RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Self-esteem can greatly influence one's emotional well-being, behavior, and interactions with others. It can range from high self-esteem, where individuals have a positive and healthy view of themselves, to low self-esteem, where individuals may have feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and a negative self-perception. Social media usage can have a negative impact on one's self-esteem, however, it can also potentially have a positive effect. This research is conducted to identify the level of social media addiction among university students and the relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem among university students. There are 384 respondents who were selected using simple random sampling techniques among university students in Malaysia. The findings show that the level of social media addiction among university students in Malaysia is high and it shows that there is a significant relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem among university students.

Keywords: Social media addiction, self-esteem, social comparison

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Because of technology improvements, social media has become an essential part of our daily lives. Social media platforms allow users to generate and share information as well as make and deepen connections. Social media can be defined as online spaces that can be accessed through the internet and are used by people to share their instant thoughts, feelings, and activities with others through photographs and videos.

Social media may have some positive benefits, such as bringing people closer together socially and economically, boosting long-distance friendships, and reducing the negative effects of modern living. The term "social media" refers to a variety of user-driven platforms that let users create and share material, promoting communication with a wider audience and fostering discourse (Kapoor et al., 2018).

Social media usage can have a negative impact on one's self-esteem, however, it can also potentially have a positive effect. Depending on the individual's level of self-esteem, some students may be more likely to take advantage of social media for their own gain, whereas others may use it to benefit those around them. Students with a healthy level of self-confidence are less vulnerable to criticism on social media (Martinez&Gavilan, 2019), and are more likely to use it to advance their own interests. Those with low self-esteem may feel anxious about posting on social media, as they may be afraid of being judged negatively if they don't receive a lot of 'likes'. According to Valkenburg et al., (2021), higher self-esteem in youth was linked to increased use of social media, thus providing evidence to the proposed connection between self-esteem and social media use.

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2.0   RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1) To identify the level of social media addiction among university students in Malaysia.
2) To identify the relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem. among university students in Malaysia

3.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media addiction is becoming more widely acknowledged as a severe public health issue. In recent years, the misuse of social media, particularly among university students, has created a serious problem for the next generation. Spending more time and effort on social media could develop into an addiction. In Malaysia, there were recorded internet users, and the age group with the highest percentage 34.1 percent of the total, was 20 to 25 years old. Students at universities typically range in age from 19 to 23, which is considered to be in their 20s. They are classified as frequent users of social media. Youth who overuse social media may experience more problems because they have developing minds and social abilities (Jena Hilliard, 2022). Social media usage might alter youth's moods or make them feel good (Xuan & Amat, 2021).

According to Bergman (2022), It's a clear sign that someone has a problematic dependence on social media when using social media and smartphones causes them to spend less time with friends and family, learning, exercising, and other activities. He stated that the signs of social media addiction included spending too much time on social networking, spending less or no time with friends and family, feeling anxious when the phone is forgotten or taken by parents, or emotional withdrawal.

The use of social networking sites has grown significantly during the past ten years. Globally, there are more than 1 billion users. WhatsApp is the most popular social networking platform while Facebook is the second most popular social media platform (West, 2023). Facebook's primary feature is the ability for friends and the public to examine users' personal profiles, inspect them, and comment with their opinions to ensure that the user is aware of what they think about his personal life. According to Jan et al. (2017), it stated that depending on the individual, self-esteem may take years to grow while for others, it may change in response to trends and everyday events. Self-esteem is considerably increased by positive feedback, whereas it is significantly decreased by negative feedback.

According to Purnama et al. (2021), respondents who used social media excessively had lower self-esteem and were more socially suppressed than respondents who did not, and nearly half of respondents reported decreased self-esteem, indicating a relationship between internet use and self-esteem in college students.

Festinger first presented the Social comparison theory (SCT) in 1954. He said that humans are compelled by instinct to compare oneself to others. People use a variety of techniques to evaluate themselves, but one of the most popular ones is social comparison, or assessing oneself in light of others. to compare oneself to others. Let's use the example of a high school student who just started taking band to learn how to play the clarinet. In order to gauge her progress and talents, she will contrast her performance with that of the other students in the class.

In the modern age, these comparisons might be made more quickly through social media profiles. The opportunity for social comparison on social media platforms is abundant (Kavakli & Unal, 2021). Social media intensifies the negative impacts of social comparison. Consequently, it amplifies the harmful consequences on adolescent well-being (Monroe, 2019). Adolescents dedicate some effort to updating their social networking pages and publishing. The majority of their social media usage, however, is spent looking through their friends' profiles and photos. In turn, this leads to continual comparisons.

Similar to partaking in other types of social comparison, adolescents who participate in upward comparison on websites like Facebook and other social media platforms typically display poorer levels of self-esteem and self-evaluation. When adolescents made downward comparisons, such as by glancing at the profiles of peers with fewer friends and accomplishments, they felt better about themselves (Monroe, 2019). In a study conducted by to Kim et al. (2020), it was argued that individuals frequently employ social comparisons as a conscious tactic to enhance their self-esteem. They achieve this by contrasting themselves with less fortunate individuals, which leads to feelings of superiority known as downward comparison. Additionally, young adults in their twenties may engage in social comparisons by comparing themselves to slightly more successful peers. This type of upward comparison allows them to perceive themselves as capable of achieving similar levels of success.

This happens when we evaluate ourselves against others, we perceive to be superior to us. These upward comparisons typically revolve around our desire to improve upon our current state or level of proficiency. We could compare our circumstance to that of someone who has it worse and look for ways to get the same results (Guyer & Vaughan-Johnston, 2018). People who make downward social comparisons in social media may have better degrees of self-esteem and overall belongingness than other people, which could be advantageous for them. According to Nortje (2020), while comparing ourselves negatively to others may seem like a quick and dirty approach to boost our self-esteem, the results can be unpredictable and have negative effects as well.

Individuals' sense of self-esteem and belonging may suffer as a result of excessive social media use. Therefore, these people would wish to control their emotions. Then emotion management kicks in, and those who lack self-esteem and a sense of belonging may control their emotions by engaging in downward social comparison on social media in order to increase their level of self-esteem.

One's perspective and level of confidence come into play when making upward comparisons (Guyer & Vaughan-Johnston, 2018). For instance, a person with poor self-esteem may become offended if they see a picture of someone they believe is superior to them. Additionally, many use Instagram for upward social comparison. Lower levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem could result from these upward societal comparisons (Nabillah & Hanurawan, 2022).

4.0   METHODOLOGY

In the context of this study, the researcher used the survey method as a tool for obtaining research data from predefined study samples. A quantitative study may provide opportunities for the researcher to generate insights into more accurate and effective opinions. According to Shaughnessy et al. (2000), by using a quantitative study, it is also possible to produce results that will give an accurate picture of the studied population through generalization. In particular, this study used the method of the cross-sectional survey to answer the research questions and research objectives. This survey method required the researcher to sample the population only once and at a given time. The data obtained from the study by this method are explained to represent the population, and the researcher made a prediction in accordance with the research data (Shaughnessy et al., 2000).

The population in this study refers to university students which are individuals between the ages of 19 and 24 years. In addition, students in this age group are more prone to social media addiction. Moreover, most of the research has been on teenagers, and only a few studies have looked at students in this age group. By studying university students in this age group, researchers can identify the relationship between social media addiction with their self-esteem.
According to the Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (2022), there is a population of 108,249 students in the range of 19 to 24 years old who studies undergraduate program. According to

Krejcie and Morgan (1970), if the population size is close to 1,000,000 people, the sample size will be 384 respondents. Thus, the sample size of respondents in this research is 384 students as respondents. Social media addiction was measured using the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) (Cengiz Şahin, 2018), while self-esteem was measured using Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

5.0   FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of respondents in this study. A total of 384 respondents have been randomly selected among Malaysian university students. Based on Table 1, there are 159 males (41.4%) and 225 females (58.6%) university students in Malaysia were involved in this study.

Table 1: Respondent's Gender

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	159	41.4
Female	225	58.6

Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis of social media addiction among respondents. For item no.6 "I want to spend time on social media when I am alone.", it has the highest mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 0.946. Most respondents have agreed that they want to spend time on social media when they are alone which is a total of 192 respondents equivalent to 50.0% overall. Followed by a total of 3.76 mean and standard deviation of 0.995 and 1.085 of respondents neutral on the statements of "The mysterious world of social media always captivates me" and "Going on social media is the first thing I do when I wake up in the morning" respectively with 183 respondents with 47.7% from overall. Next is a mean of 3.74 with a standard deviation of 1.047 states respondents agree with the statement "I usually prefer to communicate with people via social media", it has total of 187 respondents agree with 48.7% overall. Item no.1 "I am eager to go on social media." states 3.62 mean and 0.937 standard deviations of respondents agree that they are eager to go on social media. This has a total of 178 respondents with 46.4% overall.

134 respondents 34.9% overall agree that their life becomes meaningless without social media with a mean of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.132. Next, there are 199 respondents agreed with the statement "Being on social media excites me" with 51.8% overall, it has recorded a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.935. As for the statement "Social media activities lay hold on my everyday life", there are 172 respondents neutral on this statement with a percentage of 44.8%, it has a mean of 3.49, and a standard deviation of 1.060. Lastly, 3.17 mean and 1.021 standard deviations of respondents were neutral on the statement "I prefer to use social media even if there is somebody around me.

Table 2: Social Media Addiction Scale

Items	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)	Mean	Std Dev
	%	%	%	%	%		
1. I am eager to go on social media.	4.2	4.9	29.9	46.4	14.6	3.62	0.937
2. Going on social media is the first thing I do when I wake up in the morning.	5.7	8.3	14.3	47.7	24.0	3.76	1.085
3. A life without social media becomes meaningless for me.	6.3	9.6	25.8	34.9	23.4	3.60	1.132
4. I prefer to use social media even there are somebody around me.	8.9	10.9	42.4	30.2	7.6	3.17	1.021
5. I usually prefer to communicate with people via social media.	4.2	10.4	14.6	48.7	22.1	3.74	1.047

6. I want to spend time on social media when I am alone.	3.1	5.7	18.8	50.0	22.4	3.83	0.946
7. Social media activities lay hold on my everyday life.	4.7	7.0	44.8	21.1	22.4	3.49	1.060
8. Being on social media excites me.	4.4	7.6	25.8	51.8	10.4	3.56	0.935
9. The mysterious world of social media always captivates me.	3.9	7.0	20.1	47.7	21.4	3.76	0.995

Note: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 3 shows the level of social media addiction among respondents. Overall, the level of social media addiction among 384 respondents is identified by the mean value, which is 3.61, and a standard deviation of 0.756. Abu Halifah and Mohd Hanafi (2016) stated that data interpretation is carried out to obtain mean values of high, moderate, or low. A mean score of 3.67 to 5.00 indicates a high level of agreement with the statements provided in the questionnaire. The moderate level agreed with the statement showing mean scores of 2.34 to 3.66 while the low level of agreement was 1.00 to 2.33. Overall, the findings indicate that the level of social media addiction is high, mean of 3.61. Therefore, it is proven that most of the university students have a high level of social media addiction.

Table 3: Level of Social Media Addiction

	N	Mean	Std Dev.	Level
Social Media Addiction	384	3.61	0.756	High

Table 4 shows the descriptive analysis of self-esteem among 384 respondents. The highest mean value is 3.66 with a 0.996 standard deviation for item no.8 "I wish I could have more respect for myself." 166 respondents equivalent to 43.2% overall wish to have more respect for themselves. Followed by a 3.55 mean value and 1.026 standard deviations for item no.10 stating they take a positive attitude toward themselves which recorded 139 respondents neutral on this statement equivalent to 36.2% of the total. Next, items no.7 and no.1 have mean values of 3.49 and 3.42 respectively. The standard deviation for both items is 0.975 and 1.013 respectively. For item no.7 "I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others", there are 186 respondents who agreed on this statement 48.4% of the total while for item no.1 "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself", 156 respondents agreed on this statement with 40.6% of the total.

Item no.9 "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure", no.2 "At times I think I am no good at all.", no.3 "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and no.6 "I certainly feel useless at times." have a mean value of 3.17, 3.16, 3.15, and 3.11 respectively. The standard deviation for these 4 items is 1.117, 0.984, 1.077, and 1.022 respectively. Most of the respondents agreed with the statement's item no.3 "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and items no.9 "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure" which recorded 158 respondents equivalent to 41.1%, and 139 respondents equivalent to 36.2% respectively. For item no.4 with the statement "I am able to do things as well as most other people", it recorded a mean value of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.051. Most of the respondents were neutral on this statement which has the frequency of respondents at 138 equivalents to 35.9% of the total. Lastly, item no.5 "I feel I do not have much to be proud of" has recorded the lowest mean value at 2.90 and a standard deviation of 1.062. There are 143 respondents equivalent to 37.2% of total neutral on this statement.

Table 4: Self-esteem

Items	1 (SD) %	2 (D) %	3 (N) %	4 (A) %	5 (SA) %	Mean	Std Dev
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	4.2	14.6	28.6	40.6	12.0	3.42	1.013

2. At times I think I am no good at all.	5.5	18.0	39.3	29.9	7.3	3.16	0.984
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	9.9	16.4	27.3	41.1	5.2	3.15	1.077
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	9.1	21.6	35.9	27.1	6.3	3.00	1.051
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	10.9	22.9	37.2	22.9	6.0	2.90	1.062
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	7.0	18.2	39.1	27.9	7.8	3.11	1.022
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	4.4	11.2	25.5	48.4	10.4	3.49	0.975
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	3.1	9.6	24.7	43.2	19.3	3.66	0.996
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	7.8	22.4	24.2	36.2	9.4	3.17	1.117
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	3.4	9.6	36.2	30.5	20.3	3.55	1.026

Note: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 5 shows the correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem. Based on the table, there is a strong positive correlation between two variables, r = 0.601 and p = 0.000. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem among university students. Social media addiction is correlated with self-esteem.

Table 5: Correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem

		Social Media Addiction	Self-esteem
Social Media Addiction	Pearson Correlation	1	.601**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	.601**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

6.0 DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the result shows that the level of social media addiction among university students is "high". This finding was in line with research by Sriparna et al (2022), which shows that students are impacted by social media. The normal age range of university students is 19 to 23, which is seen as being in their 20s. They are categorized as frequent social media users (Jena Hilliard, 2022). Social media usage might alter youth's moods or make them feel good (Xuan & Amat, 2021).

Based on the findings, social media addiction is correlated with self-esteem. The increase in social media addiction is associated with the increase of self-esteem among university students. Jan et al. (2017) provided evidence to support this claim by demonstrating a significant correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem.
Guyer and Vaughan-Johnston, (2018) and Kim et al. (2020), claim that people regularly utilize social comparisons as a deliberate strategy to boost their self-esteem by contrasting themselves with those who are less fortunate, which makes them feel superior (downward comparison). Meanwhile, it is possible for 20s individuals to engage in social comparisons by comparing themselves with others who are similar but slightly more successful, which helps them perceive themselves as capable of achieving similar success (upward comparison). Moreover, according to Kavakli & Unal (2021), the Internet can offer numerous opportunities to fulfill the human need

for social comparison. Through social media platforms, students can easily compare their abilities, ideas, and appearance to others, which is a common process called "social comparison." In today's world, social media accounts provide abundant opportunities for social comparison. This is proven that when students are addicted to social media, they tend to compare themselves with each other via social media platforms by using social comparison, thus increasing their level of self-esteem.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that social media addiction can have a positive effect on self-esteem. Social media platforms provide individuals with the opportunity to display their accomplishments and receive validation and positive feedback from others. This constant validation can contribute to an individual's self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, social media platforms also serve as a means for individuals to connect with like-minded people, find support, and receive positive encouragement. This sense of belonging and virtual social support can positively impact self-esteem, providing individuals with a sense of acceptance and validation.

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