

Please cite this article as: Chaniago, R. H. C., Yusuf, S., Ahmad Tajuddin, S. N. A., & Ali, R. . (2020). Social Media Use and Depression Among UPSI Students: Penggunaan Media Sosial Dan Kemurungan Dalam Kalangan Pelajar UPSI. *The Asian Journal of Professional & Business Studies*, 1(2), 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.61688/ajpbs.v1i2.51>

SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND DEPRESSION AMONG UPSI STUDENTS

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Received 31 Oct 2020, Revised 20 Nov 2020, Accepted 30 Nov 2020, Published 31 Dec 2020

ABSTRACT

Social media plays a huge role in the daily life of today's society. Social media has become one of the media that has multiple functions and is very popular with every community compared to other media. Depression is a mental disorder in which an individual's feelings are disturbed and cause prolonged feelings of sadness, fatigue and lack of energy, quick anger and also loss of interest in daily activities. Depression is also common among students at the primary, secondary or university levels. Depression can be detected through student behaviors such as anxiety, stress and stress. This study was conducted to examine the association between social media use and depression among UPSI students. This study used a quantitative method by using a survey form which has 3 parts, namely parts A, B and C. This form was distributed to 100 students of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) as a sample of the study. The selection of study samples was based on a simple random sampling selection. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. The results of this study are expected to shed light on how the problem of depression and social media use are closely related to each other and can also be overcome through getting closer to religion.

Keywords: Depression, Pressure, Stress, Student, Social Media

1. INTRODUCTION

Depression is an everyday word that refers to the feelings of sadness experienced by an individual. However, this word is very difficult to interpret because it can lead to various meanings through various situations. Depression is also the formation of behaviors that affect an individual (Ainul Aina, 2018). This can happen in every individual regardless of race or religion through various aspects of his or her appearance. Based on a report by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017), it shows that there are over 1.1 million cases of depressive disorder in Malaysia. The report also states that depression is a major contributor to suicide deaths which account for 800,000 or 1.5% of all deaths worldwide. According to (NorHayati, 2013), depression is a type of mental illness that occurs a lot but is not diagnosed until the problem has become severe and requires proper treatment. Almost all patients with depression experience episodes of low mood and completely lose interest in an activity that they previously enjoyed.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), half of almost all types of mental illness start at the age of 14 due to the delay in getting professional treatment. A study from Globalstat reported that more than 72 per cent of social media use in Malaysia is among hardcore users and social media addicts. According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2017, about 5.5 million adolescents, one in five young people suffer from depression while one in 10 adolescents is recorded to experience emotional distress.

According to the founder of the Malaysian Mental Health Foundation (MHF), Dr Abdul Aziz Abdullah, around 27 per cent of Malaysians aged 16 and above who suffer from mental health problems should be given attention. This study was conducted to study the use of social media and depression among UPSI students. According to Carr & Hayes (2015), social media refers to the diversity in Internet network policies that allow users (humans) to interact with each other both verbally and visually.

Citing a Sinar Harian newspaper report (2019) by Psychiatrist, International Islamic University Medical Centre Malaysia, Dr Rozanizam Zakaria, excessive use of gadgets and social media not only causes mental problems but scientific studies have also shown its association with cases of depression, extreme anxiety and impulsive behaviour. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017), depression is a psychiatric disorder that involves disturbances in the emotions of an individual.

Individuals suffering from depressive disorders will show feelings of sadness, depression, low self-esteem, hopelessness, lifelessness and often self-blame. Yvonne et al (2018), found that online distractions, sleep schedule disorders, and lack of self-confidence are factors linking social media use and depression. According to Shamsudin et al (2016), the level of mental health of university students is an important issue because it involves their academic performance as well as their overall welfare. Academic performance is one of the signals to a student's productivity and is an important asset to the country's development. This study aims to examine the relationship between social media use and depression among UPSI students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017), reports that 10% to 20% of children and adolescents worldwide suffer from mental problems. The most common mental disorders in children and adolescents are anxiety disorder and depression (Mental Health Foundation, 2018: Stansfeld et al, 2016). Morgan et al (2017), report that the rate of self-injury in the UK has increased by 68% in children aged 13 to 16 years in the last 10 years.

Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major cause contributing to the overall global burden of disease (Depression, 2018). Lack of energy, or fatigue, loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that make it difficult to concentrate, remember and make decisions are just some of the signs and symptoms of individuals suffering from depression (Depression, 2018). In addition, Health Direct states "good mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. A positive state of well-being includes feeling good and functioning well (Good Mental Health, 2017).

The term 'social media' refers to an internet-based network that allows users to interact with others verbally and visually (Carr & Hayes, 2015). According to the Pew Research Centre (2015), at least 92% of teens are active on social media. In 2018, about 88% of U.S. people aged 18-19 indicated that they used social media. The majority of US people use Facebook, however those aged 18 to 24 tend to use Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Social media can also be used as entertainment to individuals, maintaining relationships, or spending time. However, it can be an addiction that develops from feeling better or more confident in oneself while using social media (Guedes et al, 2016).

When examining the relationship between social media and mental health outcomes such as depression the findings showed mixed results (Susan Wu, 2019). Such relationships are complex and may involve a variety of psychological, social, behavioral and individual factors (Baker & Algorta, 2016). Whether social media is beneficial or harmful to mental health and well-being so on depends on the quality of the social factors on social media sites (Seabrook, Kern & Richard, 2016). Further research is needed due to the high use of social media (Smith & Anderson, 2018) and high rates of depression in young adults (Depression, 2018) with depression being the most common health problem for college students (Depression & College Students, n.d.).

3. METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methodology used to determine the purpose of the theoretical model. This section is divided into several parts, namely, 1) Study Design; 2) Study Location; 3) Population and Study Sampling; 4) Study Instruments; 5) Pre-Testing and Data Collection; 6) Instrument Validity and Reliability Process; 7) Data Processing Methods; 8) Data filtering; and 9) Formula.

3.1 Research Design

According to Kothari (2004), the study design is a plan, roadmap and blueprint investigation strategy designed to get answers to the research questions (Kothari, 2004), it is an important element for each study. This study was quantitative. According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2002), quantitative research is research into social problems, explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data analyzed using methods based on mathematics, especially statistics. This study used a questionnaire survey approach to obtain respondents' information. A total of 100 UPSI students were involved in this study.

The respondents were randomly selected using a simple random sampling method where all populations were given an equal opportunity to answer this questionnaire (Merrigan & Huston, 2004). Researchers will randomly select students based on the chances and probabilities of each member to be selected as a study sample. Based on this study, the researchers used questionnaires as a study instrument that included several items according to the study objectives. The questionnaire prepared by the researcher is divided into three parts, namely parts A, B, and C. In part A, respondents are required to answer several questions related to the demographics of the respondents while the likert scale is used in parts B and C where the respondents are required to mark the answers based on the questions given. Pearson's descriptive and correlation analysis using the IBM SPSS version 25 programming system was used to analyze the study data.

This study was conducted at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), but due to Covid-19 symptoms, the study location was online. Where each survey form is distributed through social media such as whatsapp and UPSI students' emails.

3.2 Population And Sample Studies

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study used students studying at UPSI who use social media and who have knowledge of depression who are 18 years old and above and who are currently studying from diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree and PhD. Students will also be randomly selected to answer this questionnaire and students comprise various faculties at UPSI. According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) (2017), about 5.5 million adolescents, one in five young people suffer from depression while one in 10 adolescents is recorded to experience emotional distress. This clearly shows that depression among university students is getting more serious and the use of social media is also increasing among students.

Identifying Study Populations

This study was conducted for students at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), this study was also conducted online only. Where each survey form is distributed through social media such as whatsapp and UPSI student email and Telegram. This study was conducted for UPSI students because UPSI has a large number of students and consists of various ethnicities. The respondents were 100 students from various ages and faculties as well as levels of study at UPSI. The sample of this study is using random sampling where there is no specific student that will be selected by the researcher to answer this questionnaire.

Study Instruments

The construction of study instruments is very important in a study. Researchers need to show the right instrument that is not appropriate for the study being conducted to avoid discrepancies in a study. Based on this study, the researchers used a questionnaire as a study instrument that included several items according to the study objectives. The questionnaire prepared by the researchers was divided into three parts, namely part A which contained the demographics of the respondents including gender, ethnicity, age, education level, semester and faculty while part B consisted of 7 questions on the level of depression among UPSI students. Part C consists of 6 questions on the level of social media use among UPSI students. This study question also has two types of questions, namely open-ended and closed-ended questions to make it easier to measure both variables.

Pre-Exam

Before collecting actual data, pre-testing is an important element to be done to ensure that the instrument used is accurate and appropriate for the study. This study involved both genders, namely males and females from the age of 18 years and above among UPSI students themselves. The questionnaire survey form was distributed to UPSI students through social media and student email. The pre-exam was made with a total of 30 respondents who had been selected by simple random sampling.

Data Collection

To carry out data collection, researchers need to obtain clearance from the higher-ups, namely the Faculty of Language and Communication and also the lecturers involved. The study instrument will be reviewed by the lecturer for this subject before the researcher is released to distribute the questionnaire form that has been made. During the actual data collection day (20 June 2020), the questionnaire forms were distributed online to UPSI students through social media such as Telegram, Whatsapp and Twitter, as well as students' emails. This is because the current issues have limited the movement of researchers and study respondents. The form also includes a few explanations about the study conducted to make it easier for respondents to understand the purpose of this study. To answer this questionnaire, respondents only needed 10 to 15 minutes. This allows the researchers to collect data quickly but because the questionnaire links are also disseminated through social media, they will usually overlap with other links which causes students to overlook making it take a long time to collect 100 respondents.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Process

According to Hamed (2016), questionnaires are the most widely used tool for collecting data, especially in quantitative research. The main purpose of the questionnaire boring was to obtain accurate information and in accordance with the objectives of this study itself where the accuracy of the data and consistent data are of interest in this study. After the instrument is built, the researcher needs to make sure that the instrument made is valid and reliable. According to Blumberg et al (2005), validity is often defined as the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure while reliability refers to measurements that provide consistent results with the same values. This argument is supported by Oliver (2010) where he states that these two elements are mandatory for all types of studies.

According to George et al (2015), the accepted rule is that Cronbach alpha(α) 0.6-0.7 is acceptable and reliable, and 0.8 or more is at a very good level. However, a value over 0.95 is not necessarily good as it may indicate overlap (Hulin et al, 2001). Thus, cronbach alpha was used as a tool to measure the validity and reliability of the instruments in this study.

Table 1: Reliability coefficient of study instruments

Variables	Item	Cronbach Alpha(a)	
		Pre-exam (n=30)	Actual (n=100)
Stages of Depression	7	.901	.896
Levels of social media use	6	.576	.732

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability After Data Collection

Based on the table above, the reliability of the level of social media usage in the pre-test shows that the Cronbach alpha value is below .07 meaning that the instrument used is invalid and cannot be used. However, after the instrument was modified, the validity of the actual data on the level of social media use was valid and applicable to this study. As for the level of depression, cronbach alpha is considered reliable for actual data collection because it is over 0.7.

Data Processing Methods

This study used a single piece of software to process and analyze the data. The software used is IBM SPSS 'Statistical Package for Social Science' version 25. The software is used to process and filter the data obtained for this study.

Data Filtering

After the data collection process was completed, the researchers obtained a total of 103 responses for the survey form which was distributed to UPSI students. However, after coding, a total of 3 respondents were rejected due to incomplete forms and only 100 responses were valid. The first step for data processing is where the researcher needs to enter the data into the SPSS software and the raw data analysis for the data filtering and cleaning process. This is done to identify imperfect responses, errors and also if there are missing or outstanding values. The researchers also went through frequency tests and data editing before conducting reliability tests.

Then, reliability tests are performed to ensure that the measurements obtained in one session are consistent and reflect the reliability of the study. This test was done to see if the alpha cronbac meets the required conditions which is more than 0.7 per variable. After undergoing reliability testing, the researcher performs data transformation i.e. compute and records to construct new variables based on existing variables and re-evaluate them according to matrix variables. Finally, normality testing is performed by researchers to ensure that the data population is distributed normally based on past studies. The results of this test i.e. 5 out of 7 normality tests show that this study has reached the standards that have been set.

Results and Discussions

The study used the "Pearson Correlation" method to analyze the data obtained. "Pearson Correlation" is a parametric statistic. This method is to see the relationship between two variables, namely *independent variables* and *dependent variables*. This study was conducted to look at the relationship between social media use and depression among UPSI students.

Respondent Profile

This study was conducted to study the level of social media use and depression among UPSI students. In this section, the study will focus on respondents consisting of a student who is gender, race, education level, semester and faculty at UPSI, Tanjung Malim, Perak.

The table above shows the number of respondents by gender, race, education level, semester, and faculty. The results showed that the number of genders from men was 26 people (26%) while for women it was 74 people (74%). As for the number of national respondents, as many as 76 people (76%) were from the Malays, 8 people from the Chinese (8%), 3 people (3%) from the Indians and 13 people (13%) from others. As for the number of respondents for education level, bachelor's degree was the highest number of respondents at 94 people (94%) while diploma was 5 people (5%) and master's degree was the lowest at 1 person (1%). Furthermore, for the number of respondents for the semester, the highest number of respondents was in semester 2 which was 51 people (51%), the medium level was semester 4 which was 17 people (17%) and the lowest was semester 8 which was 2 people (2%). Finally, the number for the faculty section is the Faculty of Language and Communication is the faculty with the highest number of respondents who answered this study question with 61 people (61%), the medium number is from the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Education and Human Development which is 8 people (8%) while the Faculty of Sports Science and Coaching is the lowest number of respondents with 1 person (1%).

Table 2: Distribution of Frequency of Gender, Race, Education Level, Semester and

Faculty

Variables	Freq	Percent
Jantina		
Lelaki	26	26
Perempuan	74	74
Bangsa		
Melayu	76	76
Cina	8	8
India	3	3
Lain-Lain	13	13
Tahap Pendidikan		
Diploma	5	5
Ijazah Sarjana Muda	94	94
Ijazah Sarjana	1	1
Semester		
Semester 1	5	5
Semester 2	51	51
Semester 3	6	6
Semester 4	17	17
Semester 5	10	10
Semester 6	5	5
Semester 7	4	4
Semester 8	2	2
Fakulti		
Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi	61	61
Fakulti Muzik dan Persembahan	2	2
Fakulti Pendidikan dan Pembangunan Manusia	8	8
Fakulti Sains dan Matematik	5	5
Fakulti Pengurusan dan Ekonomi	5	5
Fakulti Sains Sukan dan Kejurulatihan	1	1
Fakulti Sains Kemanusiaan	8	8
Fakulti Seni Komputeran dan Industri Kreatif	6	6
Fakulti Pendidikan Teknikal dan Vokasional	4	4

Levels of social media use and Levels of depression

Based on the Pearson Correlation table below (refer to Table 3), the data obtained support the study hypothesis that there is a significant relationship (.000) between the level of social media use and the level of depression among students. The findings of this study showed that there was a positive relationship between the level of social media use and the level of depression (.371). Although the strength of this relationship is low, there is a significant difference between the level of social media use and the level of depression among UPSI students.

Table 3: Correlation between social media use levels and depression levels

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Depression	.371	.000
Social Media		

According to a past study that has been conducted, the relationship between social media use is indeed related to the problem of mental illness, namely depression. According to a study from Susan Wu (2017), the relationship between social media use and depression showed mixed results. This means that social media use can be negative or positive depending on the level of social media use and the level of depression of the person. According to Baker & Algorta (2016), the relationship between social media use and depression is complex and involves various factors such as psychological, social, behavioral and individual.

Based on the data obtained for the depression level section, most university students have a low level (53%) of depression. However, there are also students with moderate levels of depression (36%). This clearly shows that there are students who suffer from this depressive illness even though they are not at a severe level. According to Yang et.al (2005), among the symptoms of a person who suffers from depression are low self-esteem, low motivation, fear of rejection and the need to get validation from others will cause a person to spend time using social media.

From the level of social media use, the level of social media use among UPSI students is moderate (54%). This is because most university students have social media accounts and have smartphones. A study by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, (MCMC) (2017) shows that smartphones are the main medium for consumers to access the Internet at 89.9% (21.9 million people). As many as 89.3% of Internet users use the Internet to access their social sites. This clearly shows that social media users among students are high due to the ease of access to the Internet and most of them use smartphones.

The results of the study showed a significant relationship between the level of social media use and the level of depression. This hypothesis can be proven by the value of sig. *r* is .000 which is less than the alpha value which is .05. Although the strength of the relationship indicates a low relationship, there is a positive direction of the relationship where the factor of social media use is indeed related and affects the level of depression of a university student even though the strength of the relationship between these two variables is low. This happens when students spend a lot of time using social media, they will tend to feel inferior and will start to compare their life to the life of an individual they see on social media. This can be supported by a study conducted by Urista, Dong & Day (2008) which states that most generations are now more likely to view and follow content on social media to create their own identity.

5. CONCLUSION

All in all, it can be concluded that depression is a serious type of disease that involves the body, the feelings of the individual mind. It is also due to the level of social media use which has a connection in a person suffering from depression. This study is supported by past studies that have stated about social media use and depression among university students. This study was conducted at a local university in Malaysia, namely Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, UPSI located in Tanjung Malim, Perak and this study took a total of 100 different respondents randomly and this study could be done with the appropriate Cronbach

alpha value of $>.07$. Finally, there is a significant relationship between the level of social media use and the level of depression among UPSI students and the objectives of the study can be achieved in this study.

In conclusion, there is a link between the level of social media use and the level of depression among students at UPSI. Although the level of depression among students at UPSI is low, there is a possibility that there are students who suffer from depression and use social media as a way to fill their time and minds. As such, social media use and depression have a significant relationship despite being at low levels. This study also achieved the objective of looking at the association between the level of social media use and the level of depression among UPSI students.

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