

Moderator Role of Social Support in Relationship Between Social Comparison and Life Satisfaction of Instagram Users

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the moderator role of social support in the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction of Instagram users. Data was conducted in November 2020 and involved 402 Instagram users with age ranges from 18 – 34 years old. The result in this study showed that social support has significant role ($t = 2.224$, $p < 0.05$) in moderating the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction of Instagram users, in which social support could enhance the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction of Instagram users.

Keywords: Social comparison, life satisfaction, social support, Instagram

1. INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is part of subjective well-being's (SWB) component structure [1]. Previous researchers, Pavot and Diener [2] and Diener [3], identified life satisfaction as a component that represents a cognitive and comprehensive assessment of the quality of life that an individual feel when he sees his life as a unit and in several aspects of his life.

In 2018, World Happiness Report shows the results of self-report on life satisfaction in the world on a scale of 0 to 10, the results show that Indonesia is in the several ranks of countries that shows the results of 5.32 who feel life satisfaction [4]. Veenhoven [5] states that individuals who are satisfied with one aspect of their life (such as work, marriage) are not necessarily satisfied with their whole life, and contrast. The more individuals feel dissatisfied with their life, the more likely they are to compare themselves with others [6].

Humans often compare themselves with others, either with someone familiar or some strangers. Festinger argued that basically humans seek knowledge of themselves accurately, and the way to find this knowledge is to compare themselves with others [7]. Researches conducted by Vogel et al. [8] and Civitci and Civitci [9] showed that individuals with a strong social comparison orientation (SCO) have chronic sensitivity and awareness of others, they also perform more social comparisons so they are more vulnerable to the consequences of social comparisons. Gibbons and Buunk [10] state that the consequences that can be experienced from social comparisons are decreased in self-esteem and optimism, as well as increased depression, anxiety, social anxiety, neuroticism, and negative influence.

In these growing digital era, social media are one of human's ways to interact with each other in everyday life. One of the most popular social media today is Instagram. Instagram is a form of online communication that functions to provide visual information, in the form of photos and videos about activities or activities from one individual to another [11]. There are data results, published by Instagram itself, showed that Instagram users who are less than 25 years old spend more than 32 minutes each day and Instagram users who are over 25 years old spend more than 24 minutes every day on Instagram [12]. In Indonesia, there is a report showed the number of active Instagram users reached around 61.6 million, moreover, the age range of Instagram users in Indonesia is mostly between the ages of 18 and 24 years, reaching around 23 million or 37.3% of users and followed by those aged 25 to 34 years who are the second most users, reaching 33.9% [13].

Regarding the majority ages of Instagram users, it can be related to the theory of psychosocial development, with individuals aged 18 are in the adolescent stage, in which this stage is a transitional period in the individual's life to find his identity in society. Individuals at this stage will become more independent and search for careers, relationships with friends or partners, have conformity in society, and so on to find out their identity role as an individual, and at the age of 18 to 34, in which are included in the early adulthood stage, individuals in this stage seek intimacy with other people [14]. If connected in this study, individuals aged 18 - 34 years old, if they have not known their identity role as an individual, then they can make social comparisons with other people to find out the role of their identity in society. Research has found that individuals who use Instagram experience an increase in negative mood and body dissatisfaction and a decrease in self-esteem for their

appearance when they make social comparisons with other individuals who share content on Instagram [15]. In addition, it was found that Instagram use also negatively predicted individual life satisfaction, with social comparison behavior as a strong predictor, which explains that the more individuals make social comparisons on social media, the lower the individual's SWB [16]. Supported from other research showing that the use of Instagram with a high tendency of social comparisons can also have a negative effect on these individuals, such as an increase in symptoms of depression and disorders on well-being [17], [18], which researcher concluded could lead to individual's low evaluation of his life satisfaction. However, research shows that in the context of providing and volunteering for people in need, individuals with a high tendency for social comparison will have higher life satisfaction if they compare themselves to people whom they consider lower than themselves [19].

Another study found image-based social media platforms, namely social networking sites Instagram and Snapchat, provided a significant reduction in self-reported individual's loneliness and an increase in individual's happiness and life satisfaction, with the sharing of images and video content representing the social presence of other individuals in individuals who feel loneliness [20].

One of the factors that can increase individual life satisfaction is through social support [21]. There is research showed that social support, with the desire to belong, could predict individual's perceived social support who used image-based social networking site, in this research used Instagram, in which individuals who have desire to belong and use Instagram, will have belief that they have social support and enhance in well-being, and thus could lead to higher life satisfaction [22]. Other studies also showed individuals with high levels of social support feel more satisfied with their lives, with self-esteem as a mediator [23].

Social support can be obtained from social relationships between individuals and those around them. Cobb [24] states that social support is an individual's belief that the people in his environment care, love, appreciate him and he is part of a social group. Dunst, Trivette, and Cross [25] argued that social support is the physical, emotional, informational, and instrumental help that individuals receive from their social relationships. Social support can be received in person (offline) or through social networking sites (online) based on the social relationships of one individual to another [26].

Based on the explanation previously given, it is known that several studies show that high social comparison can have negative consequences on the life satisfaction of individuals who use Instagram. However, individual life satisfaction can be increased by the presence of social support, in which previously mentioned that social support and life satisfaction have a positive relationship, with individuals who have a high level of social support will feel higher life satisfaction. Researcher assume that social support can increase the life satisfaction of individuals who tend to do social comparisons on Instagram, in addition, as far as the research can be found, there has been no research on social

comparison, life satisfaction, with social support as a moderator so that the researcher intended to examine the role social support as a moderator on the relationship between social comparison orientation and individual life satisfaction of Instagram users.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

2.1. Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a cognitive assessment process that depends on the standards set by the individual [1]. Shin and Johnson suggest that life satisfaction is an overall assessment based on an individual's standard of quality of life [27]. Each individual has a unique view of seeing the "good life" for them (eg., having a suitable job, satisfying relationships, etc) [1], therefore individuals who view aspects of their lives are in accordance with their standard of living, tend to feel high life satisfaction [28].

According to Diener and Ryan [21], there are factors that can affect individual life satisfaction, there are gender, research shows that women experience strong positive and negative emotions more often than men, so that some women tend to experience life satisfaction at extreme levels; beliefs, individuals with a high spiritual level tend to have higher life satisfaction, in which faith in religion can provide meaning and purpose to individuals in living their lives; marriage, divorce and social relationships, individual's life satisfaction can be influenced by the number of family members and friends the individual has, Diener and Biswas-Diener [29] argued that individuals with high life satisfaction tend to have social support than individuals with low life satisfaction; and jobs and income, individuals who have high life satisfaction with the amount of income and work tend to be more productive, responsible, innovative, have good relationships with colleagues and have a higher quality of work.

2.2. Social Comparison

Mussweiler et al. suggested that the tendency to conduct social comparisons on individuals can increase when individuals are faced with information about how other individuals face their lives, the abilities of the individual, the individual's achievements and failures, and the information obtained can be attributed to the individual to himself [30].

According to Festinger [7], social comparison is divided into two dimensions, namely abilities and opinions. Basically, most situations in real life are a combined assessment of abilities and opinions, so that individual thoughts (opinions and beliefs) about the context of their existence and assessments of their abilities can jointly influence individual behaviour.

2.3. Social Support

Social support is an individual's belief in the availability of support that can be received from people (such as family, friends, and special people in his life) in the environment when he is in need [31]. According to Zimet et al. [31], social support comes from three sources, there are family, individuals get help and support from their families in discussing problems and making decisions or needs emotionally; friends, the individual gets help and support from his friends when he is in trouble, and he can share sadness and joy with his friends; and significant others, individual gets help and support from someone who is important or special in his life so that he can feel comfortable and cared for by that person.

Social support has types from functional perspectives [32], include emotional support, the presence of emotional support changes the viewpoint of the threat of unpleasant events, increases self-esteem, reduces anxiety or depression, and provides motivation for coping; instrumental support, the existence of instrumental or practical support helps individuals to overcome various practical problems, increase time for rest and relaxation, and so on; informational support, informational support helps individuals to find various information that can be useful in their lives so that they can have effective coping; companionship support, the existence of a friendship relationship provides positive affection for the individual so that he is not easily affected by problems; and validation or feedback, the existence of validation or feedback decreases the tendency to view oneself as deviating from the comparison and increases the tendency to be more accepting of oneself.

2.4 Instagram

Instagram is a visual-based social networking site with services for sharing photos and videos online, this site was first launched in 2010 [33]. In providing services to users, Instagram provides several features [34], in which sharing photos and videos, users can upload the photos or videos they want to upload; share stories; starting a conversation, users can send photos, videos and messages privately to their friends on Instagram; discover new things, users can discover new content that has never been known to them, etc.

3. METHODS

The participant of this study were individuals who used Instagram for at least 20 minutes per day, and have compared themselves with others on Instagram, with age ranges from 18 - 34 years old. In this study, the research design used is non-experimental quantitative research, technique sampling of this study is convenience sampling and the time approach used is cross-sectional. Data collection for this study was distributed through online questionnaires among social media such as Instagram, Line, WhatsApp, and Twitter. The distribution of online

questionnaires was distributed via google-form and obtained 402 participants, in which 345 participants are in age ranges 18 – 23 years old, 47 participants are in age ranges 24 – 29 years old, and 10 participants are in age ranges 30 – 35 years old. In this study, there were three measurements used, namely the IOWA-Netherland Comparison Orientation Scale (INCOM Scale) developed by Buunk and Gibbons [35], in this study was adapted to Indonesian language by researcher and had gone through 3 expert judgements, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. [1], in this study was adapted to Indonesian language by researcher and had gone through 3 expert judgements, and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) developed by Zimet et al. [31] and adapted to Indonesian language by Winahyu et al. [36].

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Based on the results of the Spearman Correlation test, results were obtained that there was a negative correlation between social comparison and life satisfaction ($r = -.171, p < 0.05$) and there was a positive correlation between social support and life satisfaction ($r = .487, p < 0.05$). The results can be seen in table 1.

Table 1 Correlation tests of variables

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	r	P
Social Comparison	Life Satisfaction	-.171	0.01
Social Support		.487	0.000

Simple Regression tests results were obtained that social comparison has significant role on life satisfaction ($t = -3.890, p < 0.05, R^2 = 0.036$) and social support has significant role on life satisfaction ($t = 12.266, p < 0.05, R^2 = 0.273$). And Multiple Regression test shows that social comparison and social support simultaneously has significant role on life satisfaction in which social comparison ($t = -4.674, p < 0.05$) and social support ($t = 12.611, p < 0.05$), both variables have determinant coefficient (R^2) in the amount of 0.311. The results can be seen in table 2.

Table 2 Regression tests variables

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	t	P	R ²
Social Comparison	Life Satisfaction	-3.890	0.000	0.036
Social Support		12.266	0.000	0.273

Social Comparison and Social Support	-4.674 12.611	0.000	0.311
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To test the moderator role, this study used Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) and the result obtained that social support has moderation role in the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction ($t = 2.224$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.320$), and the rest ($100\% - 32\% = 68\%$) are influenced by other factors outside this study. The results can be seen in table 3.

Table 3 Moderation regression analysis

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	t	P	R ²
Social Comparison, Social Support, Multiplications of Social Comparison and Social Support	Life Satisfaction	2.224	0.000	0.320

4.2 Discussions

The overall test results show that social comparison has a significant relationship and role with life satisfaction, then social support has a significant relationship and role with life satisfaction. Then, social comparison and social support together can have a significant effect on life satisfaction.

In the moderator test, it is known that social support can be a moderator that can moderate the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction. Social support can strengthen as much as 32% in the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction of Instagram users. The results of the study can support the statement of Wills and Shinar [32], in this study the difficulty comes from social comparative behavior, and support can be given emotionally, companionship, and validation or feedback. Emotional support can change an unpleasant view into a pleasant one, provide motivation for coping such as improving oneself, accepting oneself, being grateful for what one has, so that researcher assume according to research that social support can change the unpleasant view from negative feelings, obtained from social comparison behavior, and coping to improve, self-acceptance and grateful, that could leads to higher life satisfaction.

Companionship support, in which, is interpersonal relationship that provides positive affection for individuals, so that, they are not easily affected by problems, in this study the problem is social comparative behavior, therefore participants who have support around them tend to feel positive affection for themselves and feel more satisfied of his life. Validation or feedback, the influence of social support can reduce the tendency to see oneself less, from

the comparison, and increase the tendency to be self-accepting oneself, in this study the existence of social support can reduce the tendency of the influence of social comparisons which gives negative feelings to oneself and can increase a tendency to accept oneself, leading to a higher evaluation of life satisfaction.

The results of the study can also support previous research conducted by Wong et al. [22] regarding the belief in social support can predict well-being, which can be directed towards higher life satisfaction in individuals who have desire to belong in a relationship or group, and use Instagram. Moreover, the results can also support the research of Markus and Kitayama [37], regarding individuals with a collectivism culture, in which emphasizes that individuals with this culture have a self-definition to fit themselves in a relationship or group, adapting to self-restraint and maintaining harmony in the social context. If connected in this study, with participants are from Indonesia which is known to be a collectivism country, that teaches individuals to depend on one another [38], it can be concluded that social support can indeed increase individual's life satisfaction in this study, in which he will feel satisfied with his life when he feels that he has a place in a relationship or group that can provide support for him.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of data analysis that has been done regarding the moderator role of social support in the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction of Instagram users, it can be concluded that social support has significant role in moderating the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction of Instagram users. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study could be accepted. Implications for future studies could use other variables outside this study to examined the relationship between social comparison and life satisfaction. In the future, the study could also be examined in other social media such as Snapchat, Tik Tok, etc.

The suggestion that researchers can give to the society is to be able to use social media more carefully, rather than using Instagram to compare with others, individuals could also use other features provided by Instagram, such as expand relationship with others; learn new things in order to improve their abilities or accept themselves through Instagram content, such as watching tutorials on how to do things; and so on. For people who have family, friends, or significant others who tend to do social comparisons on Instagram, researcher also suggest to pay more attention and provide support to them. Especially during this pandemic, individuals tend to not be able to reconcile with their family, friends, or significant others, but social support can also be provided through social media, such as giving video calls to each other, chatting with each other, etc. Thus, these individuals can be more aware there is social support around them, either in person or through online, and reduces comparative behavior, so they can accept themselves more and feel satisfaction with their life.

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