THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HYPNOTHERAPY DIRECT SUGGESTION IN IMPROVING THE EMOTIONAL REGULATION OF STUDENTS ADDICTED TO SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract
This study aims to test the effectiveness of the Hypnotherapy Direct Suggestion technique in improving the emotional regulation of students who are addicted to social media. This approach was chosen because hypnotherapy allows individuals to receive positive suggestions that can help them better manage their emotions. The research method used was an experiment with the One Group Pretest-Posttest design, where the research subjects consisted of 15 students of the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Prima Indonesia, who were selected through purposive sampling techniques. The selection of subjects was based on a high level of social media addiction, which was measured through a scale of social media use intensity. The intervention was carried out in a hypnotherapy session with the direct suggestion technique, which aims to instill positive suggestions into the subject's subconscious mind. Emotion regulation measurements were carried out before and after the intervention using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) scale, which has been tested for validity and reliability. The results of data analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed a significant improvement in emotion regulation after being given therapy ($p < 0.05$). In addition, observations and interviews with subjects supported these findings, where participants showed positive behavioral changes, such as reduced time spent using social media and increased awareness of its negative impacts. This research provides important implications for psychological interventions in dealing with social media addiction and improving students' emotional well-being.
Keywords: Hypnotherapy Direct Suggestion, Emotion Regulation, Social Media Addiction

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas teknik Hypnotherapy Direct Suggestion dalam meningkatkan regulasi emosi mahasiswa yang mengalami kecanduan media sosial. Pendekatan ini dipilih karena hypnotherapy memungkinkan individu menerima sugesti positif yang dapat membantu mereka mengelola emosi dengan lebih baik. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah eksperimen dengan desain One Group Pretest-Posttest, di mana subjek penelitian terdiri dari 15 mahasiswa Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Prima Indonesia yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Pemilihan subjek didasarkan pada tingkat kecanduan media sosial yang tinggi, yang diukur melalui skala intensitas penggunaan media sosial. Intervensi dilakukan dalam satu sesi

hypnotherapy dengan teknik direct suggestion, yang bertujuan untuk menanamkan sugesti positif ke dalam pikiran bawah sadar subjek. Pengukuran regulasi emosi dilakukan sebelum dan sesudah intervensi menggunakan skala Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) yang telah teruji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Hasil analisis data menggunakan uji Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam regulasi emosi setelah diberikan terapi (p < 0.05). Selain itu, observasi dan wawancara dengan subjek mendukung temuan ini, di mana peserta menunjukkan perubahan perilaku yang positif, seperti berkurangnya waktu penggunaan media sosial dan meningkatnya kesadaran terhadap dampak negatifnya. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi penting bagi intervensi psikologis dalam menangani kecanduan media sosial serta meningkatkan kesejahteraan emosional mahasiswa.
Kata kunci*: Hypnotherapy Direct Suggestion, Regulasi Emosi, Kecanduan Media Sosial*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of the life of modern society, especially among college students. The development of information and communication technology has brought about major changes in the way individuals interact, seek information, and express themselves (Aprilia dkk., 2020). Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok are not only a means of entertainment, but also a medium for learning, building social networks, and promoting themselves or their products. Students, as part of the digital native generation, are very vulnerable to intensive use of social media. Easy access through mobile devices, wide internet connections, and interactive features make social media very attractive and addictive. In one day, students can spend hours exploring various content, interacting with friends, and sharing their activities with the public.

However, behind the various benefits and conveniences offered, excessive use of social media can have negative impacts, one of which is social media addiction. Social media addiction is defined as a condition in which a person experiences an excessive psychological dependence on social media, making it difficult to control his or her desire to constantly access the platform (Drigas dkk., 2022). Individuals who experience addiction tend to feel anxious, anxious, and even experience symptoms of stress when they cannot access social media for a certain amount of time. According Demus, (2024) They also often show compulsive behaviors such as constantly checking notifications, comparing themselves with others on social media, and neglecting other important activities, such as studying, socializing in person, and getting enough rest.

This phenomenon shows that social media addiction is not only a matter of habits, but also closely related to psychological aspects, especially emotional regulation. Emotion regulation is an individual's ability to manage and express their emotions healthily and adaptively. This process involves the recognition of emotions, understanding the source of emotions, and the ability to tailor emotional reactions according to specific social contexts and situations. Good emotional regulation allows a person to deal with stress, conflict, and life challenges healthily. Conversely, poor emotional regulation can trigger a variety of psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and

dependence on runaway behaviors, including social media addiction (Rosyidul 'Ibad & Napik, 2021).

Previous research has shown that there is a negative correlation between social media addiction and emotion regulation. This means that the higher the level of addiction to social media, the lower the individual's ability to manage and channel their emotions constructively. Students who are addicted to social media tend to have difficulty processing negative emotions such as loneliness, anxiety, or insecurity, so they seek escape through online activities that are temporary and do not solve the root of the problem. As a result, they become more susceptible to stress, interpersonal conflict, and even more serious mental health disorders (Boursier dkk., 2020). It is in this context that effective and adaptive interventions are needed to help students who are addicted to social media improve their emotional regulation. One of the psychotherapy approaches that has begun to gain attention in recent years is hypnotherapy, especially with direct suggestion techniques. Hypnotherapy is a form of therapy that uses hypnosis techniques to help individuals achieve a state of deep relaxation (trance), thus allowing the therapist to provide positive suggestions that can be directly accepted by the subconscious. In this condition, individuals become more receptive to changes in mindset and behavior, including in terms of regulating emotions, reducing anxiety, and letting go of negative habits (Batra dkk., 2024).

The direct suggestion technique in hypnotherapy refers to giving suggestions explicitly and directly to clients who are in a hypnotic state. Syahrizal dkk., (2024) The suggestion is designed to strengthen self-control skills, increase emotional awareness, and instill positive habits that support emotional regulation. For example, a therapist might give suggestions such as: "You can control the urge to open social media when you feel anxious," or "Whenever you feel stressed, you will take a deep breath and calm yourself without the need to open social media." This technique is effective in a variety of cases, including stress management, reducing smoking addiction, losing weight, and strengthening motivation to learn. Various studies support the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in overcoming psychological problems (Syari dkk., 2023). For example, a study showed that students who underwent hypnotherapy sessions to overcome anxiety in facing a thesis experienced a significant decrease in anxiety levels after the intervention. In another context, hypnotherapy has also been successfully used to reduce smoking habits in college students, with results showing a decrease in cigarette consumption over time (Meynadier dkk., 2024). These results suggest that hypnotherapy, especially with a direct suggestion approach, has great potential in modifying individual behavior and emotional responses.

However, research that specifically examines the effectiveness of hypnotherapy with direct suggestion techniques in improving emotional regulation in students who experience social media addiction is still relatively limited. This issue is increasingly relevant along with the increasing number of active social media users among students, as well as the increasing number of cases of psychological disorders caused by excessive

use of social media. Therefore, this research is very important to be carried out, to provide a strong empirical foundation in developing effective and applicable psychotherapeutic approaches in the context of contemporary psychological problems.

This study aims to explore in depth how hypnotherapy with direct suggestion techniques can improve emotional regulation in students who are addicted to social media. By conducting interventions in the form of structured hypnotherapy sessions, this study will observe the changes that occur in the aspects of emotion regulation before and after the intervention. The evaluation will be carried out using valid and reliable psychological instruments to measure the level of social media addiction and emotion regulation ability. In addition, this study will also pay attention to the dynamics of the therapy process, including participants' subjective responses to the suggestions given, as well as factors that affect the success of therapy. The benefits of this research are not only theoretical, but also practical. Theoretically, this research can contribute to the development of psychological science, especially in the fields of clinical psychology and developmental psychology. The findings of this study may enrich the literature on alternative interventions to improve emotion regulation, as well as strengthen understanding of the relationship between social media addiction and mental health. Practically, the results of this research can be a reference for mental health professionals such as psychologists, counselors, therapists, and educators in designing effective intervention programs and by the needs of today's students. Hypnotherapy with direct suggestion techniques can be one of the economical, efficient, and minimal side effects therapy options to overcome the problem of social media addiction and emotional regulation disorders.

Furthermore, this research is also expected to increase public awareness, especially among academics, about the importance of managing emotions in the digital era. Students, as the next generation of the nation, must be equipped with good emotional skills to survive and thrive in an environment full of pressure and distraction. Through this study, it is hoped that there will be a collective awareness that social media addiction is not a trivial thing, but a psychological problem that requires proper handling. Interventions such as hypnotherapy can be a solution that can be seriously considered to improve the quality of students' mental health. Thus, this research not only functions as an academic study but also as a concrete step to answer psychological challenges in the digital era. The need for effective and friendly intervention methods for the characteristics of the younger generation makes hypnotherapy, especially direct suggestion techniques, an alternative worth considering. In the future, the results of this research can be the basis for the development of hypnosis-based therapy programs in campus environments, psychological institutions, and mental health clinics. In addition, this research can also trigger the birth of advanced studies that explore the role of hypnotherapy in the context of other psychological problems arising from the development of modern technology and lifestyles.

METHOD

This study uses an experimental method with a Pre-Experimental Group Pretest-Posttest Design, because it does not involve a control group, and the sample is not randomly selected (Mulyana dkk., 2024). This design allows the researcher to compare the subject's condition before and after treatment to measure the effect of the intervention given, in this case, hypnotherapy with the direct suggestion technique. The research population consisted of 326 active students of the Faculty of Psychology UNPRI, semesters 1 to 4, who were social media users. The research sample of 20 people was determined by a purposive sampling technique based on certain criteria, namely active students aged 19–34 years, who have a high level of social media addiction, and are willing to participate in all hypnotherapy sessions.

The main instruments in this study are two scales, namely the scale of the intensity of social media use based on the aspects of attention, appreciation, duration, and frequency according to Ajzen, and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) scale from Gross & John, which has been adapted by Radde and colleagues. The ERQ scale consists of two aspects: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Both scales use the Likert model and have been tested for validity and reliability with the help of the SPSS version 26 program. The validity test was carried out with an r> r-value of 0.30, and the reliability was analyzed using Ordinal Alpha. Hypnotherapy interventions are structured based on Djaali, (2021) theory, which includes seven sessions, ranging from introduction, hypnosis preparation, induction, suggestion, application, to evaluation and follow-up. To test the hypothesis regarding differences before and after treatment, the non-parametric analysis of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used, as an alternative to the t-test for abnormally distributed data. This approach was chosen to assess the effectiveness of the direct suggestion hypnotherapy technique in improving the emotional regulation of students who experience social media addiction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was carried out in several stages. The first stage began with the dissemination of the Social Media Addiction Scale to all active students of the Psychology study program of Universitas Prima Indonesia (UNPRI) who participated in face-to-face lectures, totaling 326 people. This process lasts from November 11, 2024, to January 10, 2025, with a direct approach to each class after the lecture session ends. The scale used in this stage consists of 30 items, according to the revised results of the trial. The renumbering of items is shown in Table 1 based on the four aspects of social media addiction.

Table 1. New Numbering of Social Media Addiction Scales

Yes	Aspects of Social Media Use Intensity	Item		Sum
		Favourable	*Unfavourable*	
1	Attention	1, 3, 5, 7	-	4

2	Appreciation	2, 4, 6, 8, 10	9, 12	7
3	Duration	11, 13, 15, 17, 19	14, 16, 18, 20, 30	10
4	Frequency	21, 23, 25, 27	22, 24, 26, 28, 29	9
	Sum	**18**	**12**	**30**

The results of the scale spread show that:

a. 45 college students (14.1%) had low levels of social media addiction (score < 60),

b. 231 students (69.6%) were in the medium category (score between 60–89),

c. 50 students (16.3%) were included in the category of high addiction (score ≥ 90).

Of the 50 students who showed a high level of addiction, only 20 were willing to proceed to the next stage, which is the provision of hypnotherapy interventions. However, during the implementation of the intervention on January 10, 2025, only 15 people attended and participated in the hypnotherapy session until it was finished. Three people confirmed their absences for health and family reasons, while the other two did not provide confirmation. Before the intervention, 15 subjects who attended were asked to fill in the Emotion Regulation Scale as pretest data. The numbering of the new items of the emotion regulation scale is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 2. New Numbering of Emotion Regulation Scales

Emotion Regulation Strategies	Item Number	Sum
Cognitive Reappraisal	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	6
Expressive Surpression	7, 8, 9, 10	4
Total		**10**

Stages of Hypnotherapy Intervention

The intervention was carried out in one session, consisting of five stages:

a. Opening and Introduction (13.00 WIB) Introduced by the research team (Chandra) and hypnotherapist Mrs. Mina Wongso, S.Psi., M.Psi., Psychologist, CH.t to the subjects.

b. The Hypnotherapist Preparation Session opens up a discussion on open-mindedness and introduces relaxation techniques to facilitate trance states.

c. Hypnotic Induction Sessions: Subjects are directed to enter a trance state through deep relaxation techniques. The focus of the subject's mind is then directed to the suggestion to be given.

d. Direct Suggestion Suggestions are given in stages: awareness of the negative impact of social media, planting positive suggestions, building confidence, and termination.

e. Application and Reflection The subject is invited to develop a personal action plan, discuss concrete strategies to reduce addiction, and reflect on perceived changes. The emotion regulation scale was redistributed as posttest data.

After the intervention, the hypnotherapist provides additional advice in the form of mindfulness techniques, breathing exercises, and the use of a reflection journal to support the implementation of changes in daily life. The session was closed with a Q&A and feedback from the subject.

Data Analysis Results

Data collection was carried out through pretest and posttest questionnaires directly to 15 participants. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26 with the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, given the small sample size and the data not being normally distributed.

Description of Social Media Addiction Data

a. The scale consists of 30 items, with a score range of 30–120.

b. Hypothetical average: $(30 + 120)/2 = 75$

c. Hypothetical standard deviation: $(120 - 30)/6 = 15$

d. Empirical mean value = 80

e. Empirical standard deviation = 10

Table 3. Comparison of Empirical and Hypothetical Data on Social Media Addiction

Variabel	Value Range	Category	Quantity (N)	Percentage (%)
Social Media Addiction	$X < 60$	Low	45	14.1%
	$60 \leq X < 90$	Keep	231	69.6%
	$90 \leq X$	Tall	50	16.3%
Sum			**326**	**100%**

As seen in Table 3, the majority of students are in the medium category (69.6%). The empirical mean value (80), which is higher than the hypothetical average (75), indicates that the level of social media addiction of UNPRI students tends to be higher than the average of the general population.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted on 15 students of the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Prima Indonesia, who experienced social media addiction. The results of this study are in line with Abiddine dkk., (2022), which show that *Hypnotherapy Direct Suggestion* is effective in reducing students' anxiety about their thesis. These findings corroborate that hypnotherapy may play a role in the regulation of emotions, especially in controlling

impulses and addictive habits such as excessive use of social media. The *Direct Suggestion* technique in *hypnotherapy* works by providing direct positive suggestions to individuals while in *a trance* state, so that they can instill a new, healthier mindset and habits (Miltner dkk., 2024). In the context of this study, hypnotherapy interventions aim to reduce dependence on social media and improve students' emotional regulation.

The results of the data processing showed that there was a significant difference between before and after the intervention, with a value of Sig. = 0.005 in the *Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test,* indicating that the intervention had a significant impact on the behavioral change of the study sample. In addition, a value of Z = -2.803 indicates that the majority of the study sample had a higher value of emotion regulation after therapy than before. The reliability coefficient of the social media addiction scale of 0.732 and the emotion regulation scale of 0.891 showed that the measuring tool used in this study had a good level of validity and reliability to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. However, quantitative results alone are not enough to understand the impact of interventions in depth. Therefore, observations and interviews were carried out to get a clearer picture of the changes experienced by the participants.

The results of the observation showed that before the intervention, participants spent more than 5 hours a day on social media scrolling without a clear goal. After *hypnotherapy* sessions, some participants reported reducing their social media use time to 2–3 hours a day and preferring productive activities such as reading or exercising. One of the participants stated that he was more aware and able to control the urge to use social media. These findings are in line with research by Gioia dkk., (2021) Hypnotherapy can help individuals reduce digital addiction by increasing awareness of unproductive habits. In addition, it was also found to increase the regulation of the sample's emotions. Based on interviews, it was found that before treatment, the sample of this study tended to be easily influenced by negative content on social media, such as feeling jealous of other people's achievements or experiencing anxiety due to social comparisons. After *the hypnotherapy* session, they felt calmer and less reactive to the content they consumed on social media. One of the participants revealed that he no longer felt depressed when he saw his friends' uploads on social media and was more focused on his development. This finding is in line with a study by Okonkwo, (2022), who stated that effective emotion regulation strategies, such as *cognitive reappraisal*, can help individuals control their emotional reactions to social media.

This intervention also affects the participants' sleep patterns. Before the intervention, some participants admitted that they often stayed up late at night due to social media use. After the intervention, they experienced improvements in sleep patterns, felt refreshed in the morning, and were more productive in academic activities because they used less social media at night. Another participant stated that she used to stay up late at night because *of scrolling* social media, but after therapy, she was able to go to bed earlier and wake up more refreshed. A recent study by Goldfus, (2024) found that hypnotherapy can improve sleep quality in individuals who experience anxiety due to social media

addiction. This suggests that *hypnotherapy* interventions not only impact the regulation of emotions but also contribute to improving healthier sleep patterns. In addition, this intervention increased participants' awareness of the negative impact of social media. Some participants stated that after attending *hypnotherapy* sessions, they became more aware of the negative impact of excessive social media use. They began to consciously limit social media use and focus more on direct social interactions. One of the participants revealed that he became more concerned about the people around him and began to reduce the habit of using social media when gathering with friends. Asmalinda dkk., (2023) shows that resilience can be a mediator between emotion regulation and well-being, which means individuals who are more aware of the negative impact of social media tend to have better self-control.

Theoretically, the findings of this study can be attributed to several relevant theories from the last five years. Emotional regulation and resilience are major factors in controlling social media addiction. Pereira, (2024) explained that good emotional regulation can increase a person's resilience, so that individuals are better able to control impulses and avoid addictive behavior towards social media. In addition, research by Hanan dkk., (2024) shows that hypnotherapy is effective in lowering anxiety and improving focus, which supports the results of this study that *hypnotherapy's direct suggestion* can help individuals in improving emotional regulation and reducing social media addiction. The theory of hypnotic suggestion put forward by Syari dkk., (2023) explains that direct suggestion in hypnotherapy can instill new, healthier mindsets and habits, which explains how *direct suggestion techniques* work in changing the social media use habits of the study participants. In addition, the cognitive *reappraisal* theory developed by Assaz dkk., (2018) shows that a person's change in mindset towards a stimulus can help individuals control their emotions and impulsivity. In the context of this study, *cognitive reappraisal* helped participants to be less reactive to social media content and more focused on the more positive aspects of their lives.

Based on the results of quantitative data processing, observations, interviews, and the latest psychological theories (2020–2025), it can be concluded that hypnotherapy with *the Direct Suggestion* technique significantly improves emotional regulation in students who experience social media addiction. The effectiveness of this intervention can not only be seen from the statistical results, but also from real changes in participants' habits and mindsets, such as reduced time using social media, increased emotional regulation, improved sleep patterns, and higher awareness of the negative impacts of social media. Supported by observations, interviews, and the latest psychological theories, this study reinforces the findings that *direct suggestion hypnotherapy* is an effective technique in helping individuals reduce social media addiction and improve their emotional regulation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that hypnotherapy with *direct suggestion* techniques has been proven to be effective in

improving emotional regulation in students who are addicted to social media. The effectiveness of this intervention was proven through statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon test which showed a significance value of 0.005. The value is below the threshold of 0.05, which means the research hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there was a significant difference between the emotion regulation score before and after hypnotherapy treatment, where the score after the treatment showed a higher improvement. This increase indicates that *the direct suggestion* technique in hypnotherapy is able to affect the individual's subconscious, especially in strengthening control over emotions that previously tended to be labile due to the excessive intensity of social media use. As is known, addiction to social media can disrupt a person's emotional balance, which is characterized by individuals easily feeling anxious, jealous, depressed, or feeling inferior due to exposure to content that compares their lives with others. Hypnotherapy works by instilling positive suggestions directly into the individual's subconscious mind, thus being able to change negative mindsets into more constructive and emotionally balanced. These findings are in line with previous studies that have shown that hypnotherapy is effective in helping individuals manage stress, anxiety, and improve inner peace and self-control. Therefore, the results of this study strengthen the argument that hypnotherapy interventions, especially with *direct suggestion techniques*, can be used as an alternative method that is relevant and effective in dealing with emotion regulation problems, especially for students who are addicted to social media.

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