Neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adults

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a means of digital-based self-exploration, and the formation of personality traits such as neuroticism. Excessive use of social media, based on a strong neuroticism trait, can cause individuals to experience social media fatigue. This study aims to determine the relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adulthood. The method used is a quantitative correlational design. The number of participants involved was 136 early adults using social media, obtained using an accidental sampling technique. The scale used in this research is big five inventory (α=.890) to measure neuroticism trait personality and the social media fatigue scale (α=.934) to measure social media fatigue. The data analysis method uses the product moment correlation test from Karl Pearson. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adulthood (r=.361 and sig.=.000). This indicates that the neuroticism personality trait is a factor that can cause social media fatigue in early adulthood. Training and forming a healthy personality by maintaining emotional stability can help the process of self-exploration in social media so that they can complete developmental tasks properly as early adults.

Keywords: Big five personality, Early adult, Neuroticism trait personality, Self-exploration, Social media fatigue

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early adulthood is a period of growth where individuals switch and must adjust to new life patterns and new social expectations. According to Santrock [1], early adulthood is a period when individuals begin to enter a transitional stage both physically, intellectually, and socially. Individuals who enter early adulthood are expected to take on new roles, such as husband/wife, parents, and breadwinners. Early adulthood also encourages individuals to have new desires, develop new attitudes and new values according to new assignments [2]. Therefore, early adulthood can be said to be the peak period of individual development. Early adulthood is used to indicate the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Santrock suggests early adulthood starts from the age of 20 to the age of 40 years [1]. It is during this period that individuals build their independence, personally and in the economic field, pursue careers, build families, and raise children [3].

Individuals in early adulthood are required to be able to complete their developmental tasks. Nowadays, many individuals use social media more often as a means to explore themselves to achieve developmental tasks [4]. Social media has provided all the things that individuals need to carry out social relations with a wide range because it can be accessed by anyone using the internet. According to Li et al. [5] social media provides people with opportunities to build relationships regardless of actual distance and allows people to freely express their opinions and creativity. As a result, the number of social media users has...
experienced rapid growth over the past few years. Based on the we are social report, the number of active social media users in Indonesia was 191 million people in January 2022. That number has increased by 12.35% compared to the previous year of 170 million people.

The use of social media which has become increasingly popular lately tends to have negative impacts and various problems. One of the biggest concerns is whether the time spent on social media outweighs the time spent interacting face-to-face, a phenomenon known as social displacement. Social media then develops into a lifestyle in a society that makes individuals more obsessed with the virtual world than the real world. Although in practice, involvement in social media can make users feel meaningless. Especially when faced with technological media, they cannot experience the same interactions as offline social life [6]. This causes online socialization to cause feelings of emptiness because it cannot produce balance in interpersonal interactions.

Individuals as users of social media tend to show that they have a “perfect” life, so that other users who see this content may feel jealous, dissatisfied with their lives, and even have low self-esteem because of this comparison [7]. Swallow also discovered that content shared by others on social media led users to draw comparisons with their circumstances. When individuals feel that they are in an unfavorable position in the comparisons, they often experience negative self-assessments and might even decrease their social media usage as a result of diminished self-confidence and heightened anxiety [6].

When people are inundated with an abundance of information and find themselves dedicating considerable time to managing their social connections, a portion of users will opt to disengage from and depart from social media. In 2018, Hill Holiday published the “Z Generation Social Media Survey Report,” revealing that a significant majority of young individuals, specifically 64% of social media users, have curtailed their social media usage by taking intermittent breaks from one or more social media platforms. Additionally, 34% of young people have entirely ceased their use of social media [8]. Social media can plunge its users excessively. According to some data, women are 9% higher than the average index to pay attention to their online feedback and spend 26% more time and energy [9]. If they use it continuously, they may feel guilt, regret, and other emotions, coupled with various stresses, which eventually lead to depression or anxiety.

Through pre-research interviews conducted by researchers with ten informants in June 2022, it was shown that they had experienced and were even experiencing social media fatigue. Six out of ten informants who actively use social media feel exhausted from hearing or reading information and seeing the lives of their friends on social media. The informant was not very active in updating status, likes, comments, and so on. Overall, they feel anxious and depressed because they often make comparisons of themselves with others. They tend to use social media to see things that suit their interests. Then if you feel bored with the content on one of the social media platforms, the informant will uninstall the application. This also has an impact on decreasing motivation to use other social media platforms. Anxiety is also unavoidable because in communicating online using social media, the informant cannot know the actual reaction or feedback from the other person.

Certain professionals hold the view that social media fatigue encompasses adverse reactions to activities on social media, including sensations of weariness, tedium, lack of interest, and apathy [6], [10]. A number of specialists emphasize that social media fatigue encompasses more than just feelings of depression, weariness, and other emotions; it also involves a reduced inclination to engage in social media [11]. Bright's research, along with insights from other experts, characterizes social media fatigue as being closely related to information overload [12]. This refers to the phenomenon where individuals are inclined to disengage from social media when they encounter an overwhelming amount of information [12]. Someone will spend more energy to be able to process a lot of information and this has the potential to cause someone to experience fatigue or fatigue [13]. As a social media user, it is not easy to be able to digest excessive information. This refers to the views of Hwang et al. [14], which state that the excess information a person receives can cause cognitive load. If cognitive load occurs continuously over a long period, biologically and emotionally it will make the individual feel tired and can also interfere with the individual's mental health [15]. Several factors or stressors can cause social media fatigue, such as information overload that he receives from social media, privacy issues, daily living environment, and anxiety that lead to individual personality characteristics.

Neuroticism personality trait is one of the social media fatigue factors. Neuroticism is one of the personalities in big five personality traits [16]. Individuals with high levels of neuroticism respond poorly to environmental stressors, interpret ordinary situations as threatening, and may experience minor frustrations as overwhelming. Individuals with low neuroticism usually exhibit behavior that might be described as ‘calm’ or ‘stable’ [17]. Meanwhile, individuals who have high neuroticism tend to show anxiety, anger, depression, self-awareness, vulnerability, and impulsivity [18], [19].

Concerning social media, individuals with high neuroticism have relatively small online social networks [20]. Then those with high neuroticism generally do not provide a significant number of status
updates [21] or react to other people's content through 'likes' or 'comments' [22]. Therefore, it is not surprising that this use of 'passive' does not attract a large following or friendship base [23]. In addition, social media users with high neuroticism tend to share negative valence content [24].

Even though previous research has proven that there is a positive relationship between neuroticism and social media fatigue, this problem cannot be avoided with today's technological advances. This pattern is continuously repeated along with the increasing use of social media [25]. Social media fatigue is a negative emotion in the use of social media that tends to direct users to withdraw from life on social media. Individuals who experience social media fatigue will issue responses of fatigue, anxiety, boredom, disinterest, and indifference. Individuals with elevated levels of neuroticism are more likely to encounter symptoms of social media fatigue. Conversely, if the individual has a low level of neuroticism, it will reduce the possibility of the individual experiencing social media fatigue.

This study aims to determine the relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adulthood. Then, the hypothesis put forward in this study is that there is a positive relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adulthood. The higher the level of neuroticism trait personality possessed, the higher the social media fatigue in early adulthood. Conversely, the lower the level of neuroticism trait personality possessed, the lower the social media fatigue in early adulthood.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design and participants

This type of research is quantitative with a correlational design to determine the relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue. The population in this study are early adults aged 21-40 years who used social media using an accidental sampling technique. Accidental sampling is a sampling technique based on coincidence, that is, anyone who meets the researcher by chance can be used as a sample if it is deemed that the person met by chance is suitable as a data source. The characteristics in this study are early adults in general who are users of social media. The appropriate participant engagement size or considered sufficient for quantitative studies is a minimum sample size of 30 people [26]. The researcher will provide informed consent to the participant before the participant fills out the questionnaire to ask for the participant's consent to be part of the research and to ensure that the participant understands the purpose of the research. From the questionnaires that have been distributed, 136 respondents who meet the criteria are obtained, and then used as participants in this study. Participant demographic data are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of participants</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>21-25 years</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-35 years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-40 years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media used</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>83.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TikTok</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whatsapp</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Litmatch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2. Method of collecting data

Measurements in this study used a psychological scale consisting of two scales, namely the neuroticism trait personality scale and social media fatigue. Neuroticism trait personality is measured using the big five inventory scale from John and Srivastava [27] and then translated by researchers into Indonesian. This scale consists of 8 items, which were then validated by two expert judgments. The neuroticism trait personality scale has five responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. From the results of item selection, all items were obtained that passed with a total correlation item value ranging from .337 to .784 and a Cronbach Alpha value of .890 which was classified as very reliable.

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Social media fatigue was measured using the social media fatigue scale developed by Zhang et al. [28] uses the theory put forward by Bright et al. [12] and then translated by researchers into Indonesian. The social media fatigue scale consists of 15 items that measure three aspects of social media fatigue. The translated scale was then validated by two expert judgments. The social media fatigue scale has seven different response categories ranging from very unsuitable to very suitable. From the results of item selection, all items were obtained that passed with a total correlation item value ranging from .305 to .880 and a Cronbach alpha value of .934 which is classified as very reliable.

2.3. Data analysis technique

The data analysis technique used to measure the relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue is the product moment correlation test from Karl Pearson. Karl Pearson correlation is a parametric test statistic that aims to analyze the relationship between one independent variable and one dependent variable [29]. Therefore, before conducting hypothesis testing, an assumption test will be carried out which consists of a normality test and a linearity test.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive analysis

In Table 2, the neuroticism trait personality scores obtained by most of the participants are in the moderate category with a percentage of 45.6%. Meanwhile, the social media fatigue scores obtained by most of the participants were in the moderate category with a percentage of 42.7%.

When compared to pre-pandemic conditions, people tend not to experience personality problems with poor emotions, and the use of social media tends to be balanced. However, this is the opposite when the COVID-19 pandemic emerges and causes everyone's mental state to be disturbed due to all the information and transactions that must be obtained through social media [30]. This condition also causes personality changes and leads to the actions of individuals who dominantly spend very intense time on social media, resulting in severe self-exhaustion [10]. Thus, the results of this study illustrate that the pandemic has made many changes and still has a fairly risky impact on the formation of neuroticism personality and the occurrence of social media fatigue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Categorization of research variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism trait personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media fatigue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Normality assumption test

From the normality test results in Table 3, the K-S-Z value of the neuroticism trait personality variable was .741 with sig.=.642 (p>.05), and the K-S-Z value of the social media fatigue variable is .668 with sig.=.763 (p>.05). The significance value of each variable is more than .05, indicating that the neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue variable data are normally distributed. These results indicate that both research variables have good quality. In line with this, Arnastauskaitė et al. revealed that the normality of data is a reference for conducting correlational analysis [31].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Kolmogorov Smirnov-test normality test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. Linearity assumption test

From the results of the linearity test in Table 4, the calculated $F_{\text{linearity}}$ is obtained as 20.215 with sig.=.000 (p<.05) which shows the relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adulthood is linear. This means that a good correlation must have a linear relationship between the two variables being measured. This is emphasized by Seeram that hypothesis testing can be done if the research data is linear [32].

Table 4. ANOVA linearity test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media fatigue * neuroticism trait personality</th>
<th>Linearity</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deviation from linearity</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Hypothesis Testing

Karl Pearson correlation test in Table 5, the correlation coefficient value is obtained of .361 with sig.=.000 (p<.01). This shows that there is a significant positive relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adulthood. The effective contribution given by neuroticism trait personality to the social media fatigue variable is 13% ($r^2$), meaning that neuroticism trait personality is one of the factors associated with social media fatigue in early adulthood.

Table 5. Karl Pearson correlation test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neuroticism trait personality</th>
<th>Social media fatigue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism trait personality</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.361 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media fatigue</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

3.5. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the hypothesis proposed in this study is acceptable. There is a significant positive relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adulthood, with an $r$ of .361 and a significance of .000 (p<.01). This means that the higher the level of neuroticism trait personality, the higher the social media fatigue experienced by early adulthood. Vice versa, the lower the level of neuroticism trait personality, the lower the social media fatigue experienced by early adulthood. Research conducted by Stephan et al. [33] showed that neuroticism, information overload, invasion of life, and anxiety are all associated with social media fatigue. Excess information is the most dominant antecedent in influencing the occurrence of social media fatigue in students. In another study also conducted by Lee et al. neuroticism has a positive correlation with social media fatigue among Facebook users [34].

Most of the early adult individuals who participated in this study experienced social media fatigue in the moderate category, namely 58 people or 42.7% of all participants. This means that individuals in early adulthood experience enough cognitive overload in processing the amount of information on social media, decreased motivation in using social media, delay social media use, become forgetful, and tend to experience changes in circumstances which are responses to information or messages received from the media, social. The results of this study confirm previous research conducted by Liu and He [6] which stated that information overload positively affects social fatigue behavior or social media fatigue. In addition, Fan et al. [13] also explained that individuals who experience social media fatigue feel exhausted, and lose interest, or reduced need/motivation related to various aspects of using social networks and interactions.

In this study, early adults who experience social media fatigue do not have sufficient cognitive resources to process messages or all the information contained on social media. It can be seen in feeling overwhelmed or wanting to give up and avoid using social media because you have to deal with too much information. It is not uncommon for individuals to feel angry when they realize that social media has taken up too much time. As per Zhao et al. [35] social media presents intricate information, leading users to struggle in their efforts to access the specific information they seek due to the overwhelming volume of content on these platforms Some individuals need to spend a lot of time identifying, which leads to low efficiency in using social media [36], [37].

This research demonstrates that early adults who suffer from social media fatigue exhibit diminished enthusiasm for using social media and frequently experience difficulty in recalling or tracking what they intend to explore or have already explored on these platforms. In addition, they easily forget what to post on social media, and have trouble finding good ideas to post on social media. This is following the opinion of Sunil et al. that social media fatigue will result in shorter social media browsing times, reduced use and reduced enthusiasm when using social media, and promote negative impressions and negative attitudes towards social media [38].
In this study, early adults who encountered social media fatigue reported adverse reactions to their social media usage, which manifested as alterations in their conditions, including feelings of exhaustion while using social media. This can be seen in feeling disturbed by the amount of information or new messages on social media accounts, feeling annoyed with various functions or features on social networks, feeling anxious when other people mention or mark them on social media, and feeling nervous when receiving friend requests on social media. This discovery aligns with Bright et al. perspective, which asserts that individuals encountering social media fatigue exhibit unfavorable reactions towards social media engagements, including sensations of weariness, monotony, disengagement, and apathy [39].

In this study, the reason why individuals in early adulthood experience social media fatigue is due to their neuroticism trait personality. These findings support research conducted by Lee et al. which states that neuroticism affects social media fatigue or social media fatigue [34]. In other words, neuroticism can be used to predict social media fatigue. The results of this study found that the neuroticism trait personality is one of the factors of social media fatigue. These results support Xiao and Mou [16] who confirmed that personal traits are important antecedents of social media fatigue.

The results of this study indicate that individuals in early adulthood mostly describe the neuroticism trait personality in the moderate category, namely as many as 62 people or 45.6% of all participants. This means that individuals in early adulthood lack good emotional stability which includes various negative feelings such as worry, tension, depression, and having moods that change easily. These findings support the opinion of Ibrahim et al. and Ashiru et al. that neuroticism is described by labels such as moodiness, anxiety, and depression [40], [41].

Individuals who have the neuroticism trait personality can be described as sensitive person who tends to feel irritated and annoyed. The results found in this study indicate that young adults who use social media are less able to cope with stress well. This can make them feel overwhelmed when using social media, especially when they have to deal with a lot of information [42]. In the end, they avoid using social media because they feel annoyed by the amount of information available. These results support research conducted by Roos and Kazemi [43] which states that finding and gathering information takes time and requires patience and people who have high neuroticism tend to be restless and impatient.

The neuroticism trait personality possessed by individuals also describes a vulnerability to thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. In addition, neurotic individuals also have anxiety, namely the tendency to feel afraid and nervous [17], [44]. Research conducted by Haris and Bardey [45] shows that individuals with high neuroticism tend to disclose personal information on social networks, and this is largely due to the need for self-presentation. The results of this study indicate that young adults who use social media easily feel tense and worried. Individuals in early adulthood who use social media are also less able to remain calm in stressful situations. These things have an impact on individual experiences when using social media. Individuals in early adulthood who are social media users feel nervous when receiving friend requests on social media, annoyed with features on social media, afraid of receiving new messages, and anxious when others mention them on social media. The findings of this study are also in line with Abbasi and Drouin who argue that neurotic personalities are anxious, they will be more likely to be annoyed and regretful when posting something [46].

The limitation of this study is the uneven age distribution, especially at the age of 30 years and over. In addition, the distribution of sexes is also unequal and causes a large number of early adulthood women, resulting in a shortage of male participants. The limitation of this study also lies in the absence of measuring the period of using social media. The difference in the duration of using social media can be a trigger for social media fatigue or social media fatigue.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adults. These results indicate that neuroticism trait personality is one of the factors associated with social media fatigue. That is, when there is an increase or decrease in neuroticism trait personality, there is an association with an increase or decrease in social media fatigue. Therefore, training and forming a healthy personality by maintaining emotional stability can help the process of self-exploration in social media so that they can complete developmental tasks properly as early adults.

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, suggestions for further research that will examine neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue can carry out a more even distribution of questionnaires, to avoid having a more dominating participant category. For future researchers, there should be a measurement of the length of time individuals use social media so that there are differences in the duration of using social media which could be a trigger for social media fatigue.
REFERENCES


Neuroticism trait personality and social media fatigue in early adults (Jeskhia Nurhamidin)


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