Original Research

The Influence of Social Media Use Intensity on Social Comparison in College Students

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Abstract

Social media have been growing rapidly with the advanced development of IT, people are spending an increasing amount of time in the cyberspace and perceive psychological of intangible objects (e.g., video reels, avatars, online movie streaming services), which they come to regard as “projection”. However, it remains unclear whether social media make people more emotionally positive healthy or less. This study aims to explore the intensity effect of social media utilization on social comparison. With a general basis of the two-stage model of interactive media use for motivation and positive content, we conducted a cross-sectional online survey study (N = 450) in the context of student in Pekanbaru, Indonesia and empirically tested a mediation pathway linking to social anxiety. The results indicated that use did not directly increase social anxiety. Instead, social comparison, a proximal outcome, and self-esteem, an intermediate outcome played mediating roles, supporting the complete mediation effects. As statistically, intensity of social media utilization have influence more in positive direction. This finding provides important theoretical and practical implications for the design of communication mental health campaigns and education in this digital era to enhance the positive effect of social media.

Keywords: Social Media, Communication Strategy, Psychological, Teeneger.

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1. Introduction

Extensive adoption of Information Technology and Communication (ITC) networks drives changes in many ways for numerous people. It influences the advanced and reinforced intensive of internet-related activities such as shopping, stock trading, education, facets of healthcare, entertainment, and leisure plan. This exposure changes people’s patterns of behavior and continuously emerges rapidly in line with technological development (He et al, 2020). In particular, affect the dramatic innovation in interpersonal communication on the availability and accessibility of information (Skjuve and Brandzaeg, 2019). These induce social changes in human activities that have moved from in-person physical contact communication to online distant communication.

In Fawn T. Ngo et al (2020) study mentions activities in online or cyberspace, which obviously motivate psychological changes in minds and personalities. In psychoanalytic terms, cyberspace can be defined as a type of “transitional space” (Knafo, 2021). As they view social media posting, e-mails, blogs, or webpages by a friend or online celebrity, some people truly feel that their minds are connected to or even blended with the minds of others (Tiggemann and Anderberg, 2019). It may be experienced as an intermediate zone between self and other that is part self. This circumstance has twofold sides, first, dystopian social which is concerns effects such as feeling insecure, helpless, and afraid (Yadlin-Segal and Oppenheim, 2020). Second, awareness of society enables discovering even more knowledge an undeniable feasible for personal improvement (Jozani et al, 2020).

Interestingly, several studies on specific objects in online psychological content have been developed. Febrina et al (2018) identified four different types of social media platforms and categorized each social media type by the function of social presence in the teenage subject group. This study indirectly showed that psychological insecurity may appear differently depending on the characteristics of online content. Moreover, Fauziah et al (2020) study found a self-disclosure content on social media from users’ perspective often captures both hedonic (i.e. the presence of negative and absence of positive emotionality) and eudaimonic (i.e. cognitive evaluations of one’s life) aspects of life satisfaction, and negative-indicators, such as depression, loneliness and anxiety (Florencia, 2020). However, it is difficult to find studies that have dealt with changes in positive emotional psychological focusing on motivational relationships.

Given the strong evidence of the potentially harmful effects of social media on self-confidence and insecurity, which identifies a need for more research and a better understanding of the mechanisms by which social media use and engagement may led to depression. Therefore, this study proposes begun to examine ways in which to make the social media environment a more positive one. The present study focuses on investigating which recommendation strategy is effective when presenting content information depending on viewers’ psychological and to identify the relationship between the intensity of social media utilization effect.

2. Method

The study designed and survey of social comparison scale (high vs. low) and intensity scale of social media utilization (frequently vs. barerly) factorial conditions with participants randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. The survey was conducted online for two weeks in Islamic University of Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia. The collected survey data with the recruitment requirements of 18s to 23s general users who had day to day experience using differential social media services. The participants were informed beforehand about the aim of the study. Study participation was voluntary, and data were collected in an anonymous form. As our questionnaire was originally in Bahasa Indonesia, we conducted a back-translation procedure to ensure translation validity to English.

For the purpose of this study, we operationalized social comparison by the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Respondents were required to rate the degree of agreement, such as “I sense that this video streaming service is me” and “I often compare myself with others with respect to what I have accomplished in life”. A five-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. And then, intensity scale of social media utilization by the Social Media Engagement Questionnaire (SMEQ) (Przybłski-
-et al, 2013) is a questionnaire for measuring the frequency of use of social media. It measures how many times a week the participant used social media after waking up, at breakfast, at noon, during the evening meal, and before sleep.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the research that has been done, the researchers obtained a total of 450 students/respondents. In the table below, there is gender demographic data which has been arranged in the form of frequency and percentage, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on table 1.1 above, it can be obtained an overview of demographic data based on gender, the largest being female, with a total of 286 respondents with a percentage of 63.6%.

Based on the results of data analysis that has been carried out the intensity variable of social media use produces a t-value of 6.561 with a p-value of 0.000. The test results show the p-value (0.000) < level of significance (α = 0.05) so that there is a significant effect between the intensity variable of social media use on social comparison in Riau Islamic University students. When viewed from the regression coefficient β 1 on the intensity variable of the use of social media has a positive value of 0.440, indicating that the intensity of social media use has a positive effect on social comparison in college students. This means that the higher the intensity of social media use, the higher the social comparison among Riau Islamic University students.

Based on the results of the normality test using the One Sample Kolmogrov Smirnov Test technique, it shows that the data obtained is normally distributed. The value of the KS statistic is 0.039 and the p value is 0.109. The test results show p value (0.109) > level of significance (α = 0.05) this means that the assumption of normality is met.

If we look at the research results from demographic data, based on gender, the majority were women with a total of 286 respondents with a percentage of 63.6%. The results of this study are in accordance with the results of research conducted by Febrina, Suharso, and Saleh (2018)-which revealed that social comparison is mostly dominated by young girls. This means that women are more focused on appearance. So, when they see posts by celebrities who are considered beautiful and charming, they will feel worried, ashamed, and insecure and feel less about themselves (insecurity) and think they are no better than the people or programs they watch.

In addition, the age was dominated by the age of 20 years with the number of respondents namely 139 people with a percentage of 30.9%. This is in accordance with the results of previous research, according to Kemp (2019) most social media users in Indonesia are between the ages of 18 to 34 years with the greatest use among college students. This means that due to the age level of students who have entered their late teens with an estimated teenage age between 19-20 years, students also have a higher probability of making social comparisons than younger children.

Then, the research results from demographic data based on the duration of using social media, the most users spend more than 6 hours using social media as many as 314 respondents with a percentage of 69.8%. Based on research conducted by Zanah and Rahardjo (2020), states that the average person uses social media for more than 6 hours. Research conducted by Hartinah, Sriati and Kosasih (2019), states that the frequency of using social media is more than half of the respondents accessing social media for 4 to 6 hours per day.

In addition, researchers also found data in the field that social media accounts that were often used were Instagram with 292 students, TikTok with 289 students and Youtube with 229 students. This is in line with research conducted by Fauziah, et al. (2020) showed that the social media data used showed that Youtube and Instagram were the most used social media by respondents, a total of 86 individuals gave answers using Instagram and Youtube.

In addition, the data that the researchers found in the field found that students who use social media have a moderate level with the number of respondents, namely 208 people with a presentation of 46.2% of 450 students. This is in line with Aziz's research (2020) which also revealed that the intensity of social media users is known to be that the majority of respondents use social media at a moderate level of 195 people with a presentation of-
-78% of 250 people. Meanwhile, 32 people or 12.8% are in the high category and 23 people or 9.2% are in the low category.

From the results of the research that has been done, it turns out that Riau Islamic University students are included in the upward comparison type of social comparison, which according to Festinger (1954) upward comparison is when someone compares himself with other people who the individual believes that they are more good compared to himself so that he feels insecure, ashamed of his own shortcomings and thinks that beautiful people are better than himself.

The results of the research that have been obtained are that all Riau Islamic University students have moderate categorization scores on the variable intensity of social media use and social comparison.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been done, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence between the intensity variable of social media use on social comparison in Riau Islamic University students. Regression coefficient on the intensity variable of social media use has a positive value of 0.440, indicating that the intensity of social media use has a positive effect on social comparison in college students. This means that the higher the intensity of social media use, the higher the social comparison among Riau Islamic University students.

Weaknesses in this study are in the data collection method section, where the data collection process only uses a questionnaire so that it is less objective in the process of filling out the questionnaire as the subject does not fill in according to the actual situation. The limitation of this research is the lack of references that can be used by researchers, such as journals or books from research results related to these two variables. Nonetheless, this research is considered important to be able to understand the phenomenon of social comparison behavior that is mostly carried out by social media users.

Funding

The author declares that this research received no specific grant from any funding agency or the commercial or not for profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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