EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG UTAR STUDENTS

GAN LER ERN

A RESEARCH PROJECT

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FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

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

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Date   :   <u>6th MAY 2025</u>

APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled "EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG UTAR STUDENTS," prepared and submitted by GAN LER ERN in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Corporate Communication (HONOURS), is hereby accepted.

_____ Date: _____15/5/25_____

Supervisor

Dr. Soon Thean Bee

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UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

Date: 6 May 2025

PERMISSION SHEET

It is hereby certified that Gan Ler Ern (ID No: 2102985) has completed this final year project entitled "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Social Support Among UTAR Students" under the supervision of Dr. Soon Thean Bee (Supervisor) from the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Creative and Industries.

I hereby give permission to the University to upload a softcopy of my final year project in PDF format into UTAR Institutional Repository, which may be made accessible to the UTAR community and the public.

Yours truly,

(Gan Ler Ern)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the UTAR students use social media platforms to perceive social support. With the rapid growth of social media platforms, it has become a trend and is used among students. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the usefulness of social media platforms in the support of UTAR students and to identify the specific ways in which students use these platforms when seeking social support. A quantitative approach was adopted using a structured questionnaire distributed to 101 respondents of UTAR students. The results show that the students of the UTAR perceive social support from social media platforms when they are under stress. Among the different platforms, Instagram and Rednote are the most frequently used media for social support seeking. This study contributes to the positive role played by social media in improving students' well-being, especially in times of need for social support.

Keywords: mental illness, university students, social media

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Background of Study

Higher education can be a significant source of stress for students as they encounter numerous new challenges (Olivera et al., 2023). Transitioning from high school to university marks a major shift, bringing students into an unfamiliar environment with different expectations. This unfamiliarity can lead to feelings of fear and anxiety as students adapt to a new place, culture, and routine. Even as they become more accustomed to their surroundings, academic demands continue to be a major stressor. University life often involves managing multiple assignments, examinations, and presentations, all of which can feel overwhelming. Balancing these responsibilities requires significant effort and can contribute to ongoing stress, making the university experience both an exciting and challenging period for students.

Students also need to manage their mood and self-esteem effectively to cope with the stress of their studies. In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life, serving diverse purposes such as product promotion, learning new skills, accessing information, and providing entertainment. For students, these platforms are often a go-to outlet after a long day of studying or engaging in extracurricular activities. University students, in particular, face academic workloads, including numerous assignments, exams, quizzes, and participation in club activities. This schedule often leaves them feeling overwhelmed and in need of a break. Social media platforms offer a dual advantage of social interaction and entertainment, making them a valuable resource for stress management and emotional support (Zhao, 2021).

To help students with good mental health, UTAR has out a new leave for students. UTAR has introduced a Mental Health Leave (MHL) initiative to support the well-being of its students and emphasize the importance of mental health. Effective from 1st August 2024, this leave enables students to take a much-needed break, providing them with the time and space for physical and emotional self-care. Mental health leave for students was supported by 70% of parents ("Parents Want Mental Health Education in Schools, Mental Health Days off for Students," 2021). The goal is to create a space for students to temporarily distance themselves from their daily routines, allowing them to relax, recharge, and prioritize their mental well-being (*Why Mental Health Days*

Are Important for Students | Talkspace, n.d.). For short trimesters, students are eligible to apply for up to 3 days of leave, while for long trimesters, they can apply for up to 5 days. This initiative ensures that students have time to pause, recharge, and regain their focus before resuming their academic responsibilities.

In today's digital age, students have their preferred social media platforms, which often serve as essential coping mechanisms. 68.3% of students feel that social media has positively impacted them (Sheng et al., 2022). Social media platforms have multiple functions. Students can share their interests, ideas, and feelings on social media platforms (Zhao, 2021). Through this, students can obtain social support, and this can help them to reduce their stress.

Social media platforms serve as a tool for managing stress by allowing students to temporarily escape their responsibilities, engage in entertaining activities, or seek encouragement. Using social media as a stress-reduction strategy can impact students' performance. By alleviating stress levels, students can focus better on their tasks, leading to improved performance outcomes (Azizi et al., 2019).

In today's connected world, social media platforms have become a valuable tool for students seeking support in various aspects of their lives. These platforms allow students to connect with family and friends, enabling them to share what they're thinking, worrying about, and struggling through, in a supportive environment (Internet Matters Ltd, 2024). In addition, social media platforms provide a safe space for students to openly discuss issues around them, as well as personal issues that they are not comfortable discussing with those around them. Through online discussions, students can gain different views, receive emotional support, and receive valuable suggestions or advice.

By offering a safe and accessible environment, social media platforms allow students to express their thoughts and emotions freely, often with the option to remain anonymous (Pan et al., 2023). This anonymity is especially beneficial for students who may feel hesitant or fearful about expressing themselves openly, worried that their friends or peers might judge them. By removing this barrier, social media enables students to unburden themselves without the fear of being

recognized, creating an environment where they feel free to speak honestly about their struggles. When students share their feelings on social media, they will receive comforting messages, encouragement, and advice from others, including strangers who empathize with their situation. In this situation, students will feel better and decrease their stress because they get support from social media platforms, and they will choose this way as a way to decrease their stress.

Entertaining content can significantly reduce students' stress by helping them shift their focus away from negative emotions (Scott, 2024). When students watch funny videos, engage with memes, or consume lighthearted content, it can significantly lift their spirits, bringing moments of joy and laughter. Social media platforms offer students the opportunity to post, like, and comment, fostering interaction with others. When students receive positive feedback, such as likes or encouraging comments, it provides a sense of social support and validation. This interaction helps reset their emotional state, easing stress and promoting a more positive mindset.

1.1 Objective

This academic paper seeks to explore and identify the social media platforms that UTAR students use to seek social support when they encounter stress, anxiety, or other mental health issues. It focuses on UTAR students because UTAR has released a new leave for its students, which is called Mental Health Leave (MHL).

Besides that, this academic paper aims to evaluate the usefulness of social media platforms in supporting UTAR students and to identify the specific ways students utilize these platforms when seeking social support. These may include watching relaxing content or chatting with friends. A student who spends wisely on social media platforms to decrease stress will improve their academic performance (Azizi et al., 2019).

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions for this academic paper are:

1. What social media platforms do UTAR students commonly use to seek social support for managing stress, anxiety, or other mental health issues?

2. Do UTAR students perceive social media platforms as an effective source of social support for managing stress, anxiety, or other mental health issues?

1.3 Methodology

This academic paper uses a quantitative research methodology, which involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of measurable data systematically to validate a hypothesis that is formed in a particular study (Ghanad, 2023). Quantitative research is based on a structured and logical approach, ensuring that data is collected in a way that makes objective analysis and meaningful conclusions possible. This method allows a strong emphasis on testing theoretical concepts through statistical evaluation, allowing researchers to establish patterns, relationships, and trends based on the findings of their research (Ghanad, 2023). To select respondents for this research, the simple random sampling method was used, ensuring that every individual had an equal chance of being selected (Noor et al., 2022). This approach helps minimize selection bias and enhances the reliability of the findings.

The primary objective of quantitative research is to increase the understanding of the social world by observing the situations and cases that affect individuals (GCU, 2021). This research method allows researchers to collect data from large sample sizes, which helps to improve the accuracy and overall generalisability of the findings (Unimrkt Research, n.d.).

The survey consists of a series of questions for UTAR students to complete, aiming to understand which social media platforms they frequently use to manage stress. A total of 100 respondents are required for the survey. The questions focus on identifying the social media platforms they use most often, their primary reasons for using these platforms, the amount of time they spend on social media, and the types of content they typically engage with.

1.4 Theory

This academic paper applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which was developed by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitchin in 1974. Originally introduced in the 1940s, this theory aimed to explain why individuals choose to engage with different forms of media (Faiswal Kasirye, 2021). Early research primarily focused on broadcast audiences but later

expanded to examine the social and psychological factors that influence media consumption and how it fulfills various consumer needs (Sichach, 2024).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory focuses on the needs, motivations, and satisfaction of media users. It highlights how individuals actively engage with media for personal benefits rather than being passively influenced by mass media (Drew, 2024). This theory challenges traditional perspectives on media influence by emphasizing the audience's active role in selecting and using media based on their specific needs and preferences (Sichach, 2024).

In this theory, the users are active because they as an active role in searching for different reasons and purposes when they use social media platforms ("5 Key Concepts of Uses and Gratifications Theory Explained - Indian Media Studies," 2024).

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch introduced five key needs in the Uses and Gratifications Theory: cognitive needs, affective needs, personal identity needs, social interaction and integration needs, and tension release needs (Escapism) (Kasirye, 2021).
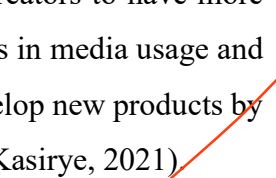
- **Cognitive Needs** – Audiences engage with media to acquire knowledge and gain a better understanding of their social environment.
- **Affective Needs** – Media serves as a source of pleasure and emotional fulfillment, allowing audiences to experience joy and satisfy personal desires.
- **Personal Identity Needs** – Media helps individuals shape their personality, reinforce personal values, and develop a deeper understanding of themselves.
- **Social Interaction and Integration Needs** – Media facilitates communication and strengthens relationships between family and friends while also expanding social networks.
- **Tension Release Needs (Escapism)** – Media serves as a distraction from stress, providing relaxation and a temporary escape from unpleasant experiences.

There are 5 key satisfaction motivations for media usage: information-seeking gratifications, socialization gratifications, entertainment gratifications, passing time gratifications, and information-sharing gratifications ("5 Key Concepts of Uses and Gratifications Theory Explained - Indian Media Studies," 2024).

- **Information-seeking gratifications** - Occur when individuals use media to acquire new knowledge.
- **Socialization gratifications** - Using media to interact and engage with others, fostering social connections.
- **Entertainment gratifications** - Refer to media consumption for enjoyment, relaxation, and content sharing for pleasure.
- **Passing time gratifications** - Using media to occupy free time and avoid boredom.
- **Information-sharing gratifications** - Provide users with a sense of accomplishment when they share valuable information with others.

The advantage of uses and gratifications theory is media can help creators to have more effective to create more attractive content and know the patterns of audiences in media usage and preferences (Kasirye, 2021). The theory is also good for the company to develop new products by knowing their preferences and can engage and interact with the consumers (Kasirye, 2021)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Overall Review

It is undeniable that students widely use social media platforms for various purposes, including accessing information and entertainment and fostering connections. Social media platforms provide a global digital space encouraging active participation, involvement, and sharing (Agus Purwanto et al., 2023). Social media platforms are also an effective tool for student engagement, offering a space to express and share their feelings more comfortably (C. Zhang et al., 2023).

2.1 Social Networking Reduces Stress or Anxiety

Social media platforms allow students to have a better place to let out their emotions. The study conducted by Chowdhury (2024) mentioned that when students face challenges in their studies and feel overwhelmed, social media becomes a safe space for them to share their thoughts and feelings. By sharing their experiences, they can connect with others who offer comfort, empathy, and support. This sense of being understood and cared for helps students feel less alone in their struggles. Through this, their emotional burden is lightened, and their stress levels are significantly reduced.

Baines et al. (2021) highlight that graduate students experience higher stress levels than the general population and frequently use social media for social support. While their research focuses on graduate students, my study will examine whether similar patterns exist among undergraduate students. Social media platforms enable students to connect with family and friends, share information, and sustain existing relationships (John Erwin P. PEDROSO et al., 2024). Research conducted by Luchtefeld & Jordan (2022) shows that social media is particularly popular among students due to its ability to provide access to information and avenues for social support. It is a good source of emotional comfort for students and students use social media to help them to adjust.

Social media has proven to be an effective tool in reducing stress by offering emotional support to individuals, particularly students (Baines et al., 2021). Olivera et al. (2023) showed

students encounter various stressors, including high competitiveness, academic pressures, and the challenge of adapting to new environments, which can significantly affect their overall well-being and mental health. Social support, whether from family, friends, or even strangers, plays a vital role in helping students manage these stressors. Students who receive strong emotional support often experience reduced stress levels and a lower risk of developing mental health issues (Acoba, 2024). This support, enabled by social media platforms, fosters a sense of connection and community, helping individuals navigate challenging situations more effectively. By connecting students with others who understand their challenges, social media can be a powerful resource for reducing stress and promoting better mental health.

College students are particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges, often experiencing higher levels of stress than their non-student peers (Vornholt & De Choudhury, 2021). The article "How Social Media Usage Affects Psychological and Subjective Well-Being: Testing A Moderated Mediation Model" indicates that social media platforms are vital in providing emotional and informational support for these students (C. Zhang et al., 2023). A study conducted by Zainudin et al. (2023) mentioned many students turn to social media to alleviate stress, using it to share and vent their concerns with friends or online communities. This helps them feel heard and supported, fosters a sense of encouragement, and contributes to building their self-esteem (C. Zhang et al., 2023). Knowing that someone is always available to listen and offer support can significantly reduce feelings of stress and anxiety (Itzchakov et al., 2022).

2.2 Perceived Feedback on Social Media

When students face academic challenges, they often turn to social media platforms as an outlet to share their feelings. By doing so, they hope to receive positive feedback, such as likes and supportive comments from others. Many students find solace in engaging with others on these platforms, as it fosters connection and understanding, helping to alleviate feelings of isolation or overwhelm (Machado et al., 2022). This interaction promotes a feeling of social support, which can significantly alleviate stress and improve their mood. Positive comments from others provide students with validation and a sense of care, helping reduce stress and uplift their mood (Machado et al., 2022). This reassurance strengthens their belief that they are not alone in their struggles, offering much-needed encouragement and understanding. As a result, students feel emotionally

supported, which enhances their overall well-being and fosters a sense of belonging. This emotional reinforcement not only helps them manage their burdens more effectively but also instills the motivation and resilience needed to confront challenges with a renewed perspective, ultimately empowering them to navigate their academic and personal lives more confidently.

Positive feedback on social media platforms significantly impacts users' emotional well-being. For instance, receiving encouraging responses can uplift a user's mood and reduce negative emotions (Lai et al., 2023). The distinction between active and passive social media users also plays a crucial role in mental health outcomes. Active users are those who engage by posting content, commenting on their friends' posts, and interacting with others. They tend to experience better mental health compared to passive users, who primarily consume content without interaction. Active engagement fosters a sense of connection and support, which can positively influence overall mental well-being. (Machado et al., 2022).

However, students may also encounter negative feedback on social media, which can have detrimental effects on their well-being. The study conducted by Kolhar et al. (2021) mentioned that excessive social media use can lead to a decline in academic performance, as students may rush through their assignments to maximize their time online. This distraction can reduce focus and productivity, ultimately impacting their academic success. The research study conducted by Lee et al. (2020) found that students who receive negative feedback, such as fewer likes on social media, often experience increased stress, sadness, and anxiety. This can lead them to perceive themselves as less likable, lowering their self-esteem and causing self-doubt about their ability to handle academic demands.

2.3 Active and Passive Users on Social Media

A study conducted by Godard & Holtzman (2023) showed active users of social media are better equipped to reduce stress compared to passive users. This is because active users engage in meaningful interactions by posting content, seeking advice, and communicating with others (Ozimek et al., 2023). Through these interactions, they gain valuable feedback, which can help them navigate their challenges (Lai et al., 2023). Positive responses and supportive comments from others provide emotional validation, leading to a sense of relief and reduced stress.

In contrast, passive users who observe content without active engagement or contribution are less likely to receive supportive responses. They are less involved in posting content, they usually browse through other users' profiles and engage in private conversations (Ozimek et al., 2023). Passive social media users are more at risk of anxiety, depression, and stress due to a lack of engagement or meaningful connections, which can lead to feelings of loneliness and a sense of disconnection, making it harder for them to reduce their stress (Zoe Taylor et al., n.d.). As a result, passive users are less likely to experience the same reduction in stress because they do not have the opportunity to make connections or receive support from others (Godard & Holtzman, 2023).

2.4 Good Mental Health Makes Life Easier

Mental health plays a crucial role, as it significantly influences overall well-being and future outcomes. When students experience anxiety, depression, or behavioral disorders, these challenges can have lasting effects, increasing the risk of a greater burden of disease in adulthood (Guthold et al., 2021b). Mental health is a state of well-being that empowers individuals to cope with life's stresses, recognize their abilities, learn effectively, and perform well in their work and daily activities (Halat et al., 2023). By prioritizing mental health and working to overcome barriers such as stigma and limited access to resources, individuals can develop the strength and resilience needed to face life's challenges, achieve their potential, and positively impact those around them (Gautam et al., 2024).

A research study conducted by Gautam et al. (2024) mentioned mental health shapes our thoughts, behaviors, and social interactions in daily life. Maintaining good mental health is crucial for emotional stability and effectively managing life's challenges (Fusar-Poli et al., 2019). It enables students to feel calm, content, and valued, fostering resilience in the face of fears, uncertainties, and changes. With strong mental well-being, they can adapt more easily, cope effectively, and prevent prolonged struggles (Fusar-Poli et al., 2019).

The risk of physical health problems can also be reduced by maintaining good mental health. Chronic stress is strongly linked to heart disease, which means that a student who is constantly stressed is more likely to develop heart-related problems compared to those managing stress effectively (Franklin et al., 2021). Beyond physical well-being, the benefits of good mental

health are many. It helps to improve emotional stability, reduce anxiety, promote inner peace, increase clarity of thought, and boost self-esteem. Through the promotion of good mental health, individuals can achieve a greater sense of overall well-being and be more resilient in their day-to-day lives.

Mental health problems are particularly common among higher education students and have a significant impact on their academic performance (Dekker et al., 2020). Poor mental health often leads to a decline in academic performance by harming the way students think, feel, and behave (Mohammad Mofatteh, 2020). Stress and anxiety, which are common in students with poor mental health, can affect their ability to focus and perform academically. In addition, students who experience social demands and expectations as external constraints, instead of being able to integrate them with their values, may experience greater feelings of control and stress (J. Zhang et al., 2024b). This lack of alignment can lead to poor mental health and further impair academic performance (Uji & Kawaguchi, 2021). Social support also plays a crucial role. Students who lack supportive relationships are more likely to be demotivated, which can lead to dropout and poor performance. Good mental health promotes clear thinking, emotional stability, and the ability to cope, enabling students to manage stress effectively and stay motivated. When students feel supported, valued, and in alignment with their goals, they are more likely to apply themselves consistently, stay focused, and achieve better academic results. Therefore, promoting mental health awareness and providing strong support systems in higher education environments is vital to improving student well-being and academic success.

In a nutshell, social media platforms provide a vital space for students to express their emotions, helping them manage stress, overcome feelings of isolation, and gain social support. Good mental health contributes to better academic performance, emotional stability, and overall well-being, enabling students to effectively navigate life's challenges. As a tool for emotional expression and support, social media plays a significant role in fostering resilience and psychological well-being among students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research methodology used in this study, describing the research design, target population, sampling method, data collection process, and data analysis techniques. Its purpose is to provide a clear structure for understanding how data were collected and analyzed to reach the research objectives and to ensure the findings' reliability and validity.

3.1 Research Design

According to Organizing Academic Research Papers: Types of Research Designs (2020), a research design refers to the strategy you choose to combine the various aspects of the study logically and effectively. It is to ensure that the problems of the research can be solved effectively, which includes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Research design can ensure the reliability of the research since it has relevant evidence. The importance of research is it is used to answer specific questions which considered to be important for the field Tom Welsh et al. (2023).

Lim (2024) states that quantitative research depends on surveys and experiments to collect data, making it suitable for statistical analysis and objective hypothesis testing. This research approach is causal, meaning that it allows researchers to identify variables and determine causal relationships. In addition, one of the key advantages of quantitative research is its speed, as data can be collected quickly through online surveys, allowing for quick responses from participants.

Quantitative research is well suited to the study because it provides efficient and timely data collection. The use of online surveys improves the research process by making it cost-effective and enabling access to a larger and more diverse population (Lim, 2024). This method ensures that a wide range of participants can be reached, without the limitations of geographical limitations. Furthermore, the structured method of quantitative research makes it easier to measure variables objectively, ensuring that the results are reliable and easily generalizable.

3.2 Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Method

The population must be included in a study. For this study, the population is a group of students from University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The size of the sample is 101 individuals, ranging the age from 17 to 28 years old. The criteria of these individuals are they use social media for their purposes, such as some of them are to obtain social support when they are stressed or anxious, and some of them are to obtain the latest information and news around the world or obtain knowledge for their studies. The main purpose of the sample is to survey the relationship between stress and social media. The sampling method uses a convenience sampling method which involves approaching students on campus. This sampling method is easy to study as the components are easily reached (Fleetwood, 2025).
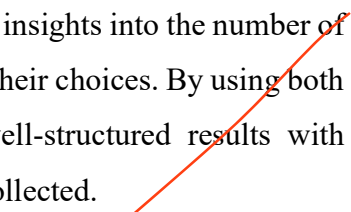
3.3 Data Collection

The survey questionnaire is through Google Forms. At the beginning of the survey, participants were informed that they were encouraged to give honest opinions and that their responses would remain anonymous and only be used for academic purposes. The survey consisted of various sections which covered different aspects. Section A focused on demographic information, such as gender and age. Section B explored social media usage, including the platforms most frequently used by students. Section C examined perceived social support, identifying the types of content students found most emotionally supportive. Section D looked at experiences of seeking support on social media, including any negative feedback encountered. Finally, Section E addressed the risks of using social media for support, such as students' biggest fears when engaging on these platforms. The survey questionnaire was through various channels, which approached UTAR students via Microsoft Teams and around the campus.

3.4 Data Analysis

The survey data is analyzed using Google Forms and Microsoft Word to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the responses. The study was conducted using Google Forms due to its ability to efficiently collect and analyze feedback in detail (Melo, 2023). It also allows the survey to be completed within a few minutes. Google Forms will generate pie charts for each section, which will provide a clear visual representation of the data, making it easier to identify patterns and trends. These visualizations will enhance the overall understanding of the study by allowing

for quick comparisons of the distribution of responses. Microsoft Word will be used for textual analysis, providing a detailed interpretation of the pie charts, including insights into the number of participants who selected each option and the possible reasons behind their choices. By using both Google Forms and Microsoft Word, the study aims to present well-structured results with summaries and explanations, providing deeper insights into the data collected.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.0 Introduction

   This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the survey data, which consisted of 101 responses. The analysis covers several key aspects, including demographic profiles, social media usage, perceived social support, using social media for social support, and risks of seeking social support on social media. The findings are visually presented through various of figures, such as charts and bar chart to enhance clarity and understanding. Each aspect is explored in depth to ensure a complete and informative interpretation of the questionnaire results, providing a well-rounded perspective on the key themes and implications of the study.

4.1 Demographics Profile

4.1.1 Gender
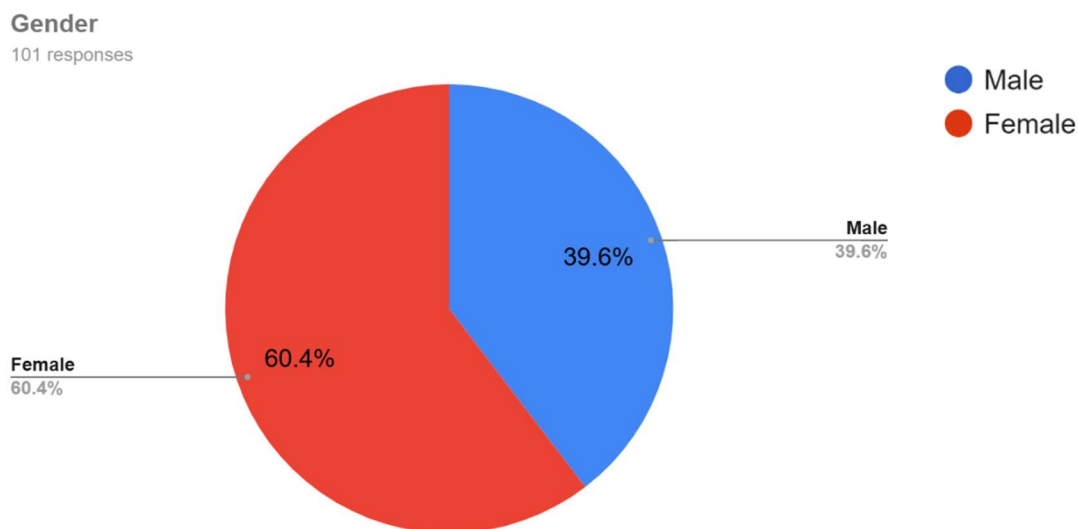
Figure 4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

   Figure 4.1.1 shows the gender of the 101 respondents. The survey results indicate that the majority of respondents are female, accounting for 60.4% of the total, while males make up the remaining 39.6%.

4.1.2 Age
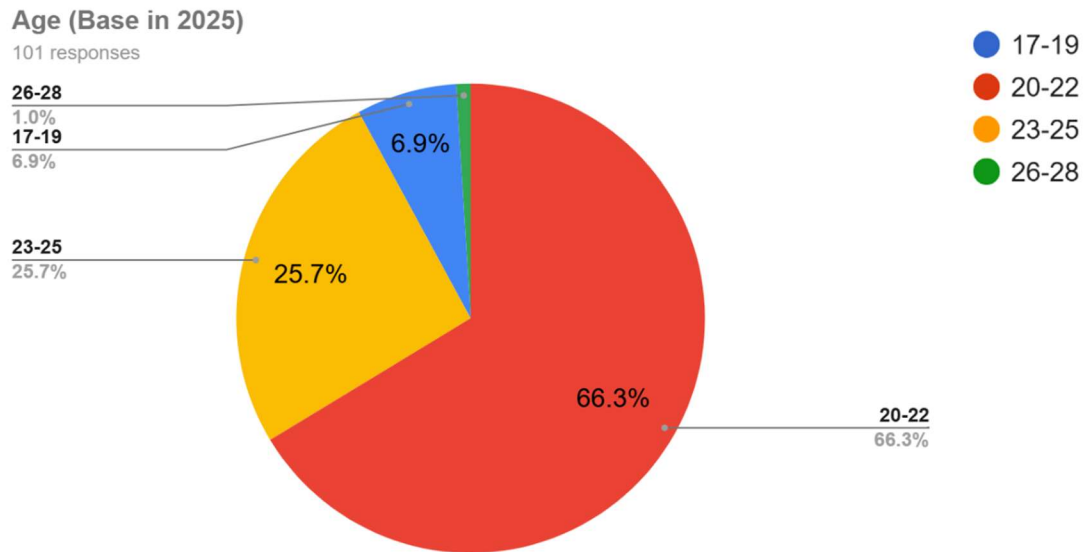
Figure 4.1.2 Age of Respondents

The age distribution of the 101 respondents is illustrated in Figure 4.1.2. The pie chart indicates that the majority of respondents, approximately 66.3%, fall within the 20 to 22 age group. Additionally, around 25.7% of the respondents are between 23 and 25 years old, while 6.9% are aged 17 to 19 years old. A small proportion, approximately 1%, consists of respondents aged between 26 and 28 years old.

4.1.3 Level of Education

Level of Education
101 responses

Figure 4.1.3 Level of Education of Respondents

According to the results of the survey, the majority of the respondents are undergraduate students, representing around 85.1% of the total number of participants. In contrast, a smaller proportion, around 14.9%, are students who are in undergraduate programs. There are no students representing the postgraduate category.

4.2 Social Media Usage

4.2.1 Which Social Media Platforms Do You Use Frequently?

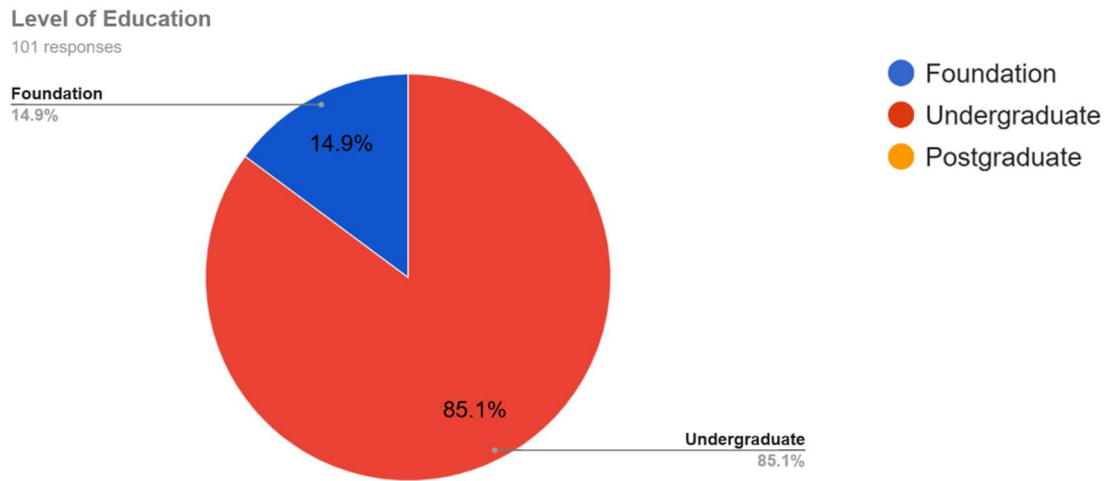Which social media platforms do you use frequently? (Select all that apply)
101 responses
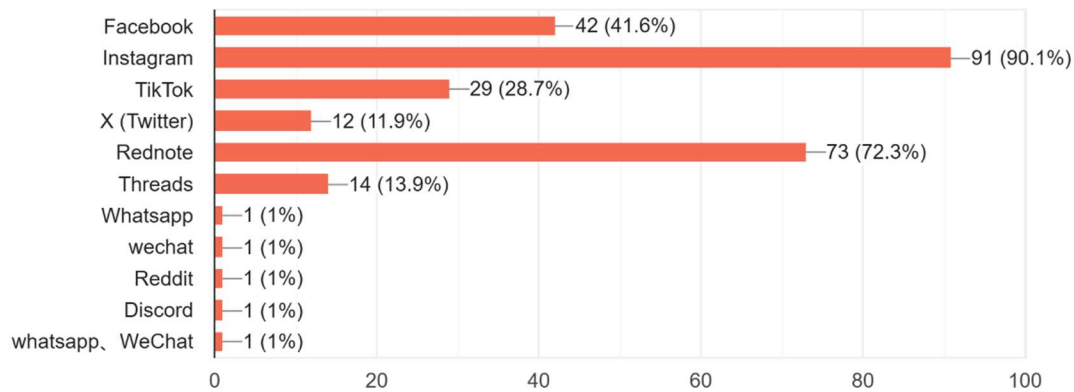
Figure 4.2.1 Social Media Platforms Frequently Used by the Respondents

Figure 4.2.1 illustrates the social media platforms most frequently used by students. The majority of respondents, 91 out of 101 (90.1%), indicated that Instagram is their preferred platform. This is followed by Rednote, which is used by 72.3% of participants. Facebook ranks third, with 41.6% of respondents using it regularly. TikTok is also a popular choice, with 28.7% of students reporting frequent usage, while Threads and Twitter are used by 23.9% and 11.9% of respondents, respectively. Additionally, a small percentage (5%) of students selected "Other" as their response, indicating that they frequently use alternative platforms such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Reddit, and Discord. This data highlights the varying preferences among students regarding social media usage.

4.2.2 How Many Hours Do You Spend on Social Media Daily?
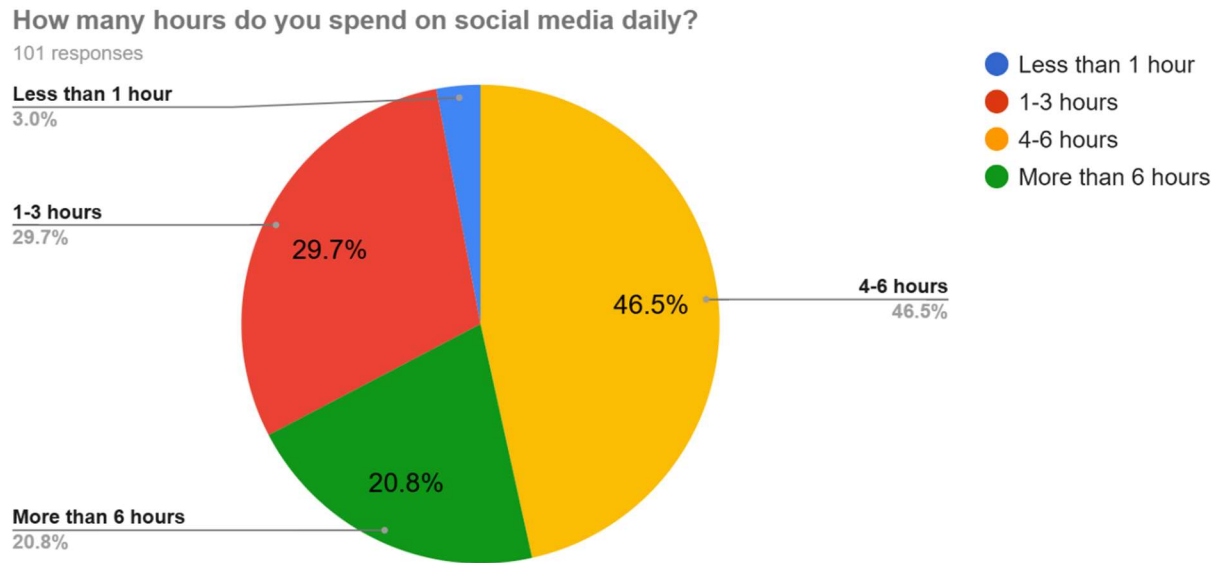
Figure 4.2.2 Hours of the Respondents Spend on Social Media Daily

Figure 4.2.2 presents the daily time spent by respondents on social media. The majority, 46.5%, spend approximately 4 to 6 hours per day on social media. A significant portion, 29.7%, reported using social media for 1 to 3 hours daily. Meanwhile, 20.8% of respondents indicated that they spend more than 6 hours on social media each day, suggesting a high level of engagement. In contrast, a small percentage (3%) reported spending less than 1 hour on social media daily.

4.2.3 What Is Your Primary Purpose for Using Social Media?
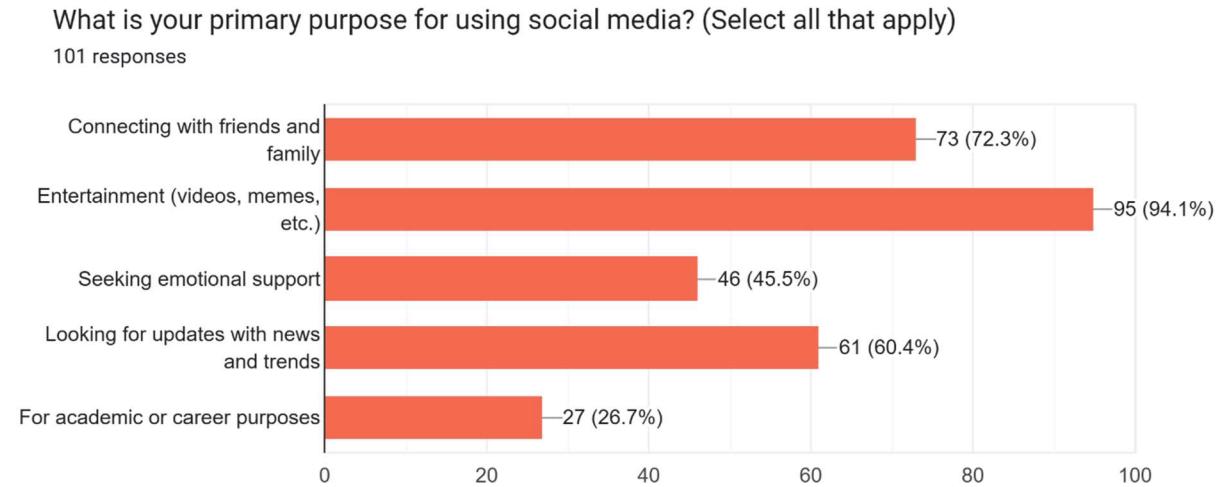
Figure 4.2.3 Primary Purpose of Using Social Media of Respondents

Figure 4.2.3 illustrates the primary purposes for which respondents use social media platforms. The most common reason, chosen by 94.1% of respondents, is entertainment. This is followed by connecting with friends and family, with 72.3% indicating this as their primary purpose. Additionally, 60.4% of respondents use social media to stay updated on news and trends. Seeking emotional support is another key reason, cited by 45.5% of participants. Meanwhile, 26.7% of respondents use social media for academic or career-related purposes.

4.2.4 I Have Received Emotional Support, Guidance, Or Advice from Individuals Or Communities On Social Media.

I have received emotional support, guidance, or advice from individuals or communities on social media .

101 responses

● Yes, frequently
● Yes, occasionally
● No, never

64.4%
8.9%
26.7%
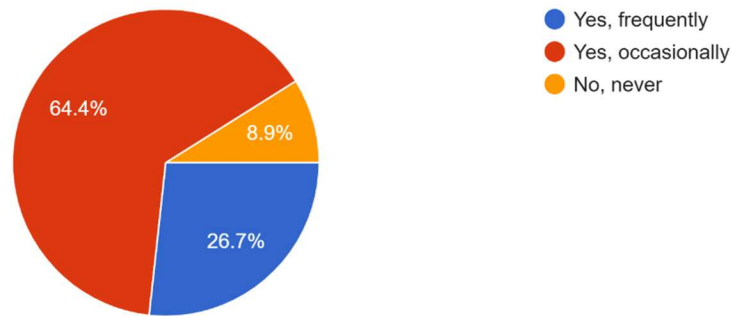
Figure 4.2.4 Have Received Emotional Support, Guidance, or Advice from Individuals or Communities on Social Media of Respondents

Figure 4.2.4 shows respondents' experiences in receiving emotional support, guidance, or advice from individuals or communities on social media. The majority, 64.4%, stated that they occasionally receive such support, while 26.7% reported receiving it frequently. A small percentage, 8.9%, indicated that they have never received emotional support through social media. In short. out of a total of 101 respondents, 92 agreed that they had used social media to get emotional support, guidance, or advice from individuals or communities. In contrast, only 9 respondents stated that they have never used social media for such purposes, which means they do not rely on it for emotional guidance or advice.

4.3 Perceived Social Support

4.3.1 Social Media Provides Me with Emotional Support When Needed

Social media provides me with emotional support when needed. (Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree –
Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree)

92 responses
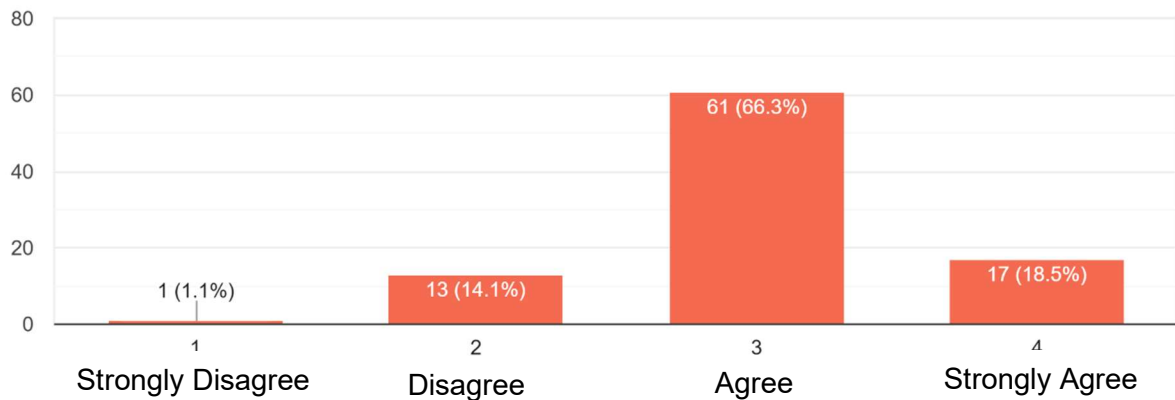
Figure 4.3.1 Social Media Provides Respondents Emotional Support When Needed

      Figure 4.3.1 presents the respondents' perceptions of whether social media provides them with emotional support when needed. For most respondents who have used social media for emotional support, guidance, or advice, 61 out of 92 respondents (66.3%) agreed with the statement. 18.5% strongly agreed, indicating that most respondents view social media as a source of emotional support. On the other hand, 14.1% of respondents disagreed, and a small percentage, 1.1%, strongly disagreed, suggesting that a minority do not perceive social media as a reliable platform for emotional support.

4.3.2 What Type of Social Media Content Do You Find Most Helpful for Emotional Support?

What type of social media content do you find most helpful for emotional support? (Select all that apply)

92 responses
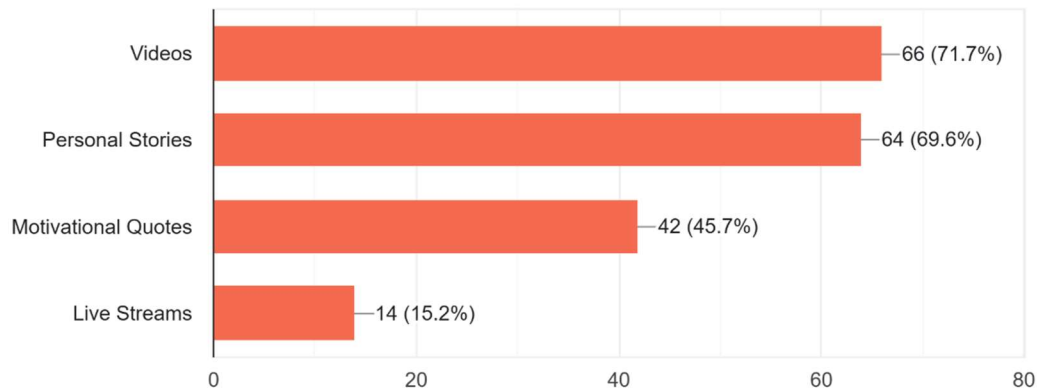
Figure 4.3.2 Most Helpful Social Media Content for Emotional Support of Respondent

The type of social media content that respondents find most helpful for emotional support is shown in Figure 4.3.2. The results indicate that videos are the most preferred form of content, with 71.7% of respondents selecting this option. Personal stories follow closely behind, representing 69.6% of responses. Additionally, 42 respondents (45.7%) find motivational quotes beneficial for emotional support, while a smaller portion, 15.2%, consider live streams to be helpful.

4.3.3 Which Type of Social Support You Have Get on Social Media?

Which type of social support you have get on social media? (Select all that apply)

92 responses
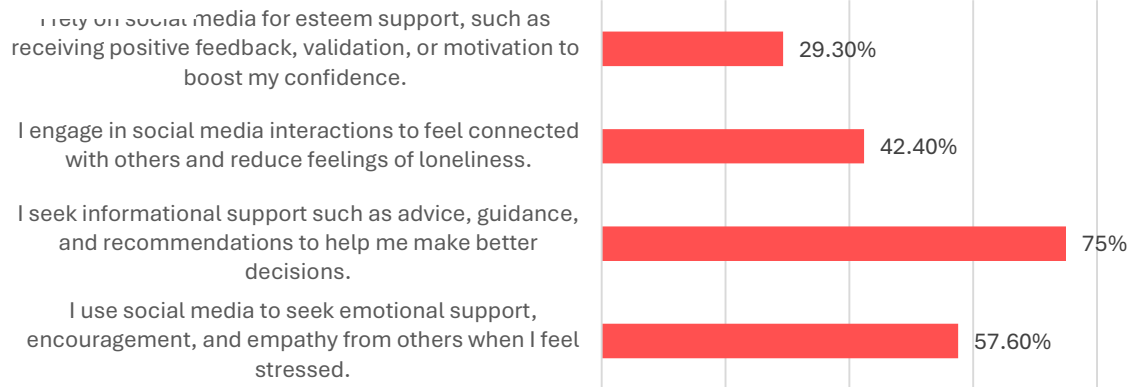
Figure 4.3.3 Type of Social Support Respondents Have Get on Social Media

Figure 4.3.3 presents the type of social support respondents have received through social media. The most common form of support sought is informational support, such as advice, guidance, and recommendations to help with decision-making, which received the highest response rate at 75%. This is followed by emotional support, including encouragement and empathy during stressful times, which was chosen by 57.6% of respondents. Social companionship, where respondents use social media to connect with others and reduce loneliness, received for 42.4% of responses. Lastly, esteem support, which involves receiving positive feedback, validation, or motivation to boost confidence, was the least selected category, with 29.3% of respondents reporting that they rely on it.

4.4 Using Social Media for Social Support

4.4.1 Have You Ever Encountered Negative Experiences or Feedback When Seeking Social Media Support?

Have you ever encountered negative experiences or feedback when seeking social media support? (Select all that apply)

92 responses
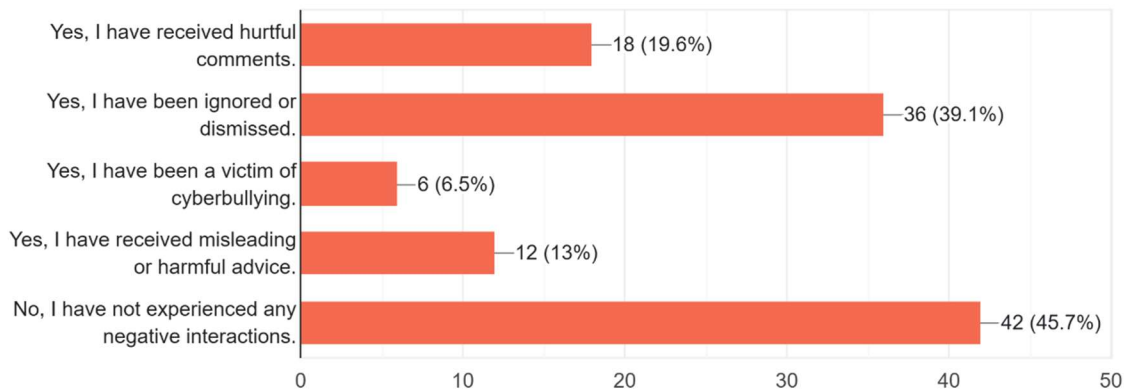
Figure 4.4.1 Negative Experiences or Feedback of Respondents When Seeking Social Media Support

Figure 4.4.1 examines whether the respondents have faced negative experiences or feedback while seeking support on social media platforms. The results show that more than half of the respondents had negative experiences. The most popular issue reported was being ignored or dismissed, with 39.1% of respondents experiencing this while seeking support. In other cases, 19.6% of respondents reported receiving hurtful comments, and 13% encountered misleading or harmful advice. A smaller percentage (6.5%) reported being victims of cyberbullying. On the other hand, 45.7% of respondents stated that they had never experienced negative interactions while seeking support on social media.

4.4.2 How Often Do You Feel that Social Media Support is Unhelpful?
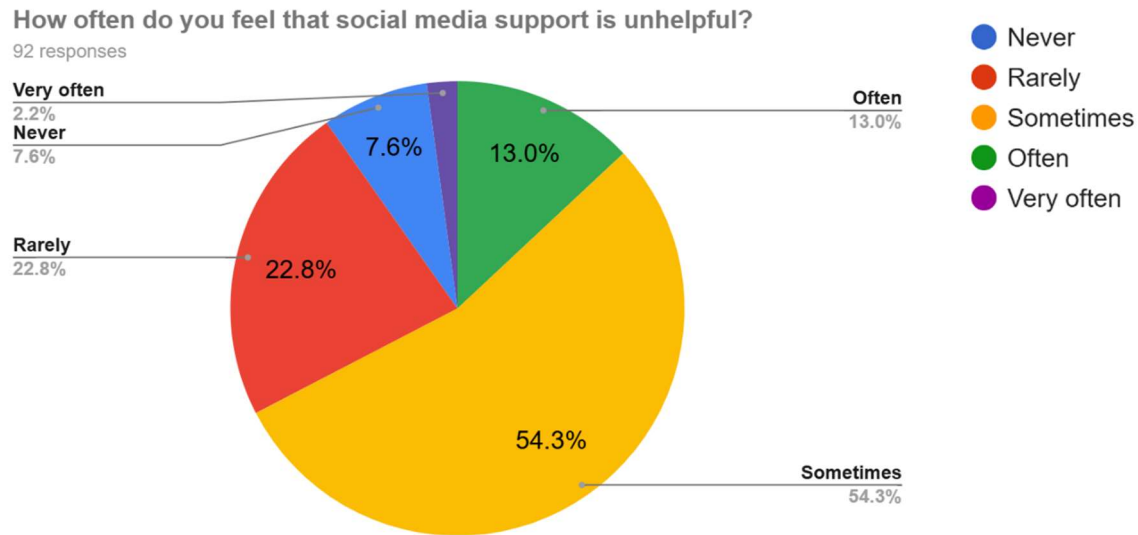
Figure 4.4.2 The Frequency of Respondents Feel Social Media Support is Unhelpful

The pie chart in Figure 4.4.2 illustrates the frequency with which respondents find social media support unhelpful. The majority, 50 out of 92 respondents (54.3%), reported that they sometimes feel social media support is unhelpful. Meanwhile, 22.8% of respondents stated that they rarely find social media support unhelpful. Additionally, 13% of respondents often feel that social media support does not help them, whereas 7.6% have never felt that social media support was unhelpful. A small percentage, 2.2%, reported that they very often find social media support unhelpful. In summary, 30.4% of respondents find social media support consistently helpful, while 15.2% consider it unhelpful. Meanwhile, 54.3% of respondents feel that social media support is situational, meaning they sometimes find it helpful and at other times unhelpful.

4.4.3 Do You Believe that Social Media Platforms Can Lead to Unrealistic Expectations about Mental Health Improvement?

Do you believe that social media platforms can lead to unrealistic expectations about mental health improvement? (Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree)

92 responses
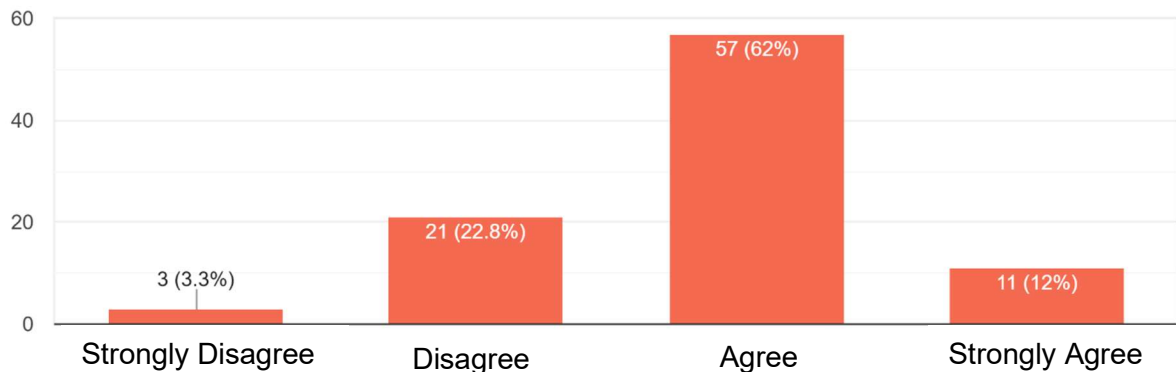
Figure 4.4.3 Unrealistic Mental Health Expectations on Social Media of Respondents

Figure 4.4.3 illustrates whether respondents believe that social media platforms can create unrealistic expectations about mental health improvement. The results indicate that the majority, 62%, agree with this statement, while 12% strongly agree. In contrast, 22.8% of respondents disagree, and a smaller percentage, 3.3%, strongly disagree.

4.5 Risks of Seeking Social Support on Social Media

4.5.1 When sharing personal issues on social media, how safe do you feel?

When sharing personal issues on social media, how safe do you feel? (Likert Scale: Not Safe at All –
Not Safe – Safe– Very Safe)

92 responses
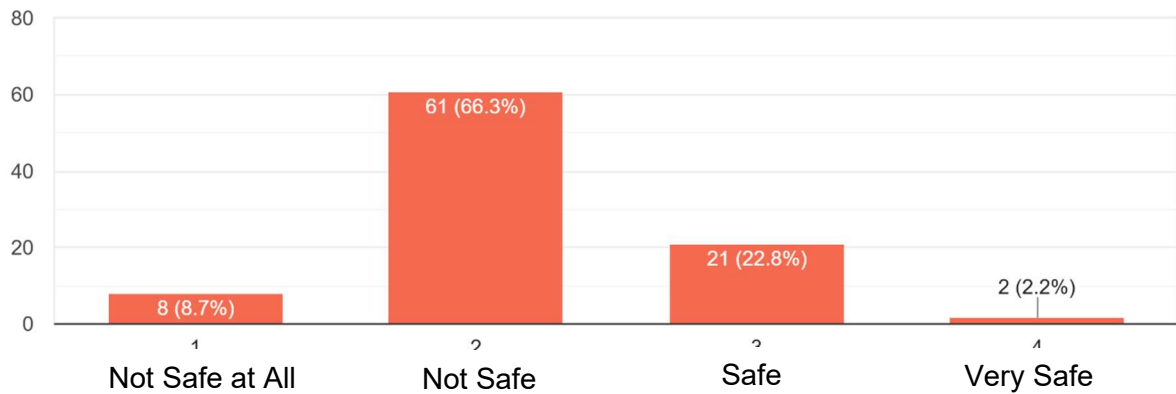
Figure 4.5.1 The Safety of Sharing Personal Issues on Social Media of Respondents

Figure 4.5.1 presents the respondents' perception of the safety of sharing personal issues on social media. A majority, 66.3%, feel that sharing personal issues on social media is not safe, while 22.8% believe it is safe. Additionally, 8.7% of respondents feel that it is not safe at all, and 2.2% feel very safe sharing personal issues on these platforms.

4.5.2 What is Your Biggest Fear for You While Using Social Media Platforms?
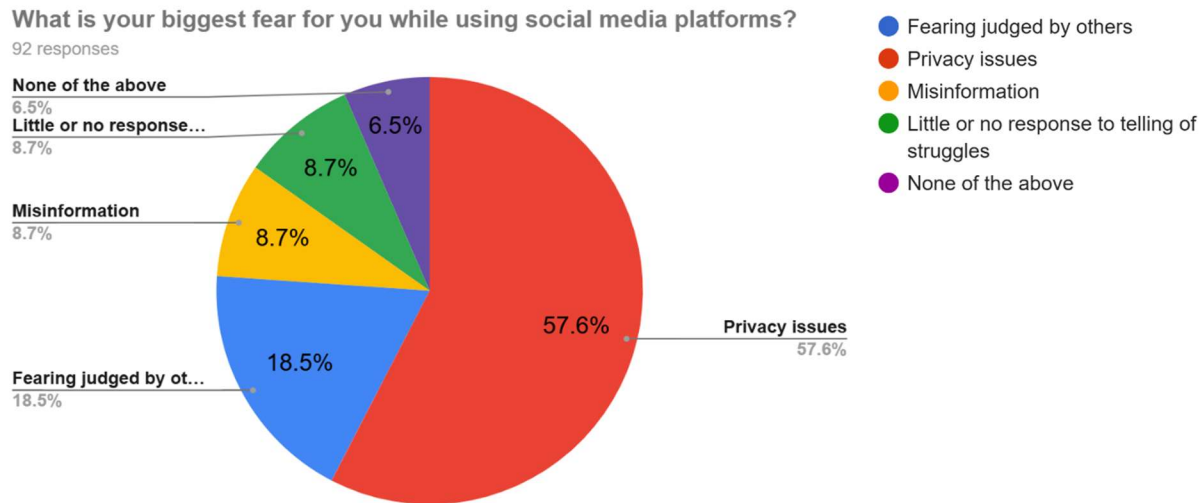
Figure 4.5.2 Biggest Fear While Using Social Media Platforms of Respondents

Figure 4.5.2 presents the biggest concerns of respondents while using social media platforms. The most common concern is privacy issues, with 57.6% of respondents indicating this as their primary fear. This is followed by the fear of being judged by others, which was reported by 18.5% of respondents. Both misinformation and receiving little to no response when sharing struggles were equally noted by 8.7% of respondents. Additionally, 6.5% of respondents stated that they do not have any of the listed concerns while using social media platforms.

4.5.3 Would You Recommend Someone Else Use Social Media to Seek for Social Support?

Would you recommend someone else use social media to seek for social support?
92 responses
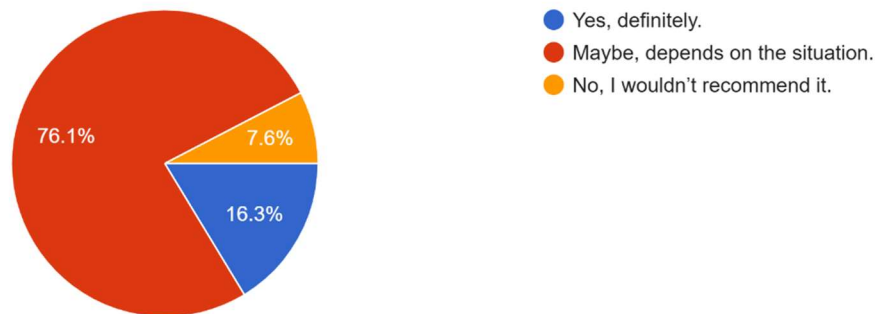
Figure 4.5.3 Respondents' Recommendations for Using Social Media to Seek Support

Figure 4.5.3 shows the respondents' recommendations on whether they would suggest using social media for social support. The majority, 76.1%, indicated that they would recommend it depending on the situation, while 16.3% would definitely recommend it. In contrast, 7.6% of respondents would not recommend using social media for social support.
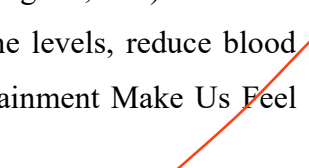
Chapter 5: Discussion & Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This discussion aims to answer the research question regarding the social media platforms commonly used by UTAR students to seek social support for managing stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Additionally, it examines how UTAR students perceive the effectiveness of these platforms as a source of support for addressing mental health concerns. This research explores the role of social media platforms in helping students cope with stress and anxiety. Specifically, it aims to identify which social media platforms UTAR students use to seek social support when facing stress, anxiety, or mental health issues, as well as the specific ways these platforms are utilized for this purpose. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) explains how individuals choose media to fulfill personal needs (Sichach, 2024). It also provides a valuable framework for understanding why students turn to social media when they are experiencing stress or anxiety (Zhang et al., 2023). UGT also aligns with the results of this research. A quantitative research method was employed as a survey, which collected 101 valid responses. This chapter presents the key findings in detail, evaluates the effectiveness of the findings in addressing the research questions, outlines the study's limitations, and draws the overall conclusion of the research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The results presented in Chapter 4 align with the UGT, which emphasizes that individuals actively use the media to fulfill their personal needs. The questionnaire explored both the purpose and frequency of social media use among UTAR students. Findings revealed that the majority of students, 94.1%, use social media primarily for entertainment, with Instagram (90.1%) being the most frequently used platform. Entertainment is an activity designed to keep an audience's attention and interest, or to entertain and please them (Longdom Publishing SL, n.d.). Research has shown that consuming entertaining content can lower stress hormone levels, reduce blood pressure, and positively impact vascular function (Why Film and Entertainment Make Us Feel Good, 2021).

Moreover, the findings also revealed that around 66.3% of UTAR students agree that social media provides them with emotional support when needed. As much as 91.1% of UTAR students reported that they use social media to seek guidance, advice, or emotional reassurance. This indicates that students use social media platforms for a specific purpose, which is to fulfill their emotional needs. According to the UGT, users are considered active participants who intentionally engage with media to satisfy personal needs (Vinney, 2024). The behavior of UTAR students aligns with this concept, as they actively turn to social media to meet their emotional or affective needs. As noted by Vinney (2024), affective needs refer to the desire for emotional experiences, such as comfort, empathy, or aesthetic enjoyment.

UGT effectively explains the behavior of UTAR students, as reflected in the questionnaire findings. Students reported using social media platforms for academic and career purposes, staying connected with family and friends, entertainment, emotional support, and keeping up with news and trends. These uses align closely with the five core needs identified in UGT: cognitive needs, affective needs, personal identity, social interaction and integration, and tension release.

5.2 RQ 1: What social media platforms do UTAR students commonly use to seek social support for managing stress, anxiety, or other mental health issues?

Social media has become a significant trend in today's society, with individuals using different platforms based on their personal preferences and needs. According to the survey results, 46.5% of UTAR students spend between 4 to 6 hours per day on social media, and 90.1% reported using Instagram daily. Additionally, 45.5% of students indicated that they use social media to seek emotional support. This suggests that a large number of students turn to Instagram as a platform to find emotional support when dealing with stress, anxiety, or other mental health concerns. This aligns with the information-sharing gratifications because the media provides users with a sense of accomplishment when they share valuable information with others.

Besides that, Rednote is the second most frequently used social media platform among UTAR students for seeking social support, with 72.3% indicating regular use. According to Treisman (2025), Rednote is primarily known for its content on travel, makeup, fashion, and shopping, but it also allows users to share short videos and engage in live chats. UTAR students

not only use Rednote for entertainment but also for consuming motivational content. This aligns with the affective needs because the media serves as a source of pleasure and emotional fulfilment, allowing the audience to experience joy and satisfy personal desires. Videos and personal stories shared on the platform offer encouragement and emotional support, helping students manage stress and anxiety by creating a sense of connection and inspiration.

To sum up, the social media platforms most frequently used by UTAR students to seek social support are Instagram and Rednote. Students often watch motivational videos and personal stories on these platforms, which reflect shared experiences and emotions (Joelwarren, 2024). This type of content helps foster a sense of trust and connection, making students feel understood. As a result, it contributes to reducing stress and anxiety, ultimately helping them manage their mental health more effectively.

5.3 RQ 2: Do UTAR students perceive social media platforms as an effective source of social support for managing stress, anxiety, or other mental health issues?

According to Yue et al. (2023), social media platforms can help reduce feelings of loneliness and enhance an individual's overall life satisfaction. These platforms are also effective in meeting various personal needs. Ashar (2024) supports this further by stating that social media provides a space for users to connect with others and express their thoughts openly. Through these interactions, users can strengthen their relationships and receive emotional support from one another, emphasizing the role of social media as a valuable tool for mental well-being and social connection. The experience of the UTAR students in using social media supports such an indication.

In this research, 84.5% of UTAR students agreed that social media platforms provide them with emotional support when needed. Additionally, 76.1% of students stated that they would recommend social media as a source of social support to others, depending on the situation, while 16.3% would definitely recommend it. These findings indicate that students not only benefit personally from using social media to manage stress and anxiety but also recognize its potential to help others. This highlights the perceived effectiveness of social media platforms as a valuable
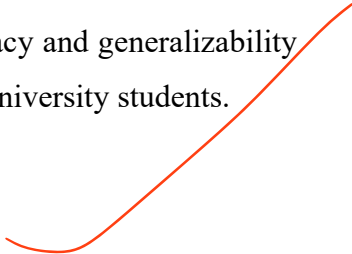
tool for emotional support and mental well-being among UTAR students. Indirectly, UTAR students show their trust in the effectiveness of social media for emotional well-being.

Moreover, the results indicated that 45.7% of UTAR students did not encounter any negative experiences or feedback when seeking support on social media. Although some students reported facing harmful comments or being ignored, many of them continue to use and even recommend social media platforms as a source of social support. This suggests that despite occasional negative interactions, the overall perceived benefits of using social media for emotional support outweigh the drawbacks for most students.

The findings of this study indicate that UTAR students perceive social media platforms as an effective source of social support. A significant number of students agreed that social media provides them with emotional support, and many expressed their willingness to recommend these platforms to others facing stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges. Instagram and Rednote were identified as the most frequently used platforms, where students often engage with relatable content such as motivational videos and personal stories. These types of content create a sense of connection and trust, making it easier for students to receive the emotional support they need.

5.4 Research Limitation

According to Ross and Zaidi (2019), research limitations refer to the weaknesses or limitations within the design of a study that may affect the accuracy of the findings. The study was conducted only among UTAR students, which limits the ability to generalize the findings to a broader population of university students in Malaysia. The results may not accurately reflect the views or behaviors of students from other universities who may have different backgrounds, academic environments, or social experiences. To address the limitation, future research can be improved by expanding the sample size and scope to include university students from different institutions and regions. This broader approach would enhance the accuracy and generalizability of the findings, making them more applicable to the wider population of university students.
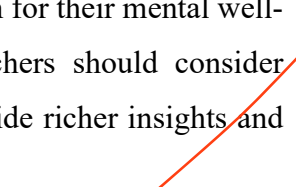
5.5 Recommendation Areas for Future Research

Expanding the sample size and including students from various universities can improve the representativeness of the results, and no longer only reflect the UTAR students. For example, increasing the sample across different institutions would offer broader perspectives. Expanding the sample size would provide a wider range of perspectives, especially since students come from diverse backgrounds. This approach would strengthen the reliability of the research and allow the results to be more representative and applicable to a broader population of university students, rather than being limited to those from a single institution.

5.6 Conclusion

In a nutshell, this study focuses on identifying which social media platforms are frequently used by UTAR students to manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Instagram and Rednote emerged as the most commonly used platforms, where students often watch motivational videos and personal stories to help cope with their emotional challenges. These types of content provide a sense of trust and relatability, making it easier for students to connect with the messages and apply the coping strategies in their own lives. Real-life stories tend to be more impactful and emotionally engaging, which helps motivate students to take positive action for their mental well-being. To enhance the depth and accuracy of future findings, researchers should consider expanding the sample size and incorporating interviews. This would provide richer insights and allow the results to be more representative of the wider student population.

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Appendices

Appendix A – RESEARCH PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

Faculty of Creative Industries
Research Project Evaluation Form

Supervisor / Reviewer	**:**	Dr. Soon Thean Bee
Student's Name	**:**	Gan Ler Ern
Student ID	**:**	2102985
Programmme	**:**	Bachelor of Corporate Communications (HONOURS)
Research Project Title	**:**	Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Social Support Among UTAR Students

Instruction:
Please score each descriptor based on the scale provided below:
(1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good and 5 = very good)

Abstract (5%)	Score	Convert
1. Adequately describes the entire project		
2. States clearly the research problem		
3. Describe briefly and clearly the approach/methodology of the study		
4. Highlights the outcomes/significance of the study		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum / 4)		
Remark:		

Introduction (10%)	Score	Convert
1. Fitting introduction to the subject of the study		
2. Concepts/definitions well explained		
3. Scope of study well described		
4. Statement of the research problem/research questions		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum / 2)		
Remark:		

Literature Review (15%)	Score	Convert
1. Latest research/work done in the area of study		
2. Explication of theories used		
3. Constructive discussion on publications in relation to the topic of study		
Sum		

	Score	Convert
Subtotal (sum *1)		
Remark:		
Methodology (10%)	**Score**	**Convert**
1. Research method explained clearly(inclusive of clear explanation of sampling techniques used, where applicable only)		
2. Appropriate research design/framework/questionnaire		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
Findings & Analysis (20%)	**Score**	**Convert**
1. Data analysis is appropriate		
2. Data analysis is detailed		
3. Pertinent use of diagrams/tables/graphs, correlated with content/Analysis supported by evidence		
4. Clear interpretation, well explained		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
Discussion & Conclusion (15%)	**Score**	**Convert**
1. Appropriate; related to the objective of the study		
2. Shortcomings of the study & recommendations for future study		
3. Conclusion is apt, clear		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
Language & Organization (15%)	**Score**	**Convert**
1. Correct use of English and technical language		
2. APA format is followed		
3. Comprehensiveness of content and presentation		
Sum		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		

Presentation (10%)	Score	Convert
1. Ability to answer questions from the panel (4 Marks)		
2. Presentation delivery is clear (4 Marks)		
3. Body language (2 Marks)		
Subtotal (sum * 1)		
Remark:		
	TOTAL	100%
Penalty: maximum 10 marks for late submission or poor attendance for consultation with supervisor		
	FINAL MARK	100%

**Overall Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature:_____ **Date:** _____

<u>Notes:</u>
(1) Sum: The sum of scores for the chapter
(2) Subtotal: Convert scores from the sum of scores for the chapter
(3) Total: The summation of all subtotal score

**It's compulsory for the supervisor/reviewer to give the overall comments for the research project with A & F gradi

Appendix B – Email from UTAR about Mental Health Leave (MHL)

LER ERN GAN <lerern25@1utar.my>

Mental Health Leave (MHL) for UTAR Students

Announcements <announcements@utar.edu.my>   Thu, Aug 1, 2024 at 4:06 PM
To: student@1utar.my
Cc: Nyuk Leung Loh <lohnl@utar.edu.my>, wonglf@utar.edu.my

Dear UTAR Students,

UTAR recognises the importance of mental health and is dedicated to supporting the well-being of all students.

We are pleased to announce the implementation of Student Mental Health Leave (MHL) to support your mental well-being. MHL allows you to take a break to create a space, both physically and emotionally, that allows you to step back from your regular routines to focus on restoring your mental well-being. Students can apply for MHL through the **Hi-Hive Community App** which should be **submitted on the same day** as the intended leave. Upon successful application, the applicant will receive an email containing self-help resources and details about Centre for Healthy Minds and Wellbeing (CHMW) counselling services.

MHL Details:

- **Application**: Via *hi-hive* Community App which should be submitted on the same day as the intended leave, no supporting documents are needed*.

  If you have to apply for Mental Health Leave after the intended leave day, please apply to the Faculty for consideration. Such an application must be submitted not later than three days from the intended leave date.

- **Leave Entitlement****:

  - Long trimesters (Jan, May/June) / semester (for MBBS only): Up to 5 days
  - Short trimester (Oct): Up to 3 days

  ***If a Mental Health Leave application reaches 3 days in a long trimester or 2 days in a short trimester, your Academic Advisor (AA), Head of Department (HoD), and Faculty Dean will be notified to provide further assistance.*

- **Exclusions**: MHL **cannot be taken** during final exams, assignment deadlines, tests, presentations, industrial training, work-based learning, or FYP deadlines. For these exclusions, students **must apply for medical leave with a valid medical certificate**.

We appreciate the efforts and participation of the staff, SRC and students in collaborating with the University for the implementation of MHL.

MHL would be implemented starting this trimester/semester on 1 August 2024. The *hi-hive* Community App for MHL is on a trial basis and we welcome feedback for improvement. Please share your feedback with us at *dsa@utar.edu.my*. The MHL implementation is also subjected to attendance requirements of the Faculty and professional bodies.

Thank you for your commitment to making UTAR a better place for all students.

Office of the Registrar
1 August 2024

Appendix C – Survey Questionnaire

Title: A survey on UTAR Students' Perceived Social Support on Social Media Platforms.

Description:

Hello and Good Day,

I'm Gan Ler Ern from the Bachelor of Corporate Communication (HONS) program at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Welcome to our survey on UTAR Students' Perceived Social Support on Social Media Platforms. Your participation is highly valued and will contribute significantly to understanding how students perceive social support from social media platforms.

The primary goal of this survey is to identify the social media platforms UTAR students use for social support during stress, anxiety, or mental health challenges. Your feedback will help to improve online support systems and enhance awareness of mental health resources.

Completing this survey should take approximately 5 minutes. We kindly request that you allocate some uninterrupted time to provide well-considered responses. There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your honest opinions. Your responses will remain **anonymous** and will be used for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your participation!

Yours sincerely,

Gan Ler Ern

lerern25@1utar.my

1. Email

_____

Section A: Demographics Profile

2. Gender

◯ Male

◯ Female

3. Age (Base in 2025)

◯ 17 – 19

◯ 20 – 22

◯ 23 – 25

◯ 26 – 28

4. Level of Education

◯ Foundation

◯ Undergraduate

◯ Postgraduate

Section B: Social Media Usage

This section aims to know the social media platforms that users usually use.

5. Which social media platforms do you use frequently? *(Select all that apply)*

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ TikTok

☐ X (Twitter)

☐ Rednote

☐ Threads

☐ Other: _____

6. How many hours do you spend on social media daily?

◯ Less than 1 hour

◯ 1 – 3 hours

◯ 4 – 6 hours

◯ More than 6 hours

7. What is your primary purpose for using social media? *(Select all that apply)*

☐ Connecting with friends and family

☐ Entertainment (videos, memes, etc.)

☐ Seeking emotional support

☐ Looking for updates with news and threads

☐ For academic or career purposes

8. I have received emotional support, guidance, or advice from individuals or communities on social media.

◯ Yes, frequently   (Skip to Q9)

◯ Yes, occasionally   (Skip to Q9)

◯ No, never   (Go to submit)

Section C: Perceived Social Support

This section is to know what type of support users get on social media.

9. Social media provides me with emotional support when needed.

(Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree)

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

10. What type of social media content do you find most helpful for emotional support? *(Select all that apply)*

☐ Videos

☐ Personal Stories

☐ Motivational Quotes

☐ Live Streams

11. Which type of social support you have get on social media? *(Select all that apply)*

☐ I use social media to seek emotional support, encouragement, and empathy from others when I feel stressed.

☐ I seek informational support such as advice, guidance, and recommendations to help me make better decisions.

☐ I engage in social media interactions to feel connected with others and reduce feelings of loneliness.

☐ I rely on social media for esteem support, such as receiving positive feedback, validation, or motivation to boost my confidence.

Section D: Using Social Media for Social Support

This section is to understand the problems that users face when using social media for social support.

12. Have you ever encountered negative experiences or feedback when seeking social media support? (*Select all that apply*)

◯ Yes, I have received hurtful comments.

◯ Yes, I have been ignored or dismissed.

◯ Yes, I have been a victim of cyberbullying.

◯ Yes, I have received misleading or harmful advice.

◯ No, I have not experienced any negative interactions.

13. How often do you feel that social media support is unhelpful?

◯ Never

◯ Rarely

◯ Sometimes

◯ Often

◯ Very often

14. Do you believe that social media platforms can lead to unrealistic expectations about mental health improvement?

(Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Agree – Strongly Agree)

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Section E: Risks of Seeking Social Support on Social Media

This section is to know about the concerns of the users when using social media.

15. When sharing personal issues on social media, how safe do you feel?

(Likert Scale: Not safe at all – Somewhat unsafe – Somewhat safe – Very safe)

	1	2	3	4	
Not safe at all	○	○	○	○	Very safe

16. What is your biggest fear for you while using social media platforms?

○ Fearing judged by others

○ Privacy issues

○ Misinformation

○ Little or no response to telling of struggles

○ None of the above

17. Would you recommend someone else use social media to seek for social support?

○ Yes, definitely.

○ Maybe, depends on the situation.

○ No, I wouldn't recommend it.

Appendix D - Turnitin Report

FYP- Gan Ler ern

ORIGINALITY REPORT

11%	11%	4%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman Student Paper	4%
2	Submitted to William Penn University Student Paper	3%
3	eprints.utar.edu.my Internet Source	1%
4	Submitted to SP Jain School of Global Management Student Paper	1%
5	www.utar.edu.my Internet Source	<1%
6	stmlportal.net Internet Source	<1%
7	ipindexing.com Internet Source	<1%
8	Fong Peng Chew. "Global Dialogue on Media Dynamics, Trends and Perspectives on Public Relations and Communication", CRC Press, 2025	<1%

Publication

9   Submitted to ESoft Metro Campus, Sri Lanka   <1%
Student Paper

10   Adela Chen, Kristina Lemmer. "Seeking social support on social media: a coping perspective", Internet Research, 2024   <1%
Publication

11   repository.up.ac.za   <1%
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Exclude bibliography   On