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Research Article

The Description of Alexithymia in Nursing Students at Padjadjaran University with Social Media Addiction

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Abstract

Aim: People's inability to recognize and express their emotions (alexithymia) seems to be a risk factor in causing social media addiction, where the higher level of social media addiction, the higher level of alexithymia. This study aims to determine the prevalence of alexithymia among nursing students at Padjadjaran University who experience social media addiction.

Method: This study used a quantitative descriptive design. The research samples were 216 nursing students at Padjadjaran University who experienced social media addiction after being screened using the IAT instrument, with a total sampling technique. The instrument used to see alexithymia was TAS-20 instrument. In this study, the data are analyzed by univariate analysis and presented in the form of frequency distribution tables.

Result: The result of this study showed that less than half of the respondents, which were 94 (43.5%) experienced a high level of alexithymia, with alexithymia subscales average scores were 20,68 \pm 7.90 for DIF, DDF 16 \pm 5.54, and EOT 22,52 \pm 8.32.

Conclusion: The conclusion of this study is that respondents who experienced moderate and severe social media addiction have higher alexithymia scores. Therefore, it is necessary to have preventive and promotive solutions for nursing students who don't or have alexithymia.

Keywords:

Alexithymia, Social Media Addiction, Nursing Students

INTRODUCTION

Alexithymia is a personality characterized by a person's inability to recognize and express emotions and the use of a cognitive style that focuses more on external events than intrapsychic experiences (1). Likewise Alexithymia according to Lyvers, Hanigan, & Thorberg (2018), where this personality trait is characterized by difficulty in identifying Identifying Feelings) (Difficulty describing (Difficulty Describing Feelings) emotions, as well as externally oriented thinking (Externally Oriented Thinking).

Alexithymia is one of the main problems faced by students, and outweighs other academic and non-academic problems among the student population due to its non-clinical nature, where sufferers are often unable to recognize the problem unless they are aware of the mental health problem and have knowledge of it (3). College life often makes students experience stress which is characterized by disorders regulation emotional alexithymia (4). Students entering college may face various challenges including loneliness, alexithymia, and anxiety (3). Health clump students often experience







emotional difficulties (5), and they are more prone to alexithymia due to the nature of the learning and training they undergo during their studies (3).

In general, according to (Mattila et al., 2009; Harjanah, 2018) The incidence alexithymia in men can reach 9%-17% and in women it can reach 5%-10%. From several studies, various rates of alexithymia occur in university students. Study results Alzahrani et al. (2020) showed that of 347 medical students, 49% of them had alexithymia, with a higher incidence in males (51%) than females (49%). This is also supported by another study which showed that 297 of 1,886 medical students China (15.7%)had alexithymia tendencies with a higher incidence in men than women (8). Likewise, the results of a study conducted in Indonesia by Lestari (2016) to 150 people aged 18-23 years, of which 70 or 47% had a high alexithymia tendency, with a higher incidence occurring in men (52%) than women. There are also other studies that show different results, where 24.6% of Jordanian University students experience a higher alexithymia tendency in women than men (10). Based on the results of a preliminary study conducted by researchers to 10 students of the Faculty of Nursing Unpad, it was found that 8 out of 10 students stated that they often feel confused about the emotions they feel and often have difficulty in describing their feelings. In addition, 7 out of 10 students stated that they also had difficulty in expressing their deepest feelings even to their own close friends. However, research related to the number or prevalence of alexithymia is still rarely found by researchers.

Students with alexithymia (higher TAS-20 scores) are more likely to have difficulty identifying or describing their emotions (3), reduced capacity to analyze and express emotions, and limited imagination (11) compared with students without alexithymia (lower TAS-20 scores). These characteristics cause a person with

alexithymia to have difficulty in differentiating and evaluating the emotions of others, difficulty in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, a perceived lack of social support, and weaker social skills or abilities (12).

Developing communication skills in nursing students is very important and necessary (13). In the field of nursing, communication skills and emotional characteristics as well as their ability to assess & express emotions are important, this is because the field of nursing is concerned with relationships. (12). Communication believed to be an inseparable part of safe and quality nursing care worldwide (13). Patient safety at all stages of nursing care on optimal communication depends the health between (interprofessional), where nurses need to collaborate with other health teams and communicate effectively to make the right decisions to produce better patient outcomes (12). However, nursing students with alexithymia may experience difficulties in implementing optimal nursing care later. due to low communication skills. As research conducted by (14) to nursing students at the Turkish University, where from the study it was concluded that the higher the level of alexithymia in nursing students. the less their ability communicate.

In addition to alexithymia, there are several other things that can cause a person to experience social media addiction, including social anxiety, low self-control, and fear of missing out. Someone who experiences social anxiety tends to be afraid to do faceto-face communication and prefers to do it (15).According to research conducted by Soliha (2015), there is a significant relationship between social anxiety and the level of social media dependence where the higher a person's level of social anxiety, the higher his dependence on social media (p <0.05). Low self-control can also cause a person to experience social media addiction, as stated





by (16) that one of the important factors that influence the behavior of using social media is low self-control. This is evidenced by research conducted by (17) that the lower a person's self-control, the higher the addiction to social media (p<0.05). In addition, fear of missing out or feelings of worry about missing important moments in social media activities can make a person experience social media addiction (18), where there is a significant relationship between the incidence of fear of missing out with social media addiction (p <0.05) based on research conducted by Fathadhika & Afriani (2018).

Judging from the large number of social media users in Indonesia, which reaches 160 million people (19), the number of social media addiction in the students of the Faculty of Nursing, University Padjadjaran where 72.1% have moderate level of addiction and 16.2% have high addiction level (20), There is a relationship between social media addiction and the incidence of alexithymia (12,21,22), there are still few studies that raise the incidence of alexithymia and the consequences that can result from alexithymia in the form of difficulty in distinguishing and evaluating other people's emotions, difficulty in building and maintaining interpersonal relationships, and weaker social skills or abilities. (12), and the possibility of nursing students with alexithymia who will have difficulty in implementing optimal nursing care later, due to low communication skills that make researchers interested in identifying the incidence of alexithymia in students of the Faculty of Nursing, Padjadjaran University with social media addiction.

METHODS

The study of alexithymia description on students of the Faculty of Nursing, University of Padjadjaran with social media addiction uses a descriptive type of research and the method used is descriptive quantitative. Descriptive research aims to

explore and clarify a phenomenon, by describing or explaining a number of variables under study (23).

Research variable

The variable in this study was alexithymia experienced by students of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Padjadjaran with social media addiction.

Population and Sample

The population in this study were active students of the Bachelor program of the Faculty of Nursing, University Padjadjaran, Jatinangor/Garut campus, and Pangandaran class of 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 who were addicted to social media. There are 216 students who experience social media addiction after being screened using the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) instrument. The sample in this study amounted 216 active to student respondents for the 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 undergraduate programs, the Faculty Padjadjaran University, of Nursing, Garut campus, Jatinangor Pangandaran who were addicted to social media with a sample response rate of 100%.

Data retrieval

This research was carried out from October 2020 to June 2021 with the data collection process being carried out on 10-25 May 2021. Data collection took place at each location due to online lectures due to the covid-19 pandemic, so it was carried out using an online survey, namely by distributing google forms links.

Data analysis

The processed data is then analyzed by scoring and interpreted. The data analysis used in this study is univariate analysis, namely the analysis that aims to explain, describe, and describe the research variables (Notoatmodjo, 2012). The frequency distribution analysis in this study uses SPSS computer analysis software to see the percentage of each data.







RESULTS

The Picture of Alexithymia on Students of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Padjadjaran with Social Media Addiction.

The following is a data depiction of alexithymia in active students of the Bachelor program class 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 Faculty of Nursing, Padjadjaran University, Jatinangor/ Garut and Pangandaran campuses with social media addiction, totaling 216 students.

Table 1.

Distribution of Alexithymia Picture Frequency in Nursing Faculty Students,
Padjadjaran University with Social Media Addiction (n=216)

Alexithymia	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
No Alexithymia	46	21,3
Possible Alexithymia	76	35,2
Alexithymia height	94	43,5

Based on Table 1, data shows that less than half of the respondents (43.5%) had a high degree of alexithymia (n=94), 35.2% were likely to have alexithymia (n=76), and a small proportion of respondents (21.3%) did not. had alexithymia (n=46).

Description of Alexithymia on Students of the Faculty of Nursing Universitas Padjadjaran with Social Media Addiction Based on Alexithymia Subscale.

Based on the instrument used, namely the Toronto Alexithymia Scale 20 (TAS-20) developed by Bagby, Parker, & Taylor (1994), there are 3 alexithymia subscales in total. The following is an overview of alexithymia in active students of the 2017 2018 undergraduate program, 2019, and 2020 Faculty of Nursing, Padjadjaran University, Jatinangor/Garut and Pangandaran campuses with social media addiction based on the alexithymia subscale.

Table 2.

Average of each Alexithymia Subscale in Nursing Faculty Students, Padjadjaran
University with Social Media Addiction (n=216)

Subscale Alexithymia	Mean <u>+</u> SD	Min	Max
Difficulty Identifying Feelings (DIF)	20,68 <u>+</u> 7,908	7	35
Difficulty Describing Feelings (DDF)	16 <u>+</u> 5,544	5	25
Externally Oriented Thinking (EOT)	22,52 <u>+</u> 8,324	8	40

Based on Table 2, the average value of each alexithymia subscale is obtained, with the average value of the DIF subscale of 20.68 + 7.908, the DDF subscale of 16 + 5.544, and the EOT subscale of 22.52 + 8.324.

Description of Alexithymia in Nursing Faculty Students, Universitas Padjadjaran with Social Media Addiction Based on Respondents Characteristics

The following is the distribution of alexithymia frequency among active undergraduate students of the 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 Faculty of Nursing, Padjadjaran University, Jatinangor/Garut and Pangandaran campuses with social media addiction based on the characteristics of the respondents.



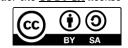




Table 3.
Distribution of Alexithymia Frequency in Nursing Faculty Students, Padjadjaran
University with Social Media Addiction Based on Respondents Characteristics (n=216)

	Interpretation of Alexithymia						
Demographic Data of Respondents	No Alex	No Alexithymia		Possible Alexithymia		Alexithymia height	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Age							
18 – 20 years	21	9,7	45	20,8	59	27,3	
21 – 23 years old	25	11,6	31	14,4	35	16,2	
Gender							
Man	5	2,3	12	5,6	10	4,6	
Woman	41	19	64	29,6	84	38,9	
Bacth							
2017	13	6	19	8,8	22	10,2	
2018	15	6,9	21	9,7	21	9,7	
2019	8	3,7	16	7,4	22	10,2	
2020	10	4,6	20	9,3	29	13,4	
Campus Location							
Jatinangor/Garut	39	18,2	65	30,1	83	38,4	
Pangandaran	7	3,2	11	5,1	11	5,1	

Based on Table 3, the results of the cross tabulation on each respondent's characteristic data show that the highest level of alexithymia is experienced by respondents aged 18-20 years (27.3%), female respondents (38.9%), 2020 class respondents (13, 4%), and respondents with the location of the Jatinangor/Garut campus (38.4%).

DISCUSSION

A healthy emotional condition in a person can be reflected in the individual's ability to express his emotions such as joy, sadness, fear, worry, and so on. (24). However, there is a condition in which a person is unable to recognize and express his emotions, which is known as alexithymia. Alexithymia is a personality trait of a person who has difficulty recognizing and expressing emotions and the use of a cognitive style that is more oriented towards external events than intrapsychic experiences. (1).

Based on the results of data analysis (Table 4.2), it was found that 76 respondents (35.2%) likely had alexithymia (result of TAS-20 score > 52) and 94 respondents (43.5%) had a high degree of alexithymia (result of TAS-20 score). > 61). The results in this study show a higher percentage compared to several previous studies, such as research conducted by (4) in health students at the Tunisian Sfax University, with 16.5% of respondents experiencing high levels of alexithymia, a study conducted by Zhu et al. (2017) which shows 15.7% of Shenyang College students in China have a high degree of alexithymia, and research conducted by (10) which showed 24.6% of students at Jordanian University had a high degree of alexithymia.

The higher percentage of respondents who experienced a high level of alexithymia in this study compared to several previous studies could be due to the research respondents having criteria for

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experiencing social media addiction. As mentioned in various studies that the higher the level of internet or social media addiction, the higher the alexithymia measurement score will be (12,25-27). Individuals who experience alexithymia often show difficulty in developing healthy and intimate social relationships due to their inability to identify emotional states, which can make individuals who experience alexithymia feel more comfortable communicating through social media (26). So that the inability of individuals with alexithymia to identify, express, and communicate their emotions puts them at risk for internet or social media addiction.

The personality traits of someone who has alexithymia include difficulty in recognizing and expressing emotions and the use of a cognitive style that is more oriented to external events. In the instrument used (TAS-20) there are 3 subscales that represent these personality traits, namely the Difficulty Identifying Feelings (DIF) subscale, the Difficulty Describing Feelings (DDF) subscale, and the Externally Oriented Thinking (EOT) subscale. Based on the results of the analysis in this study (Table 4.3), it was found that the average value of the highest alexithymia subscale in the respondents was in the third category (EOT) with a value of 22.52 + 8.324. This reflects а situation where when communicating, respondents alexithymia will prefer to talk about things outside of the discussion related to feelings. The next alexithymia subscale with a high average score is the first category subscale (DIF) with a value of 20.68 + 7.908, which indicates that respondents with high alexithymia tend to experience confusion regarding the emotions they are actually feeling, be it sad, fear, or anger. . While the subscale with the lowest average value in this study is the second category subscale (DDF) with a value of 16 + 5.544, which indicates that respondents tend to have the ability to describe, express, and express the emotions they are feeling to others.

From the three results of the alexithymia subscale average value in this study, the average value was higher than several previous studies. Among them, such as research (28), where the EOT subscale has an average value of 18.72 + 2.77, DIF 16.40 + 5.38, and DDF 13.04 + 3.48; study (8) which shows the average value of the EOT subscale is 20.78 + 3.35, DIF 17.49 + 4.87, and DDF 13.29 + 3.12; and research (10) which shows the average value of the EOT subscale is 21.15 + 4.15, DIF 20.61 + 5.99, and DDF 14.15 + 3.77.

The higher average alexithymia subscale score in the respondents in this study compared to several previous studies could be due to the respondents experiencing moderate and severe levels of social media addiction. Based on the results of this study, there is agreement with what was mentioned in previous research, that the higher the level of addiction to social media, the higher the level of alexithymia. (12,25–27).

A person with a high alexithymia score tends to have lower social skills and interpersonal relationship building skills. Developing communication skills in nursing students is considered very important and necessary. communication is an important part of safe and quality nursing care (13). Patient safety at all stages of nursing care depends on optimal communication between the health team (interprofessional), where nurses need to work together with other health teams and communicate effectively to make the right decisions to produce better patient outcomes (12). The presence of alexithymia can also cause many problems in creating and maintaining good relationships between nurses and patients. This is because nurses with alexithymia have difficulty recognizing diagnoses or mental treatments, avoiding problems overcoming interpersonal relationships, having difficulty communicating and verbally (12).





In addition. who those experience alexithymia are considered to have low ability to empathize, due to their inability to place or imagine themselves as other people (7,29,30). It is important for nurses to have empathy in carrying out nursing care. According to (31), In performing nursing care, nurses must be good at weighing the client's feelings, and this may be difficult for nurses with alexithymia to do.

Thus, what can be done for students who experience alexithymia is to provide psychological education regarding the importance of analyzing and recognizing the emotions they feel and expressing them in order to achieve optimal mental health, as well as introducing the consequences that can occur from the alexithymia state, such as compulsive behavior that can lead to alexithymia. emerge (social media addiction). In addition, students with alexithymia are advised to visit or contact a trusted psychologist who can help them overcome the problems they feel.

CONCLUSION

The results in this study show a higher percentage of alexithymia compared to several previous studies which leading to have difficulty in developing healthy and intimate social relationships due to their inability to identify emotional states. This research related to the factors that can cause alexithymia is needed to explain in detail what things can be done to prevent alexithymia in nursing students.

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