the majority of interviewees agreed that communicating with *AI chatbots* actually made them more lazy individuals in search and only wanted to rely on *AI chatbots* due to dependence. The speakers mentioned that this dependence creates a feeling of always wanting to give their tasks and responsibilities to *AI chatbots* only. However, FA and MS actually feel that *AI chatbots* do not change or affect their daily lives or habits because they consider *AI chatbots* to be only limited to the system. This shows that *AI chatbots* are still able to have various positive impacts on teenagers in the city of Bandung, although there are still various negative impacts felt from communicating with *AI chatbots*.

All of the speakers also believe that the interaction between humans and *AI chatbots* will also be more intense in the future, which they conveyed based on the environmental conditions around them, which has begun to make *AI chatbots* their confiding friends. In fact, until now, many humans have also begun to tend to be individualistic so that the potential for a high rate of individualism in the future will be higher. NI argues that currently, AI is still in the early stages and will enter the AGI (*Artificial General Intelligence*) stage which will begin to perform various basic human tasks so that consciousness or even *emotions* will arise. CG also added that he considers the situation quite terrible because it is possible that humans in the future will create new technologies together with AI. However, of course, all of these possibilities depend on the condition of each person. GB argues that if a person has friends, then he will be more likely to discuss with his friends. This suggests that communication conditions in the future have the potential to change as a result of the development of *AI chatbots*. The impact of these conditions can certainly increase individualism so that a person has the potential to prefer to talk to *AI chatbots* rather than humans for reasons of effectiveness.

The perception of adolescents in the city of Bandung towards interpersonal communication with *AI chatbots* indicates a change in the way of interpreting the discussion process. Based on the results of the interviews, the results of this study reveal that *AI chatbots* are able to provide responses that are considered more rational and objective, because *AI chatbots* are not influenced by emotional involvement or hesitation that generally arises in human interactions. This phenomenon is in line with research in the title "*The phenomenon of AI chatbots as confiding friends: Implications for interpersonal relationships in the digital age*", which explains that *AI chatbots* provide a space of interaction that is relatively free from social judgments (Yoseppin *et al.*, 2025). This condition is a characteristic that is difficult to manifest consistently in the practice of communication between humans. In addition, the findings of a study entitled "*Interaction*

Experience of Adolescent Confiding in ChatGPT" are also in line with this phenomenon, which shows that adolescents feel comfortable when interacting with *AI chatbots* due to the lack of concern about judgments and social impacts that usually arise when telling personal problems to fellow humans (Norsely, Arviani and Achmad, 2023). However, even though it is considered capable of presenting systematic reasoning, the capabilities of *AI chatbots* still have technical limitations. A number of informants revealed that conversations that take place over long durations tend to be repetitive and lose continuity.

The use of *AI chatbots* has a positive impact on changing adolescents' behaviors and mindsets, especially in academic contexts. *AI chatbots* can act as virtual assistants that are able to respond quickly and support learning independence through the delivery of interactive explanations (Suprihartini *et al.*, 2025). This is in line with the results of the research, informants revealed that in the learning process they felt able to organize their mindset in a more systematic and structured way, where the condition was influenced by the process of adjustment in the prompt making activity clearly, so that *AI* was able to provide more appropriate responses.

However, there have been previous studies that have highlighted the potential risks of using *AI chatbots* as a place to share stories intensively can trigger emotional dependence on technology, as stated that excessive reliance on *AI* has the potential to weaken an individual's ability to build meaningful communication with fellow humans (Yoseppin *et al.*, 2025). The form of support provided by *AI* is one-way and designed to maintain user comfort, potentially obscuring an individual's ability to receive objective assessments if not critically addressed. These findings are in line with the results of the study, where negative implications appear in the form of laziness tendencies and dependency in the use of *AI chatbots*. One of the informants highlighted the emergence of the phenomenon of "pseudo-validation", i.e. affirmative responses given repeatedly by *AI*, which ultimately affects the way individuals interpret reality and reduces readiness to accept objective criticism from the social environment in the real world.

The issue of privacy in the use of *AI chatbots* has become a concern, as in the findings put forward by Norsely *et al.* (2023) reveal that anonymity and the availability of unlimited access to chatbots provide a sense of security for adolescents to open up without having to feel judged. However, a number of informants also expressed concerns that the data and conversations shared with chatbots would potentially be stored or accessed by other parties.

Nonetheless, most informants predict that the rate of use of *AI chatbots* will continue to increase in the future, especially in urban environments that are increasingly individualized. Chatbots are considered to be ready and neutral listeners, but most informants are also aware that these technologies are not yet able to fully meet human needs for real and meaningful social interaction.

CONCLUSION

This study found that practical motives that prioritize speed and efficiency, especially in the context of academic support and virtual assistants in daily life, form a perception in adolescents in the city of Bandung about interpersonal communication with *AI chatbots*. Most students already think of *AI chatbots* as "personal assistant" entities that can provide a space for rational discussion and without social judgment. However, the massive use of *AI chatbots* has resulted in conflicting behavioral changes, on the one hand this can help and encourage students in training students to think more structured, but on the other hand it can pose a risk of emotional dependence and decreased critical thinking skills due to the urge to get results quickly. Ultimately, *AI chatbots* are considered the inevitable communication companions of the future, which can validate users' perspectives in a rational manner, but cannot yet replace the depth of human-to-human interaction.

This study confirms that AI-mediated interaction among adolescents has shifted beyond instrumental technology use toward relational communication experiences, where AI chatbots are socially perceived as alternative interpersonal communication partners.

As a suggestion, students are expected to always prioritize critical awareness and verify independently so that they are not too dependent, besides that students also need to increase their understanding of digital literacy related to ethics and personal data protection in the use of AI. Furthermore, for future researchers, it is possible to expand the focus of research on comparing perspectives between different generations about the ethical limits of communicating with artificial intelligence. Researchers can also conduct quantitative research to analyze more deeply their comfort level when discussing with AI chatbots.

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