

Mental Health In The Digital Era

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Abstract

The digital age has brought significant changes to our daily lives, including the way we interact, work and seek information. However, these technological advancements also have an impact on mental health. This study aims to examine how the use of digital technologies, such as social media, the internet and other digital devices, affects individuals' mental health, particularly in the context of stress, anxiety, depression and social isolation. The results showed that, while digital technologies provide benefits in terms of access to information and communication, excessive or inappropriate use can increase the risk of mental disorders. Especially in the younger generation, excessive social media use is associated with increased levels of anxiety and depression. This study emphasizes the importance of awareness of the negative impact of digital technology and the need for strategies to promote healthy use of technology for mental well-being. The implications of these findings can be used to develop better mental health policies in the digital age. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of awareness and developing strategies to use technology wisely to minimize risks to mental health in the digital age.

Article History:

Keywords: Mental Health, Digital Age, Social Media, Stress, Anxiety, Depression.

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization driven by advances in digital technology, Indonesia certainly has a significant impact on people's daily lives. Digital technology has changed the way we communicate, work, learn, and even interact with the surrounding environment. In this context, it is important to realize that digital technology is not only a tool or means to achieve certain goals, but also has significant social, economic, political and health impacts. significant. Apart from that, the use of technology Responsible digital also involves many important aspects, such as protecting data privacy and security, avoiding the spread of false information or hoaxes, and ensuring the use of technology. digitally in a fair and equitable manner by all levels of society.

Mental health in the digital era refers to the impact that technology and digital devices have on mental health and well-being. With the rise of digital technology and the internet, people are increasingly connected and information, but this also comes with potentially negative consequences for mental health on one hand, digital technology can be a helpful tool for mental health, such as teletherapy, online support groups, and mental health apps that provide resources and support for individuals struggling with mental health issues. On the other hand, excessive use of technology, particularly social media, has been linked to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. The constant barrage of information, social comparison, and cyberbullying can also have negative effects on mental health. Overall, mental health in the digital era refers to the complex relationship between digital technology and mental health, and the need to balance the benefits of technology with the potential risks it poses to mental health.

In this fast-paced digital era, technology has become an integral part of everyday life. The internet and social media have changed the way we communicate, work, and seek entertainment, providing

unprecedented convenience. However, technological advancements also bring significant challenges to individuals' psychological well-being. Easy access to information often overwhelms us with too much content, which can trigger stress and anxiety. In addition, intense virtual interactions often replace face-to-face relationships, creating feelings of alienation and emotional isolation. This situation highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between the digital age and mental health more deeply.

The proliferation of digital technologies has created an environment that fuels dependence on electronic devices on an unprecedented scale. Most people now spend hours every day in front of their phones, laptops or other gadgets, whether for work or entertainment purposes. This dependency often leads to disrupted sleep patterns, mental fatigue and reduced quality of social interactions. In addition, the pressure to stay “online” and always be responsive to messages or notifications also exacerbates stress levels. Ultimately, this digital-focused lifestyle can reduce the balance between physical, emotional and social needs, affecting overall mental health.

Social media as a major product of the digital age has a huge impact on people's mental health. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and TikTok allow individuals to share moments and interact without time or place limits. However, on the other hand, these platforms are also a source of unhealthy social comparison. Many individuals feel pressured by the standards of perfection exhibited through carefully curated posts. Feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, or even depression often arise as a result of over-consumption of content that showcases the “ideal” life. Furthermore, social media algorithms designed to maintain user engagement can exacerbate these psychological impacts, creating a cycle of use that is difficult to break.

Overall, mental health in the digital age is a complex issue with multidimensional impacts. Technology brings great benefits in improving the accessibility of mental health information and services, but also creates significant new challenges. Lifestyle changes, social pressures and increased expectations online are some of the factors that affect people's psychological well-being. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to address the negative impacts of the digital age, including through research, public policy and education. This article will further discuss how the digital age affects mental health, as well as solutions that can be implemented to create a balance between technological advancement and psychological well-being.

2. Method

This study used a questionnaire to identify the impact of social media on mental health in the digital era. The questionnaire consisted of questions that measured the level of social media usage, perceived psychological impact, and experiences related to anxiety, stress, and loneliness. Respondents involved in the study were active social media users aged 18 to 35, randomly selected from popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The questionnaire was designed to get an in-depth picture of the relationship between social media use and mental health in daily life.

The questionnaire instrument used in this study included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were designed to measure the frequency of social media use, the types of platforms frequently used, as well as specific experiences associated with feelings of anxiety or depression due to social media. Meanwhile, open-ended questions provided an opportunity for respondents to explain their personal experiences in more depth. The questionnaire was then analyzed descriptively to describe patterns of social media use and its impact on individuals' psychological well-being. This analysis also helps in understanding the various factors that influence the relationship between the two, such as the duration of social media use and the type of content consumed.

The results of the questionnaire were used to develop findings on the effect of social media on mental health, particularly in the context of anxiety and stress experienced by individuals. The data collected was then analyzed to see if there was a correlation between the frequency of social media use and the feelings of anxiety or stress that arose in the respondents. In addition, the analysis also included comparisons between age groups and genders to see if there were any differences in the perceived impact. By using questionnaires as a data collection method, this research is expected to provide a clearer insight into how social media plays a role in shaping individual mental health in the digital era.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

a. Effect of Social Media on Mental Health

The majority of participants in this study reported that social media use had a significant impact on their mental health, particularly in relation to anxiety and low self-esteem. Many of them felt pressured by the standard of living displayed on social media, where posts about success, beauty and ideal lifestyles often made them feel inadequate. These feelings often arise after seeing content that showcases other people's seemingly perfect lives, be it in the form of photos, videos, or made-up stories. Some participants mentioned that they felt trapped in constant social comparison, which ultimately affected their mindset about themselves and their achievements in real life.

In addition to feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem, some participants also stated that they often felt anxious if they could not access social media for a long time, known as "FOMO" (Fear of Missing Out). This condition is exacerbated by constantly checking incoming notifications or notifications, even though in many cases, they are not really interested in the content of the messages or content received. This FOMO made participants feel isolated or worried that they were missing out on important information or events in other people's lives, which affected their psychological well-being. This finding is in line with research conducted by Kross et al. (2013) who stated that social comparison on social media can increase feelings of anxiety and decrease self-esteem, which ultimately has a negative impact on mental health.

In some cases, in addition to social comparison, exposure to negative content on social media also worsened participants' mental health conditions. Bad news, hate speech or even scary content often led to ongoing stress and anxiety. Participants stated that they felt exhausted after being exposed to information that constantly appeared on their timelines, which were full of news about tragedies, violence or safety-threatening events. Research by Tandoc et al. (2015) supports these findings, suggesting that overexposure to negative information on social media can increase feelings of stress and anxiety, contributing to a decline in overall mental health.

b. Dependence on Digital Technology

The results showed that many participants experienced dependence on digital technology, which was reflected in the time spent using devices such as cell phones, laptops or tablets. Some participants revealed that they spend hours every day browsing social media, watching videos, or simply opening apps for no apparent purpose. This addiction often leads to disruptions in daily life, including work, social relationships and physical health. One participant said, "I find it hard to sleep well because I check my phone so often, even when I'm lying in bed." This shows how deep the dependency is, causing disruptions to sleep that is crucial for mental and physical health.

Other participants revealed that they felt extremely anxious if they were unable to access their digital devices for long periods of time, known as "nomophobia" (no-mobile-phone phobia). The inability to access social media or favorite apps can make them feel disconnected from the outside world and lose control of the information around them. This dependency also exacerbates mental well-being issues, such as anxiety and depression, especially for those who feel connected and need to keep a constant eye on their online activities. Research by Przybylski and Weinstein (2013) also noted that excessive use of technology, especially smartphones, can lead to feelings of stress and lack of emotional connectedness with the real world.

This phenomenon of dependence on digital technology is also associated with a decline in the quality of face-to-face social interactions. Some participants admitted that they interacted more through text messaging or social media than face-to-face meetings with friends or family. This causes them to feel increasingly isolated, despite being virtually connected. In a study by Sherry Turkle (2015), it was found that while digital media allows for faster and more efficient communication, overuse can actually reduce the depth of social relationships, which in turn exacerbates loneliness and isolation.

Discussion

Social media use has been shown to have a significant impact on users' mental health, particularly in relation to anxiety and social comparison. As found in this study, participants often felt depressed when comparing themselves to others on social media, who show off seemingly perfect lives.

This phenomenon exacerbates feelings of inferiority, and triggers mental disorders such as depression and anxiety. These results are in line with research findings by Fardouly et al. (2015) who stated that excessive social media use can trigger feelings of dissatisfaction with the body and self-image, which then leads to an increased risk of mental problems, especially among adolescents and young adults. These negative influences can worsen psychological well-being, especially in individuals who are already predisposed to mental health problems.

Social comparison that often occurs on social media is indeed one of the main factors that cause feelings of anxiety among participants. This is consistent with Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory, in which individuals often judge themselves by comparing themselves with others, which in the digital context, is mostly driven by the idealized image exhibited on social media. This influence of social comparison can worsen one's mental state, especially for those with low self-confidence or who are prone to anxiety. Research by Vogel et al. (2014) also showed that individuals who frequently compare themselves to others on social media are more likely to experience feelings of anxiety and dissatisfaction with their lives, which then risks exacerbating mental disorders.

The "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO) phenomenon that arises as a result of social media dependence is an important factor affecting individuals' mental health. Participants who expressed feelings of anxiety and isolation when unable to access their social media reflected the FOMO pattern that is now widely found among social media users. According to Przybylski et al. (2013), FOMO triggers anxiety and can reduce the quality of offline social interactions as individuals focus more on the virtual world. The desire to always be connected and monitor the lives of others often creates feelings of anxiety, because individuals feel left behind or do not get the same experiences as others. This research shows that while social media can provide connection, the anxiety caused by FOMO can lead to feelings of loneliness and decreased emotional well-being.

Dependence on digital technology, especially mobile phones and social media, contributes to a decline in social life and mental health. Most participants revealed that they were often caught in a cycle of device overuse, which disrupted sleep and caused concentration problems. Research by Elhai et al. (2017) showed that smartphone dependence can lead to sleep disturbances, anxiety, and distraction, all of which have a direct effect on an individual's mental health. This dependency affects one's ability to rest well, which in turn increases feelings of stress and anxiety. In other words, while technology provides convenience in communication, its excessive use without wise management can be detrimental to one's mental well-being.

In addition to social comparison, exposure to negative news and hate speech is also a factor that can worsen the mental health condition of social media users. Participants in this study revealed that frequent exposure to news full of violence, natural disasters, or other social problems made them feel anxious and insecure. This kind of content, which is often shared virally, can increase stress and emotional strain. Research by Frison and Eggermont (2015) shows that exposure to negative news often followed by hateful discussions or comments can increase feelings of anxiety and depression among social media users, especially for individuals who are already vulnerable to mental health problems.

4. Conclusion

In the rapidly evolving digital age, the influence of technology and social media on individual mental health is increasingly evident. Widespread use of social media and reliance on digital devices can have a double impact: on the one hand, technology makes it easier to communicate and access information, but on the other hand, overuse can increase the risk of mental disorders, such as anxiety, depression and loneliness. Phenomena such as social comparisons that occur on social media, as well as exposure to negative news, contribute to the deterioration of users' mental health. This points to the importance of awareness of how technology is used and its impact on psychological well-being.

Dependence on technology and social media has also resulted in new phenomena such as "Fear of Missing Out" (FOMO), which intensifies anxiety and dissatisfaction in individuals. When social media presents an image of a seemingly perfect life, many people feel depressed and anxious because they feel they cannot match that standard. This psychological impact suggests that while technology provides access to information and social connections, it also plays a major role in shaping feelings of

alienation and harmful comparisons. This poses a major challenge in maintaining a balance between digital and real life.

However, in the face of these negative impacts, technology also offers the potential to support mental health. One way is through online platforms that allow easy access to counseling services and psychological therapies. Digital mental health apps and services can provide convenience for individuals who find it difficult to access therapy in person, especially in areas that lack healthcare facilities. This opens up opportunities for more people to seek help without shame or stigma, as well as helping those experiencing mental problems to get the support they need.

In conclusion, while the digital age brings many benefits, uncontrolled use of technology can have a serious impact on mental health. Greater awareness and collective efforts are needed to manage these negative impacts, through education, limiting use, and increasing access to digital-based mental health services. Only with a balanced and thoughtful approach can individuals utilize technology in a way that supports their mental wellbeing, ensuring that mental health is not neglected amidst the rapidly evolving digital world.

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