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Loneliness, social anxiety, social influence and addiction that contributes to online social networking: A study among adolescent in Malaysia

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The present study aimed to identify the contribution of loneliness, social anxiety, social influence and addiction on online social networking. In the study 220 students from different seven schools in Johor Bahru district of Malaysia were taken as sample. The obtained data was statistically analyzed by descriptive statistics through SPSS 17 version. Results demonstrated that social influence is an influential variable and has great contribution on online social networking. Further the study also revealed that loneliness was found to be the weakest factor in online social networking.

Keyword: Social Networking, Loneliness, Social Anxiety, Social Influence and Addiction

INTRODUCTION

Since last few decades internet is consider one among the most powerful tools in the world. Through this source, it is now possible to attend any event, communicate and sharing the information to anyone while setting in any corner of the world. It is with the help of internet service, we are able to create our personal profile, make groups, share audio and video information to other people through social networking like Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Skype, hike, imo, yahoo massager, etc. Since 2000 there is tremendous growth in internet use throughout the globe. Reports show that till December 2017, 51.8% world population was using internet. It is also found that till 30 June 2017, 49.7% Asian population was internet users, and 17% European, 10.4% Latin American, 10% African, 8.2% North American, 3.8% Middle East, and 0.7% Australian population uses internet services (Internet world Status).

However, every day, large number of teenagers in Malaysia spends hours on Facebook, Instagram, Wechat, Line etc. At first glance it seems like a waste of time, but it also helps them to develop their cognitive abilities and social skills. Social network increase social capital (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007), also increases prosocial behavior (Stephen and Galak 2012). It is also found that use of the social networking sites

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helps in maintaining relationships and sharing knowledge, ideas and opinions (Neelamalar & Chitra, 2009), influence perception and actions (Moreno & Kelb 2012), strengthen interpersonal relationships (Valentine & Holloway, 2002; Besley 2008; Gross, 2004; Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield, & Gross, 2000; Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006), creating the sense of belonging (Harris 2003; Hillier & Harrison 2007; Munt, Basset & O. Riordan 2002), and promote younger's wellbeing (Berson, 2003; Gross, Juvonen & Gable 2002). On the other side it is unveiled that creating false online identity leads a person to lower self-esteem, greater social anxiety, inferior social skills, and higher aggression towards their friends (Harman, Hansen, Cochran, & Lindsey (2005).

Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively (Peplau & Perlman, 1982); Loneliness is a one of the main cause of depression (Cacioppo, 2006), suicide, Alzheimer disease (Valtorta & Hanratty, 2012); blood pressure and poorer immune functioning (Grant, Hamer, & Steptoe, 2009; Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). It also causes physical inactivity, and poorer sleep (Hawkley, Thisted, & Cacioppo, 2009; Theeke, 2010; Cacioppo et al., 2002). It is also associated with social anxiety (Rao, Beidel, Turner, Ammerman, Crosby & Sallee, 2007).

Social anxiety is defined as a feeling of fear and anxiety that occurs in response to social situation. Social anxiety or social phobia is one of the common psychological problems that could be faced by human being. It is considered to be the third most common psychological disorder after depression and alcohol abuse (Furmark, 2002). Beidel, Turner, Young, Ammerman, Sallee & Crosby (2006) reported that socially anxious adolescents are more depressed, lonely and introversion, they have also deficits in social skills. Further, they also have suicidal ideations (Francis, Last, & Strauss, 1992) and excessive self focused attention (Albano, DiBartolo, Heimberg, & Barlow, 1995). It is also found that social anxiety causes physical as well as emotional problems (Herrero, Sandi & Venero, 2006) and suicidal ideation (Valentiner, Gutierrez & Blacker 2002). It also disturb the encoding, storing and retrieval procedures (Ansari & Derakshan, 2010; Ansari, Derakshan, & Richards, 2008; Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, & Calvo, 2007). Finally social anxiety is also responsible for impaired attention process (Muris, Meesters & Rompelberg 2007).

Man is a social animal, likes to live within the society, to fulfill their basic needs and satisfying themselves as being a member of the society. While living in the society he is influenced by the other members, result change in his thoughts, ideas, opinions, feelings, attitudes as well as behaviors, we call this changing as social influence. Social influence is a form of conformity behaviour, and has a great

influence on adolescent life. Influence will not always be negative; however it is influence positive too. Sometimes we have to change our ideas, thoughts, decisions and behaviour to adopt in the society or in a particular group.

Internet addiction is characterized by excess or abnormal use of internet; it can also be defined as an impulse disorder. Internet addiction is same as addiction to drugs, alcohol and gambling (Young, 2006). Excess use of internet affects academic performances, have negative impact on personality (Zainudin, Din, & Othman, 2013), causes migraine, headache, sleep problems (You, 2007; Shuhail & Bergees, 2006), increase depression, loneliness, social anxiety and suicidal ideation (Kim, Ryu, & Chon, 2006; Caplan, 2001; Shapira, Goldsmith, Keck, Khosla, & Mcelroy, 2000) and decreases self-esteem (Jeon, 2005; Young, 2006; Yang & Tung, 2007). It is also reported that internet addiction among adolescents causes depression and insomnia (Cheung & Wong, 2011), responsible for aggression (Ko, Yen, Liu, Huang & Yen, 2009), suicidal ideation (Fu, Chan, Wong & Yip, 2010), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), social phobia, and hostility (Ko, Yen, Chen, Yeh & Yen, 2009), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), schizophrenia, (Ha, Yoo, Cho, Chin, Shin & Kim, 2006) and drug use (Gong et al., 2009) respectively.

Being part of the social networking has been a routine for mostly those whom easily access to the Internet. Besides study, social network has become part of their daily routine life. The questions that arises is that, how does the students divide their time and how well do they learn from the Internet? Therefore the present study was conducted to find out the factors that contribute on social networking.

Objective : To identify the most dominant factors on loneliness, social anxiety, social influence and addiction that contributes to online social networking.

METHOD

Data Collection : The population of this study is 220 students selected from seven secondary schools in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The selected schools are equitable as resources of internet are well provided and located in 30km radius from the Johor Bahru town.

Instruments : The questionnaire administrated in the study was adopted by the items selected from Internet Addiction Test, Social Interaction Anxiety Scale, R-UCLA Loneliness Scale, and the rest of the items are developed by the researcher.

Reliability : To find the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted in SMK Seri Perling on 30 students. Students were instructed to read the statements carefully and give their answers. The obtained data was statistically analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 17.0 for Windows. The obtained Alpha coefficient value

0.875 shows that the questionnaire is reliable and can be used for actual research.

RESULTS

The factors involved consist of loneliness, social anxiety, social influence and addiction. The findings are shown in table 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Eight statements are applicable for loneliness. Both social anxiety and social influence have six statements each and ten for addiction. Each statement has five responses viz never, rarely, sometimes, often and always.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents factor of Loneliness.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	S.D
In real life, I do not have someone to talk to.	139 63.2%	35 15.9%	31 14.1%	12 5.5%	3 1.4%	1.66	1.00
I experience a general sense of emptiness.	82 38.3%	52 24.3%	60 28.0%	9 4.2%	11 5.1%	2.14	1.13
In daily life, I feel rejected.	100 45.5%	59 26.8%	52 23.2%	5 2.3%	5 2.3%	1.89	0.99
I miss the pleasure of the company of the others.	48 22.1%	52 24.4%	74 34.7%	21 9.9%	19 8.9%	2.59	1.19
There are no one I can rely on when I have problems	74 33.8%	64 29.2%	57 26%	17 7.8%	7 3.2%	2.17	1.08
There are less people I feel close to.	50 22.9%	60 27.5%	63 28.9%	31 14.2%	14 6.4%	2.54	1.18
There are less people I can lean on when I have problems	39 17.8%	63 28.8%	69 31.5%	34 15.5%	14 6.4%	2.64	1.13
I could not call on my friends whenever I need them	70 31.8%	58 26.4%	53 24.1%	30 13.6%	9 4.1%	2.3	1.17
OVERALL						2.44	1.11

One of the factors that may contribute to the online social networking is loneliness. The findings from the table 1 show that 60.51% of the loneliness factor contributes to online social networking with the average (M) 2.44 and standard deviation (SD) 1.11. The item “*There are less people I can lean on when I have problems*” have the highest average compared to the others with 2.64 and SD of 1.13. For this statement, it is verified that 17.8% (N=39) never experienced it, 28.8% (N=63) rarely experienced, 31.5% (N=69) experienced it sometimes, 15.5% (N=34) often, and very less 6.4% (N=14) experienced it always.

The statement “*I miss the pleasure of the company of the others*” comes at second level with the mean 2.59 and SD=1.19. It is found that 22.1% (N=48) never experienced it, 24.4% (N=52) rarely, 34.7 % (N=74) sometimes, 9.9 % (N=21) often and 8.9 % (N=19) always experienced it respectively.

The next statement which comes at third level was “*There are less people I feel close to*”. The average and SD of this statement were found (M=2.54, SD =1.18). It is also confirmed that 22.9% (N=50) never experienced it in their lives. Simultaneously, 27.5% (N=60) rarely, experienced it, 63% (N=63) sometimes, 14.2% (N=31) often and 6.4% (N=14) always experienced such emotions.

Further it is also divulged that the statement “*In real life, I do not have someone to talk to*” provides the lowest average compared to the other statements, as the mean and standard (M=1.66, SD=1.00) of this statement is very less than other statements. Further it is also found that 63.2% (N=139) not experienced it, 15.9% (N=35) experienced it rarely, 14.1% (N=31) sometimes went through it, 5.5 % (N=12) often and very less 1.4% (N=3) always experienced the emotions respectively.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' factor of Social Anxiety.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	S.D
How often do you feel that you lack companionship ?	82 37.6%	62 28.4%	59 27.1%	11 5.0%	4 1.8%	2.05	1.01
How frequent do you feel that there is no one you can turn to?	64 29.5%	71 32.7%	59 27.2%	11 5.1%	12 5.5%	2.24	1.10
How frequent do you feel alone?	55 25.5%	77 35.6%	58 26.9%	17 7.9%	9 4.2%	2.29	1.06
How frequent do you feel part of a group of friends?	12 5.7%	24 11.4%	53 25.1%	68 32.2%	54 25.6%	3.61	1.15
How frequent do you feel that no one really knows you well?	36 16.5%	72 33%	62 28.4%	32 14.7%	16 7.3%	2.63	1.14
How frequent do you feel isolated from others?	60 27.9%	66 30.7%	63 29.3%	14 6.5%	12 5.6%	2.31	1.12
Overall						2.52	1.09

Another factor that may contribute the online social networking is social anxiety. The findings in table 2 shows that 52.6% (N=681) of the social anxiety factor does not contribute to online social networking with the mean 2.52 and standard deviation 1.09.

In social anxiety the statement “*How frequent do you feel part of a group of friends?*” shows the highest mean as compared to the others with 3.61 and standard deviation of 1.15. It is also confirmed that 5.7% (N=12) respondents not experienced it, however 11.4% (N=24) experienced it rarely, 25.1% (N=53) sometimes, 32.2% (N=68) often and 25.6% (N=54) experienced it always.

Similarly, the statement “*How frequent do you feel that no one really knows you well?*” comes in second level as its average was found 2.63 and SD =1.14. It is also reported that 16.5% (N=36) respondents never experienced it, while as 33% (N=72) experienced it rarely, 28.4% (N=62) sometimes, 14.7% (N=32) often and 7.3% (N=16) always experienced it respectively.

The next statement; “*How frequent do you feel isolated from others?*” provides the third highest mean (M=2.31 and SD=1.1152). For this statement, 27.9% (N=60) says that they never experienced it, 30.7% (N=6) rarely experienced it, 29.3% (N=63) experienced it sometimes, 6.5% (N=14) often and 5.6% (N=12) always experienced such emotions.

While taking the statement “*How often do you feel that you lack companionship?*” it is found that the average of this statement is less than all other statements. The mean and SD was found to be 2.05 and 1.01. For this item, 37.6 % (N=82) participants never experienced it, 28.4% (N=62) rarely experienced it, 27.1% (N=59) sometimes went through it, 5.0% (N=1) often experienced it and very least 1.8% (N=4) participants experienced it always.

From the table-3, it can be seen that 37.5 % (N=492) of the social influence factor does contribute to online social networking with the mean 3.07 and standard deviation 1.26.

The statement “*My friend/s talk about social networking and what is happening on it?*” gives the highest mean compared to the others with 3.59 and SD 1.23. For this statement, it was identified that only 5.0% (N=11) not experienced it in their life. However 16.4% (N=36) rarely experienced it, 24.5% (N=54) sometimes, 22.7% (N=50) often and very least 31.4% (N=69) experienced it always.

From the above table it is inclined that “*Most of your friends have social networking account. How frequent do you feel you should have one?*” comes to second level. For this statement mean and SD were found to be M=3.22 and SD =1.28. It is also divulge that 12% (N=26) never experienced, whereas, 15% (N=33) rarely went through it, 33.6%

(N=73) sometimes, 17.5% (N=38) often 21.1% (N=47) always experienced such emotions.

Table 3: Frequency and mean distribution of respondents' of Social Influence.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	S.D
My friends influence me to use the social networking.	38 17.3%	34 15.5%	73 33.2%	47 21.4%	28 12.7%	2.97	1.25
Most of your friends have social networking account. How frequent do you feel you should have one?	26 12%	33 15%	73 33.6%	38 17.5%	47 21.1%	3.22	1.28
The media enlighten the social networking. It attracts me.	33 15.2%	30 13.8%	70 32.3%	47 21.7%	37 17.1%	3.11	1.28
How frequent does people surrounding you persuade you to have a social networking account?	46 21%	61 27.9%	59 26.9%	34 15.5%	19 8.7%	2.63	1.22
I feel outdated if I do not own a social networking account.	42 19.1%	38 17.3%	64 29.1%	47 21.4%	29 13.2%	2.92	1.29
My friend/s talk about social networking and what is happening on it.	11 5.0%	36 16.4%	54 24.5%	50 22.7%	69 31.4%	3.59	1.23
OVERALL						3.07	1.26

Another statement “*The media enlighten the social networking. It attracts me*” provides the third highest mean, which is 3.11 with SD=1.28. It is also revealed that 15.2% (N=33) not experienced it, However, 13.8% (N=30) experienced it rarely, 32.3% (N=70) sometimes, 21.7% (N=47) often and 17.1 % (N=37) always respectively.

In the same table it is also found that the statement “*How frequent does people surrounding you persuade you to have a social networking account?*” provides the lowest mean compared to the other statements. The obtained average and SD of this statement were found to be M=2.63, and SD=1.22. Further it is also found that 21% (N=46) respondents never experienced such emotion in their life, however 27.9% (N=61) rarely experienced it, 26.9% (N=59) sometimes went through it, 15.5% (N=34) often and very least 8.7% (N=19) always experienced the emotions.

From the table 4, it is evident that 37.3% (N=817) of the addiction factor slightly does not contribute to online social networking with the mean 2.91 and standard deviation 1.22.

It was also found that the mean 3.46, and SD 1.35 of the statement “*How frequent do you find yourself saying “just a few more*

minutes” when on-line?” was high compared to the others. Further it is also found that 10.9% (N=24) have not experienced it, however 13.2% (N=29) experienced it rarely, also 23.2% (N=51) sometimes, 20.9% (N=46) often and 31.8% (N=70) experienced it always.

Table 4: Frequency and mean distribution of respondents' of Addiction.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	S.D
How often do you find that you stay on-line longer than you intended?	26 12.1%	28 13.0%	83 38.6%	39 18.1%	39 18.1%	3.17	1.22
How frequent do you form new relationships with fellow on-line users?	37 16.9%	60 27.4%	69 31.5%	38 17.4%	15 6.8%	2.69	1.14
How frequent do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend on-line?	35 16.1%	50 27.4%	74 33.9%	39 17.9%	20 9.2%	2.81	1.18
How frequent do your grades or school work suffers because of the amount of time you spend on-line?	45 20.6%	56 25.7%	72 33%	27 12.4%	18 8.3%	2.62	1.18
How frequent do you find yourself anticipating when you will go on-line again?	25 11.5%	39 18.0%	90 41.5%	40 18.4%	23 10.6%	2.99	1.12
How frequent do you fear that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, and joyless?	39 17.7%	49 22.3%	62 28.2%	33 15.0%	37 16.5%	2.91	1.32
How frequent do you snap, yell, or act annoyed if someone bothers you while you are on-line?	46 21.0%	68 31.1%	58 26.5%	32 14.6%	15 6.8%	2.55	1.17
How frequent do you lose sleep due to late-night log-ins?	47 21.6%	53 34.3%	54 34.8%	38 17.4%	36 11.9%	2.74	1.30
How frequent do you find yourself saying “just a few more minutes” when on-line?	24 10.9%	29 13.2%	51 23.2%	46 20.9%	70 31.8%	3.46	1.35
How frequent do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend on-line	29 13.4%	32 14.7%	75 34.6%	47 21.7%	34 15.7%	3.11	1.23
OVERALL						2.91	1.22

“How often do you find that you stay on-line longer than you intended?” comes at second level for addiction factor. Mean and SD for this statement was found to be 3.17, and 1.22 respectively. Regarding this statement it is found that 12.1% (N=26) participants never

experienced it, 13% (N=28) rarely went through it, 38.6% (N=83) experienced it sometimes, 18.1% (N=39) often and 18.1% (N=39) always experienced it.

Likewise the first two statements it is also found that mean and SD of the statement “How frequent do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend on-line” were found 3.11 and SD=1.23, therefore this statement comes at third level. Further regarding this statement it is found that 13.45% (N=29) not experienced it in their life, however 14.7% (N=32) rarely experienced it, 34.6% (N=75) experienced it sometimes, 21.7% (N=47) often experienced it and 15.7% (N=34) always experienced such emotions.

The findings from the table also shows that the statement “How frequent do you snap, yell, or act annoyed if someone bothers you while you are on-line?” have lowest mean compared to the other statements which totals 2.55 and its SD was found to be =1.17. The findings also reported that 21% (N=46) respondents never experienced it, 31.1% (N=68) rarely experienced it, 26.5% (N=58) sometimes went through it, 14.6% (N=32) often and very least 6.8% (N=15) always experienced this type of emotion.

Table 5: Distribution of mean and standard deviation for overall factors towards Online Social Networking.

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Loneliness	2.44	1.11
Social Anxiety	2.52	1.09
Social Influence	3.07	1.26
Addiction	2.91	1.22
Overall	2.74	1.17

Figure : Graphical representation of mean and standard deviation for overall factors towards Online Social Networking

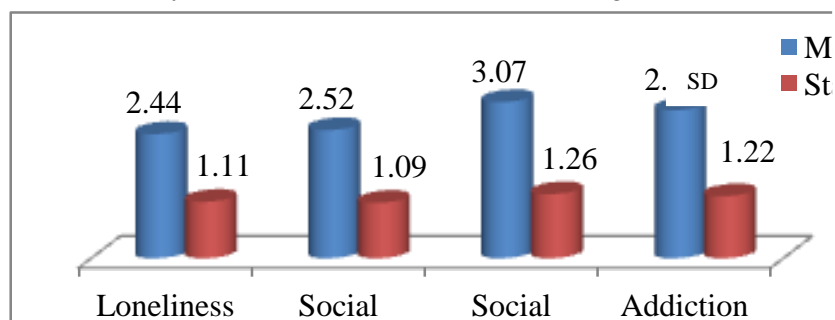


Table 5, shows the distribution of mean and standard deviation for the overall factors towards online social networking. The mean and SD for all the factors were found to be [Loneliness (M=2.44, SD = 1.11), Social anxiety (M=2.52, SD =1.09), Social influence (M=3.07, SD = 1.26), and Addiction (M=2.91, SD = 1.22)] respectively. Therefore it is revealed that social influence is one of the major factors towards online

social networking, followed by addiction and social anxiety. However loneliness were found weakest factor in online social networking.

Discussion : The present research demonstrated that social influence is one of the major factors towards online social networking, than addiction and social anxiety. Social influence is change in the individual's thoughts, ideas, feelings, attitudes, or behaviors by others. It is a form of conformity behaviour, and has a great influence on adolescent life. It impacts on individual and group attitudes and behavior (Berkman 2000). Researches indicate that people are influenced by the speed and their quality of the individual performance of a particular task. Influence may not always be negative but positive too. Family plays a vital role in modifying the behavior of family members especially the growing ups and adolescent too, some studies also report that children's home and family lives have long been considered a primary environmental context influencing their psychological as well as biological development (Belsky, 2009).

The research also unveiled that loneliness is the weakest factor in online social networking. Similarly, Kraut, Kiesler, Boneva, Cummings, Helgeson & Crawford (2002) revealed that internet use is positively associated with initial loneliness, overtime internet use decreases loneliness. On the other side Brennan & Auslander (1979) confirmed that loneliness is associated with poor grades, expulsion from school, running away from home, and engaging in delinquent acts like theft, gambling and vandalism.

Conclusion : Since past few decades online social networking becomes one of the common communication means among the students. Now a day's these sites provides various useful features through them students learn various things, therefore it is importance for every adolescent to have at least a social networking account so he or she can remain up to date about the world.

The present study highlights the merits as well as the demerits of social networking. Further the study is expected to be the beneficial for the society. The findings will be useful for the future researcher and the readers. So they can use it properly and also give the proper knowledge to adolescents. The study also suggested that parents should not leave their children alone when they are using internet. It is important for parents and teachers to watch control the activities of children during internet use. Further it is also expected that proper use of online social networking will contribute towards child's learning behaviour.

Educational institutions should mention social networking as part of curriculum. Teachers should be more creative in adapting the social network into the classroom. In present times conventional learning is not much beneficial because students' wants to be free and learn only through social network like facebook, YouTube etc. therefore it is

responsible for teachers to use new method for their students like online social networking.

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