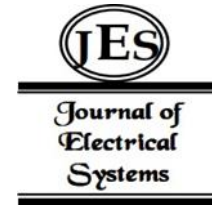


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Facebook Addiction among Millennials: A Conceptual Model



Abstract: - With the advent of the social media especially Facebook has been used widely by millennials in Malaysia for social networking purposes. The dramatic increase in the use of this social networking site has also inadvertently led to Facebook addiction among the millennials. The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual model of Facebook addiction, its antecedents and consequences. We began with a review of the literature to develop a preliminary conceptual model with their accompanying propositions. We have propositioned the link between narcissism fear of missing out, Facebook addiction, subjective well-being and academic performance. We hope to contribute to the literature on Facebook addiction from a developing country perspective and also the specific context of millennial users.

Keywords: Facebook addiction, millennials, conceptual model, university students, Malaysia

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of social networking sites (SNS) has been increasing dramatically over the past few years. As of March 2019, Facebook boasts having more than 2.8 billion active users spanning a global reach through 70 translations (Statistic Brain, 2019). Despite being founded in 2004, it grew rapidly to become the world's most popular social networking site and one of the fastest-growing company in history (Kirkpatrick, 2010). In Malaysia, Facebook ranks ahead of Twitter, LinkedIn and Tumblr as the top social networking site in the country (comScore, 2013). In fact, Malaysia is among the top 15 countries with the highest Facebook penetration at 97.3% out of 24.6 million social media users (Statistics Brain, 2019).

Majority of Malaysian Facebook users consist of the younger generation. Statistics compiled by the analytics Socialbakers revealed that the largest group of Facebook users is currently the 18–24-year-olds (33.3%) followed by those aged 25-34 (32%) (Socialbakers, 2019). These two significant age groups fall under the Millennial population, also known as Generation Y. According to Strauss and Howe (2000), Millennials are those born between the years 1982 to 2004. Nevertheless, there are no precise dates as to when the generation starts and ends. Researchers and commentators generally use birth years ranging from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. By Strauss and Howe's (2000) definition, Millennials today would be those who fall within the ages of 10 to 32. They would comprise adolescents, college/university students and young, contemporary working adults. This is also a generation of people who have been exposed to technology (computers and the Internet) since childhood (Djamashi et al., 2010). Consequently, they have an inherent aptitude and high skill levels when using new technologies (Jones et al., 2010).

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND STUDY RATIONALE

Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007) found that Millennial college students use technology much more than any previous generational cohorts. Comparatively, they appear to be more comfortable embracing Web 2.0 technologies (Burhanna et al., 2009) being involved in online activities such as text messaging, social networking, blogging, podcasting and downloading. Naturally, Facebook is popular among students as almost all (85 to 99%) college/university students have a profile on Facebook (Ellison et al., 2007; Hargittai, 2008; Hew, 2011; Cheung et al., 2010). Most students would agree that Facebook has become indispensable in their lives to the point that

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they cannot live without it instead of treating it merely as a social networking site (Balci & Gölcü, 2013). According to Alabi (2013) this frenzy is gradually leaning toward addiction as some students cannot do without accessing their Facebook accounts within every passing hour. The time and attention that undergraduates are devoting to Facebook is becoming increasingly alarming because students can now access their Facebook accounts on their mobile devices. As a result, when lectures are going on, students can often be found chatting with friends online or responding to Facebook notifications at the detriment of their academic pursuit.

It was reported in the Malaysian local newspaper *The Star* that many Malaysians have become addicted to Facebook as they continue to spend more hours and make more 'friends' on it (Aruna, 2012). Malaysians have been found to have the greatest number of friends on Facebook in the world (*The Star*, 2010) with an average of 233 Facebook 'friends' per user (Chelliah, 2013). This is even higher than the global average number of friends per Facebook user which is 130 (Statistic Brain, 2014). Sadly, in Malaysia Facebook addiction is a problem that goes largely undetected because most addicts do not realise or want to admit that they have a problem. Furthermore, there is no established instrument to properly assess or detect the presence of Facebook addiction. The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale developed by Andreassen et al., (2012) is by far the most widely publicised scale in its area although not validated well and the Social Media Disorder scale (Einjnden et al., 2016) a much more comprehensive and newer scale which will be the focus of this study.

Society here also does not view Facebook addiction as a real problem because they do not perceive it as harmful as the addiction to tobacco or drugs (Aruna, 2012). However, the reality is that Facebook addiction is a problem that prevents the addict from going on with his/her daily activities. It can potentially cause anxiety as well as depression and therefore needs to be treated like any other addiction. The gravity of Facebook addiction among the Millennial undergraduate population is an even more serious concern considering that Millennial students are fervent users of technology. Stein (2013) described Millennials as narcissistic, over-confident, entitled, lazy and known for constantly holding up cameras, taking pictures of themselves and posting them online. According to researchers (e.g. Bergman et al., 2011; Malikhao & Servaes, 2011; Stein, 2013), such self-centred traits within the Millennials are exacerbated by technological platforms such as Facebook, causing Millennials to have higher rates of narcissism, materialism and technology addiction in their lives (Stein, 2013). High levels of addiction towards Facebook would likely result in lower subjective well-being and lower academic performance among the Millennial students. In short, Millennial undergraduates are at a crucial point in their lives. Soon after they graduate, they will enter the workforce. At this stage, if they are Facebook addicts during their formative years in the university, it is very likely that they will bring those problematic behaviours into their working lives. This would be detrimental to the country's aspirations of building high quality and performance-driven human capital. Thus, the research objectives are many-fold as follows 1. to identify the role of psychobiological traits like narcissism and FOMO as predictors of Facebook addiction among the Millennial undergraduates, 2. to examine the impact of Facebook addiction on Millennial undergraduates' subjective well-being, 3. to examine the impact of Facebook addiction on Millennial undergraduates' mental health symptoms and 4. to determine the impact of Facebook addiction on the academic performance of the Millennial undergraduates.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Facebook and Millennials

Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become a ubiquitous part of the lives of young adults (Hunt et al., 2018). The excessive use of new technologies such as online SNS is particularly addictive to young people (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Having grown up with digital technology and social media, the Millennials (born between 1980 and 2000) are such fervent users of SNS. They not only embrace multiple technological modes of self-expression but also fuse their social lives into hi-tech gadgets. The increased popularity of SNS could be attributed partly to the fact that SNS allow users to become the producers and stars of their productions as they create their own profiles and observe those of others (Pempek et al., 2009). Facebook is a prime example of the exponential growth of SNS and also the most popular SNS among Millennials. Three quarters of the Millennial generation have created a profile on Facebook while one-in-five have posted a video of themselves online on YouTube (Malikhao & Servaes, 2011). In a study undertaken in late 2010 on 36,950 students from 126 US universities and one Canadian university it was revealed that out of the 90% of students who used SNS, 97% revealed that they used Facebook. This 97% reported logging on and using the site daily (Smith & Caruso, 2010). In a separate study, students reported devoting a lot of time to Facebook, spending an average of over 1 hour and 40 minutes a day on the site (Junco, 2011). In Hew's (2011) study, students were found to have spent an average of 10 to 60 minutes per day on Facebook in order to maintain existing relationships. Though some students also use Facebook to facilitate learning (Bosch, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009) it was found that only 4% of messages posted on the Wall or Timeline are related to academic purposes (Selwyn, 2009).

3.2 Facebook addiction

People addicted to using SNS experience similar symptoms like those who suffer from addictions to substances or other behaviors (Echeburua & Corral, 2010). Joanna Lipari, a clinical psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles commented that Facebook addicts usually (1) lose sleep as they spend entire nights logged on to the site, (2) spend more than an hour a day on Facebook, (3) become obsessed with old flames that they reconnect with on Facebook, (4) ignore work in favour of Facebook, (5) break out in a cold sweat at the thought of getting off Facebook (“Are you a”, 2009). Facebook Addiction has been generally accepted as a form of disorder because addiction criteria such as neglect of personal life, mental preoccupation, escapism, mood modifying experiences, tolerance, and concealing the addictive behaviour, appear to be present in some people who use SNS excessively (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). According to Griffiths (2000; 2005), all forms of behavioural addictions consist of a number of distinct common components. For instance, an individual can be classified as a Facebook addict if any of his/her behaviour meets the following addiction components:

1. **Saliency:** A particular activity, such as Facebook use, becomes the most important activity in the subject’s life and dominates his or her thinking;
2. **Mood modification:** The particular activity modifies or improves the subject’s mood;
3. **Tolerance:** Increasing amounts of the particular activity or time are required to achieve the desired effects;
4. **Withdrawal:** Unpleasant feelings, state, or physical effects (e.g. moody, irritable) when the particular activity is discontinued or suddenly reduced;
5. **Conflict:** The particular activity causes conflicts between addicts and those around them (e.g. family members or friends), with work/education and other activities (e.g. sleep or studies), or within individuals themselves; and
6. **Relapse:** The tendency to revert to earlier patterns of the activity after abstinence of control.

3.3 Narcissism

People with high levels of narcissism are known to be exhibitionistic, attention-seeking, and are acutely concerned about their physical appearances (Vazire et al., 2008). They generally hold an inflated view of themselves believe they are special and unique, and expect special treatment from others while believing they owe little or nothing in return (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Millon, 1996). Raskin and Terry (1988) identified seven factors that constitute narcissism namely authority, superiority, exhibitionism, entitlement, vanity, exploitativeness and self-sufficiency. Due to their inflated view of themselves, narcissists tend to lack empathy and have few and close relationships, yet they strongly desire social contact with others. This is because other people serve as their primary source of admiration and attention. Narcissists also have problems regulating their self-esteem therefore they must rely on external sources for affirmation (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). They engage in frequent use of Facebook for the mere fact that Facebook functions as an outlet for them to engage in a variety of ways to showcase their exhibitionism and attention-seeking behavior (Buss & Chiodo, 1991), as well as to assert dominance and competitiveness in social situations (Emmons, 1984; Raskin & Terry, 1988). This is usually done through posting photos and writing status updates on Facebook.

3.4 Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

When people are anxious about relationships, they likely fear being socially excluded. Fear of missing out (FOMO) is a fear that other people are having fun without you (Przybylski et al., 2013). FOMO has been linked to increased social media use (Przybylski et al., 2013), as well as to problematic smartphone use (Elhai et al., 2016). However, to our knowledge, no research has specifically examined the relationship between FOMO and social media addiction except the work of Blackwell et al. (2017).

3.5 Subjective well-being, Mental Health Symptoms and academic performance

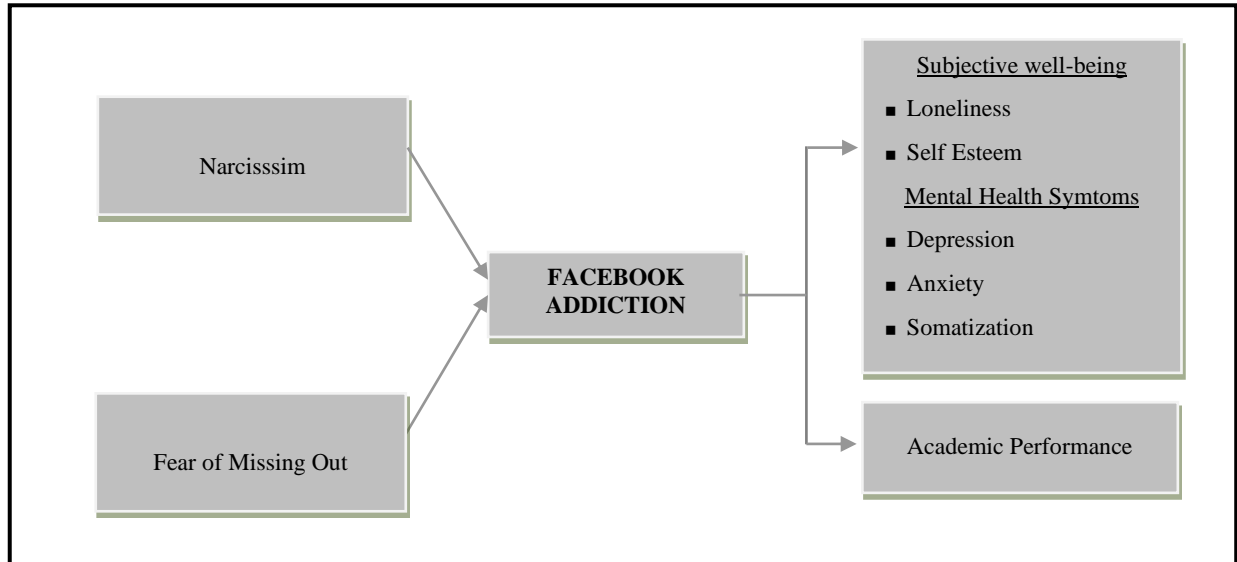
Self-reported Facebook and Instagram usage have been found to correlate positively with symptoms of depression, both directly and indirectly (Donnelly & Kuss, 2016; Lup, Trub, & Rosenthal, 2015; Rosen et al., 2013; Tandoc, Ferrucci, & Duffy, 2015;). Higher usage of Facebook has been found to be associated with lower self-esteem cross-sectionally (Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011) as well as greater loneliness (Song et al., 2014). Higher usage of Instagram is correlated with body image issues (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013). In a large population-based study, Twenge and colleagues (Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2017) found that time spent on screen activities was significantly correlated with more depressive symptoms and risk for suicide-related outcomes.

Time spent using Facebook while studying or during classes was found to have a negative implication on overall college GPA (Junco, 2012; Junco & Cotton, 2012) mainly because students would have lower levels of engagement in their studies when they are ardently multitasking or using Facebook during classes as well as during times when they are studying. This fact is supported by researchers like Kirschner and Karpinski (2010)

whose findings showed that Facebook users reported having lower GPAs (Ramayah et al., 2017) as they spend fewer hours per week studying than non-users.

Based on the literature reviewed above we developed a conceptual model shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 depicts the relationships between narcissism fear of missing out, Facebook addiction, subjective well-being and academic performance.

Figure 1: Proposed research model



P1: The higher the narcissism, the higher the addiction towards Facebook among Millennial undergraduates.

P2: The higher the fear of missing out, the higher the addiction towards Facebook among Millennial undergraduates.

P3: Addiction to Facebook is positively related to loneliness among Millennial undergraduates.

P4: Addiction to Facebook is negatively related to self-esteem among Millennial undergraduates.

P5: Addiction to Facebook is positively related to depression among Millennial undergraduates.

P6: Addiction to Facebook is positively related to anxiety among Millennial undergraduates.

P7: Addiction to Facebook is positively related to somatization among Millennial undergraduates.

P8: Addiction to Facebook has a negative impact on academic performance of Millennial undergraduates.

IV. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The population for this study consists of all undergraduates between the ages of 19 to 24 from 2 public universities (IPTA - USM and UNIMAS) and 1 private universities (IPTS - UTAR) residing in the university campuses. The subjects for this study would be all undergraduates from Year 1 to Year 4 both from the Arts and Sciences field of study who use Facebook in their daily lives. This study will not include those who are postgraduate students and those undergraduates who do not use Facebook. We have to exclude this group because postgraduates are older, and they have different use of the Facebook. We will select the respondents from 3 universities (2 public and 1 private). The sample size was calculated using Gpower with a medium effect size, power Of 0.8 and alpha level of 0.05 (**minimum sample size is 68**). We will try to balance the sample in terms of gender and in terms of field of study, Arts versus the Sciences using an intercept survey method. For the purpose of better representativeness, we will be targeting 200 students each from the 3 universities. The inclusion criteria for the sample are as follows:

1. Full-time undergraduate students.
2. Those who are actively using Facebook for leisure and study.
3. Studying in the 2 public (USM and UNIMAS) and 1 private (UTAR) university that will be selected.

The exclusion criteria for the sample include those undergraduate students who are not full-time students, do not use Facebook for leisure and study, and those who are not from the 3 universities selected.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research paper is to develop a conceptual model to predict Facebook addiction among millennials and the consequences. We hope that this research would contribute the existing body of knowledge in Facebook addiction from a developing country perspective and an emerging context of millennials.

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