



A STUDY ON RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA DEPENDENCY AND
LONELINESS AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES STUDENT

KHAW EN QI

A RESEARCH PROJECT
SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION (HONS) BROADCASTING
FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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To every one of you, I thank you. This thesis has been completed by having all of your efforts and contributions.

KHAW EN QI

ABSTRACT

Social media refers to digital technologies that prioritise user-generated material or interaction (Carr & Hayes, 2015). There are several platforms like Facebook, Instagram or Whatsapp, which bring convenience and interaction to society. Social media has become more popular among youngsters like university students. So, in this paper I am going to study the relationship between social media addiction and loneliness among university students. The survey question will be using a quantitative method to collect the data from 50 university students to study their addiction level on social media and why they feel loneliness. In the result, a random sample ($S=50$) of males ($m=20$) and females ($l=30$) who are university students from different universities have participated in the survey to provide their opinion on how social media addiction affects loneliness among the students. There are 60% of students show the results that social media has become their primary platform to connect with others where they feel loneliness when using it, and 40% of them might think differently. Hence, the result indicates that spending more time on social media and becoming addicted will have negative aspects on university students.

Keywords: *Social Media, Social Media Addiction, Youngsters, Universities Students, Loneliness*

DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

Name : KHAW EN QI

Student ID: 20UJB02774

Signed :



Date : 6th May 2024

Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “A Study on Relation between Social Media Dependency and Loneliness among Malaysian University Student” prepared and submitted by Khaw En Qi in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Communication (Hons) Broadcasting is hereby accepted.

Date: 10/05/2024

Supervisor

MS FOO MEI LEE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Uses and Gratifications Theory	UGT
Fear of Missing Out	FOMO

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Social media refers to digital technologies that prioritise user-generated material or interaction (Carr & Hayes, 2015). There are multiple platforms like Facebook, Instagram or WhatsApp that bring convenience and interaction to society. Instagram provides users with multiple tools and entertainment to interact with family and friends. They can take photos with filters to enhance the photos and make video calls with others. In addition, for filters, users can also create their own filters, and this feature provides more interactivity to the time users spend on Instagram. Social media is the main application for college students in Malaysia today, and they cannot ignore the use of social media every day. Therefore, the influence of social media leads to dependence or loneliness among them.

1.2 Research Background

"A behavioural addiction characterised by excessive focus on social media, driven by uncontrollable desires to log on or use social media, and investing so much time and energy on social media that it impairs other important areas of life" is the definition of excessive or addicted social media use (Haand & Shu-Wang, 2020). A person's everyday activities and interpersonal connections may suffer as a result of the amount of time they spend on social media. An obsession with checking social media, spending extended amounts of time on social media pages, spending less time offline, mood swings, especially when not using social media, withdrawal symptoms, and conflict stemming from social media use are some of the symptoms of social media addiction. According to Davenport (2022), there is a survey conducted in 2019, it shows that 40% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 22 said they were addicted to social media. 79% of Malaysians were using social media in January 2023. The negative goals

included addiction, FOMO (fear of missing out), online validation seeking, and future benefits expectation. The concern is that using social media frequently has worse than beneficial effects on mental health, contributing to low mood and low self-esteem (Shamsher, 2023).

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine how social media causes addiction among university students.
2. To study how social media addiction leads to loneliness among university students.

1.4 Research Question

1. How social media causes addiction or dependency towards university students?
2. How social media dependency causes loneliness among university students?

1.5 Significant of the Study

The purpose of this study is to study the relationship between social media addiction cause loneliness among Malaysian universities students as this is the important element to me take note on our daily life. Where according to experiment that brings out from Haand and Shu-Wang, the findings of the study demonstrate that social media addiction and depression are positively correlated, with social media addiction being significantly predicted by depression (Haand & Shu-Wang, 2020). The research that brings out shows the relationship between them and confirms that there is a relationship between depression with social media addiction. Usually there are many reason could affects depression in different sector, but seldom research shows the experiment or research in terms of loneliness cause by social media addiction, and this is the most relevant topic to our youngsters nowadays. They might not know actually they have addicted to social media platforms and not notice of the harms that brings from social

media platforms. Therefore, it is a great chances to explore and research on the relationship between these two areas.

LITERITURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media in Malaysia

Malaysians ranked sixth in the world in 2022, averaging nine hours and four minutes online per day. For comparison, the Philippines, a neighbour, came in top place with 10 hours and 23 minutes (Commission Factory, 2023). Friendster, Myspace, and other early 2000s social media platforms marked the beginning of the history of social media marketing. After 10 years, additional social media sites emerged and quickly integrated into our online world. The average Malaysian spends nine hours a day online, three hours on social media, and an additional hour and a half listening to music streaming devices and reading news sources. This quick expansion has had an unquestionable impact on our lives. According to Samur, (2023), Friendster and Myspace are competitors in the early 2000s where social media platforms are just coming up. Friendster launched in the early 2000s, to be more accurate, which is 2002. Originally, Friendster was a dating service that facilitated the discovery of common friends. One might make a profile, post "status updates," and share their feelings. Unfortunately, the site's rapid growth in popularity in 2003 caught the company off guard. As a result of Friendster's servers being overloaded, an increasing number of users were looking for other ways to join. Additionally, Myspace, formerly known as MySpace, rapidly replaced Friendster as the preferred website for millions of trendy teenagers. In contrast to Friendster's private profiles, its editable public profiles—which frequently included music, films, and shoddy, semi-naked selfies—were accessible to everyone. Myspace peaked in 2005. When NewsCorp bought the website, it ranked sixth in the United States with 25 million users. And that was when it went from being ultra-hip to becoming ultra-tacky (Samur, 2023). Meanwhile, according to Howe (2024), they have done the test about the most popular social media platforms in Malaysia which are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and Tik Tok. There are 96.8% of Malaysians are spending on social media platforms every day and the average spend time is

eight to nine hours per day. This shows the high volume of people where not only youngsters are addicted and dependent to the social media platform everyday as it has become a habit to them.

Besides that, social media platforms are not just a platform for every user to spend time or interact with other people, but also a business platform for users. WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram are one of the most popular platforms for internet users to share and sell their product through live feature and the relationship of these platforms are they came from the same media company which is Meta. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Oculus VR are just a few of the social media and technology platforms and apps run by Meta Platforms, formerly known as Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg launched the business in 2004, and it has since expanded to become one of the biggest and most significant technological businesses globally (Tbh, 2023). The phrase "meta platforms" describes the company's new direction for the future, which is centred on developing an online experience that is more personalised, immersive, and connected. The objective is to build a virtual environment that is totally immersive and dynamic, allowing users to interact with one another in real time, a concept known as the "metaverse," as first used by science fiction writer Neal Stephenson. Interoperability, or the ability for users to move their digital assets, such as avatars, virtual products, and even cryptocurrency from one platform to another, is one of the main characteristics of the metaverse. Whatever platform a user chooses, this will make their experience more integrated and smooth. Any kind of business can utilise problem-solution campaigns to attract interest and establish a social media presence because most people use Meta, which is like a one-way ticket to increase sales. Meta offers many useful elements for business knowledge that may assist anyone in establishing their brand and promoting their business. Creating a company page on Meta, which enables companies to manage their operations and take advantage of features like CTA buttons, is one

of the features. Additionally, you get a custom tab in your feed that functions as a landing page and a "About" section where you can sum up your company, add locations, and specify your hours of operation (Rosley, 2024).

One strategy for internet users who want to launch a business is to get enough exposure for potential buyers to learn about your product. Then, they may utilise Facebook and Instagram's LIVE features to draw in more loyal customers. Customers may stay on your page to see what's new using the LIVE function. Additionally, by showcasing your product, visitors may be drawn to it in the event that it's something they need or like. Also, this feature has been heavily utilised on Facebook and Instagram, which might be very useful in increasing sales. According to Rosley (2024), both applications are visually appealing content which allows any internet user to browse through the feed and posts online. Since humans are visual creatures, or at least have been educated to be so, we are often influenced by what we observe. Since visual media is simple, it is advantageous to the general audience. For example, Instagram may be a very profitable platform for businesses wishing to expand and easily reach half of the population through advertising or product promotion. The software has a tonne of features that regular users and business owners can utilise to increase their visibility, sales, followers, engagement, and everything else! The Instagram shopping post function is available to businesses and e-commerce sites that offer clothing and apparel lines. It enables you to include a link, along with a price and name, to send potential customers to a website or URL.

2.2 Social media addiction/ dependency

"A behavioural addiction characterised by excessive focus on social media, driven by uncontrollable desires to log on or use social media, and investing so much time and energy on social media that it impairs other important areas of life" is the definition of excessive or addicted social media use (Haand & Shu-Wang, 2020). Social media actually has a big impact on your brain, despite the fact that it might sometimes seem like mindless, relaxing enjoyment. Dopamine signals in your brain rise whenever you open one of your favourite apps. These brain chemicals are linked to happiness. Your brain recognises using social media as something enjoyable that you should continue when you feel more dopamine after using it. When you publish something of your own and receive encouraging comments, you might experience this response more strongly (Cherney, 2020). Social networking can occasionally be a really helpful diversion if you're sick or separated from the outside world at work. Your brain will tell you that engaging in this activity is making you feel less lonely the more you do it, even though that may not be the reality. For instance, the poster of a post receives a dopamine boost when it receives a "like." The person posts more because they wish to feel that way in the future. The procedure remains unchanged when you increase the quantity of followers. This system of inherent rewards affects us all. The mechanism that results in social media addiction is this one. When we receive a reward that makes us happy, we start to crave it more and more until it becomes difficult for us to manage our cravings. We don't stop doing it even when it has bad effects. Like a teenager feels self-conscious about their size. Their negative emotions may be compounded when they see skinny people online being presented as the ideal of beauty. Or a teenager received no invitation to a friend's birthday celebration. She may have FOMO (fear of missing out) if she sees other people having a good time at the party on someone else's

Instagram feed. Stress, worry, discomfort, and despair might result from such reactions (Cherney, 2020).

2.3 Negative effects

Occasional social media use unlikely to be harmful. However, there are negative effects to consider when overusing social media. To know how an individual is addicted to social media, before addiction there will be some signal to warn yourself. Disruptions to sleep, eating, and exercise routines; disregard for real-life responsibilities and once-enjoyed pastimes; incapacity of discontinuing social media; frustration or anger when unable to use social media; concentration with social media even while offline; and hidden use of social media. Social media activity sometimes is probably not harmful. Nevertheless, excessive use of social media might have unfavourable consequences. Low self-esteem, which may result from false beliefs that other people's lives are "better" than your own, increased loneliness and isolation, anxiety or depression, fear of missing out (FOMO), which may encourage you to use social media even more, and other possible disadvantages are some of the potential negative effects of social media.

Human beings usually are naturally to live in as a social group and not meant to be alone. According to Pietrangelo (2019), Being alone is not equivalent to loneliness. You can be alone and not lonely. In a house full of people, loneliness can still exist. It's the sensation of being alone and isolated, with no one to confide in. It's a lack of deep relationships, and it affects everyone in the range like children, elderly people, and everyone in between. We are more connected to one another than ever due to technology. Making "friends" on social media could make you feel more connected to the world, but it doesn't necessarily make the loneliness

feeling go away. Addiction to social media can make loneliness more serious, leading to a continuous cycle of separation and loneliness. People are avoiding real-life relationships and experiences as they grow more dependent on social media platforms for entertainment, validation, and social interaction. When face-to-face encounters are substituted with shallow online connections, this avoidance might result in a lack of true connection and intimacy. One significant factor in the loneliness brought on by social media is time. Teenagers who use social media for more than three hours a day are more likely to have psychological and mental health problems, such as sadness, suicidal thoughts, and loneliness, according to a study published in JAMA Psychiatry (Social Media Victims Law Center PLLC, 2023). An example of causing loneliness due to addiction to social media platforms is when you often lose sight of the surroundings while you sit at your desk or stare at the screen of your phone and this action is one of the actions that disconnect face-to-face interaction with others.

2.4 Why has social media become so famous among Malaysian University Students?

Social media platform is one of the internet platforms that provide a wide range of information for students to collect data and enhance their task and assignment from school. Social media makes it frequently simpler and more comfortable to communicate, exchange information, and obtain information. These platforms allow tutors and students to interact with one another and benefit from each other's knowledge for better teaching and learning especially during the pandemic period. Social media has become more popular among students due to the connectivity and communication through internet platforms. The ways that today's students communicate and obtain information are mainly supported by mobile technology and require internet connectivity. Students could also demonstrate their assignment like a questionnaire to the social media platform and get the feedback quickly. Although in-person contacts are valued

by university students, research on their communication preferences indicates that technology-mediated communication is their preferred option to face-to-face communication. Furthermore, mobility and immediacy are important considerations when selecting communication channels and instruments. Even though email is still the most common way for colleges to communicate both within the organisation and between staff and students, relying entirely on email may restrict communication and cause students to miss important messages. And through this, it may also allow students to do information sharing through social media platforms like WhatsApp or Instagram. Social media serves as a tool that lets students exchange the academy information and have discussions to complete the assignment. Besides that, social media platforms are the most cost-effective way for students to browse online. It can be a highly affordable communication tool, and users typically get it for free. In addition to being a great tool for communication, it may be used to promote events, new courses, and scientific advancements (*Why Use Social Media? / MyCumbria*, n.d.).

In addition, social media platforms also serve as an entertainment and leisure space for students to spare their free time. Not only favourable on the academy part, but also provide a space for students to release stress and gossip with friends. They can get entertainment from TikTok, YouTube or Instagram to look at funny videos or trending challenges to follow the latest trend. According to Hubinska (n.d.), it says that students can see equality, diversity and inclusion through social media platforms. A rising number of people see students as clients who require simple access to resources and services at all times and locations. This access potentially changes the way that students interact with institutions and challenges the idea of campus boundaries. Higher education institutions can improve educational access for students whose personal circumstances prohibit them from pursuing traditional higher education by

embracing mobile technologies. Parents and students who work full-time are frequently among those who advocate for more flexible and humane ways that education should be provided.

2.5 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

The uses and gratifications theory was developed in the early 1940s and was first presented by Katz and Blumler (1974). It aims to explain why people use particular media, what requirements they have that require their use, and the satisfaction they derive from doing so. In the past, the hypothesis was initially put up in the 1940s to explain why individuals decided to absorb the numerous media that were available at the time (Kasirye, 2022). Two assumptions about media users form the core of the uses and gratifications theory. It describes media consumers as being actively involved in choosing the material they consume, to start. From this angle, media use is not something that people do inertly. When choosing media, they do so with motivation and engagement. Secondly, individuals are conscious of the rationale behind their choice of media. In order to choose the media that best meets their needs and desires, they rely on an understanding of their own motivations (Vinney, 2019).

According to Vinney (2024), she has explained the needs of UGT in the media usage, for instance, Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas developed a well-known list of five social and psychological needs that are satisfied by media consumption in 1973. These needs include cognitive needs that relate to obtain knowledge and information, or enhance comprehension; affective needs is referring to the desire for emotional or creative moments; integrative needs is the requirement for strengthening credibility, status, or confidence. These requirements consist of both affective and cognitive elements. For social integrative needs is the necessity

of reinforcing bonds with loved ones, and tension-release needs is about the want to detach from oneself in order to unwind and escape.

Consumers now have more choices for the information they interact with, when they interact with it, and what they interact with. This makes it possible to satisfy satisfactions through the use of new media. Seven gratifications can be discovered by using the Internet: information searching, aesthetic pleasure, monetary reward, amusement, maintaining relationships, personal status, and virtual community, according to an early study on the topic that was published in the journal *Cyberpsychology & Behaviour*. Studies have also shown the satisfactions obtained and aspired for via social media use. An additional study that was published in *Cyberpsychology & Behaviour*, for instance, identified four requirements for Facebook group involvement. These demands include the following: enjoyment or leisure through Facebook use, socialising through staying in touch and meeting new people, seeking self-status through upholding a personal image, and information searching about events and items (Vinney, 2019b).

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the method utilised in this study, including how sampling and measurement were done, and how the methodology was employed overall. Meanwhile, an explanation of the study's data collection process will be presented.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The process of using a portion of a population to represent the entire population is known as sampling in survey research. Therefore, we will choose a sample size of 50 because this will essentially enable us to collect enough data from our students to carry out data analysis for the outcome and the discussion. This research will focus on 50 Malaysian Students as the sample of groups with different races which included Malay, Chinese, Indian, and in the age range of 18- 26 with both male and female genders. Meanwhile, the term "target population," which also refers to the entire group or set of people, things, or events that have particular qualities and are of interest to the researcher, is used to describe the research population. It stands in for the broader population that a sample is taken from (Thomas & Thomas, 2023).

The questionnaire has been using stratified random sampling to choose the specific age group of respondents to provide their opinion which is from the age range of 18-26 Universities Student in Malaysia. Stratified random sampling is defined as a big population divided into smaller groups that, although they usually do not overlap, reflect the full population. This frequently entails categorising groups according to demographic characteristics like gender, age, race, ethnicity, etc.

3.3 Research design

According to Singh (2024), the blueprint or framework used to carry out a research study is called a research design. In order to find answers to research questions, it is necessary to specify the general strategies and procedures for data collection and analysis. A well-designed research project should include a strategy for data collection, a method for analysis and interpretation of the findings, and a precise and well-defined research question. And this research aims to study the relationship between social media addiction and loneliness among Malaysian Universities Students. Hence, the questionnaire needs to be specific when asking the questions that are relevant to the respondent and they could answer the question.

Gathering and evaluating numerical data is the process of conducting quantitative research. It lets you look for trends and medians, make presumption, investigate cause-and-effect linkages, and project results to a broader population. Qualitative research, which is the opposite of quantitative research, involves gathering and analysing non-digital materials including text, audio, and video (Bhandari, 2023). The method used to design the questionnaire is by using quantitative methods that allow us to easily get the result and work on the result. For data analysis, before data can be analysed, it might need to be processed after it is gathered. For instance, it could be necessary to convert test and survey data from language to numbers. After that, statistical analysis might be used to address your study issues. You can get a summary of your data using descriptive statistics, which also include measurements of variability and averages. To visualise your data and look for trends or outliers, you can also utilise graphs, scatter plots, and frequency tables.

3.4 Data Collection

The process of gathering and analysing information or data from many sources in order to assess results, predict trends and probability, and identify solutions to research problems is known as data collection (Simplilearn, 2023b). In the questionnaire, respondents are required to provide their answer regarding demographics, individual perception, and behavioural section in terms of their perspective towards the level of social media addiction causes on loneliness.

There are 50 respondents that have answered the questionnaire. The age range is from 18-26 years old, most of them are Malaysian degree students. And below are the brief results of the respondent.

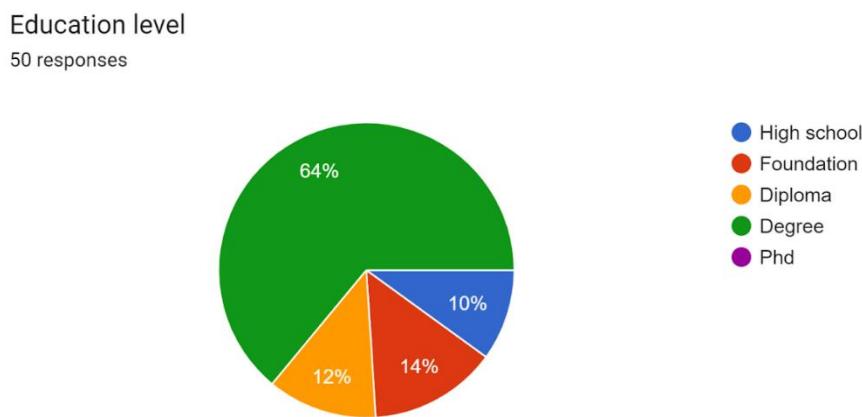


Chart 1: Education Level of Malaysian University Student

RESEARH FINDINGS

4.1 Result of questionnaire

As the aims of the survey is to study the relationship between social media addiction and loneliness among Malaysian University Student, hence their from their education level and how many hours they spend on social media per day. Below table is the result of respondent.

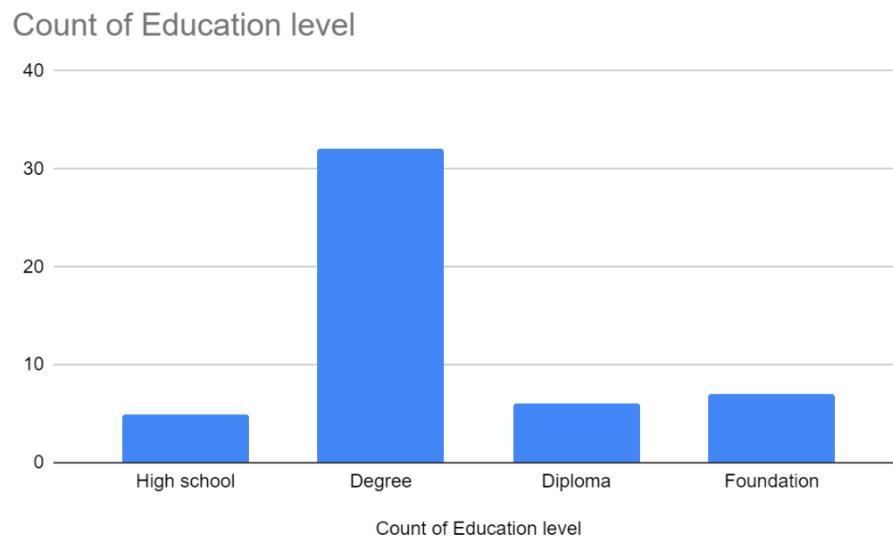


Table 1: Education Level of Malaysian University Student

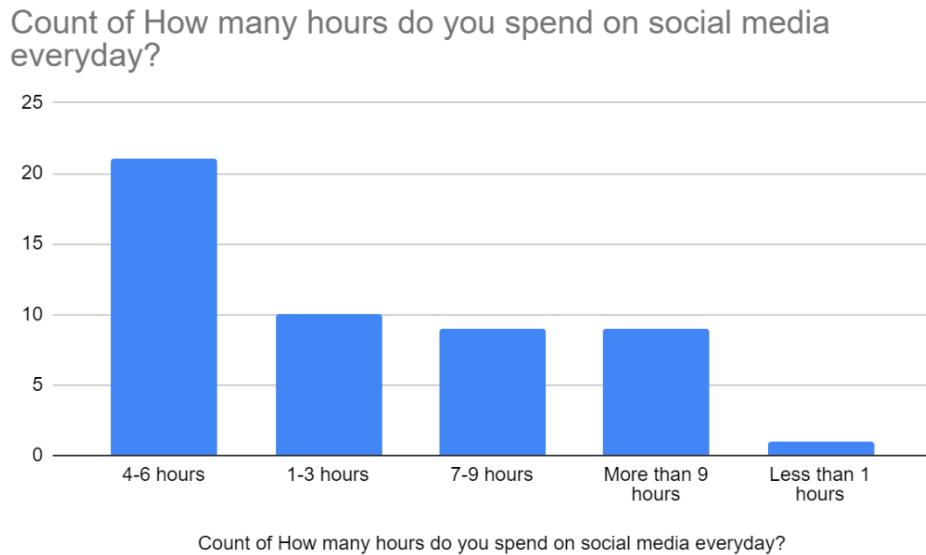


Table 2: The spending time on social media per day

According to table 1, we can observe that 32 respondents are having degree certification which is the highest rate in educational level, followed by foundation, diploma and high school. From here we could find that most of the respondents are studying in universities or already pursuing a degree. Additionally, on table 2 is showing the spending time on social media per day from the respondent. We can observed that our respondent spending their time on social media around 4-6 hour per day as it could be count as long period of time focusing on the social media. Due to the result, it can result in students relying on social media in many areas. As I have mentioned before, why social media platforms become so popular among students due to the communication and interaction, bringing entertainment and leisure, also the most-cost effective way to browse online and a great tool to promote any news.

Which social media do you spend most time on?

50 responses

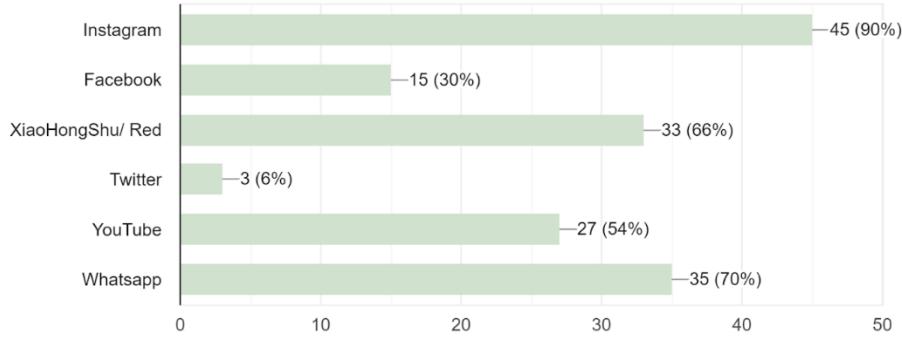


Table 3: Most use social media platform among student

What is the purpose of you browsing social media?

50 responses

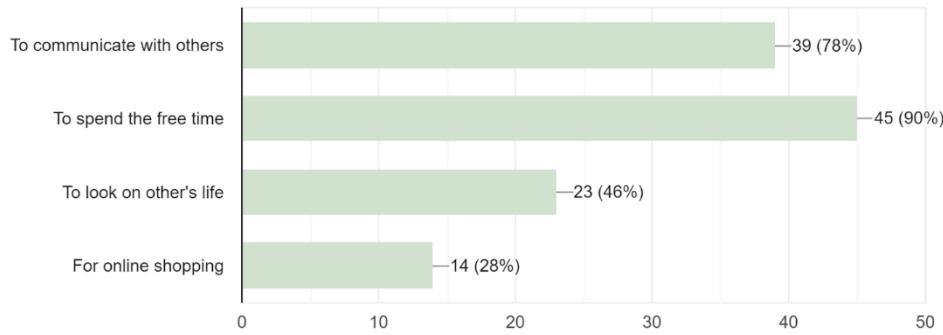


Table 4: The purpose of using social media platform

Above table shows the most used social media platforms among students and the most popular is Instagram, WhatsApp, and XiaoHongShu. Out of 100%, they get 90%, 35%, and 33% respectively. And according to Howe (2024), the most used platform is WhatsApp where it allows people to communicate and interact with friends and family. But as we can see from

table 4, it shows the result of the respondent's purpose of using social media platforms is to spend the free time, and to communicate with others.

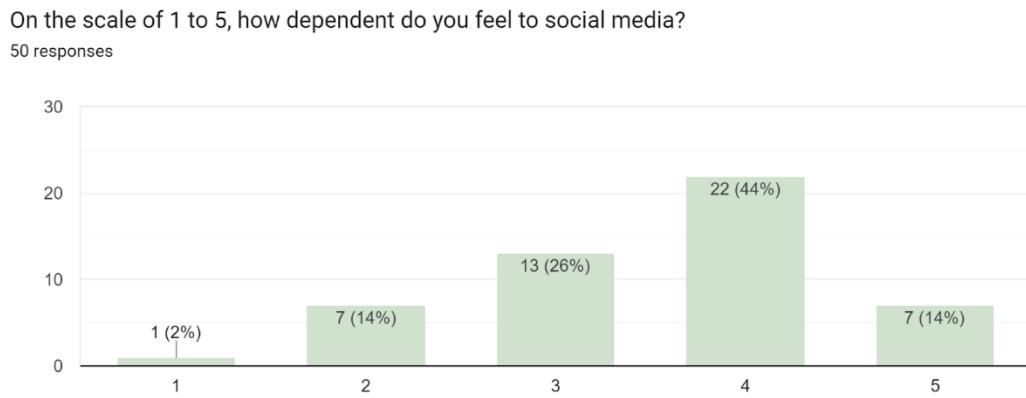


Table 5: The dependency on social media

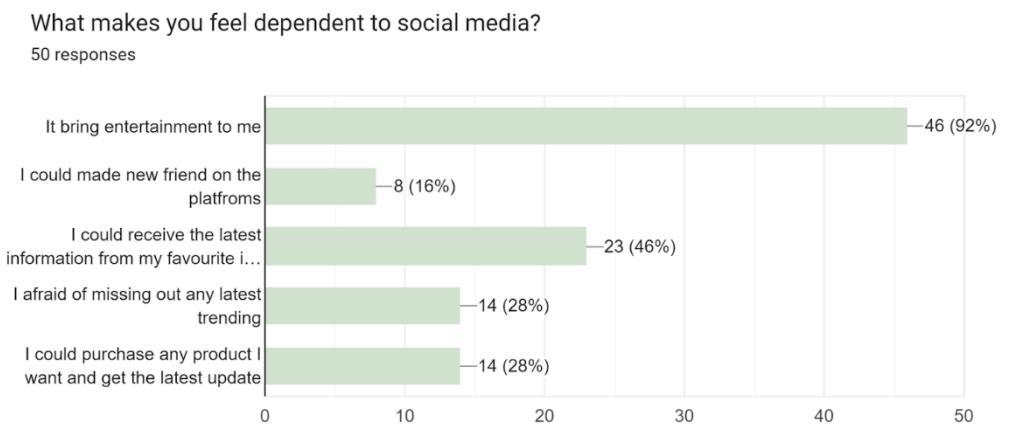


Table 6: The feeling of dependency towards social media

Coming to the dependency or relying level towards social media platforms, there are 22 respondents who are very addicted towards social media platforms and this is the self-examination or a self-rating process to let them better know themselves (Table 5). On table 6 that

shows the result of the respondent's feelings towards social media platforms. The highest rating is that they feel that social media platforms will bring entertainment to them, followed by they could receive latest information from their favourite influencer. As the result shows on table 2, the most popular social media platform is Instagram. Instagram will bring much entertainment and interaction to the users. And also, those respondents have chosen they are afraid of missing out on any latest update or trend in social media platforms and getting the latest update on the favour items on platform.

Count of Why do you feel a sense of FOMO (fear of missing out) when not using social media?

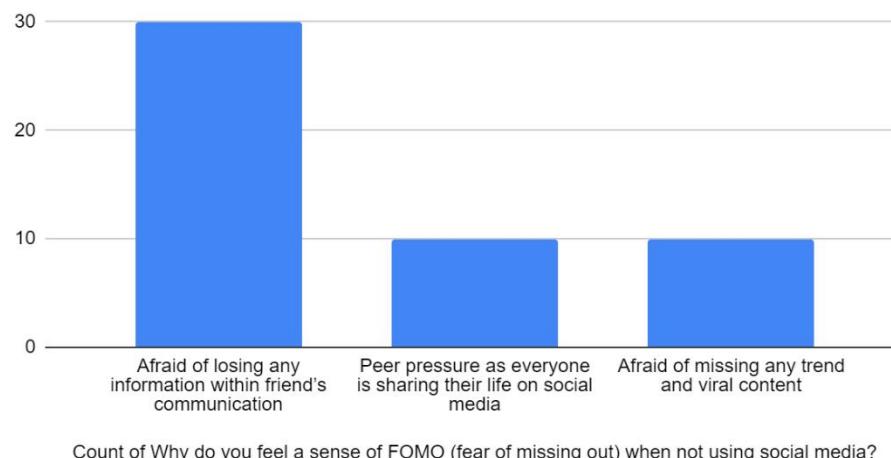


Table 7: The sense of FOMO on social media platform

Looking at our objective one, is to examine how social media causes addiction among university students. One of the impacts on social media addiction is FOMO (fear of missing out), which can be defined as users are afraid of losing any updates on social platforms like looking at other life or any latest update on trending. It is obvious that implementing lockdowns to increase social isolation will probably make an already significant issue worse for both adults and children. However, using digital communication tools like WhatsApp, Skype, and Zoom

as well as social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter may help to lessen the likelihood of feeling more alone after being forced to isolate oneself from others. Although this line of thinking may seem reasonable, there is more and more proof to suggest that the exact reverse may be true: using social media may make young people feel more alone and the emotions that go along with it (Fumagalli et al., 2021). Hence, we can observe from table 7 that more than half of respondents, which are 30 respondents, have chosen the reason that they feel a sense of FOMO is due to fear of losing any information within a friend's communication. Friend is beside family, the person that is close to our lives and knows our movement in daily routine. Hence, as human beings will also be afraid of losing track within friend's communication and form a sense of insecurity in the relationship.

Coming to the behavioural section where the result used to study how social media addiction leads to loneliness among university students.

I feel that social media dependency negatively impacts the quality of face-to-face social interactions.

50 responses

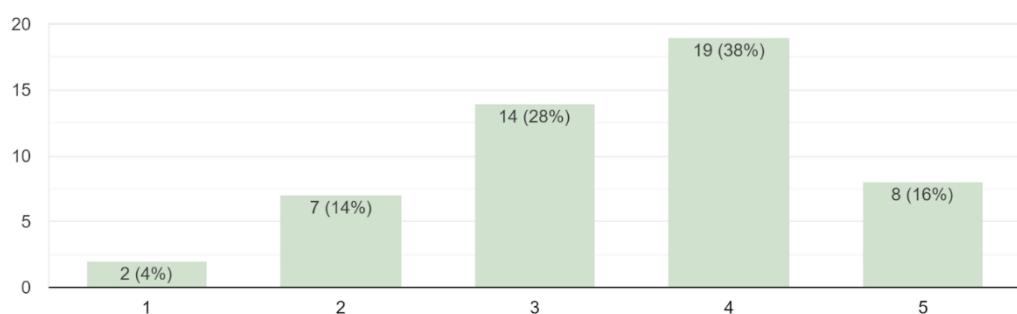


Table 8: How respondent feel of the negative impacts of face-to-face social interaction

From the question above, why do you think so?

50 responses

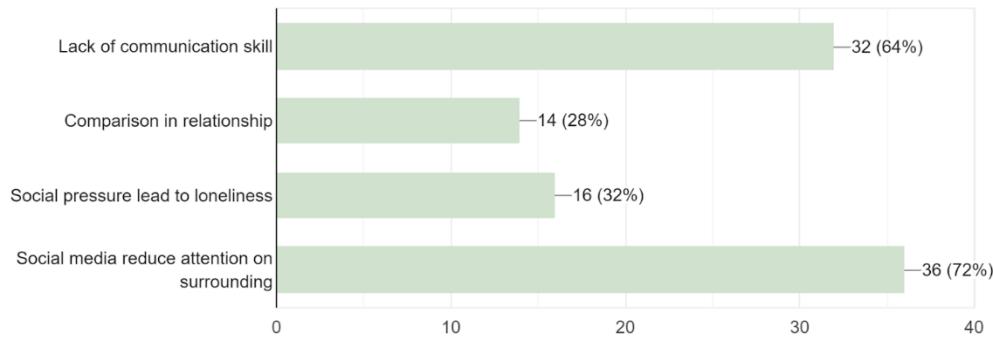


Table 9: Why they think of the negative impact

According to table 8, there are 19 respondents who agree with the statement that they feel social media addiction will negatively impact the quality of face-to-face interaction. According to Social Media Victims Law Center PLLC (2023b), they shows the example of causing loneliness due to addiction to social media platforms is when you often lose sight of the surroundings while you sit at your desk or stare at the screen of your phone and this action is one of the actions that disconnect face-to-face interaction with others. Hence, coming to table 9, 72% of respondents chose social media to reduce their attention on surroundings and this is the main reason that affects their quality of face-to-face interaction. This is because when you are focusing on browsing social media platforms, it is difficult for us to concentrate on surrounding and this is why respondents have the same feelings towards the question as it is a common habit. But there is also some research that argues that loneliness came after social media addiction or before, the research says before participating in harmful social media behaviour, some adults and teenagers experience a life of loneliness or self-perceived social failure. In these situations, using social media, especially among teenagers, tends to make loneliness worse. However, there are several examples of adults and teenagers who did not

experience loneliness before engaging in harmful social media behaviour but later discover themselves dealing with it (Social Media Victims Law Center PLLC, 2023b).

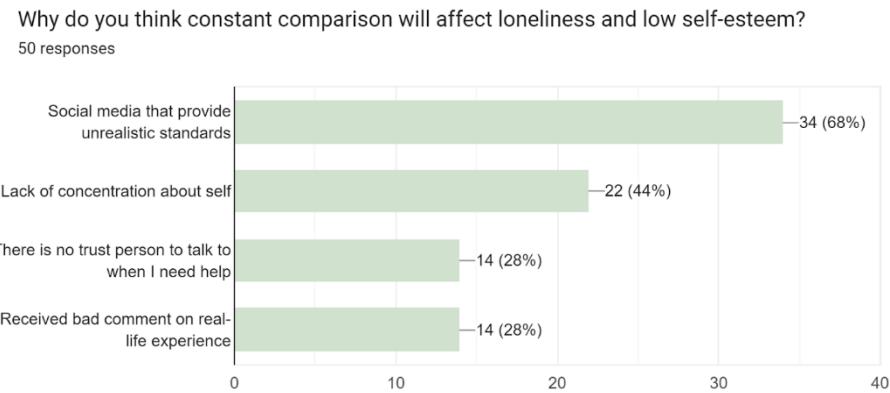


Table 10: Why they think constant comparison will affect loneliness and low self esteem

Excessive social media will cause loneliness where people can't focus on the surroundings. But, constant comparison through social media platforms will also impact loneliness and low self-esteem as it is the addictive behaviour on social media platforms. Result on table 10 shows that respondents think that social media creates an unrealistic standard to the public and affects their perspective and thought. This is because social media frequently gives users an idealised view of other people's life by highlighting their most significant successes, happy moments, and gorgeous experiences. Students may experience feelings of loneliness and degradation when they contrast their real life with these well-chosen representations of themselves.

Does the pressure to maintain a certain image and life on social media make you feel stressed and lonely?

50 responses

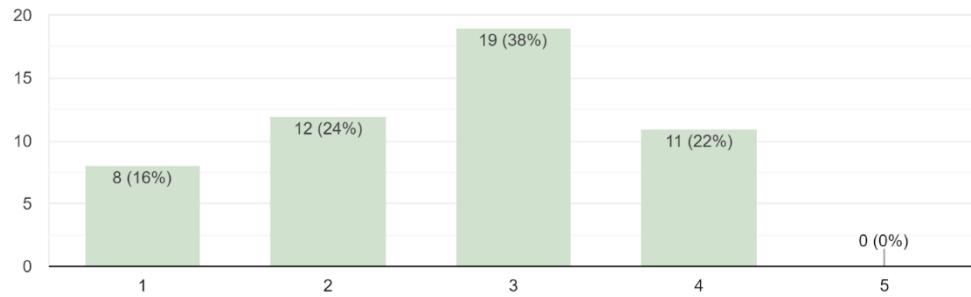


Table 11: Pressure to maintain a certain image and life on social media

From the above question, why do you feel so?

50 responses

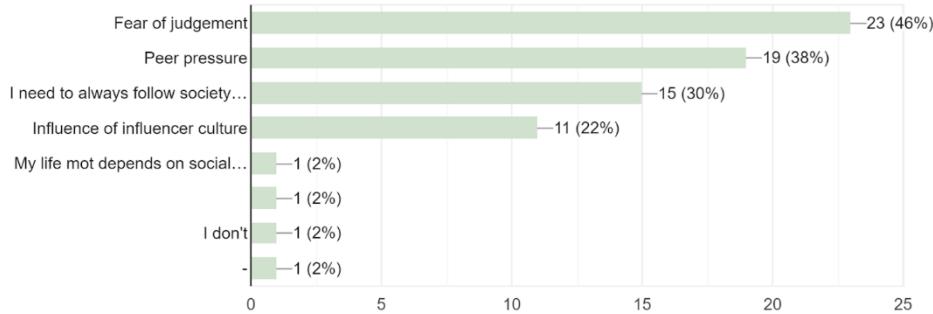


Table 12: Why they feel pressure in terms of maintaining image on social media

From the last two questions, we could observe that respondents will feel occasional pressure to maintain their image on social media platforms and lead to loneliness (Table 11) due to the reason of fear of judgement (Table 12). When students compare themselves to their friends on social media, the desire to present a perfect image can make them feel even more pressured. Based on what they see on social media, they can believe that people with more interesting lives, fulfilling relationships, or more wealth than them. This could make them feel more alone and less worthy of respect. Also, when they don't get praise in your life, they

will look for approval from other places to balance themself back to the same status as others.

Stress often occurs because of their own insecurity and not being understood by other people.

The results of the questionnaire have proven that social media addiction will actually give impact to loneliness among Malaysia Universities Students as they will afraid of FOMO, losing track on friends' communication and fear of the judgement by others which may lead more loneliness of student when addictive to social media as this is the platform for them to build their own security.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

Through the research that has been brought out, the research shows that social media addiction leading to loneliness is a serious problem for university students. It is actually a psychological illness for loneliness respondents where it needs to be settled as soon as possible. If loneliness can't be solve, the longer time it takes, it might bring out more illness like low self-esteem, depression, and lastly individuals might suicide. Therefore, it is a big issue to deal with as social media addiction is more and more common nowadays where not everyone realises it. From the study, we could also observe how social media platforms cause addiction, and how social media addiction leads to loneliness among university students.

According to the research, there are several issues with distributing the questionnaire and conducting the study. It is preferable to focus closer on the target audience, as I failed to notice that the respondents' university and faculty of study are excluded. This is a research error that complicates the interpretation of the findings and observations. Additionally, certain questions could be more specific to help in the research's completion, but it is also a mistake to select more than two responses, which weakens the accuracy of the answer and makes it more difficult to conduct or observe the findings.

5.2 Recommendation on Further Research

In the research, there are many imperfect areas that could be improved. Firstly will be the questionnaire design, some of the questions are not suitable for interpretation but just only

a reference for me to review on it. Hence, it is good to improve the sentences, the technique for asking and design the question properly on future research. Besides that, in terms of the topic, I need to be more specific and search for more journals or materials to support the study. This is because I have found only one study for me to refer to and this will increase the difficulty to work on the findings segment.

5.3 Conclusion

In a nutshell, from the study, we could know that university students nowadays addicted to social media platforms are more and more serious where they will spend more than 5 hours per day to scroll the feed on the platform. The symptoms of social media addiction include excessive anxiety about social media, a constant desire to use or log on to social media and spending so much time. Research findings have demonstrated an obvious correlation between the usage of social media, poor mental health, and low self-esteem. Although social networking platforms offer advantages, over use of them can lead to feelings of loneliness, reduce the concentration on other things surrounding you or even yourself and unhappiness. In addition to the social pressure to share items with others, these websites often encourage comparisons between material things and lifestyles, which can result in negative emotional reactions. While many people can use social media without any issues on a daily basis, those who are addicted to it are consumed by their need to utilise and interact with social media platforms. Fortunately, there are effective treatments available, and many people have made a full recovery (Hilliard, 2024). Of course, one of the best ways to solve problematic social media use is to reduce screen time.

There are some key differences for people to clarify if themself is facing social media addiction. For instance, a social media addiction might have a negative effect on your career or academic performance because of excessive usage of social media, such as browsing through applications while working or skipping class. It will be used more often as compared to other activities, including eating or socialising with loved ones. Furthermore, they will become restless and angry when they are not using social media, and they will think about it continually when they are not using it to the point that they will always turn to it first when given the chance (Cherney, 2020). Therefore, the only thing to reduce the addiction towards social media addiction is to reduce the screen time by setting a limitation on the mobile phone to always alert themself.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Section 1 (Demographic)

1. Gender
 - Male
 - Female

2. Age
 - 18-20
 - 21-23
 - 24-26
 - 26 and above

3. Ethnicity
 - Chinese
 - Malay
 - Indian
 - Other

4. Education level
 - High school
 - Foundation
 - Diploma
 - Degree
 - Phd

5. How many hours do you spend on social media everyday?
 - Less than 1 hours
 - 1-3 hours
 - 4-6 hours
 - 7-9 hours
 - More than 9 hours

Section 2 (Obj 1)

1. Which social media do you spend most time on?
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
 - XiaoHongShu/ Red
 - Twitter

- YouTube
- Whatsapp

2. What is the purpose of you browsing social media?

- To communicate with others
- To spend the free time
- To look on other's life
- For online shopping
- Others:

3. On a scale from 1 to 5, how dependent are you on social media?

- 1 (Not depend at all)
- 2 (Slightly depend)
- 3 (Moderately depend)
- 4 (Very depend)
- 5 (Extremely depend)

4. What makes you feel dependent on social media?

- It bring entertainment to me
- I could made more new friends on the platforms
- I could received the latest information from my favourite influencer
- I afraid of missing out any latest trending
- Others

5. I often think about social media when I am not using it

- Yes
- No

6. Why do you feel a sense of FOMO (fear of missing out) when not using social media.

- Afraid of losing any information within friend's communication
- Afraid of missing any trend and viral content
- Peer pressure as everyone is sharing their life on social media
- Other

7. I interrupt whatever else I am doing when I feel the need to access social media

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

8. I lose track of how much I am using social media

- Not at all

- A little
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

9. How do you feel when spending time on social media?

- Satisfying
- Secure
- Sense of identity and belonging
- Lonely

10. Have you been try to reduce the time on social media

- Yes
- No

Section 3

1. I feel that social media dependency negatively impacts the quality of face-to-face social interactions.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

2. From the question above, why do you think so?

- Lack of communication skill
- Comparison in relationship
- Social pressure lead to loneliness
- Social media reduce attention on surrounding

3. Constant comparison on social media contributes to loneliness and low self-esteem among university students

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A great deal

4. Why do you think constant comparison will affect loneliness and low self-esteem?

- Social media that provide unrealistic standards
- Lack of concentration about self
- There is no trust person to talk to when I need help

- Received bad comment on real-life experience

5. I feel lifeless without social media, as there is no joy in my life anymore

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- Always

6. Why do you feel lifeless without social media?

- I think social media is my priority platform for social connection
- Social media can provide entertainment compared to real life
- It the daily routine as I will look on the latest update on others life
- Other

7. Does the pressure to maintain a certain image and life on social media make you feel stressed and lonely?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- Always

8. From the above question, why do you feel so?

- Fear of judgement
- Peer pressure
- I need to always follow society beauty level
- Influence of influencer culture
- Other