On November 29, 2016, Brandy Vela, a teenage girl, committed suicide right in front of her family. The cause of suicide was cyber bullying that has been continued since last year. Her weight was the target of bullies’ bullying. The bullies sent her cursing text messages with untraceable smartphone apps, and even made fake Facebook accounts to bully her and continued this even when she didn’t check the messages. At the end, she couldn’t handle the bullying anymore and killed herself (Hassan, 2016).

Social media represents all the online platforms and tools people use to share their thought and information by using various contents like text, images, videos…etc. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are well known example of social medias. Depression is a mental disorder that are caused by various factors; this can affect to very basic factors of human life like how people handle their works, think, and feel. More than this, continued state of depression can even lead to the extreme incident like suicide as Brandy’s case shows. Social medias and depression don’t seem to be related to each other, but Vela’s death which is caused by depression and pressure shows that social medias, Facebook, is one of the direct cause of depression. However, why should the whole society cautious about the correlation of social medias and depression? This is basically because everyone can be the victim of social medias’ side effect.

Even if this teenage girl’s case shows social media have negative correlation with depression, still many people may think negative correlation between social medias and depression is a case only applied to immature young people who can’t handle the feeling of
depression, and different from them adults are mature enough to handle social medias so they are not affected by the correlation of social medias and depression.

However, Lin and coresearchers’ recent research (2016) proves that the negative correlation between social medias and depression are also applied to adults. No matter how old or mature they are. The research shows that social media has great impact to increase depression rate of young aged adults, college students were also part of this research subject. The research showed that spread of social media showed a correlation with increased rate of depression, and people who used social media longer and more frequently showed tendency to have higher depression level (Lin, 2016). This research result shows that influence of correlation between depression and social media is not limited to teenage groups, and college students are exposed to even greater danger because college society is exposed to social medias more frequently and widely.

College is a place where lots of students come to study. Different from society that is consist of old people, college is full of young adults who are friendly with technologies. This makes social medias do an important role to form new association among new students. This even makes most conversations of college students are done by social medias. This active usage of social medias represent college students are facing with even greater danger of depression that can be caused by social medias, and because of this reason college should set up rules that regulate the social medias to prevent the depression and incidents caused by social medias.

Even though it is revealed that that social media’s correlation with depression affects to college students, still the regulation of social media is an issue that should be treated carefully because regulation of social medias is directly related with problems like invasion of privacy and restriction of freedom. It is also true that regulation of social medias can partially harm
college students’ rights they have had even though people try to minimize the damage that are followed by regulation.

However, still it is necessary to set rules to regulate social medias to save the potential victims’ and form better social medias usage frame. For this purpose, it is important to know about the main factors that consist social medias’ specialty and see which part of the factors cause problems, and try to modify them by setting up a regulation that can change the problem causing factors to a better system without harming the main value and function of social medias.

Two main characteristics of social medias are anonymity and continuous keep-in-touch state. These two characteristics are the main factors that form the specialty of social medias. Wright’s (2013) research shows that anonymity is the key factor of the aggressiveness of people in social media space. According to the research, anonymity lead people to the state of disinhibition, and this state makes people lose self-control and start to do whatever they want to do without any doubt or censorship even though those are things they would never do personally (Wright, 2013). This research shows anonymity of social media is an important factor that lead people’s aggressiveness from social medias.

As the result, using real-name system instead of anonymity can be a successful regulation to prevent cyber bullying or any potential incidents that can be led by social medias. Some college students may claim replacing the anonymity by real-name system is harming the fundamental function of social media in college society. This is because lots of students use social media in college because anonymity is helpful for students to express their opinion or idea to other people. They also use this characteristic to announce news or information to huge amount of people without being affected by feelings like responsibility or pressure.

It is true that if some people try to express their idea or opinion about a serious issue or share an information with huge amount of people without revealing who they are the social media without anonymity may no longer fit to be a medium for this, but there are substitutes
in the school that can replace this function of social media. For the purpose of announce important information or express own opinion anonymously, post on bulletin board will be a good replacement. For the purpose of sharing concern and counsel about some individual worries, the college counselor will be a good replacement. Like this, even though students need anonymity for various purposes there are substitutes for each purpose, and these substitutes can replace present role of social medias even though it loses this function.

Furthermore, this regulation would also bring some goods. Tandoc’s research reveal that the real cause of the depression is not social media itself, but the envy and hate feelings that are followed by social media usage are the real cause of depression. So, if these feelings can be removed the social medias can even be the place that lessen the depression of people (Tandoc, 2015). This means that replacing the anonymity by the real-name system can remove or reduce the rate of posts or messages that involve feeling of envy or hate from the social medias, and the social medias can even be the place students can be emotionally cured by sharing their own thought and feeling freely.

After all, there is no doubt to say social medias are doing an important role in today’s college society. It works as a medium of every conversation that is done by college students from a casual conversation like personal conversation with friends to formal conversation like official announcements of school. However, for now even though social medias are useful it cannot be more than necessary evil because the aggressive comments or bullying that are done on social media is making lots of victims who are suffered by depression. Because of this reason college’s social media regulation’s purpose should be clear. The regulation should be able to minimize the harm of inherent good characteristics of social medias like sociality but remove the negative and aggressive feelings that are involved in social medias. For this purpose, the replacement of anonymity would work as the first step to reduce these involved negative feelings of social medias.
Bibliography


