


# The Effectiveness of Reality Group Counseling in Reducing Social Media Dependency

Mirati E. Mooy, Maria Natalia Loban\*<sup></sup>, Joris Taneo

Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia

lobanmelly@gmail.com\*

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## INTRODUCTION

Social media is a platform that greatly facilitates its users in their activities and collaborations. Therefore, social media can be seen as an online facilitator that can connect users and maintain social bond (Cahyono, 2016). Doni (2017) explained that social media offers various conveniences, while bringing impacts on its users through the various facilities provided by social media. However, the presence of social media also brings a negative impact to its users. Internet addiction is identified when a person is unable to control his behavior and accessing the internet excessively (Saputra, 2019). Social media also has a negative impact on academic performance of its users (Yamini & Pujar, 2022).

The results of a survey by APJII revealed that social media users who have a very high level of activeness are individuals with higher education, meaning that the higher the level of individual education, the higher the level of their activities in accessing and using social media. One group of people falling into this category is college students (Saputra, 2019). The intensity of social media and Facebook dependence is reported to be high in urban areas. Menon et al. (2023) explained that dependence on social media was found to be higher among men than women. This social media dependence can also result in social alienation among users and young people.

Social media dependency can be found almost everywhere. Social media addiction is also found in Morocco. Benhadj (2023) found that Facebook was the social media site most frequently used by the participants, while Twitter was the least used. Additionally, when they are online, they prefer to

communicate with family and friends, entertain themselves, and read about social issues. In addition, the findings reveal that only 11% of participants were heavily addicted to social media, 24% were LIGHT or average social media users, and 61% reported moderate addiction. On the other hand, tests showed that 3.5% of participants were not social media addicts. Statistical data Students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung showed that in 2015 there were 20% which then increased to 43% in the following year. These students tended to use social media and could not stop accessing their social media for one full day (Azka et al., 2018). Saputra (2019) explained that 97% of students are active users of social media, with 96% of respondents using WhatsApp and 36% of respondents using Facebook. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube and others are highly addictive. Social media, such as social games, social messaging applications, and WhatsApp can create the false impression that social engagement makes individuals feel isolated and alone. It is also important to note that social addiction also leads to vanity such as posting selfies, using filters, and focusing too much on one's physical appearance (Vishwakarma, 2022).

Various kinds of problems can arise when using social media excessively. Bilgin et al. (2020) Found that the increase in social media among teenagers is accompanied by an increase in the level of conflict in the family. Excessive dependence on technology can have a significant impact on personal and social life ranging from the mildest levels to feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety (Vishwakarma, 2022). Social media dependency can also make other problems like feelings of helplessness, anomaly, unreasonableness, social isolation or other social alienation (Atarodi et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to find the right intervention to answer this problem.

### Rationale of Study

This research was conducted based on several important reasons. First of all, based on a preliminary observation at IAKN Kupang, it was found that during online learning students did not fully focus on participating when learning took place. For example, they played with their mobile phones and accessed their social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and online games) and left out their study. In addition, the students playing with their mobile phones during their study formed bad behavior that is against the existing rules, causing them to miss topics from various lecturers and various courses. Such conditions can be described as social media dependency which has brought negative impact of spending excessive time on social media which results in decreased learning achievement, disturbed emotional health, tendency to be alone, and expressing feelings and activities through social media. In addition, it was also found that there were limited counseling services provided to these students. Therefore, there was a need for group counseling with a reality approach in reducing their level of social media dependency.

Counseling as an integral part of education is seen as important in solving various problems, one of which is social media dependency. An example of the effort to reduce the use of social media by students is done through group counseling. Group counseling with a reality approach is a method that can teach individuals in terms of managing themselves, making effective choices, and developing the power to overcome one's behavior. Reality group counseling is used because it emphasizes a sense of responsibility for the conducted behavior, triggering awareness to arise and instill commitment in the students to make changes in their behavior or select more effective behavior.

Reality group counseling can be used to resolve problems experienced by individuals. (Fiah & Anggralisa, 2015) explained that reality group counseling is effective for overcoming interpersonal communication difficulties and increasing disciplinary behavior (Indriani, 2013). Reality group counseling can also treat online gaming addiction. The results of a research have shown that there is a decrease in online game addiction when treated with reality group counseling (Vitnalia & Lukitaningsih, 2013). In line with this, some research conducted by Wahyuni & Muhari (2014), Berber

Çelik & Odacı (2017), and Putri (2019) elaborated that group counseling with reality approach has a positive effect on reducing academic procrastination. These results indicated that reality group counseling has a positive impact on solving various problems.

The reality counseling approach describes human behavior as a reaction to events that are not coming from outside (external), rather originating from internal needs. Mulawarman et al. (2020) described his view of counseling as follows: Humans are born with five internal (psychological) needs, consisting of: (1) attachment to the need to love and be loved, (2) strength regarding a responsibility (3) freedom to make choices (4) pleasure to enjoy life (5) continuity of life, or the ability to survive.

Those aforementioned needs often require individuals to fulfill them, one of which is social media dependency which is a form of effort to fulfill their basic needs. An action is sometimes directed at fulfilling one type of basic need, but it does not rule out the possibility of being directed to fulfill several types of basic needs at once. Therefore, individuals always act to fulfill their needs and these actions can be categorized into two identities, namely failed identities and successful identities. Therefore, reduced social media dependency is seen based on 3 criteria, including: responsibility, reality (understanding and facing reality), right (learning the truth of a behavior). The reality approach applied in the group counseling process can be used as an alternative for individuals to feel responsible and show commitment to any decisions. This way, students are expected to become independent and make changes to their behavior for the better.

### **Aim and Hypothesis**

The aim of the research is to determine the effectiveness of reality group counseling to reduce social media dependency behavior. It is hoped that this research can make a contribution to the world of education, especially guidance and counseling to answer client needs, especially those related to social media addiction behavior. The hypothesis in this research is that reality group counseling can reduce social media dependency behavior.

## **METHODS**

### **Design**

This research employed experimental method with one group pretest-posttest design (Sugiyono, 2017). This design was implemented to determine the effectiveness of reality group counseling in reducing social media dependency.

### **Prosedure and Participant**

The research population were the sixth semester students of Pastoral Counseling Study Program, totaling 49 people. The samples were selected through non-probability sampling (purposive sampling technique). The purposive sampling technique employed a recruitment criteria, which was done by distributing pretest questionnaire. Out of 49 students, it was found that 7 of them had high criteria, 39 of them had medium criteria, and the other 3 had low criteria. Based on these results, the researcher recruited 4 students as research samples. This number was adjusted to the number of members in group counseling.

The group counseling is a reality approach and was carried out for 6 meetings. A post-test questionnaire was then given to find out the development of the students level of social media dependency. The instrument used in this research was in the form of a scale for measuring social media dependency, projected through a Likert scale with 4 answer options.

### **Instruments**

The research instrument initially consisted of 40 statements, 20 of them in the form of Favorable statements and the other 20 in the form of Unfavorable statements. Then, the 40 items

Table 1. Objective Conditions of Students' Social Media Dependency

Total Student	Percentage	Criteria	Score
7	14%	High	Score 61 -80: High
39	80%	Medium	Score 41-60: Medium
3	6%	Low	Score 20-40: Low
49	100%		

were tested on 30 respondents, obtaining results  $df = n (30) \rightarrow r\text{-Table} = .3610$ . After analysis, 20 items were declared invalid because they had a correlation below .3610 and were subsequently excluded from the instrument. The researcher used the remaining 20 valid statements with a correlation equal to or above .3610. The instrument was also tested for reliability to find out how far its results can be trusted (Azwar, 2012). A research instrument is said to be reliable if the instrument is consistent in providing an assessment of what is being measured. It is said to be reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is more than .70. The reliability test was calculated using SPSS Software version 20. Based on the reliability analysis, a Cronbach's Alpha value of .897 was obtained, indicating that the reliability of social media dependency instrument fell into high category. The hypothesis testing was done after a prerequisite test, the normality test revealed that the data were normally distributed, using the Paired Sample T-Test.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis used the Wilcoxon Test to determine the differences between two dependent samples that are paired or related and is used as a replacement for the Paired Sample T Test if the data is not normally distributed. The data used in the Wilcoxon Test functions to test differences between paired data and test comparisons between 2 observations before and after. The Wilcoxon test is sought by looking for the difference between the initial evaluation group score and the final evaluation group score. The difference between the initial evaluation score and the final evaluation is given a ranking (level). Determining the ranking or level starts from the smallest difference to the largest.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### *The Objective Conditions of Students' Social Media Dependency*

The following table 1 describes the objective conditions of social media dependency experienced by the sixth semester students of IAKN Kupang, Pastoral Counseling Study Program, with a total of 49 students. The results are presented as follows. The score interval criteria are divided into three parts, namely low, medium and high with a maximum score of 80 and a minimum score of 20, a score range of 60 and an interval of 20. Based on the results of these calculations, the objective condition of social media dependence is described as follows. Based on the results obtained from 49 students, it is known that 7 students (14%) have high social media dependence, 39 students (80%) have moderate social media dependence and 3 students (6%) have low social media dependence.

#### *The Implementation of Reality Group Counseling Pretest*

The pretest was carried out with the objective of getting an initial overview regarding social media dependency experienced by the students before being given treatment. The pre-test was administered to four sixth semester students of Pastoral Counseling Study Program. The following are the results of the student's pre-test on their dependency, see table 2. The visualization of the table can be described as follows, in figure 1.

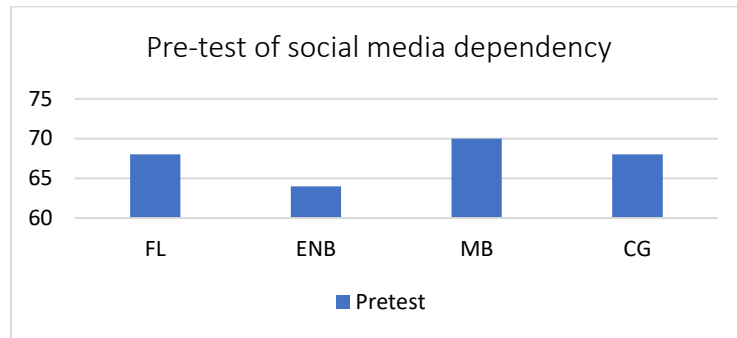


Figure 1. Pre-test of social media dependency

Based on the results of the social media dependency pretest, it is known that group members are in the high category with pretest results obtained in the range 64-70. These results are the basis for providing reality group counseling interventions to reduce social media dependency.

### ***The Implementation of Reality Group Counseling***

The treatment of reality group counseling in reducing social media dependency was carried out during 6 sessions. This treatment was implemented after knowing the results of the pretest. The following describes the implementation of the treatment. After treatment of reality group counseling, all members got the post test, see table 4. The visualization of the table can be described as figure 2.

Table 4. Post-test of social media dependency

No	Student	Post-test	Criteria
1	FL	42	Low
2	ENB	40	Low
3	MB	38	Low
4	CG	38	Low

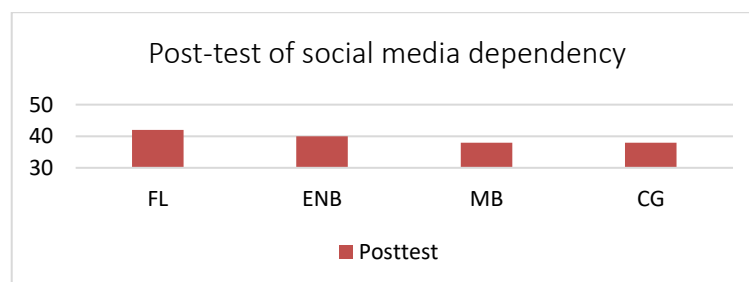


Figure 2. Post-test of social media dependency

Table 3. Reality group counseling in reducing social media dependency

Stage	Session	Objectives	Activities
Beginning stage	1	1. Forming a close relationship between the group leader and members.	1. Building rapport
		2. Conducting introductions	2. Appreciating the presence of group members
		3. Explaining the purpose of group counseling	3. Opening prayer
		4. Setting up rules and norms in the group	4. Performing ice breaking
Transation stage	2	1. Piquing the interest of group members.	5. Explaining the objective, purpose, and implementation of group counseling
		2. Assisting group members deal	6. Forming a shared commitment.
			7. Closing prayer

Table 5. Pre-test and post-test result

No	Student	Pre-test	Post-test	Result (%)
1	FL	68	42	26
2	ENB	64	40	24
3	MB	70	38	30
4	CG	68	38	32
Total		270	158	112
Average: N 4		270:4= 67,5	158:4= 39,5	112:4=28

		with their conflict, expressing opinions, and encouraging others to participate actively.	4. Explaining the procedure of implementation.
Working stage	3	1. Getting to know the “want” (W) and what the members are “doing” (D). 2. Reducing social consequences, time displacement, and compulsive feelings.	1. Building rapport, greeting, and thanking group members for their presence 2. Opening prayer 3. Performing ice breaking 4. Group members stating what they “want” (W). 5. Group members telling what they have done (D). 6. Directing group members to comprehend their behavior so far. 7. Sharing about the impact of using social media. 8. A word of thanks and closing prayer.
Working stage	4	1. Evaluating (E) what group members have done (D). Giving group members the opportunity to formulate their planning (P). 2. Reducing social consequences, time displacement, and compulsive feelings.	1. Building rapport, thanking group members. 2. Opening prayer 3. Performing ice breaking 4. Giving group members the opportunity to evaluate what has been done or not done. 5. Explaining that their current behavior to meet their needs are ineffective and has negative impacts. 6. The group leader performing a confrontation without having to criticize, providing an understanding that what is being done at this time has a positive outcome. 7. Making a formulation of the planning (P). 8. The counselor evaluating activities that focus on developing new skill or behavior. 9. A word of thanks and closing prayer.
Working stage	5	Reviewing the behavior plan of group members	1. Building rapport and greeting group members for their presence 2. Opening prayer 3. Performing ice breaking. 4. Giving opportunities for members to review their behavior 5. A word of thanks and closing prayer.
Termination stage	6	1. Exploring the results of the on-going activities. 2. Reviewing the level of success and progress that has been achieved. 3. Maintaining the new behavior by emphasizing responsibility and commitment.	1. Building rapport. 2. Greetings and thanking the members for their presence. 3. Opening prayer 4. Performing ice breaking. 5. Exploring the feelings and thoughts of group members while participating in group counseling activities 6. Recalling the plans and commitments of group members 7. Ending the group counseling session 8. A word of thanks and closing prayer.

Based on the post test results, it is known that the group members' scores were in the range 38-42 in the low category. This shows a decrease in social media addiction when compared to the

pre-test results. Mode detailed description of the result of pre test and post test is given below, see table 5. The summary of pretest and posttest results are presented in figure 3.

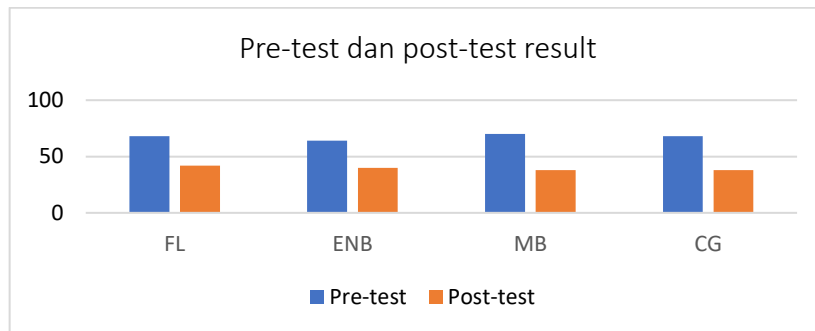


Figure 3. Pre-test and post-test social media dependency

Based on the presented graph, it can be seen that there is a difference between the pre-test and post-test results. Before being given treatment through group counseling with reality approach, the group members (students) had high category. After being treated through group counseling with the reality approach, they 4 group members had low category.

### ***The Effectiveness Test Results***

Effectiveness testing is carried out through several stages, namely normality testing and hypothesis testing. The results are explained below in tables 6 and 7. Table 6 shows the normality test is a statistical technique used to determine whether a particular data sample or variable comes from a population that has a normal distribution or not. Based on the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk calculation, it can be seen that the SPSS output analysis has a Sig value of .976 (pre-test) and .272 (post-test). These values are greater than .05, so it can be concluded that both set of data are normally distributed.

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Table 7 shows the result of the prerequisite test, the normality, says that the data are normally distributed data, so a parametric statistical test, the Paired Sample T-Test, follow suit. The following criteria regarding the Paired Sample T-Test are used. If the significance value (2-tailed)  $< .05$ , then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. If the significance value (2-tailed)  $> .05$ , then  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_a$  is rejected.

Table 6. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pre-test	.171	4	.	.994	4	.976
Post-test	.283	4	.	.863	4	.272

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 7. Result of Paired Sample T-Test

		Paired Differences							
		M	S D	SE	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	29.250	4.272	2.136	22.452	36.048	13.694	3	.001

Based on the test results, it is revealed that the value of Sig. (-tailed) is .001, lower than .05. Therefore,  $H_0$  was rejected, meaning that reality group counseling is effective in reducing social media dependency. The counseling group consists of four women aged 20-22 years who have a tendency to dependent on social media. The implementation of group counseling is based on the stages of reality group counseling which focuses on reducing students' social media dependency behavior. After conducting research, it can be seen that clients in group counseling can manage themselves, limit the use of cellphones for social media purposes that are not too important, are able to control their emotions and can focus on studying.

## DISCUSSION

Social media dependency is a psychological disorder in which its sufferers spend a lot of time accessing social media, causing high curiosity, lack of self-control, and lack of productive activities in their daily lives (Wulandari et al., 2020). The social media dependency experienced by the students in this research, before being given reality group counseling, was revealed by the pre-test results to be in the high category.

Doni (2017) argued that the behavior of using social media is a real action or activity that is carried out because the individuals doing it have the desire to do certain things. Behavioral interest will determine one's behavior. Desired behaviors are those whose occurrence is a direct result of subconscious efforts made by said person. In the context of using information technology and social media, the behavior is the use of technology.

Addiction to social media can be reduced through various counseling and guidance strategies, one of which is group counseling (Dewi & Saryanto, 2017). Reality group counseling is a service that emphasizes the concept of WDEP in its counseling process. Reality group counseling is also a treatment that aims to increase student self-awareness through commitment and responsibility for oneself without imposing punishment. This type of counseling emphasizes choice theory, so that every behavior and thought must be directed and controlled (Corey, 2012). Glaser (in Komalasari et al., 2011) explained that each individual is responsible for his life, through behavior to control the environment in order to meet his needs. The individual is challenged to face reality regardless of past events, and does not pay attention to subconscious attitude and motivation. Everyone is seen as having the ability to do something in the present. This is adapted to the characteristics of reality counseling, namely, emphasizing personal responsibility in order to achieve success. Responsibility is shown when the individual is capable of fulfilling his needs without harming others (Taneo & Malelak).

Prayitno (2017) pointed out that the proper fulfillment function is individual responsibility in meeting his needs, so that identity success is achieved. The function of fulfilling needs that is not



appropriate means that a person in an effort to fulfill his needs is more irresponsibly, so that the individual is more directed to a failure identity. Therefore, it can be said that the main goal of implementing reality group counseling is to reduce social media dependency which hinders the students in meeting their needs in managing time when using social media.

Reality group counseling also provides positive results in various problems, one of which is the problem of student disciplinary-related behavior. The result of a previous research showed that reality group counseling is effective for overcoming the problem of student disciplinary-related behavior which is characterized by increasing aspects of student self-control and decreasing undisciplined behavior after receiving reality group counseling treatment (Widodo, 2010).

Reality group counseling using the WDEP procedure was given for 6 meetings to reduce social media addiction, with the topics of social consequences, time displacement, and compulsive feelings. These treatments were only given to one experimental group consisting of 4 students selected through purposive sampling, taking into account the stages of group counseling and the commitment of group members to be responsible for their decisions.

Based on this research results, it is known that there is a decrease in social media dependency by 28%, this is indicated by the results of the post-test. The results of this research also indicates that reality group counseling is effective in reducing social media dependency. This is in line with the explanation of Ulfatari et al. (2022) that using reality group counseling is effective in reducing smartphone dependency for students.

The use of reality group counseling can be used as an alternative problem solving to answer various existing needs, not only for social media addiction (Cahyaningsih & Setiawati, 2022). Reality group counseling is also effective for increasing self-control (Haryanti et al., 2020), as well as increasing self-efficacy and multiple intelligences and achievement motivation related to problems using the internet (Shafie et al., 2019).

## CONCLUSION

The pre-test data revealed that out of 49 students, 7 students had high category, 39 had medium category, and 3 had low category. The researcher took 4 students as research samples according to the number of group counseling members and they were given treatment in the form of reality group counseling. After being given reality group counseling treatment, there was a decrease in social media dependency of the 4 students, and they had low category after the treatment.

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