

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF DISCLOSURE AND LONELINESS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO USE THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM INSTAGRAM IN BATUSANGKAR

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness in high school students who use Instagram in Batusangkar. The study used a correlational quantitative approach with 105 respondents selected through purposive sampling technique. The instruments used are self-disclosure and loneliness scales. The Spearman test results showed a positive and significant relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness ($r = 0.598$; $p < 0.05$). The higher the self-disclosure, the higher the level of loneliness felt. Self-disclosure contributed 35% to loneliness. These results support previous research and show the importance of self-disclosure in building healthy social relationships.

Keywords: self-disclosure, loneliness, Instagram

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara self-disclosure dengan loneliness pada siswa SMA pengguna Instagram di Batusangkar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif korelasional dengan 105 responden yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Instrumen yang digunakan berupa skala self-disclosure dan loneliness. Hasil uji Spearman menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif dan signifikan antara self-disclosure dan loneliness ($r = 0,598$; $p < 0,05$). Semakin tinggi keterbukaan diri, semakin tinggi tingkat kesepian yang dirasakan. Self-disclosure memberikan kontribusi sebesar 35% terhadap loneliness. Hasil ini mendukung penelitian sebelumnya dan menunjukkan pentingnya keterbukaan diri dalam membangun hubungan sosial yang sehat.

Kata kunci: self-disclosure, loneliness, Instagram

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial stage of development in an individual's life, during which various physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes occur. During this period, relationships with peers become very important in adolescent psychosocial development (Havighurst in Alwisol, 2008). Adolescents begin to develop independence, explore their identity, and build more complex social relationships (Santrock, 2023). In this process, they have a high need for social acceptance and recognition from their surroundings (Brown & Larson, 2023). Most adolescents in today's digital era, especially in Indonesia, use social

media as the main means of establishing social relationships and obtaining emotional support (Sahin, 2018). Based on data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2024), there are 221,563,479 internet users in Indonesia, with Generation Z being the largest user group at 34.40%. This data is in line with the *We Are Social & Hootsuite* (2023) report, which shows that most active *Instagram* users in Indonesia are teenagers and young adults. This indicates that social media platforms are more dominant among the younger generation today than other age groups (Sahin, 2018).

Instagram has become one of the most popular platforms because it provides a space for teenagers to express themselves and interact without the constraints of space and time (Aprilia et al., 2020). Research by Kuss and Griffiths (2017) shows that around 21% of social media users can be categorized as experiencing symptoms of addiction, which is characterized by excessive use and emotional dependence on social media. Chou and Hsiao (2000) state that individuals who have difficulty controlling their social media use tend to spend between 3 and 5 hours per day on it. According to Kirik et al. (2015), one of the causes of social media addiction in adolescents is loneliness. Adolescents who feel lonely will increase the intensity of their social media use, so that excessive use will lead to social media addiction. Emotional experiences arise when individuals feel that their social relationships do not meet their expectations (Weiss, 1973 in Yanguas, Pinaso, & Tarazona, 2018). The definition of *loneliness* was later developed by Russell, who defined loneliness as arising when a person's expectations of their social relationships are not met, so that the greater the dissatisfaction felt, the higher the likelihood of a person experiencing loneliness (in Maxentia & Florence, 2024). Weiss (1973) distinguishes two main aspects of loneliness, namely (1) *Social loneliness*, and (2) *Emotional loneliness*.

In the context of teenagers who use social media, even though they are digitally connected, the relationships formed on platforms such as Instagram are often inauthentic and do not provide sufficient emotional support (Sari, 2024). Self-disclosure plays an important role in building close social relationships and can reduce the level of loneliness in individuals (Wei, Russell, & Zakalik, 2005). Wheeless (1976) states that self-disclosure is communication that occurs with reference to an individual or specific individuals. According to Wheeless & Grotz (1976), self-disclosure is a message about oneself that is communicated to others. The aspects of self-disclosure according to Wheeless and Grotz (1976) include Amount, Depth, Honesty, Intent, and Valence. In the digital world, self-disclosure can be done through posts, Instagram stories, or private messages. Theoretically, self-disclosure plays an important role in strengthening social relationships and obtaining emotional support (Jourard, 1971). Teenagers who fall into this category strive to always be connected by easily accessing social media to satisfy their desires (Sahin, 2018).

Based on the latest research conducted by Ramadhan & Coralia (2022) entitled the relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness among Instagram users in the city of Palembang. The results of the study prove that there is a correlation between self-disclosure and loneliness among Instagram users in the city of Palembang. This indicates a high level of loneliness felt in line with the tendency to self-disclose. Another study, conducted by Akbar & Abdullah (2021) with the title “The Relationship between

Loneliness and Self-Disclosure among Students at Sumbawa University of Technology who use Instagram,” found a positive, unidirectional relationship, whereby the higher the level of loneliness among students at Sumbawa University of Technology who use Instagram, the higher their self-disclosure.

According to Self-Determination Theory (2000), individuals have three basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are not met, such as in superficial online interactions, feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction can arise. Although self-disclosure on social media can strengthen relationships, research shows that adolescents who engage in excessive self-disclosure on social media actually experience higher levels of loneliness. This occurs because relationships formed on social media often lack deep and authentic emotional responses (Lee, Noh, & Koo, 2013). In addition, adolescents with low self-esteem tend to express themselves more often on social media to seek validation from others. When the feedback they receive does not meet their expectations, their feelings of loneliness can intensify (Al-Saggaf & Nielsen, 2014).

The phenomenon of social media use, especially Instagram, among adolescents in Batusangkar is very interesting. Based on the results of observations and interviews from previous research in previous courses on students at SMAN 1 Batusangkar, it was found that most students spend more than 3 hours every day accessing Instagram, whether to interact, view content, or share personal stories. This phenomenon indicates a dependence on social media that affects their social interactions. Despite being connected online, many of them feel lonely even though they have many friends on Instagram. This excessive use of Instagram has the potential to affect the quality of their interpersonal relationships and their overall mental health.

The availability of previous research and phenomena that support the relationship between loneliness and self-disclosure in teenagers who use Instagram, as well as considering that no research has ever been conducted in the city of Batusangkar. Therefore, the author wanted to examine the relationship between loneliness and self-disclosure among teenage Instagram users in the city of Batusangkar to gain a deeper understanding of how self-disclosure on social media, particularly Instagram, can affect the level of loneliness among teenagers, especially in Batusangkar. This study is expected to provide insight into the relationship between Instagram use and self-disclosure among high school teenagers in Batusangkar.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design, which aims to determine the relationship between the variables of self-disclosure and loneliness in high school students who use Instagram social media in Batusangkar. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, which is a sampling technique based on certain criteria set by the researcher. The criteria for subjects in this study were: (1) high school students in grades 10 to 12, (2) active users of Instagram for at least the last 6 months, (3) Instagram users for 3 hours or more. The sample size used in this study was 105 respondents from various high schools in Batusangkar. The determination of the sample size is in line with

the theory of Cooper & Emory (1996), which states that if the population cannot be identified with certainty, the sample can be set directly at 100 respondents. The data analysis method used in this study is a correlation test. This test is used to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables on an interval scale and meets the assumptions of normal distribution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The subjects in this study were teenagers attending high school in the Batusangkar region of West Sumatra. The total number of respondents in this study was 105. The subjects were selected based on their active use of Instagram and indications of social media addiction.

Normality Test

The normality test is a statistical test that aims to ensure that the data obtained from the measurement of research variables is normally distributed, because parametric statistical analysis (such as correlation, regression, and t-test) can be performed if the data is assumed to be normally distributed (Azwar, 2012). If the data distribution is not normal, then a non-parametric statistical test can be used.

Table 1. Kolmogorov Smirnov Normality Test

MOST EXTREME DIFFERENCES	ABSOLUTE	0,110
	Positives	0,098
	Negative	-0,110
TEST STATISTIC		0,110
SIG N		0,002
		UNSTANDARDIZ ED RESIDUAL
		105
NORMAL PARAMETERS	Mean	0,0000000
	STD.DEVIATION	7.78121577

Based on the test results, a significance value of 0.002 was obtained. Because the significance value is less than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), it can be concluded that the residual data is not normally distributed. Thus, the data will be analyzed using non-parametric statistical techniques. According to Azwar (2012), the assumption of normality is important to fulfill so that the results of parametric and non-parametric statistical analyses are not biased.

Linearity Test

Linearity testing is a form of relationship between variables that is a key requirement for applying linear correlation and regression techniques (Azwar, 2012). Thus, linearity

testing is important to ensure that the data to be analyzed does indeed show a linear relationship pattern (Azwar, 2012). If the relationship is not linear, then the use of linear analysis will not provide accurate results.

Table 2. Linearity Test

			DF	F	SIG	
SELF DISCLOSURE - LONELINESS BECAUSE	Between Groups	(Combinational down)	20	2.082	0.031	
			Linearity and	1	33.266	0.000
			Deviation from Linearity AND	19	0.441	0.321

Based on the table above, a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) was obtained for the *Linearity* component. This indicates that there is a significant linear relationship between the variables of self-disclosure and loneliness. Meanwhile, the significance value for the *Deviation from Linearity* component is 0.321 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that there is no significant deviation from linearity, which means that the relationship between the two variables truly follows a linear pattern. Thus, it can be concluded that the relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness is linear and that the assumption of linearity in regression and correlation analysis has been fulfilled.

Correlation Test

The correlation test is used to measure the closeness of the linear relationship between two variables. The correlation value obtained will show the direction of the relationship (positive or negative) and the strength of the relationship (from very weak to very strong) (Azwar, 2012).

Table 3. Correlation Test

SELF DISCLOSURE		LONELINESS	
SPEARMAN'S RHO	Self Disclosure	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	105
	Loneliness	Correlation Coefficient	.598**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	105	105

Based on the correlation test results, a correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.598 was obtained with a significance value (p) of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between the variables of *loneliness* and *self-disclosure*. This means that the higher a person's level of self-disclosure on social media, the higher their level of loneliness, and vice versa.

The results of this study indicate a significant and positive relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness among high school students who use Instagram in Batusangkar. These findings indicate that the higher the level of self-disclosure by an individual, the higher their level of loneliness, and vice versa. The Spearman correlation test showed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.598$ with a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). Based on the correlation classification according to Azwar (2012), this value is classified as moderate. A positive value indicates a unidirectional and positive correlation, and a value of 0.000 less than 0.05 indicates that the correlation is very significant (Machali, 2017). This shows that the research hypothesis is accepted, where there is a positive and significant relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness.

This finding is in line with research conducted by Akbar and Abdullah (2021), which found that the level of loneliness among Sumbawa University students who use Instagram social media is very low, at 41.2%. These results indicate that the level of self-disclosure in individuals is closely related to the level of loneliness they experience. The higher the tendency of individuals to disclose themselves through social media, the greater the feelings of loneliness they experience.

This view is also reinforced by Ernst et al. (2022), who explain that loneliness arises from a mismatch between expected social relationships and the reality experienced, both in terms of quality and quantity. This discrepancy then encourages individuals to express their feelings through various forms of self-disclosure, especially on social media. However, the ability to control self-awareness in sharing personal information is still necessary so that self-disclosure does not have a negative impact. In line with these findings, research by Ramadhan and Coralia (2022) and Zahrabella and Herdajani (2023) shows that there is a positive relationship between loneliness and self-disclosure. This means that the greater the tendency for individuals to express themselves openly, both in the real world and on digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, the higher the level of loneliness they feel.

Fauzi and Budiyan (2022) state that self-disclosure has an influence on an individual's ability to adapt socially. In order to be able to establish effective communication with their social environment, individuals need to demonstrate a positive attitude of openness. This is reinforced by Hidayat (2012), who states that an open attitude in interpersonal communication plays an important role in forming and maintaining harmonious social relationships. Greene et al. (2006) argue that self-disclosure supports the formation of friendships and emotional closeness. Through openness in communication, individuals

gain emotional support, which ultimately can alleviate feelings of loneliness and increase self-understanding. Devito (1997) adds that social interaction allows individuals to see themselves from the perspective of others, so that by expressing their feelings, people can increase positive experiences and reduce emotional pressure.

In line with the above findings, Buhrmester and Hibbard (in Santrock, 2007) mention that adolescents who do not have close friendships tend to experience feelings of loneliness, depression, and low self-esteem. The results of this study support this view, finding that self-disclosure has a significant relationship with loneliness, contributing 35.76% to the variation in loneliness experienced by adolescent Instagram users in Batusangkar. This finding indicates that adolescents who are more open in expressing themselves to others tend to have lower levels of loneliness, while the remaining 64.24% is influenced by factors other than the variable of self-disclosure.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted on the relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness among high school students who use Instagram in Batusangkar, it can be concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between the two variables. This is indicated by the results of the Spearman correlation test, which produced a coefficient value of $r = 0.598$ with a significance of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). These results show that the higher the level of self-disclosure among students, the higher the level of loneliness they feel. This finding supports the results of previous studies which state that self-disclosure is an important aspect in forming healthy social relationships and can be an adaptive strategy in reducing loneliness, especially in adolescents who actively use social media. Self-disclosure allows individuals to express themselves, build closeness with others, and obtain emotional support that can reduce feelings of loneliness.

Based on the research results and conclusions obtained, the researchers provided several recommendations aimed at various parties. For adolescents, especially high school students, it is recommended to practice self-disclosure wisely and healthily, especially when using social media. Appropriate self-disclosure can help build closer and deeper relationships with others and reduce feelings of loneliness. However, teenagers still need to maintain privacy boundaries and be careful when sharing personal information online. For parents and teachers, it is important to educate and guide teenagers on how to build healthy communication, including in the context of social media use. Parents and teachers can be important sources of social support in the psychosocial development process of teenagers, as well as help them form open yet safe communication patterns.

Furthermore, for school counselors and psychologists, the results of this study can be used as a basis for designing intervention programs aimed at developing students' interpersonal skills, especially in terms of self-disclosure and managing loneliness. Counseling programs or group guidance can be an effective means of fostering healthy communication and building positive social relationships in the school environment. Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to explore other factors that may influence loneliness in adolescents, such as the intensity of social media use, social anxiety, or social support from peers. Future research may also use mixed methods or

expand the number and variety of research subjects to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable results.

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