SAD CULTURE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE US' MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AS EXPRESSED IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The exponential growth of social media has resulted in the establishment of significant communities, trends, and phenomena. Amidst these phenomena is the sad culture, where social media users comfortably express their mental concerns. This study is conducted to have a profound conclusion on Sad Culture as a phenomenon, using social influence theory to determine its cause of emergence. In addition, the meaning of the terminologies is discussed using appraisal theory. This study implements qualitative and content analysis research design. It is implemented by gathering the data from @mytherapistsays Instagram page and performing an in-depth content analysis. Upon conducting the research, it is concluded that Sad Culture is a type of cyberculture. It is formed due to the rapid development of ICT–social media in particular–and the rising number of mental illnesses in the US. It started as a trend, then grew massive due to conformity, a term under social influence theory defined as an act where the majority influences others to perform what is believed to be the norm. In @mytherapistsays Instagram account, ten appraisal items are found, comprising 10% positive and 90% negative items.

Keywords: *appraisal; cyberculture; mental health issues; social influence; social media*

INTRODUCTION

The United States is undisputedly a superpower nation that possesses the power to transform the trajectory of the world (Herring, 2008). The influence of America on a global scale is apparent in various aspects, including but not limited to media, business, pop culture, technology, and politics (Volker, 2010). The rise of technology, particularly ICT, has played an essential role in further enhancing America's involvement and influence in international affairs. In addition, it boosts the capacity and output of every industry sector (Andersen & Coffey, 2018). As a technology that offers telecommunication-based information access, ICT focuses on communication (Ratheeswari, 2018). Therefore, using ICT has left a positive return, particularly in the timely distribution of information (Bosamia, 2013).

However, it is not without consequences. As of late, a new phenomenon has arisen, and it did not emerge without a cause. The rising phenomenon is "Sad Culture," a trend of expressing mental health issues on social media platforms. Social media users utilize platforms to depict mental health issues, all while employing irony (Chateau, 2020). The Sad Culture phenomenon in social media is carried out through two types of actions: the first is initiation, which is an act of posting, writing, or performing any uploading that showcases emotional distress, and the second action is to relate–an action in which an individual is showing agreement or to concur on a specific subject. This can be performed by simply liking said post or commenting in a manner of agreement with the subject.

Despite starting to leave an impact globally, Sad Culture is closely tied to the US social media segment. It is due primarily to the US sheer number of users and high social media traffic. Data compiled by Statista (2022) showed that the number of Instagram users in the US had reached 159.7 million, second most in the world, trailing only behind India with 230 million users.

Concerning these data, this research selected one renowned, established US account with a massive base on Instagram as the subject of research. The designated account is @mytherapistsays, an Instagram account possessing 7.9 million followers, 10.000+ posts, and an average of 100,000+ likes on each of its Instagram posts. The account was founded by Lola Tash and Nicole Argiris, Los Angeles, US, and Toronto, Canada residents. In its first six months, the owner successfully racked up 500,000+ followers and was the most extensive anonymous-run account on Instagram (Koman, 2017).
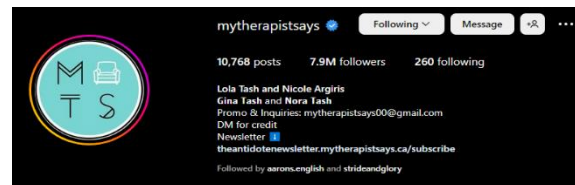

Figure 1. @mytherapistsays Instagram account

The account has become popular due to its relatable, anxious-ridden posts. It revolves around the daily struggle of individuals hindered by their mental conditions, such as depression, anxiety, chronic stress, and other psychological issues–all conveyed comically. The posts are usually made as memes, a unit of cultural information spread by imitation (Dawkins, 1976). In its simplest form, memes are created by selecting an image, clip, or other forms of media and inserting text on said image. These texts are often surrounding one or more topics.

The process is no different regarding @mytherapistsays' meme posts–they used a movie clip, screenshot of an image, or other pop culture products. They inserted a short sentence that stated their opinion or experience toward mental health-related issues. However, occasionally, @mytherapistsays uploaded a screenshot image of other memes, tweet screenshots, or text-based images circulating on the internet.

Due to these relatable topics, in each of @mytherapistsays' Instagram posts, the discourses between its followers are fabricated organically. Be it a simple statement of relatability felt by their followers, a recount of post-related narratives told by their followers, or even a conversation between fellow followers, @mytherapistsays have never been short of people engaging in their contents–all of which in massive numbers. For these reasons, @mytherapistsays is ideal for representing Sad Culture's current state.

This research will discuss three main things–divided into three subsections. The first subsection will provide a thorough analysis to have a clear conclusion on Sad Culture as a phenomenon. This subsection will discuss the definition of Sad Culture and how it is classified as a culture. Subsequently, the second part will analyze how Sad Culture originated using a sociological approach. The final subsection will discuss the linguistics side of this phenomenon by classifying the terminologies used in the @mytherapistsays account. This subsection aims to draw a profound conclusion on the meaning behind the words. The analysis in this subsection will focus on @mytherapistsays' recent posts, ranging from the beginning of January 2023 to March 2023.

While much research has been attempted to examine how mental health difficulties are expressed on social media, there is an increasing need to study such expressions. This study would concentrate on how a massive people's subsequent behavior, particularly in seeking assistance offline, is affected by publicly sharing melancholy, depression, and mental health concerns on social media and any potential stigma attached to such disclosures.

Several studies have been conducted regarding mental health disclosure in social media. These studies are "Modeling and Understanding Visual Attributes of Mental Health Disclosures in Social Media" (Manikonda & Choudhury, 2017); "Detecting Depression and Mental Illness on Social Media: an Integrative Review" (Guntuku et al., 2017); and "Detection of Depression-Related Posts in Reddit Social Media Forum" (Tadesse et al., 2019). These studies have attempted to highlight the phenomenon of disclosing mental health issues on social media through various instruments.

The researchers examined the data from the content shared on multiple social media platforms to gain insight into people's mental states, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit. The studies had similar objectives: to predict and reveal mental health using text-based aspects of the platforms. In addition, the entirety of the studies utilized similar methods, namely automated systems, integrating several subfields, such as linguistics, computer science, and artificial intelligence. Therefore, the notable differences between these studies and the analysis of Sad Culture lie in the instruments and final objective.

Firstly, the analysis of Sad Culture in this study does not utilize any automated instruments. Subsequently, this study aims to unfold the phenomenon of Sad Culture through the perspective of American Studies, which uses Sociological and Cultural approaches. This resulted in distinct differences in the findings between these four studies. However, the approach in this study bears resemblance in terms of theory in a study conducted by Al Fajri et al. (2022), in which the researchers implemented appraisal theory, one of the theories implemented in this study. The study focuses on Biden's rhetoric regarding school shootings, an issue in the US similar to Sad Culture. In all, these studies are integral to the study of Sad Culture.

Sad Culture is a form of social phenomenon. By definition, a social phenomenon is a behavior that possesses the capability to influence or is influenced to respond to one another (Markey, 1926). Therefore, the analysis of Sad Culture demands the approach of sociology. In response to this basis, social influence theory is used. Social influence theory is a concept in which people modify their conduct to fit the expectations of a social setting and is usually applied in persuasion, influencing large groups or behavior over time (Williams, 2022).

Fundamentally, social influence theory comprises several primary forms, which respectively have been presented by numerous prominent theorists. In this study, the applied sub-theory is the majority influence, a type of social influence theory known as conformity. It is a form of social influence that involves altering one's conduct, beliefs, or thoughts to conform to the expectations of others or to norms (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). It explains how a more influential majority influences an individual or minority group. This is the most prevalent type of social influence. Conformity is classified as an implicit expectation (Heinzen & Goodfriend, 2018) and is distinguished into two types: compliance and acceptance (Levine, 2020). Compliance is the act of giving in to an overt or covert request made by another and is a change in conduct but not necessarily in attitude; one can comply out of a sense of duty or by choosing to keep their private opinions to themselves in response to social pressures (Kelman, 1958).

Meanwhile, acceptance refers to overt changes in perception or attitude. The word "conformity" is frequently used to describe agreement with the majority viewpoint, whether it is due to a desire to "fit in" or be liked (normative), a desire to be accurate (informational), or a simple desire to fulfill a social function (identification) (Mcleod, 2023). This study will use the social influence theory, particularly conformity, to understand Sad Culture's roots, development, and prevalence.

Serving as the means to dissect this phenomenon through the linguistics perspective and complement the interdisciplinary side of this study, this research uses appraisal analysis by Martin and White (2005). It is one of the three primary semantic resources for creating interpersonal meaning. Attitude, engagement, and graduation are the three interconnected dimensions of this theory. Each of these types differs in meaning: attitude includes people's emotions, including emotional reactions, behavioral evaluations, and objectivity evaluations; engagement deals

with the interplay of perspectives in a discussion as well as the origin of attitudes; and graduation addresses the grading phenomena, a general property of emotion. This study addresses only the attitude subcategory, particularly the affect component.

Attitude comprises three types of emotions: affect, judgment, and appreciation. The field of affect is focused on methods for comprehending emotional reactions. It is related to both positive and negative emotions, such as happiness or sadness, confidence or anxiety, interest, or boredom; judgment is concerned with attitudes and their relationship with behavior regarding the action of admiring, criticizing, praising, or condemning others; and appreciation takes resources like semiosis and natural occurrences into account while estimating a thing's value.

In conclusion, affect relates to one's expressed emotion, whereas judgment and appreciation deal with evaluating other people or things. Regarding social media posts in Sad Culture, the topic often displays an individual's emotions. Therefore, the selected subtype of attitude needs to be that which analyzes emotion. Hence, affect is utilized in this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study implements a qualitative research design. Data for this article was taken from the well-known @mytherapistsays Instagram account. The newest posts were chosen for analysis to ensure the data's relevance and recency. The number of likes and comments, among other engagement indicators, were used to filter postings that were selected to be studied.

This process involves analyzing and collecting non-numerical data (Bhandari, 2020). These data include direct fieldwork observations, open-ended interviews, or written documents (Patton, 2005).

Additionally, Merriam (2009) explained that qualitative research design is the process of understanding the meaning people have constructed, how people make sense of their world, and the experiences they have in the world. Qualitative research design can also be defined as a method that utilizes participant observation or case studies, which result in a narrative, descriptive account of a setting or practice. (Parkinson & Drislane, 2011).

In addition, this study uses content analysis as part of the qualitative research method. Krippendorff (2013) defines content analysis as a research method for extrapolating reliable conclusions about the context of text use. Content analysis allows researchers to identify one person's opinions, interests, or attitudes, as well as small, large, and different cultural groups (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Within the same literature, Drisko & Maschi also argue that content analysis is divided into three types: fundamental content analysis, which employs statistical analyses such as the word count of the content; interpretive content analysis, which focuses on the interpretation of the content's specific characteristics; and qualitative content analysis, which uses a more empirical approach. In this study, interpretive content analysis is utilized.

DISCUSSION

This section provides a discussion of the Sad Culture phenomenon. This is achieved by dividing the section into three subsections

with distinct subtopics. To get a clear conclusion on Sad Culture as a phenomenon, The first part, "Sad Culture and Its Intangible Nature", will be used to present a thorough analysis of the phenomenon, which includes the definition and how it is situated under the definition of culture. The second part is "The Emergence of Sad Culture: Trends Spark, Community Cultivates". This part uses a social influence theory to explain how Sad Culture came to be. The third part will address the linguistic aspect of this phenomenon by categorizing the terms used in the @mytherapistsays account. The part "How Language Plays a Role in Sad Culture" seeks to infer a significant meaning from the words used using Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory.

Sad Culture and Its Intangible Nature

Schein (2004) argues that the formal definition of culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions. Furthermore, he explained that culture is invented, discovered, and developed by a particular group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel about those problems. In addition, culture has several significant traits, which include: learned, something one acquires as a result of their upbringing; transmitted, the older generation transmits it to the younger and continually reinforces it–a culture perishes if it is not passed on; symbolic, derived from images or icons; dynamic, bears no static nature; integrated, dimension of other cultures are impacted by one culture; ethnocentric, the idea that one's culture is better to and more deserving than another is a

characteristic shared by all cultures; and adaptive, possess the trait of adaptability (Saigo & Chapel, 2022).

Adhering to these definitions and characteristics, whether Sad Culture can be defined as a culture is still debatable. It could be argued that this is merely an internet trend. With no exception to most internet trends, it has a dynamic nature–it could vanish just as instantaneously as it emerged. Therefore, it stands in contrast to the characteristics of conventional culture. Nevertheless, denying the concept of it being an internet trend would be deemed incorrect as well, as it is–in fact–an internet trend. Sad Culture is virtually existent, meaning that it is intangible. It carries no physical presence nor heritage that a tangible culture has. Hence, the decision to classify Sad Culture as a culture requires more than just connecting its characteristics to its conventional meaning.

The analysis of Sad Culture should be shifted from attempting to connect the conventional definition of the word culture and the characteristics of Sad Culture to exploring other concepts that would fit more comfortably. Sad Culture can be simplified into a few characteristics: it started and flourished in cyberspace, meaning that it would cease to exist without the presence of the internet; it is a communal notion that unites people who share a common idea; and it is not a tangible culture. Judging by these characteristics, Sad Culture is a more compatible concept to be classified as a contemporary subject known as cyberculture.

Cyberculture is a collection of practices, attitudes, and values that came to be associated with cyberspace (Lévy, 2001). Cyberculture is a contentious and changing

dialogue that relies on developing ideas and concepts between its members and participants (Bell et al., 2004). Compared to conventional culture, cyberculture's characteristics are the complete opposite.

Several qualities make up cyberculture. Rheingold (1993) argues that cyberculture is a culture in which computer screens serve as a medium and is not a geographic culture but rather a cognitive and social one; it is a result of like-minded individuals discovering a common "place" to engage with each other (Kitchin, 1998); largely relies on the idea of knowledge and information transmission; and compared to conventional forms of community and culture, it is intrinsically more "fragile".

Upon analyzing these characteristics, it is evident that the conventional characteristics of culture and Sad Culture are incompatible. Therefore, it can be concluded that Sad Culture is a trend that prospers under vast cyberspace, transforming it into a cyberculture.

The Emergence of Sad Culture: Trends Spark, Community Cultivates

Similar to most memes, slang, and other forms of cybercultures, there has been no exact data about Sad Culture's origin. Nevertheless, one fact is certain: it has taken over the trend on social media at least since 2019 (Joho, 2019). The number of participating accounts has kept increasing ever since, making it relevant even until recent times. In capturing this phenomenon, several aspects are considered: the instantaneous growth of ICT, increasing mental health issues, and the role of social influence. This study argues that the

emergence of Sad Culture results from these prevailing matters.

To begin, ICT, or Information, Communication, and Technology, serves a significant role in the growth of Sad Culture. Social media/social network is a form of ICT product, as defined by Hu & Yu (2021), ICT-based social media is a variety of Web 2.0-based technologies that emphasize the social aspects of the internet, such as the creation and sharing of user-generated content. This allows social media to develop rapidly, as the market for this segment is exceptionally vigorous. This is indicated by the positive numbers the global ICT market has consistently shown. Data from Atradius (2022) shows that ICT's main sub-sectors recorded double-digit output growth rates globally: computers increased by 14.2%; electronic components increased by 19.6%; and telecommunications, the main instrument to access social media, increased by 10.4%.

In the US, social media, particularly Instagram, is a massive platform. In addition to its enormous number of users, 159.7 million (Statista, 2022), a study by Schaeffer (2021) reveals that four in ten Americans and 71% of young adults (ages 18 to 29) use Instagram. The study also shows that 59% of its users visit Instagram daily.

Consequently, the growth of ICT allows trends to emerge massively and rapidly. Adhering to the aforementioned characteristics of cyberculture, Sad Culture results from like-minded people creating a shared space to interact. This refers to the definition of a "trend", an inclination toward a specific style or taste (Envato, 2019). Despite appearing to emerge suddenly, a trend's emergence is not magical. It is a

social process human beings create (Vejlgaard, 2008). According to the Instagram Trend Report published by Instagram (2021), the trends on Instagram often shift annually. Trends revolved around various topics, including fashion and beauty, music, shopping, celebrities, career and education, memes, food, gaming, social justice, and mental wellness–the category in which Sad Culture is classified. Each trend has a large segment and a large community to sustain it. The existence of trends is one of the causes of Sad Culture's emergence and prevalence.

Subsequently, prevailing mental health issues are one of the primary reasons for the appearance of a Sad Culture. Mental health disorders have been an issue in the US for a long time. Statistics from Mental Health America (2023) indicate that 20.78% of adults in the United States have a mental illness, equivalent to over 50 million Americans. One in ten young people suffers from depression, which seriously hinders their capacity to perform at work or school, at home, with family, or in social life.

Several studies have shown a significant correlation between mental illness and social media. Excessive social media use is a major cause of several mental issues, such as poor sleep quality, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Woods & Scott, 2016). Additionally, inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, ODD, and loneliness can also be caused by high social media usage (Barry et al., 2017). Research conducted by Hunt et al. (2018) showed that by restricting the use of social media, an individual could significantly reduce loneliness, depression, anxiety, and the Fear of Missing Out

(FOMO). The correlation between social media and mental issues made people less reluctant to express these mental issues on social media, particularly Instagram. The high number of mental issues cases in the US, combined with the massive amount of Instagram users–particularly from the young adult demographic, caused the inevitable rise of Sad Culture.

Upon analyzing the rise of Sad Culture through the perspective of ICT and the increasing mental health issues, the final part of this subsection will provide an argument on how Sad Culture prevails through social influence. This study argues that significant influence (next to be referred to as conformity) is the most important contributor. Conformity is based on going along with or acting in a way that most individuals in a particular group do, which is caused by several reasons. It can be driven by the need to be perceived as "normal" (Cherry, 2022); the need to be perceived as correct, or to avoid punishments (Sowden et al., 2018). Sad Culture is massive and is starting to be seen as the norm. Attaching to the elements and definition of conformity, this study believes that most Instagram users in the US are drawn into Sad Culture due to the desire to be seen as "normal."

This study uses @mytherapistsays' Instagram account to exhibit the conformity process. This process is apparent on two bases: the number of likes @mytherapistsays has gained and the comments of @mytherapistsays' followers on their Instagram posts. Below is the data on @mytherapistsays' top posts from January to March 2023, arranged reverse-chronologically:

Table 1. @mytherapistsays Instagram posts, January – March 2023.

No.	Type of Post	Date of Upload	Likes
1.	Twitter Screenshot	March 15, 2023	730.547
2.	Meme	March 11, 2023	1.025.469
3.	Text	March 1, 2023	599.213
4.	Text	February 21, 2023	630.700
5.	Meme	February 20, 2023	661.510
6.	Meme	February 14, 2023	619.245
7.	Meme	February 13, 2023	787.484
8.	Twitter Screenshot	February 7, 2023	928.018
9.	Meme	January 25, 2023	674.944
10.	Meme	January 12, 2023	852.673

The high number of likes on @mytherapistsays' Instagram post indicates that they are a massive contributor to Sad Culture and can create an enormous community around it. The high number of its followers who are partaking in Sad Culture sustained and cultivated it to the point where it became the norm. As a result, it attracts more people to feel comfortable expressing themselves mentally, showing a process of conformity.

The second instance of conformity is apparent in @mytherapistsays' comment section. The posts, which contain mental issues-related diction, stimulate their followers to raise comments with a familiar topic as the post itself. Displayed below are several instances that have been gathered from @mytherapistsays' Instagram posts and comment section:

> Me (insane) talking to my friend (also insane): ur not insane. And neither am I (@mytherapistsays, January 29th, 2023.)

In this post, the first subject is attempting to convince the second subject that he/she is not mentally deranged, while both are admitting that they are, in fact, deranged. This is a fabricated discussion that is conveyed comically. In response to this post, several Instagram accounts have commented:

> Me talking to myself: You're not insane and neither am I (@andrew_dixon)

> I'm the same, except the 'friend' is also myself (@facubdn)

Both accounts displayed above showed relatability to the original post by saying they often feel mentally deranged. These comments are initiated due to the original post, which created a space for people who think alike.

In other posts, signs of conformity are also evident through the display of agreement and relatability, indicating the massive influence of @mytherapistsays in Sad Culture:

> The anxious urge to say "no worries either way" when you are actually worrying both ways plus a secret third way (@mytherapistsays, March 20th, 2023)

With this post, @mytherapistsays is attempting to state that they are not concerned with whatever issue they may encounter when they are concerned in reality. @mytherapistsays' followers make similar comments in response to this post:

> My worry has backup worries and spin-off worries (@lb_fitlawyer)

I've already pre-worried all options (@rislandgirl808)

The uploaded post and its comment section display how conformity unfolds. These comments are used as a sample to capture the massive influence @mytherapistsays' has in Sad Culture, which showed several people agreeing or concurring on the subject.

In conclusion, Sad Culture is created through the rise of ICT–particularly social media, and the increasing number of mental health issues in the US. It emerged as a trend, but the combination of these two aspects resulted in more people resorting to social media to express these mental health concerns. Additionally, the high usage of Instagram worsens the mental state of its users. Instagram users in the US are drawn into Sad Culture out of social influence (conformity). Ultimately, this phenomenon consistently grows and sustains itself.

How Language Plays a Role in Sad Culture

In @mytherapistsays' Instagram posts, specific terminologies are used. An analysis of these discourses is implemented by utilizing Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory. This subsection aims to examine the meaning, classify the terminologies under appraisal analysis, and draw a conclusion based on the findings. This study conducted an in-depth analysis of several of @mytherapistsays' Instagram posts.

I have high functioning anxiety which basically just means I'm good at fooling people into thinking I don't have anxiety. So anyways that's been stressful. (@mytherapistsays, March 7th, 2023).

The subject expresses a mental burden directly in the first analyzed post from @mytherapistsays. By having "high-functioning anxiety", they can function well and perform without appearing anxiety-ridden. This, ironically, led them to become more stressed. Appraisal terms found in this post are: "anxiety", a form of negative insecurity and "stress", a form of negative unhappiness.

Figure 2. Instagram post from @mytherapistsays
(March 7th, 2023)

This picture displays a freeze-frame of Bugs Bunny, a character from the Looney Tunes animated series. He is portrayed to be loosened, representing the subject's state after experiencing an emotional burst. Appraisal terms found in this meme image are: "breakdown", a form of negative unhappiness; and "overreacted", a form of negative insecurity.

Whenever I'm feeling stressed I like to take a deep breath & think about every mistake I have ever made. (@mytherapistsays, January 15th, 2023.)

In this post, a subject expresses their stress upon an issue and somehow worsens it by reminiscing over their past mistake. The point they tried to make with this statement is that they blame only themselves for worsening their mental condition. The

appraisal term found in this post is: "stress", a form of negative unhappiness.

> Does anyone else hate their own attitude sometimes? Like what are you mad now? (@mytherapistsays, February 25th, 2023.)

The subject in this post is expressing their hatred toward themselves. The hatred emerges because they often feel displeased for an unbeknownst reason. Appraisal terms found in this post are: "hate", a form of negative unhappiness; and "mad", a form of negative unhappiness.

> Beyond excited to announce that I'm giving up! I'm so grateful for this opportunity and can't wait to see where this decision takes me. (@mytherapistsays, March 21st, 2023.)

The subject sarcastically announces that they are no longer willing to work. It juxtaposes the factual information (giving up) and the words complementing it (grateful). The manner used in this post is usually used for a somewhat positive situation. The appraisal term found in this post is: "grateful", a form of positive satisfaction.

> I'm still tired from yesterday's tired. (@mytherapistsays, January 16th, 2023.)

The subject expresses their suffering from constant exhaustion. The appraisal term found in this post is: "tired", a form of *negative unhappiness*.

> I was wondering where my irrational anxiety came from until I realized I was told things growing up like if I swam after I ate I would die. (@mytherapistsays, February 3rd, 2023.)

The subject felt that his unreasonable anxiety originated from baseless, illogical information he consumed as a child. The appraisal term found in this post is: "**anxiety**", a form of *negative insecurity*.

Displayed underneath this paragraph is a table that summarizes the appraisal findings on @mytherapistsays Instagram account. The table displays the total number of subcategories found in these discourses.

Table 2. Types of Effect found in @mytherapistsays Instagram post

No.	Types of Affect	Appraising Items		Total
		Positive	**Negative**	
1.	Happiness	-	-	-
2.	Unhappiness	-	stress (2); breakdown; hate; mad; tired.	6
3.	Security	-	-	-
4.	Insecurity		Anxiety (2); overreacted.	3
5.	Satisfaction	Grateful.	-	1
6.	Dissatisfaction	-	-	-
7.	Inclination	-	-	-
8.	Disinclination	-	-	-
				10

In @mytherapistsays Instagram posts and comment section, most appraisal words found are anxiety and stress with (2) each. Breakdown, hate, mad, tired, overreacted, and grateful each appeared once. The total number of appraisal elements found in this

study is ten items. Positive items make up only 10% of the entire element, whereas 90% of the words are classified as negative.

Upon examining these posts, it is evident that language is the main instrument Instagram users use to express their mental concerns. It serves as one of the significant essentials in Sad Culture. Despite being a cyber culture that revolves around mental health issues, the terms in Sad Culture do not entirely revolve around negative words such as "sad, cry, suffer". Instead, some positive words are used. However, it is essential to note that despite a positive definition, positive words in Sad Culture do not necessarily intend to be used positively. For instance, the word "grateful" is classified as a positive satisfaction (part of effect) but is used in a negative manner (e.g., "grateful for this opportunity" which refers to "giving up"). Nevertheless, negative words still make up the majority of terminologies used in expressing mental health concerns. In all, appraisal analysis allows the researcher to understand further the meaning of the words and how essential their role is.

CONCLUSION

Sad Culture is a term that refers to a phenomenon in which people on social media express their psychological-related issues. This activity can be performed by uploading a post containing mental health concerns or showing "relatability" towards these concerns by liking, commenting, or sharing. It is a type of cyberculture that has been relevant for around five years. Sad Culture is a global phenomenon but is closely associated with the US due to the large social media segment–particularly Instagram users in this country.

Sad Culture is formed due to the growth of information, communication, technology, and the rising number of mental health concerns in the US. It started as a trend, but the development of ICT allows social media to grow more prominent and more people to gain access, which, consequently, enables more individuals who are suffering from mental health issues such as depression, severe stress, or anxiety to be expressing themselves on social media. It then grew massive due to conformity, an act in which most people influence the minority. Those who are part of the minority are attracted due to Sad Culture being seen as the norm since the number of people partaking in this phenomenon keeps increasing.

A study is conducted on @mytherapistsays, one of the most massive accounts regarding mental issues concerns. The uploaded media by this account comprises screenshots of a tweet, memes, or text-only images. These Instagram posts are intended to express their feeling toward a mental issues-related subject but are relayed comically. This is proven victorious as the numbers gathered by @mytherapistsays are incredibly high, reaching as high as 1,000,000 likes. The study aimed to examine the linguistics aspect and found ten appraisal items from the selected Instagram posts, comprising 10% positive and 90% negative items.

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