Role of social media uses and social comparison on self-esteem

Peran penggunaan media sosial dan perbandingan sosial pada harga diri

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the role of social media use and social comparison on self-esteem. The participants used in this study were 105 people who actively have social media and an age range of 18-34 years who were collected through purposive sampling technique. The instrument used in this research is The Instagram Intensity Scale, adapted from a study conducted by Ellison, Steineld, & Lampe (2007), The Questionnaire of the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure proposed by Gibbons and Buunk (1999), and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES). This study uses a linear correlation test (one tailed) which finds a correlation between variables using social media and social comparisons on self-esteem, but the correlation is low (.123).

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan peran *social media uses* dan *social comparison* terhadap *self-esteem.* Partisipan yang dipakai dalam penelitian ini adalah 105 orang yang aktif memiliki media sosial dan rentang usia 18-34 tahun yang dikumpulkan melalui teknik *purposive sampling.* Instrumen yang dipakai dalam penelitian ini adalah *The Instagram Intensity Scale,* diadaptasi dari studi yang dilakukan oleh Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe (2007), *The Questionnaire of the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure Proposed by Gibbons and Buunk (1999),* dan *Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES).* Penelitian ini menggunakan uji korelasi linear (*one tailed*) yang mendapatkan adanya korelasi antar variabel *social media uses* dan *social comparison* terhadap *self-esteem,* namun korelasinya rendah (.123)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, internet usage among Indonesians has increased, along with the time spent online. A large portion of internet users in Indonesia primarily access social media, a technology that continues to evolve as a communication platform. Social media offers easy access for users (Mullin, 2017), with both positive and negative effects on individuals.

Studies indicate that social media can have both detrimental (e.g., low life satisfaction, depression, low self-esteem) and beneficial impacts (e.g., high self-esteem, reduced loneliness, strong sense of belonging) (Kavakli & Unal, 2021). Kompas.com reports that Indonesians spend an average of 3 hours and 14 minutes daily on social media, predominantly accessed by young people aged 25-34 years. YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are the most popular platforms.

Instagram is particularly popular in Indonesia, with users reportedly spending around 17 hours per month on it (Kompas, 2021). Since June 2018, Instagram has accumulated approximately 1 billion active monthly users, with 64% of these users aged 18-34 (Clement, 2019, in Fagundes, Marot, & Natividade, 2020). As a visual platform, Instagram enables users to share moments from their daily lives through appealing graphic content, facilitating interpersonal interaction and self-presentation (Kross et al., 2013 in Fagundes, Marot, & Natividade, 2020). The ease of connection and information-sharing on Instagram fosters users' desires for social relationships and feedback from others, which significantly shapes their self-perception (Leary et al., 1985 in Fagundes, Marot, & Natividade, 2020).

Instagram often encourages users to evaluate themselves by comparing their capacity, ideas, and appearance with others. Generally, users showcase only their positive attributes. Instagram's "filter" feature allows users to modify photos, creating an idealized self-image, thus the photos displayed are often different from the original (Vries et al., 2017). This makes Instagram a platform for self-image expression, emphasizing self-perception, self-concept, and self-esteem (Fagundes, Marot, & Natividade, 2020). However, it also drives users to compare themselves to others, influencing how they view themselves—a process known as social comparison. Research suggests that the more frequently a person uses Instagram, the more likely they are to engage in social comparison (Stapleton et al., 2017). This tendency is further pronounced when users engage intensely with social media, like Instagram (Kavakli & Unal, 2021).

There are two types of social comparison: downward and upward. Downward social comparisons are when individuals compare themselves with people who are lower in level, while upward social comparisons are when individuals compare themselves with people who are higher in level. Often, downward social comparisons are said to have a positive impact on individuals because they can increase individual self-esteem, while upward social comparisons often have a negative impact on individuals because they cause low individual self-esteem. (Festinger, 1954 in Mullin, 2017).

Low self-esteem among Instagram users often stems from self-evaluation based on others' portrayals on the platform. Studies have found that extensive social media use leads individuals to believe others' lives are better or more successful, resulting in diminished self-esteem (Jiang & Ngien, 2020). Increased social comparison correlates with lower self-esteem (Stapleton, 2017). When users view others' idealized lifestyles, they may feel envy, leading to an inferiority complex that lowers self-esteem (Kim, 2021). Self-esteem is crucial for individuals to have a positive self-view, feel satisfaction in their character, and appreciate their value. In contrast, low self-esteem leaves individuals unable to value themselves or assess their capabilities positively (Rosenberg, 2001). This study aims to explore how social media use and social comparison impact self-esteem, emphasizing self-esteem's importance among social media users.

2. METHODS

The study's participants included both males and females aged 18-34 who actively use social media. Using a purposive sampling technique, data was collected through an online survey distributed on social media platforms via Google Forms. The quantitative survey method tested the influence of social media use and social comparison on self-esteem. Instruments included: 1) The Instagram Intensity Scale, adapted from a study conducted by Ellison, Steineld, & Lampe (2007). Initially used to measure Facebook intensity, but modified to measure Instagram intensity and translated into Indonesian, includes of 6 items such as "Instagram is part of my daily activities," "I am proud to tell people that I am on Instagram," and "I feel out of touch when I do not log in to Instagram for a while." Measured using a Likert scale of 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree. 2) The Questionnaire of the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure proposed by Gibbons and Buunk (1999), this scale is used to measure the social comparison held by the participants. Most people compare themselves from time to time with others. For example, they may compare their feelings, opinions, abilities, and/or situations with those of others. This scale consists of 11 items that have been tested in the United States and the Netherlands. Measured using a Likert scale of 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree. 3) Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES). This scale is used to measure the self-esteem held by the participants. This scale contains 10 items measured using a Likert scale, namely 1 " Strongly Disagree " to 4 " Strongly Agree. All items on this scale were valid. Reliability testing showed Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.856 for the Instagram intensity scale and 0.912 for The Questionnaire of the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure, indicating that all two scales are reliable in measuring the intended variables. Data analysis conducted in this study was using one-way anova using SPSS.

3. RESULTS

The number of participants in this study was 105 people. The age range of participants in this study was 18-30 years, where the majority were in the age range of 18-24 years (59%).

The research participants had high school education levels (8.6%), S1 (77.1%), S2 (13.3%), and S3 (1%). Then, participants who were active in using Instagram <5 years were 29 people (27.7%) and >5 years were 76 people (72.3%). Most participants (72.3%) have used Instagram for over five years.

Table 1 Description of Research Subject

No	Subject Description		Amount	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	40	38.1%
		Female	65	61.9%
2.	Age	18-24	62	59%
		24-30	43	41%
3.	Actively using Instagram	<5 years	29	27.7%
		>5 years	76	72.3%
4.	Time spent per day on Instagram	<1 hours	29	27.6%
		1-3 hours	41	39%
		3-5 hours	19	18.1%
		>5 hours	16	15.2%

Table 2 Pearson product moment correlation test

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Social media uses and Social Comparison with Self-esteem	.367	.001

Based on the table above, it is known that the results of the linear correlation test (one tailed) show a correlation between the variables of social media use, social comparison, and self-esteem, however the correlation is significant (.001) with weak correlation (.367)

4. DISCUSSION

The study found a weak correlation among the variables, potentially due to the duration of social media usage. As Stapleton et al. (2017) noted, high Instagram intensity correlates with greater social comparison and, indirectly, lower self-esteem. Wang et al. (2017) further explained that the type of comparison—upward comparisons, in particular—more strongly influences self-esteem reduction, as individuals who compare upwardly may feel worthless (Festinger, 1954).

Research by Jang et al. (2016) supports this, suggesting that upward social comparisons correlate with low self-esteem and negative emotions. Frequent exposure to idealized lifestyles may prompt envy and jealousy, leading users to feel inferior when comparing their lives to others (Jan, Soomro, & Ahmad, 2017; Kim, 2021).

5.   CONCLUSION

This study concludes that social media use and social comparison correlate with self-esteem, although the relationship is weak. Future research could explore additional factors that might strengthen the correlations among these variables.

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