

A CASE STUDY: HIGH CONSUMPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT BERJAYA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ann Wamaitha Gashwe

BERJAYA University College, Malaysia

Wamaitha_a@yahoo.co.uk

Ong Siew Har, Chris

BERJAYA University College, Malaysia

chris.ong@berjaya.edu.my

ABSTRACT

*This study discusses the high consumption of social media in universities using the case study of Berjaya University College. Due to the rapid increase of Social media consumption, it has become a major part of the daily life for many individuals, as it has a mass attraction towards people which has a multi-factor appeal such as high stimulation which makes its easily accessible to everyone with a smartphone and internet connection. This has led to the research being conducted which uses the variables; Socialization, Educational and Mental health. A review of both the theoretical and critical literature were conducted to find out what other writers and researcher had to say concerning high usage of social media consumption in universities. Theories used were Emotion Contagion Theory; Social Comparison Theory; Developmental Task and Emerging Adulthood Theory. Three hundred students' data was collected using self-administered questionnaires and interview guides as the primary data collection instruments. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis tool version 26.0 to generate descriptive data in order to describe the characteristics of university students.. The study revealed that there is a strong relationship between social media consumption and university students with socialization having the highest percentage of **respondents asserting that it highly affects** social media consumption **with a 91% rating**. The study recommends that forums should be organized in universities to enlighten students on the various implications of social media consumption and lecturers to adopt new strategies for guiding tests, discussions and assignments. Students are advised to reduce the time they spend on social media sites to avoid being obsessed.*

Keyword :Social Media, Berjaya University College, Internal Output, External Input, Output-Emotional Climate.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a web-based interactive media where the users send and receive messages, make calls, friend new people, post opinions, upload photos and videos, develop stories and status for other users

that is friends and even interact with each other through video calling applications. Users of social media are both creators and consumers of the content posted on their accounts. With the rapid growth of social media sites, there is an increase on the probability of its influence on them. Social media's effect on the lives of individuals is increasing every day. It has now become part of the most people's lives and also in nearby future as everyone is using the internet for their daily activities. (Ford & Ravansari, 2017).

According to A. Khan & Krishnan, (2017), a social media platform can be identified as an online platform where, its users are able to create accounts with their profile in order to interact with other users on an available online space. Today, social networks have been able to change the way people communicate with each other. With changes in web applications over the years, networking applications have been developed for socializing which have also been referenced as Social Networking Sites (SNS). Examples being Facebook, WhatsApp or Twitter which have millions of individuals who interact constantly, thus creating higher levels of interaction conversations that were difficult to achieve (Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016).

In recent years, users of social media have been using the platform in various ways and purposes and with technology having a very significant role in the life of every person regardless of user's age has enabled most users to engage with these platforms for amusement as they try to fulfil their variety of desires which include; escaping form the norm, entertainment, seeking information and majorly interacting with people. Social media has proven to be the easiest and quickest way of interacting and also providing a platform where any individual from any part of the world, speaks a different language and different culture can be able to interact easily as they can share views and exchange content despite being far from each other. Social media has rapidly emerged in the world as the most influential tool for sustaining greater communication. Most individuals globally use social media for communicating and exchanging content. Anyone is free to create content, give an opinion on various contents and share widely. Social media is best framed as a source of information distribution which is cheap and time efficient on a large scale, which enables it to be used by companies to interact with their audiences. It is estimated that over 90% of the world's adult population have an account on social media and they have been able to use it in the past one month. About 77% of the youth have a social media account. On average, a social media user spends 1hour 50minutes each day as opposed to 2012 where it was 1 hour 30 minutes (Chaffey, 2016).

Social networking sites such as WhatsApp Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have become very popular among people, especially to students due to ease of interaction. Facebook being among the largest site which has surpassed 2.58 billion registered users accounts, with Twitter having active users averaging 516 million each month. With the introduction of WhatsApp which has emerged and surpassed many social media platforms as it is very easy to use has led many individuals decrease the use of other ways that is sending letters, excessive phone calls as messages can be explained with ease through the WhatsApp application and also face-to-face meetings. One of the social media platforms, Facebook announced that they had an estimated 1.5 billion users who were active in 10 November, 2016. That means that two people out of 8 people were using Social media every single day, by February, 2020 the estimated active users number had risen to 2.5 billion (Facebook Information, 2016; 2020). Social

Media is very important as it is composed of various aspects such as education, health, marketing and even networking.

Malaysia's social media consumption according to We are social, (2019) estimates that there are over 25 million users out of the possible 31.5 million with 24 million of the using mobile for access. Where an average Malaysian takes up to 8 hours using the internet and about 2 hours on social media. Out of the 25 million users, 20-29 years of age had a 30% usage and 30-39 years had a 25.9%. The number has grown as compared to 2016 where active users were there were 66% of the population that being 18 million.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two from **Overview of Social Media: TRB's Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Synthesis 99** looks into the literature which is related and consistent with social media consumption is reviewed. Theories, empirical review of social media consumption are given and a conceptual framework of the study is outlined.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a collection of theories regarding a particular theme which is developed by reviewing previous research on the variables involved (Creswell, 2009). A theoretical framework ascertains a plan for investigation and interpretation of the findings of a study. The main objective of having a theoretical framework is to prove that the relationships you propose are not based on your personal instincts but rather formed from evidences obtained from authors of previous research studies (Smith, 2007). In this study, the following theories will be reviewed:

Emotion Contagion Theory

Emotional Transfer theory or Emotion Contagion Theory generated by Schoenwolf (1990), explains how that people have the abilities to produce both negative and positive emotions and also moods to other people. When an individual is physically present with another individual, one can view the other person's emotions and can allow that individual's emotions to be transferred to them. However, some research done by Kramer, Guillory, & Hancock, (2016) indicates that people don't have to be together for a transfer of emotions to take place. Therefore, people can become depressed by what they are exposed to on social media.

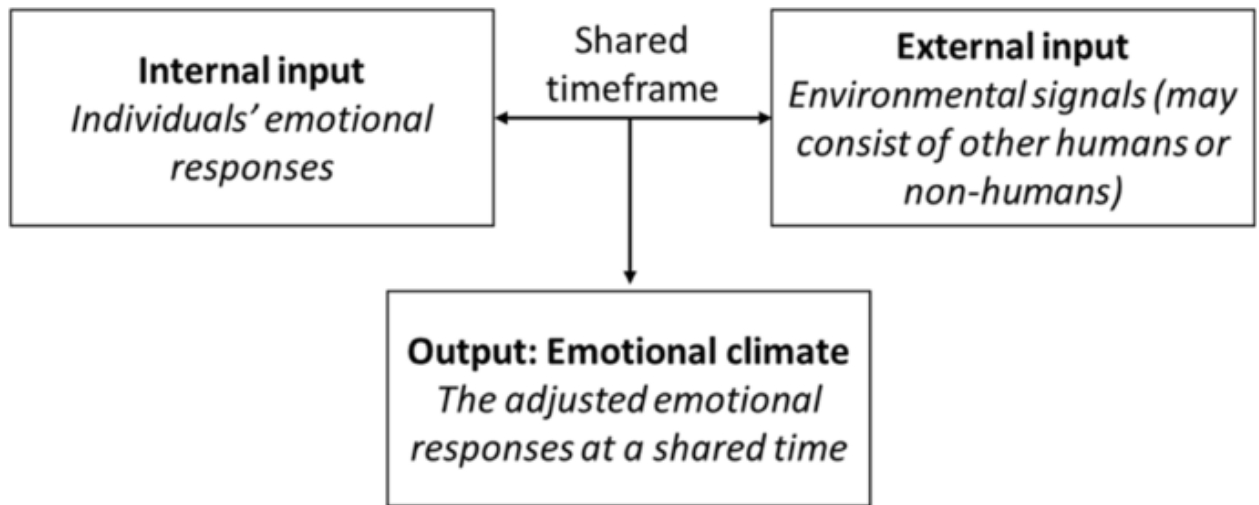


Figure 1: Emotional Contagion on Social Media framework

Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory was created by Festinger (1958) where the theory discusses that people have a tendency to compare themselves to other people’s objective standards as they seek to confirm their opinions about their abilities are correct. However, when they are unable to find these objective standards, they compare themselves with other individuals who have a similar preference which may be a biased comparison that can lead to people feeling negative about themselves. Therefore, people who tend to spend more time on social media may engage in social comparison more often which can in turn make them feel depressed and will definitely make their lives feel pale while comparing.



Figure 2: Social Comparison on Social Media framework

Developmental Task Theory and Emerging Adulthood

With various concepts explaining how young adulthood are complicated with mental health difficulties,

this theory tends to develop various expectations which vary with age and are used to distinguish between individuals whether one is successful or not (Havighurst, 1972). The theory tends to imitate both the surrounding culture values and human development. A good example being, as a student whose an adolescent, they are expected to focus in school and create friendships while adults develop romantic relationships or start families or even become employed or start a business (Havighurst, 1972). The pattern as from the past was adolescent into adulthood, but as from 2000, Arnett argues that another phase has emerged in between the phases which is called “emerging adulthood” (Arnett, 2000).

The new phase, the “Emerging adulthood” is tough to navigate as an individual in a developmental phase which has been accepted by developmental tasks of becoming a grown-up but it still has some tasks from the previous phase. According to Arnett (2000), describes that retention and adoption of the tasks is due to a modern cultural change with the variations of different cultures, they tend to experience a prolonged timeframe for education, exploring, and travelling, delaying of adulthood tasks such as marriage and parenthood. According to Burt & Masten, (2016; 2010), many adolescents in the “emerging adulthood” phase have a lot of pressure of the high number of developmental tasks which they have never experienced before.

This theory is helpful as it will guide the study since it suggests that there is a interrelationship between a young person and context in place.

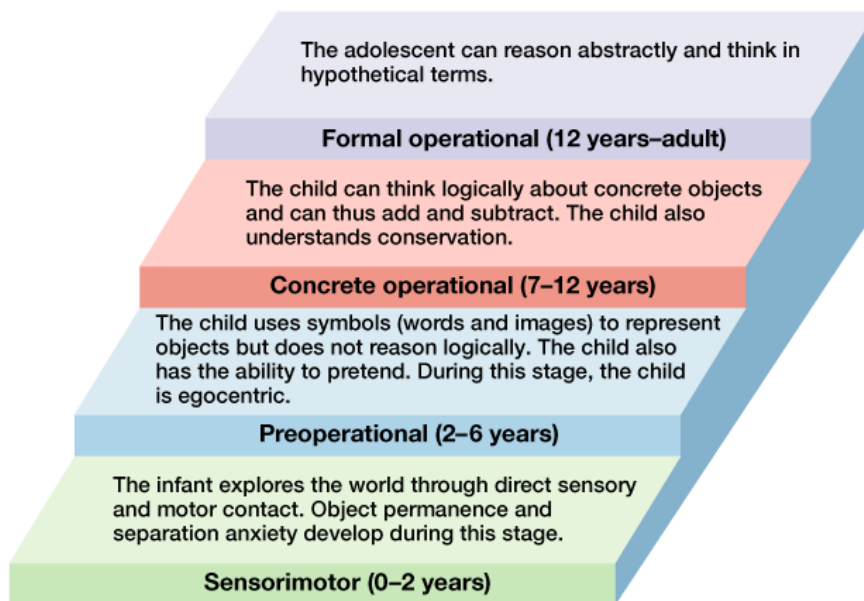


Figure 3: Developmental Task Theory and Emerging Adulthood framework

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic arrangement of the variables used in the study. The diagrammatic framework illustrates the interrelationship between an independent variable and dependent variable. The dependent variable used in the study is Social media consumption.

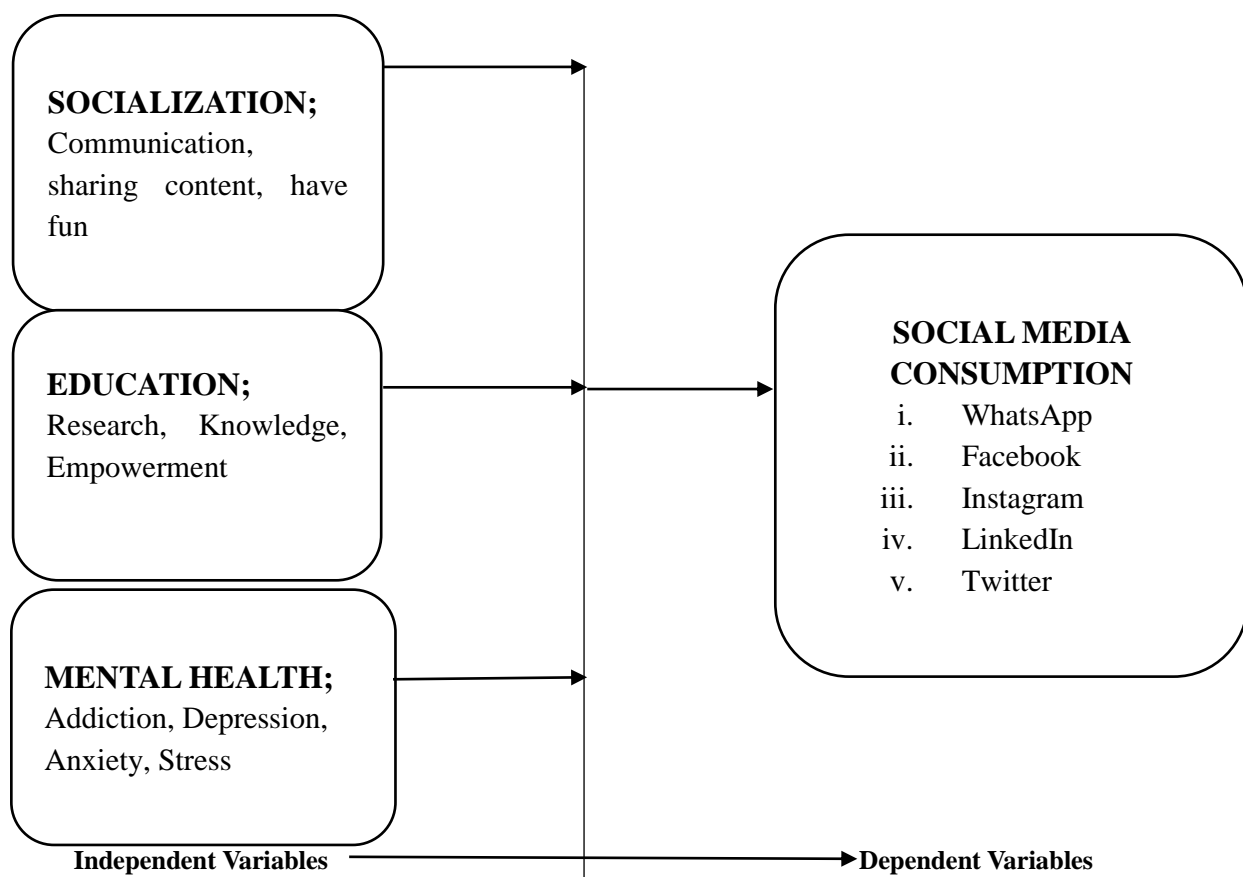


Figure 4: Conceptual framework

Empirical Review

Empirical research is research using empirical evidences used to study a phenomenon. The review of empirical literature in this study was based on the study objectives of this research.

Socialization

Socialization is the process of acquiring certain values in order to interact with other people which is acceptable to a certain society. Socialization values are created by those living in the society such as family members, our friends, school, government regulations, media and ethnic background. These values are developed according to one's age, personal experiences, society's process of adapting new values and many others (Sarah Genner & Daniel Süss, 2017).

Social networking platforms have emerged to revolutionize the way students interact with their friends, school mates and also lecturers. This has led to students becoming the highest percentage of users of these platforms. With a big audience of family and friends, one is able to project oneself through sharing photos and videos on Facebook in order to reduce boredom (Tandoc, Ferrucci & Duffy, 2015). The longer one spends on Facebook the more likely they end up comparing themselves with other people who they consider better than them, especially those who post photos and videos enjoying their best moments in life. This enables people adopt certain values from those they compare themselves with and try to relive the same way, (Liat Feldman, 2017).

Romantic relationships in emerging adults has become one aspect which has been understudied. With the introduction of Facebook, a section for revealing ones' romantic status was developed where one would indicate whether they are in a romantic relationship with another person (Fox & Warber, 2013; 2016). Further they found out that "Facebook Official" is a term that was adopted by young adults as a joke where it represented the authenticity of the romantic relationship between two people by revealing on each person's account on Facebook. This information could be set as public where everyone who has a Facebook account would be able to view or could be private where only their friends would be able to view the status. This has led to many young adults increase their social media consumption, get in more romantic relationships in order to use "Facebook Official" term, (Jessica R. Frampton, Jesse Fox, 2018).

Although, a lot of research has shown that social media platforms have been linked positively with socialization with most of those researches using only one social media platform, Facebook. With many young students using various social media platforms nowadays, using only one platform is a great limitation to the existing literature. Young adults have abandoned Facebook and adopted platforms that have not penetrated to parents and adults such as Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat (Begley, 2015). This research tends to diversify using various social media platforms, to gain a better perspective of students using social media sites for socialization and entertainment purposes.

Education

Education has been heavily influenced by rapid changes in technology. With social media been a norm in every student's life, education environment has also diversified into the networking sector in order to reach students. Having social media sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and Blogs, they have made people respond through comments by sharing their thoughts that can be useful to another person. The platforms have no time limits and have also enabled users to share the content to other people by recommending to interested parties. (Alwagait *et al.*, 2015).

Students have been identified as frequent users of social media by using the platform more than twice a day. The education sector has introduced sharing educational content to help improve communication among students Miller and Melton (2015). When using social media sites as a platform for learning through the lecturer-student process, it has been identified that students tend to get easily distracted (Hassan *et al.*, 2015). Students are unable to dedicate the required time in learning making them procrastinate in order to spend more time doing other things such as entertainment, Hettiarachchi, (2014). Miller and Melton, 2015 agreed to Hettiarachchi, 2014 and added that most students use social media to pleasure their curiosity.

Alkan and Bardakci (2017) through their study, they identified that individuals use social media sites for educational purposes by sharing educational materials, solving school projects as groups. Although they stated that it was very important to distinguish among the social networking sites which should be used for educational purposes. Although Helou & Rahim, (2014), research which focused on specifically Information technology students of Erican College and Khan, (2009) which focused on academic performance of students both researches done in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, this research tends to diversify using a different time to gain another perspective and get a better understanding that will be used in the education sector.

Mental Health

Social media has brought in so many benefits to people around the world such as enabling us to interact with people from different regions. Even though there are so many benefits, there are also some disadvantages that have had an effect on people due to the lack of social interaction. According to Elhai, J. D, *et. al.* (2016) study they indicated that Social media sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram have been associated with acculturative stress to university students. Through their wide research of stress on mental health of university students, they concluded that stress negatively affects mental health of the university students.

With likes and comments of posted content acting as positive support, many become unable to stop using the applications. Very many individuals compare their personal lives with the lives of celebrities or even their friends. According to Graham, D. L., (2016), he reported that the use of free social media sites that is Facebook and WhatsApp, many individuals stay connected with close friends and research fruitful content but at the same time end up losing a lot of discretion and privacy. Therefore, with the various studies done by the researchers we can determine that excessive use of social media sites can have a major effect on mental health of university students.

According to Yap, M.B.H *et. al.*, (2014; 2015), Social media consumption has been growing at an extraordinary rate mostly among the youth, unexpectedly in spite of having superior interconnectivity, the present young generation has been identified as lonelier than all the other groups and to make it worse the loneliest ever. With loneliness being one of the major fears of present virtual society, it has also been related to serious mental health problems. Loneliness is the discrepancy among desired levels and practical level of social contacts of an individual's social life. The Hearty Soul, (2017) agreed with Yap, *et al.*, (2014; 2015) research and added that when individuals have increased time on social media they end up much more depressed as with recent studies suggesting that majority of people have been found to be using social media sites for a significant amount of time.

Addiction has emerged as one of the major negative outcomes as it has extremely increased. When a person gets online, it becomes tough to refrain from going offline. A syndrome known as Phantom vibration syndrome (PVS), has been concluded to be acquired by the students which is nothing but a perception of an addicted person feeling the vibration of his personal phone, (A. Mohammadbeigi, 2012). Every victim of Phantom vibration syndrome reflects obsession of frequent checking of social messages exhibits manifestation of anxiety caused by cell phones.

In the past few decades, social media has beheld a sporadic improvement in quality, quantity and utility. Using an example of the body of a person, where it is nourished by the consumption of required mineral elements that are obtained through nutrition, it is likewise to the nurturing of the human mind where the availability of content through social media feeds the mind of the desire leading to an addiction. With the increase of technology, every content has been readily available, thereby creating a stage for discussion between social media and addiction. With social media sites, individuals of contemporary world have been influenced to become more social virtually but and less practically. The virtual life creates an isolation to the present man from others thereby affecting their health. With increased social media usage among the youth of this present era should be of concern to their parents, as two sides are presented either positive or negative. According to Hormes, Kearns, & Timko, (2014; 2015), they studied social media sites addictive nature and found out that individuals with highest

symptoms of social media addiction were more likely to engage in substance abuse.

However, in as much as researchers tried to be involved in all activities geared towards identifying mental health problems associated with high consumption of social media in universities, their efforts have merely been felt and barely appreciated, a factor that this study aims at correcting.

Social media consumption

J. Clement, (2020) describes social media consumption as the most widespread online activities where, as of 2019 it was estimated that about 3.48 billion people as compared to 2016 where there was an estimate of 2.9 billion people were using social media. Social media has penetrated 49% worldwide as of early 2020 which has been increasing rapidly over the years with an estimate of 55% by 2022. In the start of 2020, there was a 3.81 billion active users on social media with 3.76 billion using mobile phones.

According to Duggan *et al.*, (2015), 87% of the age between 18 and 29, use Facebook, 37% of the population uses Twitter and 54% of them are active users of Instagram. Facebook, one of the social media sites, boasts with an approximate 2.6 billion active users monthly which makes it the most used social media world-wide. Instagram, photo and video sharing application has reported to have 1 billion monthly users with its competitor, Snap chat having 229 million monthly active users with an increase from 190 million users as from 2019. WhatsApp is a messaging application which was acquired by Facebook back in 2014, (Albergotti, Reed, et. Al, 2016), the application has grown rapidly to having 2 billion active users. It's the most preferred messaging application due to its ease of use, encryption of messages as compared to other messaging application such as Facebook Messenger which has a 1.3 billion active use monthly. YouTube has 2 billion active users, WeChat 1 billion, Tiktok has 800 million active users, while Pinterest 336 million active users, (Statista, 2020). According to TechCrunch, 2020, Twitter has 152 million daily active users with over 500 million tweets each day, where 80% of its users are affluent millennials. Other social media sites include Google Plus, LinkedIn, Flickr, MySpace, Tango, Imo, Skype, BBM, Line and Viber and many others (Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This is the arrangement of conditions that are used for collection and analysis of data in a way that will combine relevance to the research purpose (Babbie, 2014; 2016). A quantitative research design will be viewed as the most appropriate for the analysis of university students' responses for it allowed quantification of the influences that each independent variable had on high social media consumption being the dependent variable. A descriptive design will be used to describe the current state of the variables. Under Quantitative research design the researcher uses descriptive design which does not begin with the hypothesis, but typically develops one after the data is collected. This study adopted both quantitative and descriptive types of research design where stratified sampling technique will be used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic

According to Ngechu (2004), a study population is defined as a set of people, group of things, households, firms, services, elements or events which are under investigation. Thus the population should fit certain specifications, which the researcher was studying and the population should be uniform. A target population refers to the population which the researcher wants to generalize the outcome of the study. The study covers the students of Berjaya University College.

The target population consisted of Diploma, Degree and Masters Students who were selected at random. The following were used in the study; 149 Diploma students, 121 Degree students and 30 Masters Students.

Table 1: Target population

Hospitality Department	Population
Diploma	149
Degree	120
Masters	30
Total	300

Source: Primary Source, (2020)

Correlation Analysis

The researcher sought to find out the correlation between the variables from the study. The table below indicates the correlations among the variables;

Table 2: Variables correlations

	Education	Social Media Consumption	Socialization	Mental Health
Education	1			
Social Media Consumption	-.113	1		
Socialization	-.036	.384**	1	
Mental Health	.369**	.015	.291*	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailored).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailored).

Cross tab using chi square is using for the results given of the correlation of the independent variables – Socialization, Education and Mental Health and the dependent variable which is Social Media Consumption, shows that only socialization has a significant influence on social media consumption with $r=0.384$ at the 95% confidence interval. Looking at the table, there were independent variables with 0.5 and above which indicated a strong correlation cited by Malawi Med J. (2012). For instance,

education was seen to be correlated with mental health and socialization as well as mental health and socialization. Assuming that 0.5 and above correlation is significant, we can conclude that education has led to mental health as well as mental health having led to socialization.

From the study findings, majority of the respondents asserted that there is high consumption of social media in Berjaya University College. They study sought to find out the effect of socialization on social media consumption and found out that majority of the respondents' assert that socialization highly affects social media consumption, and only a minority asserted that socialization does not affect social media consumption. On effect of education on social media consumption majority of the respondents interviewed assert that it highly affects social media consumption and only a minority asserted that education does not affect social media consumption. On effect of mental health on social media consumption majority of the respondents interviewed asserted that mental health highly affects social media consumption, while only a minority felt that it does not affect.

Table 3: Diploma students

Age in years	Number of people in strata	Number of people in sample
18 and Below	14	$14 \times (54/149) = 5$
19 years	28	$28 \times (54/149) = 10$
20 years	46	$46 \times (54/149) = 17$
21 years	41	$41 \times (54/149) = 15$
22 and Above	20	$20 \times (54/149) = 7$
Total	149	54

Table 4: Degree students

Age in years	Number of people in strata	Number of people in sample
18 and Below	8	$8 \times (48/121) = 3$
19-20 years	21	$21 \times (48/121) = 8$
21-22 years	42	$42 \times (48/121) = 17$
23-24 years	35	$35 \times (48/121) = 14$
Above 25 years	14	$14 \times (48/121) = 6$
Total	121	48

Table 5: Masters’ Students

Age in years	Number of people in strata	Number of people in sample
26 years	6	$6 \times (13/30) = 3$
27 years	10	$10 \times (13/30) = 4$
Above 28 years	14	$14 \times (13/30) = 6$
Total	30	13

The study sought to relate the effect of socialization on social media consumption. This data acquired revealed that all 113 respondents agreed that socialization highly affects social media consumption. 90 respondents agreed that Social media influence socialization among University students while the rest, 23, voted for No. For the test items that is Efficient communication and interaction skills is established; It is easier to make friends; Provides a platform for showcasing empathy; Helps build relationships; and Social distancing is created as people spend more time on social media that interacting physically with others leading to loneliness were strongly agreed upon by the respondents making it a 100% strong positive response. On social media consumption of university students, 103 out of the possible 113 agreed that they often or very often use social media, 8 (7%) agreed that they sometimes or rarely use social media while only one person agreed that they do not consume social media. It was established that 91% of the respondents’ assert that socialization highly affects social media consumption, 7% felt that it only affects moderately while 2% felt that socialization does not affect social media consumption.

On the effect of education on social media consumption, the data acquired revealed that 76 respondents agreed that education affects social media consumption highly, 27 agreed that it affects moderately while only 10 voted on not affecting social media consumption at all. On to what extent does social media influence the education sector, only 39 (35%) respondents agreed to a very great extent or great extent while the others went with moderate, little or no extent. On the statements made that is there are educative social media platforms; Students are able to discuss and complete school projects through social media platforms; Ease of accessing past research; I communicate with the supervisor through social media; Engaging in academic forums on social media confuses me; and Sometimes I use social media to understand what I have been taught in class, all respondents strongly agreed with the statements making it a 100% positive strongly agreed response. With all the responses, being 67%, 35% and 100%, its average conducted led to 67% while 24% voted on affecting moderately while 9% voted on it does not affect. It was established that 67% respondents assert that education highly affects social media consumption, 24% felt that it only affects moderately while 9% felt that education have no effect on social media consumption. These findings are shown in the table below.

On Mental Health, data acquired revealed that 39 respondents agreed that mental health affect Social media consumption, 51 agreed that it affects moderately while only 23 voted on not affecting Social media consumption at all. On to what extent does anxiety/ stress of social media affect one’s mental health among students, 57 (50%) respondents agreed to a very great extent or great extent while the

others went with moderate, little or no extent. On the statements made that is Seeking validation from social media creates stress if desires aren't met; Unhappiness from social media leads to one becoming stressed; and Anxiety leads to mental health problems due worry or even fear, most of the respondents voted on neutral while only 23 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements making it only 20% positive response of the statements. With all three responses, being 34%, 50% and 20%, its average conducted led to 35%. It was established that 35% of the respondents asserted that mental health highly affects Social media consumption, 45% felt that it only affects moderately while 20% felt that mental health does not affect Social media consumption.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing research, the study concluded that socialization highly affects social media consumption, on mental health, the research concluded that social media consumption highly affects mental health above average while, education highly affects social media consumption below average according to respondents. The study concludes that there was a negative relationship between mental health and social media consumption which means that an increase in social media consumption coursed mental health problems. On socialization, an increase in socialization coursed an increase in social media consumption. On education, increase in the education sector coursed an increase in social media consumption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that there should be forums organized in universities to enlighten students on the various implications of social media consumption. Lecturers are advised to adopt new strategies by guiding tests, discussions and assignments on social media sites. Students are advised to reduce the time they spend on social media sites to avoid being obsessed. Schools are advised to restrict access to certain social media sites which may be prone to distracting students from concentration on their studies.

Recommendations for Further Research

One of the recommendations provided to future researchers is to extend research on social media consumption by examining other areas such as among the elderly, youth, non-students. In addition, future researchers can use larger sample size of data in order to gain a much better understanding of the dynamics between social media consumption and university students. Frequency of data can be increased by using weekly or monthly frequencies to raise the sample size and to get a more in depth look at the factors affecting social media consumption.

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