Students' Perceptions of The Instagram Account @Ubahstigma As A Mental Health Education Platform

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Article Information:	Abstract
	Perception is the process by which individuals interpret, organize, and assign meaning to stimuli derived from experiences and learning. This research aims to analyze the perceptions of Bengkulu University students toward the Instagram account @ubahstigma as an educational source for mental health information. The theory used in this study is Perception Theory, which focuses on the process of receiving information and the factors that influence individual perceptions of the research subject. The study employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on criteria set by the researcher. The findings indicate that informants' perceptions are influenced by both internal and external factors, such as experience, background, expectations, hopes, and social changes. This research is expected to encourage more stakeholders to actively support the enhancement of educational resources related to mental health *Keyword: Perception, Mental Health, Internal Factors, External Factors*

INTRODUCTION

Mental health has garnered increased attention within societal discourse, reflecting a growing recognition of the significance of psychological well-being. An optimal mental state is critical for individual development across physical, intellectual, and emotional domains (Rozali et al., 2021). Mental health encompasses not only biological and psychological components but also social involvement, self-actualization, and emotional equilibrium. According to Fakhriani (2019), mental health integrates all facets of individual development, both physical and psychological. Data from the 2018 Riskesdas report indicates that the prevalence of emotional mental disorders in Indonesia reached 9.8% of the population, corresponding to approximately 19 million individuals. Furthermore, the incidence of depression stands at 6.1%, affecting over 12 million individuals. This statistic underscores the pressing nature of mental health concerns in Indonesia, particularly among adolescents and young adults, necessitating immediate intervention (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018).

Conceptualizations of mental health vary, with diverse definitions proposed by experts from multiple perspectives. Nonetheless, the essence of mental health resides in achieving a state of balance that enables individuals to engage in productive lives harmoniously within their social contexts (Constantin Astrid Natasha, 2023). Individuals exhibiting sound mental health are likely to experience life satisfaction, whereas those with adverse perceptions may be more susceptible to mental disorders such as depression, adversely impacting their mindset and responses to various challenges (Pradiri et al., 2021).

Global research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that one in five students worldwide experiences mental health disorders, particularly anxiety and depression, attributed to academic pressures, social complications, and uncertainties regarding the future (Auerbach et al., 2016). In Indonesia, mental health challenges among students remain significant, as the transition from adolescence to early adulthood is characterized by heightened vulnerability to mental disorders.

The utilization of social media platforms, such as Instagram, presents an ambivalent effect on mental health. A study by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) in 2017 identified that, while Instagram is frequently linked to detrimental outcomes for adolescent mental health, it also possesses substantial potential to enhance public awareness through educational content (RSPH, 2017). For instance, the Instagram account @ubahstigma aims to inform the public about the significance of mental health and to diminish associated stigma.

The presence of the @ubahstigma account aspires to encourage more individuals to engage in discussions surrounding mental health issues and share their personal experiences candidly. It is imperative for various stakeholders, including government entities, educational institutions, and the broader community, to actively promote awareness regarding the importance of mental health. Continuous, evidence-based education is essential to enable students and the general populace to comprehend, address, and mitigate the risks associated with mental health disorders.

Previous research by Setyanto (2023) identified that the highest prevalence of depression is found within the adolescent to early adult demographic, with prevalence necessitating a downward trend with advancing age. The study reported that among 227 students surveyed, 124 exhibited symptoms of depression ranging from mild to severe, while 197 demonstrated indications of anxiety disorders. These findings affirm that the higher education phase, particularly at the undergraduate level, represents a period rife with psychological stress, attributed to academic demands, separation from familial support, and social pressures (Shabrina et al., 2021).

Research conducted in North Sumatra Province corroborates these findings, revealing that the primary sources of stress for students derive from academic obligations, interpersonal relationships, and intrapersonal conflicts (Isnayati & Harahap, 2018). Unmanaged chronic stress can precipitate various negative outcomes, including diminished learning capacity, reduced academic performance, substance use, and suicidal ideation.

The existing lack of mental health awareness among students necessitates intensified efforts to enhance educational initiatives regarding this subject. One effective approach to heightening awareness is to incorporate mental health education accessible through varied media. Social media, particularly Instagram, emerges as a favored platform for disseminating mental health information. The Instagram account @ubahstigma, established in 2018 by Asaelia Aleeza and Emily Jasmine, seeks to transform public perceptions of mental health in Indonesia. Through this account, they endeavor to eliminate stigma associated with mental health issues and advocate for the recognition of mental health as an equally crucial aspect of well-being as physical health. This account has successfully accrued over 23,000 followers since its inception and has received various accolades, including recognition from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia for World Mental Health Day in 2019.

The continued presence of the @ubahstigma account is expected to inspire more individuals to engage in conversations about mental health and to articulate their experiences more openly. It remains vital for diverse parties, including the government, educational institutions, and the wider community, to play an active role in fostering awareness of mental health's importance. Continued education grounded in scientific evidence is essential for enabling students and the general populace to understand, address, and mitigate mental health disorder risks.

This study employs several fundamental concepts from perception theory and mental health theory to explain how Bengkulu University students process information from the Instagram account @ubahstigma. Two main theoretical foundations used in this research are Perception Theory and Mental Health Theory. These theories serve as the basis for analyzing how students receive and interpret mental health educational content presented through social media.

1. Perceptiom Theory

    Perception is a psychological process by which individuals organize and interpret stimuli from their surroundings into a meaningful understanding. According to Dzul (2021), perception involves three main stages: receiving stimuli, processing information, and interpreting it. In the context of this research, students' perceptions of the Instagram account @ubahstigma are influenced by how they receive mental health information, process it, and interpret it based on their personal experiences and emotional states.

The perception theory used in this research focuses on two main factors that influence individual perception:

1. Internal Factors: Perception is influenced by personal experiences, emotions, motivation, and psychological conditions. As stated by Pradiri et al. (2021), students who have had personal experiences or issues related to mental health tend to be more responsive to information that is relevant to their situation.
2. External Factors: Perception is also shaped by the social environment, media, and culture. Isnayati & Harahap (2018) emphasize that social interactions and exposure to social media can affect an individual's perception of certain issues, such as mental health.

Mental health is a state of well-being that enables individuals to cope with life's pressures, work productively, and contribute to their community (WHO, 2020). Good mental health encompasses the ability to balance emotions, maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, and adapt to changes.

According to Rozali et al. (2021), mental health is influenced by various factors, including academic stress, interpersonal relationships, and social support. Students, as an age group vulnerable to mental health issues, often face pressure from academic demands and social life. A study by Setyanto (2023) indicates that depression and anxiety are the two most common mental disorders among students, caused by a combination of internal and external factors.

In this research, the Instagram account @ubahstigma plays a role as an educational effort to raise student awareness of mental health issues. According to Nazira et al. (2022), mental health education is crucial in preventing and reducing the risk of mental disorders, as well as enhancing self-care skills in individuals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with the phenomenological method, aiming to understand the perceptions of Bengkulu University students towards the Instagram account @ubahstigma as a mental health education medium. The phenomenological approach allows researchers to explore the subjective experiences of informants regarding their interaction with this Instagram account and how the information presented through this platform is perceived by them. Informants were selected using purposive sampling. The criteria included students who are followers of the Instagram account @ubahstigma and actively consume its content. This approach was chosen because the informants are considered to have relevant experience and knowledge about the research topic. The informants in this study consisted of six Bengkulu University students who met these criteria. Data in this study were collected through three main methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section explains the findings obtained from in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation related to the perceptions of Bengkulu University students toward the Instagram account @ubahstigma as an educational medium for mental health information. The results are organized into two main categories: internal and external factors that influence perceptions, and how the @ubahstigma account impacts students' understanding and behavior regarding mental health issues.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Student Perception Process of the Instagram Account @ubahstigma

This research found that student perceptions of the Instagram account @ubahstigma are shaped by the perception process, which includes the perceived object, sensory receptors, and the attention given by students to the content presented.

a. **Perceived Object**

Students view the @ubahstigma account as an effective medium for conveying information about mental health. The content presented on the account, such as infographics, educational videos, and short articles, is considered informative and relevant to their needs. Based on interviews, students felt that this account provides easily understandable information that directly relates to their daily lives, such as tips on managing stress and anxiety, as well as the importance of self-care. This shows that the @ubahstigma account serves as a perceived object that students consider important in gaining mental health education.

b. **Sensory Receptors**

Students' perceptions of the @ubahstigma account are also influenced by how they use their senses to receive information. In this case, the primary senses involved are sight and hearing, as most of Instagram's content consists of text, images, and videos. Students also process information based on their personal experiences with mental health, which enhances the relevance of the information they receive.

c. **Attention Given**

The interviews revealed that students' attention to the @ubahstigma account is quite substantial, especially because mental health issues are perceived as highly relevant to the challenges they face during their studies. Some students mentioned that they regularly check for new posts from the account and actively participate in discussions happening in the comments section. Additionally, interactive features such as Instagram Live or Q&A sessions through Instagram Stories have successfully captured students' attention and increased their engagement.

Internal Factors Influencing Perception

This research shows that internal factors significantly shape students' perceptions of the Instagram account @ubahstigma. The internal factors identified include personal experience, emotional conditions, and student expectations.

a. **Personal Experience**

Most informants had personal experiences or knew someone close to them who had mental health issues. For example, some students admitted to having experienced anxiety or depression, while others had family members or close friends who struggled with mental health problems. These experiences made them more responsive to the mental health information provided by the @ubahstigma account. They viewed this account as a source of information that could help them better understand their own conditions or those of others.

b. **Emotional and Psychological Conditions**

Students in stable emotional states tended to have a more positive perception of the @ubahstigma account. They felt that the content provided by the account helped them maintain emotional balance and cope with psychological challenges. Conversely, students under emotional stress, such as academic pressure or personal issues, were more selective

and critical of the content they consumed. They mentioned that some content was occasionally irrelevant to their current situation, although it was generally still helpful.

    c. Expectations and Hopes

Students' perceptions were also influenced by their expectations of the @ubahstigma account. Based on interviews, students had hopes that this account would offer practical solutions to their mental health issues. Some students expressed a desire for more practical content, such as stress management guides, tips for dealing with anxiety, and ways to balance academics and personal life.

External Factors Influencing Perception

External factors, such as social environment and the media used, also play a role in shaping students' perceptions of the Instagram account @ubahstigma.

    a. Influence of Social Environment

The social environment, including family, friends, and campus communities, has a significant impact on how students process information about mental health. Some informants mentioned that they were more open to mental health information due to encouragement from friends or family members who were also concerned about the issue. On the other hand, some informants noted that the stigma still attached to mental health issues in society made them reluctant to openly discuss these problems, even though they found the content from @ubahstigma to be very helpful.

    b. Role of Social Media

Instagram, as a social media platform, plays a crucial role in how students receive information. According to interviews, students found that the content presented on Instagram was more accessible and easier to digest compared to other media, such as books or lengthy articles. Visual formats like infographics and videos were considered more engaging and made the information easier to understand. Features like comments and direct messages also allowed students to interact directly with the @ubahstigma account, increasing their engagement and participation.

Relevance and Impact of @ubahstigma Content

One of the key findings of this study is that the content provided by the @ubahstigma account is considered highly relevant to the needs of students. Most informants stated that topics such as stress management, emotional balance, and the importance of self-care were very beneficial for them. These topics were viewed as helpful in addressing academic pressures and everyday life challenges.

    a. Content Effectiveness

Five out of six informants reported feeling more motivated to take care of their mental health after following the @ubahstigma account. They felt more confident in dealing with psychological issues and became more aware of the importance of maintaining mental balance. Some informants also mentioned that the account successfully helped reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, making them more comfortable discussing the problems they were experiencing.

b. Behavioral Changes

Informants reported that after following the @ubahstigma account, they began applying several tips shared on the account, such as meditation, journaling, and other stress management techniques. Additionally, they became more open in discussing mental health with friends and family. This indicates that the @ubahstigma account not only influences students' perceptions but also positively affects their behavior in maintaining their mental health.

Theoretical Discussion

These findings align with **Perception Theory**, which asserts that individual perception is influenced by internal factors (such as personal experience and emotional condition) and external factors (such as social environment and media). In this study, students developed their perceptions of mental health based on how they processed information received through the Instagram account @ubahstigma. This perception process involved evaluating the relevance of the content, the credibility of the information, and how the content aligned with their personal experiences and needs.

Furthermore, the **phenomenological approach** used in this study allowed researchers to explore students' subjective experiences in understanding mental health content. The findings show that students' emotional and social experiences significantly influenced how they interpreted the information presented by @ubahstigma. This supports the idea that perception is a process heavily shaped by personal experiences and an individual's psychological state.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Bengkulu University students have a positive perception of the Instagram account @ubahstigma as a medium for mental health education. The content provided is seen as relevant, informative, and beneficial in improving students' understanding of mental health issues, particularly in areas such as stress management and self-care.

Internal factors, such as personal experience and emotional condition, as well as external factors, including social support and media influence, play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions. Instagram, as a social media platform, is also regarded as effective in presenting easily accessible and understandable content.

The @ubahstigma account has successfully made a positive impact, not only on students' perceptions but also on their behavior in maintaining mental health. However, the limitation of this study is the small number of informants, indicating the need for further research with a larger sample to strengthen the findings.

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