



The Effect of Social Anxiety on Inauthentic Self-Presentation in Instagram Users

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Keywords

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Abstract

Instagram is one of the social media that is widely used to present oneself. However, this is believed to hurt its users because uploaded photos or videos on Instagram tend to be inconsistent with reflections from their daily lives which are then termed inauthentic self-presentation. Inauthentic self-presentation is the degree of contradiction between the self-presentation displayed on social media and the everyday life expressed by individuals. The phenomenon of inauthentic self-presentation is driven by various factors, one of which is a high level of social anxiety. Social anxiety is understood as anxiety or fear that arises because of the possibility of bad judgment from others when faced with certain social situations. Individuals with social anxiety tend to have concerns about negative evaluations from others and feel that they will do something embarrassing, so they develop inauthentic self-presentations to deal with the anxiety they experience. This study aimed to determine the effect of social anxiety on the inauthentic self-presentation of Instagram users. This type of research is correlational quantitative. The sampling technique used quota sampling with a total sample of 120 people. The data analysis used is Pearson Product Moment with the help of a data processing program. Based on the study results, they obtained that the r Pearson's value was 0.765. These results indicate that the hypothesis in this study, namely "there is an influence of social anxiety on inauthentic self-presentation on Instagram users" is accepted.

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INTRODUCTION

The internet is an inseparable part of global society. With the internet, individuals can explore the world without restrictions so they can connect with each other to receive and provide information. The internet provides a platform for individuals to present themselves to the general public without the distance restrictions known as social media. Individuals can find out about other people's activities through social media, even though they don't know each other and have never met face to face or been outside the network (offline) with that person.

One of the social media that is widely used as a medium to present oneself is Instagram. Instagram is a photo-based platform that provides services to its users to upload photos of themselves and other users will provide feedback in the form of likes and comments (Anixiadis et al, 2019). Currently, social media, which was launched on October 6 2010, is recorded as having 113 million Instagram users in Indonesia until June 2023. Instagram users in Indonesia are dominated by women, namely 54.7% and men 45.3%. Meanwhile, the age group with the most users is the 18 to 24 year old age group, reaching 38% or 43 million of the total population of Instagram users in Indonesia.

The high growth of social media sites in Instagram social media has a big influence on efforts to present themselves, individuals then use strategies and make choices to influence feelings of liking and respect so that they can be accepted by others (Bareket Bojmel et al, 2016). Instagram is used as a medium to represent oneself or display the existence of its users so that what is displayed on Instagram is an identity that can truly represent its users in the real world. However, on the other hand, Instagram users can also construct an identity that is completely different from their identity in the real world (Retasari Dewi, 2018).

Social media allows individuals more control to present themselves in different ways. A person can choose to be his true self or his ideal self or even his false self to project. An individual's attempt to present an ideal and false self-image on social media is called inauthentic self-presentation (Twomey & O'Reilly, 2017). Ideal self-image is a visualization of characteristics that match an individual's desires or expectations for themselves, for example an ideal body shape. Meanwhile, false self-image is a self-appearance that does not match your real self-image, such as looking younger or older than your actual age (Asyifa, 2019).

There are two aspects of self that are displayed in inauthentic self-presentation behavior, namely ideal self-presentation and false self-presentation. The true self includes authentic or true feelings and is motivated by internal attributes (Harter et al., 2016). The ideal self is understood as ideal attributes such as aspirations, hopes, desires and may involve negative and positive versions of the self (Higgins, 1987). Meanwhile, Harter et al (2016) understand that false self involves feelings and actions that are not in accordance with the true self and can occur for various reasons such as deception (presenting information that is not completely true), exploration (trying out various aspects/self-identity), and impress others. (impressing other people according to their expectations).

The phenomenon of inauthentic self-presentation is prevalent among Instagram users, including the 18 to 24-year-old age group, which represents the largest segment of Instagram users. The extensive use of social media, driven by technological advancements, suggests that inauthentic self-presentation is likely to grow. A survey conducted by The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and the Young Health Movement (YHM) on 1,500 teenagers aged 14 to 24 in the UK found that Instagram has the most negative impact on adolescent health, particularly in increasing depression and anxiety. Instagram becomes a source of pressure for teenagers as it often showcases the "highlights" of a person's life rather than their everyday reality. Compared to other social media platforms, Instagram is "designed" to create unrealistic expectations, feelings of inadequacy, and lower self-esteem (Wiederhold, 2018).

In previous studies, the emergence of inauthentic self-presentation behavior has been linked to increased social anxiety in individuals (Michikyan, 2020; Asyifa, 2019; Twomey & O'Reilly,

2017; Bodroža & Jovanović, 2016; Harman et al., 2005). Findings indicate that individuals experiencing social anxiety and concerns about how they present themselves online may engage in inauthentic self-presentation to portray a desired self-image (Michikyan, 2020). This behavior is adopted to minimize negative evaluation from others, avoid social rejection, and enhance social acceptance and support (Fernandez et al., 2012; Shaughnessy et al., 2017).

Research conducted by Casale and Fioravanti (2015) found that the direct effects of social anxiety on problematic internet use occur in both male and female students. However, male students are more likely to be motivated by the desire to avoid displaying imperfections in public due to concerns about negative evaluation compared to female students. Twomey and O'Reilly's (2017) findings reveal that one factor influencing the development of inauthentic self-presentation is increased social anxiety. Individuals with social anxiety are more likely to engage in inauthentic self-presentation as a result of the anxiety they experience.

However, these findings are not consistent with the research conducted by Asyifa (2019), which examined the influence of self-consciousness on inauthentic self-presentation, with social anxiety being one dimension of self-consciousness. Based on data analysis, the dimension of social anxiety did not have a significant effect on inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users. This finding is explained by Schlenker and Leary's (1982) assertion that although individuals with high levels of social anxiety may desire to create a certain impression when presenting themselves in public, they are often unable to achieve the desired reaction from others and therefore decide not to engage in inauthentic self-presentation.

Based on this, the researchers are interested in further investigating the direct influence of social anxiety on inauthentic self-presentation. The researchers suspect that inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users is influenced by social anxiety. This study aims to determine whether there is an effect of social anxiety on inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users.

METHOD

This study employs a correlational quantitative method with the independent variable (X) being social anxiety and the dependent variable (Y) being inauthentic self-presentation. Social anxiety is defined as the feeling of unease or fear that arises from the possibility of negative evaluation by others in certain social situations. Inauthentic self-presentation refers to the degree of discrepancy between the self-presentation displayed on social media and an individual's everyday life.

The research instruments used in this study are Likert scales. The instrument for the inauthentic self-presentation variable is derived from the Self-Presentation on Facebook Questionnaire (SPFBQ) developed by Michikyan et al. (2015), which was then translated, adapted, and validated in Indonesian by Asyifa (2019). This instrument consists of 11 items measuring ideal self and false self. For measuring the social anxiety variable, the research instrument used is the Social Anxiety Scale for Social Media Users (SAS-SMU) developed by Alkis et al. (2017), which was later translated, adapted, and validated in Indonesian by Ilma et al. (2020). The Social Anxiety Scale for Social Media Users (SAS-SMU) used in this study consists of 21 favorable items.

The subjects of this study are Instagram users aged 18 to 24 years who have uploaded photos, videos, or Instagram stories on their accounts. The total number of subjects in this study is 120. The sampling technique used is quota sampling, which involves selecting sample members from the population with specific characteristics until the desired number or quota is reached.

The data analysis technique used is Pearson Product Moment, facilitated by data processing software. Pearson Product Moment is used to test whether there is an influence of the social anxiety variable on inauthentic self-presentation. The hypothesis is accepted if the p-value (ρ) is less than 0.05; however, if the p-value (ρ) is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. If the hypothesis is

accepted, it means there is an influence of social anxiety on inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Below are the results of the hypothesis test processed using the Pearson Product Moment technique. The results of the hypothesis test calculations are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Hypothesis test results

		Social Anxiety	Inauthentic self-presentation
Social Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	120	120
Inauthentic self-presentation	Pearson Correlation	.765**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	120	120

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on Table 1, it is known that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is 0.765 with a significance level of 0.001. These results indicate that the hypothesis stating “there is an influence of social anxiety on inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users” is accepted.

Inauthentic self-presentation refers to the degree of discrepancy between the self-presentation displayed on social media and an individual's everyday life. There are two aspects examined in this study: ideal self and false self. The psychological scale used in this study is the Self-Presentation on Facebook Questionnaire (SPFBQ), adapted by Asyifa (2019), consisting of 21 items. The highest possible score is 44, the lowest possible score is 11, with a mean score of 27.5 and a standard deviation of 5.5.

Table 2. Categorization inauthentic self-presentation

Score Interval	Interval	Categorization	f	%
$X < M - 1SD$	$X < 22$	Low	17	14.2
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$22 \leq X < 33$	Moderate	71	59.2
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$33 \leq X$	High	32	26.7
		Total	120	100%

Based on Table 2, it is noted that inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users falls within the moderate category, specifically within the interval of $22 \leq X < 33$, comprising 59.2% of the sample. Below is the descriptive statistics for inauthentic self-presentation using data processing software.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics inauthentic self-presentation

	Total
Valid	120
Mean	28.825
Std. Error of Mean	0.625
Std. Deviation	6.848
Coefficient of variation	0.237

Minimum	11.00
Maximum	44.00

Based on the descriptive statistics, the mean for inauthentic self-presentation is 28.825. This value falls within the moderate category with the interval of $22 \leq X < 33$, indicating that the descriptive profile of inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users is moderate.

Social anxiety is defined as the feeling of unease or fear arising from the possibility of negative evaluation by others in certain social situations. According to Alkis et al. (2017), social anxiety encompasses four dimensions: anxiety about sharing content, anxiety about personal data, interaction anxiety, and self-evaluation anxiety. Based on the data provided, the highest score obtained is 84, the lowest score is 21, with a mean of 52.5 and a standard deviation of 10.5.

Table 4. Categorization *social anxiety*

Interval skor	Interval	Categorization	F	%
$X < M - 1SD$	$X < 42$	Low	45	37.5
$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$	$42 \leq X < 63$	Moderate	65	54.2
$M + 1SD \leq X$	$63 \leq X$	High	10	8.3
		Total	120	100%

Based on Table 4, it is noted that social anxiety among Instagram users falls within the moderate category, specifically within the interval of $42 \leq X < 63$, comprising 54.2% of the sample. Below is the descriptive statistics for social anxiety using data processing software.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics *social anxiety*

	Total
Valid	120
Mean	59.416
Std. Error of Mean	1.150
Std. Deviation	12.601
Coefficient of variation	0.212
Minimum	21.00
Maximum	84.00

Based on the descriptive statistics in Table 5, the mean for social anxiety is 59.416. This value falls within the moderate category with the interval of $42 \leq X < 63$, indicating that the descriptive profile of social anxiety among Instagram users is moderate.

Based on the significant Pearson Product Moment test result ($r = 0.765$), it can be concluded that there is an influence of social anxiety on inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users. This finding aligns with research by Casale and Fioravanti (2015), which indicates that social anxiety positively correlates with using social media to present inauthentic selves, such as appearing more competent and avoiding displays of imperfection.

Upon analysis, one prominent aspect of the inauthentic self-presentation variable is the ideal self, suggesting that Instagram users aged 18 to 24 prefer to portray images involving ideal attributes like aspirations, hopes, desires, and possibly both negative and positive versions of themselves. Choi and Sung's (2018) research supports this idea, showing that Instagram users tend to display their ideal selves more than users of platforms like Snapchat. Expressing the ideal self on Instagram may fulfill psychological needs and contribute to an idealized self-view.

Meanwhile, the false self aspect of inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users aged 18 to 24 falls within the moderate category. Adolescents are willing to alter or enhance uploaded photos to gain acceptance from others on social media, and some may even falsify aspects of their identity, such as occupation, social or economic status, education, personality traits, and character (Michikyan et al., 2014). This behavior aligns with the exploration characteristic of the false self, where individuals experiment with different aspects or identities.

However, the study has limitations. First, the demographic conditions of the research subjects were not thoroughly controlled or analyzed. Second, the measurement tools for inauthentic self-presentation may not be sufficiently specific in capturing the intended behaviors. Third, the use of varied terms for inauthentic self-presentation, such as negative self-presentation or perfectionistic self-presentation, limits the ability to find consistent research references

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that there is an influence of social anxiety on inauthentic self-presentation among Instagram users. The study reveals that the level of social anxiety among Instagram users falls within the moderate category. Similarly, the level of inauthentic self-presentation among these users is also categorized as moderate.

Based on the data analysis, discussion, and conclusions drawn, the researcher suggests that social media users, especially Instagram users, should use these platforms more wisely and honestly in expressing and presenting themselves. For future researchers, it is recommended to address the limitations of this study by controlling demographic factors such as age, gender, and usage intensity of Instagram uploads. Additionally, considering more specific measurement tools could enhance the ability to measure behaviors accurately.

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