

# The Relationship between Social Media Addiction with Anxiety and Depression among Undergraduate Students in Klang Valley, Malaysia

Nuzha Mohamed Taha, Intan Surianie Mahassan, Nur Adilah  
Aishah Nor Azman, Nur Aina Irman Zuwardi

Faculty of Education and Humanities, UNITAR International University

Corresponding Author Email: [nuzha@unitar.my](mailto:nuzha@unitar.my)

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess the level of social media addiction among undergraduate students and examine its relationship with anxiety and depression in this population. The research was designed using a correlational survey model. The study group comprised 230 university students, with 158 female participants (68.7%) and 72 male participants (31.3%), all enrolled in two selected private universities in Klang Valley. Data were collected through the administration of the Demographic Information Form, Social Media Addiction Scale-Student Form (SMAS-SF), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). Pearson correlation analysis was performed in SPSS to investigate the associations between students' social media addiction, anxiety, and depression. The findings revealed a positive correlation between students' social media addiction levels and their experiences of anxiety and depression. These results suggest that anxiety and depression variables significantly predict social media addiction. The implications of these findings were discussed in relation to relevant literature, and appropriate recommendations were proposed. This study's findings indicate a tendency among undergraduate university students in Klang Valley, Malaysia, towards developing social media addiction.

**Keywords:** Social Media Addiction, Anxiety, Depression, Private Universities

## Introduction

Nowadays, social media has become an integral part of individuals' daily routines. As stated by Ganbold (2022), Malaysia ranks second in social media usage among countries in the Asia Pacific region. As of February 2022, Brunei had the highest active social media user penetration in the Asia-Pacific region, reaching 116.5 percent, closely followed by Malaysia with a penetration rate of 91.7 percent. Social media platforms offer various benefits, including frequent updates, versatility for multiple purposes, virtual sharing, and more. People utilize social media to share their everyday thoughts, engage in discussions, and present new ideas. However, while social media can serve as a positive medium for communication, it can also have adverse effects on individuals' mental health. Research has shown that social media can be associated with negative outcomes such as depression, loss

of self-control, social anxiety, stress, sleep deprivation, and even facilitate harmful behaviours like suicidal ideation (Berryman et al., 2017).

In Malaysia, prominent social media platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook enjoy significant activity (Kemp, 2019). An investigation conducted by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in 2020 revealed that 89% of the respondents were addicted to the Internet, with 60% exhibiting elevated levels of anxiety, and a third experiencing major depression (Internet Users Survey, 2020, 2020).

In the context of Malaysia, there have been limited studies exploring the relationship between social media addiction, anxiety, and depression specifically among private university students. However, in 2021, one study focused on examining social media use and depression among Malaysian university students, uncovering that 46.8% of the respondents spent a significant amount of time on screens, ranging from 9 hours to 24 hours daily. This finding raises concern and warrants attention from the government (Sallehudin et al., 2021). Another study investigated social media addiction among nursing students at UiTM (Universiti Teknologi MARA) in Malaysia, indicating that most students exhibited addiction tendencies, as reflected by a total mean score of 86.40 (Fauzi et al., 2021).

Research on social media and its addiction has been widely conducted in Malaysian education institutions (Nazir et.al., 2020). It has been observed among higher education students, social media play a significant role to be updated to current situations in the student's life. The number of students with social media addiction tends to neglect their bodily, psychological, and mental well-being (Zaw & Azenal, 2021). Another research demonstrated that social media addiction was widespread among students, and it had a detrimental impact connected to academic performance and mental health performance (Freya & Wok, 2020). Based on previous studies, researchers mostly found a significant relationship between social media addiction with anxiety and depression among public university students.

As a result, the purpose of this study is to fill a research gap by thoroughly investigating the association between social media addiction, anxiety, and depression in the context of the specific sociocultural and educational landscape of undergraduate students in Klang Valley. This study seeks to provide valuable insights into the potential linkages between these variables in order to inform preventive measures, intervention strategies, and tailored support systems aimed at safeguarding the mental well-being of undergraduate students in an era of prevalent social media usage.

The study's findings have the potential to raise awareness among university administrators, instructors, counsellors, and students about the possible negative effects of excessive social media use on mental health. This knowledge can encourage the creation of proactive support networks, such as mental health services, counselling resources, and educational programmes. Universities can also develop focused intervention programmes to address the possible negative repercussions of social media addiction armed with the findings of this study. Workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns emphasising appropriate and attentive technology use may be included. Furthermore, the findings might be integrated into educational curriculum, allowing students to gain critical thinking abilities

regarding their online behaviours. This involves understanding how to use technology in a way that reduces the risk of bad mental health outcomes.

### **Problem Statement**

The growing popularity of social media in Malaysia has established it as a significant internet traffic source, accessible through various social sites. Government statistics compiled by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (2020) reveal varying degrees of internet penetration across different regions. The Klang Valley region, encompassing Kuala Lumpur, the nation's capital, boasts the highest penetration rate at 71%, with Selangor, Malaysia's most advanced state, following closely at the same percentage. In contrast, Putrajaya, the nation's administrative centre, stands at 89% penetration. However, other less populated states such as Sabah (43%) and Sarawak (41%), situated in east Malaysia, exhibit lower internet penetration. These regions are home to indigenous communities, and their mountainous and forested terrain poses challenges for internet infrastructure (Internet Users Survey, 2020).

Numerous research studies have demonstrated that social media addiction can manifest through various symptoms, affecting an individual's mood, cognition, physical and emotional responses, as well as interpersonal and psychological well-being (Hou et al., 2019). Consequently, social media presents both advantages and disadvantages, contingent upon an individual's purpose and manner of usage.

Moreover, social media addiction has emerged as a critical concern due to its documented correlation with psychological effects on individual emotions and behaviours. This is particularly worrisome as psychological issues like anxiety, depression, and stress can lead to significant impediments in relationships, daily activities, and overall physical and mental well-being. Consequently, this issue has garnered attention as a noteworthy public health concern, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to release a report in 2018 titled "Public Health Implications of Excessive Use of the Internet, Computers, Smartphones, and Similar Electronic Devices." The report highlights the problems associated with excessive smartphone usage and its potential impact on mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress (World Health Organization, 2018).

### **Theoretical Foundation and Literature Review**

#### ***Theoretical Foundation***

Numerous theoretical frameworks have been employed in studies related to social media addiction. Examples include the Theory of Online Learning (Anderson, 2004; Self-Determination Theory, 2000; Rational Addiction Theory, 1998). However, in this study, the researcher adopted the Theory of Uses and Gratifications (Blumler & Katz, 1974) as a guiding framework, elucidating that individuals attain a certain level of satisfaction through their use of social media. In the context of social media addiction, an individual's pursuit of satisfaction may lead to addiction. This theory has evolved to address the need for understanding why people choose specific media and the benefits they derive from them. Hossain (2019) states that the primary objective of this theory is to elucidate the underlying reasons for people's media preferences, enhance comprehension of both individual and social gratifications, and elucidate users' motives when engaging with media. Researchers often employ this theory to explain, examine, define, and provide insights into why individuals are drawn to certain media

and the gratifications or benefits they derive from such interactions. The fundamental premise of the uses and gratifications theory is that individuals utilize mass media for diverse reasons, seeking various forms of gratification.

Additionally, this study is linked to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) through the Needs Theory. This theory is commonly utilized to identify human motives for life. The rationale behind combining this theory with the Theory of Uses and Gratifications is to investigate whether an individual's level of social media addiction is closely associated with the hierarchy of needs. It has been suggested that social media usage and gratifications play a crucial role in explaining individuals' dependency on social media. Consequently, individuals utilize social media to fulfil specific needs, and this fulfilment may serve as a strong incentive for continued usage of social media platforms, potentially leading to addiction in a small minority of users. Moreover, a previous study by Zheng et al (2020) demonstrated that various addictive behaviours could be moderated through engagement in physical activity. As a result, it is hypothesized that participating in physical activity may help mitigate the risk of social media addiction by fulfilling an individual's social and psychological needs.

### ***Social Media Addiction***

Social media addiction is characterized as a psychological condition that develops through cognitive, affective, and behavioural processes, leading to challenges in various aspects of daily life, including personal, professional, and interpersonal domains. Individuals with lower internet tolerance may be more susceptible to social media addiction, resulting in disruptions to their daily routines. Moreover, social media addiction can significantly impact people's emotional well-being, contributing to feelings of depression, anxiety, and the fear of missing out. Some individuals may develop a sense of superiority in the online world, further exacerbating the negative effects on their daily lives. The prevalence of social media use has been steadily increasing, with a global estimate of 4.20 billion users reported in January 2021 (Chaffey, 2021).

In Malaysia, the number of social media users has reached 28 million, indicating a 7.7% increase from the previous year (DataReportal, 2021). Notably, the number of social media users in Malaysia has risen to 86.0% as of January 2021, with platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram being the most used. Malaysian users spend an average of approximately 181 minutes per day on social media sites.

Social media addiction has become a significant concern in the public health sector due to its addictive nature and its associated psychological consequences. Many individuals engage with social media without fully understanding its potential impact on their psychological well-being, including the development of anxiety and depression. As described by Griffiths and Kuss (2017), social media encompasses various web-based technologies, such as virtual worlds, content communities, networking sites, weblogs, and collaborative projects, allowing users to create, share, and interact with online content. Prolonged usage of social media has been linked to negative effects on well-being. Kel (2018) found that increased time spent on social media is associated with heightened risks of anxiety, depression, sleep disruption, loneliness, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts.

Social media addiction can be characterized by individuals' excessive preoccupation with social media and an uncontrollable urge to continually log on and use these platforms. Symptoms of social media addiction can manifest in various aspects of an individual's life, including mood, cognition, physical and emotional reactions, as well as interpersonal and psychological functioning (Blachnio et al., 2018). This form of addiction can be viewed as one aspect of Internet addiction, where individuals feel compelled to excessively use social media platforms. The ease of access to social media and the user-friendly nature of its platforms are contributing factors to the development of social media addiction (Lopez et al., 2018).

### ***Social Media Addiction and Anxiety***

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by difficulties in controlling persistent thoughts, feelings of impending doom, and physical symptoms like restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, sleep disturbances, muscle tension, and elevated blood pressure (American Psychological Association, 2020). Individuals experiencing anxiety may resort to increased use of social networks, leading to heightened feelings of disappointment and potentially developing an addiction to these platforms. The duration of social media use plays a crucial role not only in the onset of social media addiction but also in the development of psychological disorders, including anxiety (Lu et al., 2018).

Heavy users of smartphones or electronic devices may experience a significant increase in anxiety when denied access to these devices. Additionally, previous research has highlighted a link between social media addiction and anxiety symptoms in adolescents (Cerniglia et al., 2019). Extended use of social media has been associated with various detrimental effects on the mental health of young individuals, including heightened risks of anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, loneliness, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts (Kelly et al., 2018). Furthermore, a recent study examining the impact of negative experiences with online shopping applications revealed that such experiences and subsequent disappointments can also contribute to feelings of anxiety in consumers (Widayat & Irfani, 2020).

### ***Social Media Addiction and Depression***

Depression is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in engaging in activities. It represents a significant mental health concern globally, particularly among young adults. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020, over 264 million individuals are affected by depression. The impact of depression on the daily lives of those afflicted can be profound, affecting various routine activities such as studying, work, and household chores. Severe depression can even lead to suicide, with approximately 800,000 people worldwide taking their own lives each year. Suicide ranks as the second leading cause of death among young individuals aged 15–29 years (World Health Organization, 2020). In Malaysia, the National Health and Morbidity Survey conducted in 2019 reported that half a million Malaysians are affected by depression. Notably, increased time spent on social media has been associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing depression (Boers et al., 2019). Moreover, depression has a negative impact on individuals' overall life satisfaction (Celik et al., 2018).

Numerous academic articles have extensively discussed the impact of social media on individuals. A comprehensive study analyzing over a billion emotional content postings by 100

million Facebook users revealed that positive or negative moods can spread among social media users. Additionally, factors such as cyberbullying and the perception of social media as a time-wasting platform have been associated with increased levels of anxiety and depression, particularly among highly active social media users. Gender differences have also been observed, with women feeling more pressure to use social media sites than men. Extensive research indicates that the increased use of technology, including the internet, social media, and smartphones, can lead to addiction and pose a risk factor for depression. However, certain studies have reported a positive association between these types of addiction and depression (Stones & Glazzard, 2019). Furthermore, the growing popularity of social media among adolescents has become a notable trend, particularly among the younger generation (Satici, 2019).

Moreover, previous studies have identified a significant correlation between social media addiction and depression. Notably, literature has documented a positive correlation between social media addiction and depression among university students (Ahmad et al., 2018). Furthermore, a study conducted by the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in 2021 found a strong correlation between social media addiction, depression, and anxiety (Zaw & Azenal, 2021). Results shows that the use of social media can be harmful to student's mental health.

### **Research Objective**

Numerous prior studies have highlighted the escalating social media addiction among adolescents, leading to potential psychological and behavioural issues. However, limited research has been conducted to explore the extent of social media addiction and its association with psychological problems, specifically anxiety and depression, among university students. Hence, this study aims to address this research gap and obtain more comprehensive insights into these factors. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the level of social media addiction among university students?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between social media addiction and anxiety?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between social media addiction and depression?

### **Methodology**

Research entails a systematic and methodical process of collecting and analytically examining data to achieve a specific objective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Due to the various approaches employed in investigating issues or topics, this concept is broad in scope. The techniques utilized to gather and analyze data are referred to as research methods, collectively constituting a research methodology. These methodologies are designed to ensure the acquisition of valid and reliable knowledge pertaining to the research topic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The research design encompasses the plan, strategy, and methods employed by the researcher to collect and analyze data (Chun Tie, Birks & Francis, 2019). For this research, the quantitative method was utilized, focusing on distributing survey questionnaires to targeted respondents.



This study focuses on approaching undergraduate students enrolled in private universities, specifically UNITAR International University and UNIKL MIDI in the Klang Valley.

The researcher employed two types of sampling techniques: convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling involves selecting respondents based on their willingness to participate in the survey and their availability at accessible locations. In other words, respondents are chosen based on convenience and accessibility. On the other hand, snowball sampling serves as an alternative to convenience sampling, where respondents are asked to refer or identify other potential participants to be included in the sample (Creswell, 2015).

The respondents in UNITAR were approached through WhatsApp group by sending the survey link through the Google Form platform to the group of each faculty in UNITAR. Meanwhile, the researcher reached out to staff at UNIKL MIDI and requested that he passed it on to the UNIKL MIDI students.

The data collected from the survey underwent coding and was entered into the computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for Windows. Subsequently, the data were subjected to assessment utilizing the SPSS software, wherein measures such as means, standard deviations, reliability, and correlations were computed.

## **Research Instruments**

### ***Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)***

To measure anxiety, Beck Anxiety Inventory by Beck and Steer was used. The Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) is commonly used to measure the level of anxiety in adolescents and adults. The BAI was originally developed to differentiate the behavioural, emotional, and physiological symptoms between individuals with anxiety and depression and to assess response to treatment of groups of patients with anxiety disorders by clinicians and researchers to determine the cognitive and somatic aspects of the symptoms of anxiety.

The BAI consists of 21 items with a four-point scale (zero to three) with 21 items that provide lists of symptoms of anxiety. Participants respond to questions in relation to how much each symptom has bothered them over the past week, with higher scores indicating more severe anxiety symptoms. The symptoms rated on a four-point scale, ranging from “not at all” (0) to “severely, it bothered me a lot” (3). According to the past study, the instrument has excellent internal consistency 0.92 and high test-retest reliability 0.75. Nevertheless, the researcher has done the pilot study in this current study to find the current reliability of the items.

### ***Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)***

The last section of the questionnaire is the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) by Beck and Steer. The BDI consists of 21 items that provide an indication of the level of depressed mood. Participants respond to questions in relation to how they have felt over the past week, with higher scores indicating more severe depression.

According to the past study, the alpha coefficient exceeded .90 and the test-retest reliability of .80. Nevertheless, the researcher has done the pilot study in this current study to find the current reliability of the items.

### Pilot Study

The researchers have conducted the pilot test for instruments that will be used to this research. The Cronbach's Alpha result for Social Media Addiction Scale - Student Form (SMA-SF), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) has been found as 0.965, 0.970 and 0.944 respectively obtained based on the result of pilot test conducted among 25 undergraduate student (Table 1). Overall, the results obtained showed that all the items for each variable are highly reliable.

Table 1

#### *Reliability Analysis Results*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
BAI	0.939
BDI	0.928
SMAF-SF	0.956

### Research Findings

#### ***Socio-demographic Information***

The study was conducted among undergraduate students enrolled at UNITAR International University and UNIKL MIDI. Convenience sampling and Snowball sampling methods were employed in this study. A total of 230 respondents, all from undergraduate levels (i.e., Degree and Diploma), participated in the research.

In this study, the female respondents constituted the majority, comprising 158 respondents (68.7%), whereas male respondents accounted for 72 (31.3%).

Regarding age distribution, the highest number of respondents fell within the 22 – 23 years old range, with 146 respondents (62.9%). The second-highest age group was 24 – 25 years old, comprising 40 respondents (17.2%), followed by 20 – 21 years old with 28 respondents (12.1%). The fourth category consisted of respondents below 20 – 21 years old, with 12 participants (5.2%), and finally, respondents above 26 years old had 6 participants (2.6%).

Among the racial backgrounds of the participants, Malay respondents were the largest group, with 151 participants (65.7%). The second-largest group was Indian, comprising 39 respondents (17%), while Chinese respondents closely followed with 26 participants (11.3%). Additionally, 12 respondents (5.2%) identified themselves as being from Sabah and Sarawak. Lastly, there were 2 respondents (0.9%) who were international students participating in this study.

Regarding academic level, the highest number of participants were pursuing a degree, with 203 respondents (88.3%), followed by Diploma students with 27 respondents (11.7%).



Table 2

*Demographic Table of Respondents*

Variables	Category	n, (N=230)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	31.3
	Female	158	68.7
Age	Below 20 years old	12	5.2
	20 – 21 years old	28	12.1
	22 – 23 years old	146	62.9
	24 – 25 years old	40	17.2
	Above 26 years old	6	2.6
Race	Malay	151	65.7
	Chinese	26	11.3
	Indian	39	17
	Bumiputera (Sabah/Sarawak)	12	5.2
	International Student	2	0.9
Level of Study	Diploma	27	11.7
	Degree	203	88.3

**Research Question 1: Level of social media addiction among university students**

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of the dependent variable in the research, namely social media addiction. The calculated mean of the dependent variable, as measured by the Social Media Addiction Scale-Student Form (SMAS-SF), is 3.6694. This indicates that a significant portion of the students are cognizant of the prevalence of social media addiction among undergraduate students. The study observed the level of social media addiction in 230 undergraduate students, revealing a moderately high level of social media addiction based on the mean.

Table 3

*Mean and Standard Deviation of SMAS - SF*

Dependent Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
SMAS-SF	3.6694	0.76518

**Research Question 2: Relationship between Anxiety and Social Media Addiction**

Based on the results presented in Table 4, the statistical significance of the BAI (Beta Anxiety Inventory) is reported as  $p < 0.001$ , indicating a strong relationship between Anxiety and Social Media Addiction among undergraduate students. This provides sufficient evidence to support a significant relationship between these two variables. Additionally, the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between Anxiety and Social Media Addiction, as derived from the data in Table 5, is calculated to be 0.430. Despite being a weak positive correlation (as indicated in Table 4), this relationship remains statistically significant (Samuel & Okey, 2015). Consequently, the alternate hypothesis, which posits a correlation between Anxiety and Social Media Addiction, is accepted based on the empirical evidence.

Table 4  
*Correlation Analysis between BAI and SMAS-SF*

		SMAS-SF
BAI	Pearson Correlation	0.430
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	230

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Table 5  
*Interpretation of Value and Strength of Pearson's Correlation*

Coefficient $r$		Strength of Correlation
Positive	Negative	
1 to 0.8	-0.8 to -1	Strong
0.8 to 0.5	-0.5 to -0.8	Moderate
0.5 to 0.3	-0.3 to -0.5	Weak
0.3 to 0	0 to -0.3	No Correlation

*Source: International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research (Samuel & Okey, 2015)*

**Research Question 3: Relationship between Depression and Social Media Addiction**

Subsequently, an analysis of the second variable, i.e., Depression, reveals a significant correlation as indicated by a significance value of 0.000 for the BDI (Beck Depression Inventory). These results suggest a noteworthy association between Depression and Social Media Addiction among undergraduate students, establishing a relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, referring to Table 6, the calculated correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) for Anxiety and Social Media Addiction is 0.343, signifying a weak yet statistically significant positive correlation. Consequently, the empirical evidence

supports the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis, which posits a correlation between Anxiety and Social Media Addiction.

Table 6

*Correlation Analysis between BDI and SMAS-SF*

		SMAS-SF
BDI	Pearson Correlation	0.343
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	230

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The analysis of overall hypotheses results reveals significant relationships between Social Media Addiction and both Anxiety and Depression among 230 undergraduate students in Klang Valley. The evidence supporting these hypotheses stems from the correlations observed in the collected data. Pearson's correlation table indicates that the p-values for the relationship between social media addiction and anxiety, as well as depression, are both less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), specifically 0.000 for both cases. This suggests significant relationships between social media addiction and anxiety, as well as depression. Consequently, hypotheses 1 and 2 are accepted. It is important to note that the observed relationships between social media addiction and both variables are weakly positive. Referring to the Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) in the table, the values are 0.430 and 0.343 for anxiety and depression, respectively, and both are statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). Hence, the findings provide evidence of a correlation between social media addiction and both anxiety and depression.

## Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationships between social media addiction, anxiety, and depression. The results revealed significant correlations among social media addiction, anxiety, and depression variables, indicating that most undergraduate students were addicted to social media, as evidenced by their mean scores.

Moreover, the study found significant relationships between Social Media Addiction and both Anxiety and Depression among 230 undergraduate students in Klang Valley. These findings align with previous research conducted by Malak et al (2021), who reported equivalent results. The correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) for social media addiction with depression and anxiety were found to be 0.430 and 0.343, respectively, for both independent variables. This indicates that a higher level of social media addiction is associated with a more negative impact on student's mental health in terms of depression and anxiety. The results suggest that social media addiction significantly affects the mental health status of the respondents, consistent with findings from other studies that reported a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and depression (Haand & Shuwang, 2020).

In conclusion, this study observed that age, gender, race, and level of study did not significantly influence the level of social media addiction among the students. However, it is worth noting that there were a few previous studies that contradicted these results.

Therefore, further research is needed to establish a more accurate understanding of the relationship between age, gender, race, level of study, and social media addiction.

### ***What Is the Level of Social Media Addiction Among These University Students?***

The primary research question addressed in this study was to assess the level of social media addiction among university students. A total of 230 undergraduate students were observed in this investigation, and the findings indicated a moderately high level of social media addiction, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.6694 (Table 1). Notably, numerous studies have explored the level of social media addiction among university students, consistently reporting a significant prevalence of social media addiction in this population. For instance, Fauzi et al (2021) conducted a study in a Malaysian university and observed a substantial number of undergraduate students addicted to social media. Ahmad et al (2018) also supports these findings, reporting that undergraduate university students devote considerable amounts of time to social media. Furthermore, Zaw and Azenal (2021) conducted a previous study that concurs with the current results, revealing that most students demonstrated a slight addiction to social media based on their mean scores.

In summary, this study successfully addressed the research question regarding the level of social media addiction among university students, revealing a moderately high level of addiction. These findings align with prior research, indicating a prevalent issue of social media addiction among undergraduate students.

### ***What Is the Relationship Between Social Media Addiction with Anxiety?***

The second research question in this study aimed to investigate the relationship between social media addiction and anxiety. The results presented revealed a significant relationship between social media addiction and anxiety among undergraduate students. The correlation coefficient ( $r=0.430$ ,  $p<.01$ ) reported in Table 4 indicates a weak positive relationship between these variables. In conclusion, the study found a significant relationship between social media addiction and anxiety among undergraduate students, with a p-value of .000, which is less than 0.01.

These findings are in line with numerous previous studies that have also explored the relationship between social media addiction and anxiety. For instance, Aziz et al (2018) conducted a study among Malaysian university students and found a significant association between internet addiction and high levels of anxiety among adolescents. Similarly, Ithnain et al (2018) reported a positive and significant correlation between variables, albeit weak. Another study by Malak et al (2021) identified a statistically significant positive relationship between social media addiction and students' anxiety symptoms, highlighting the impact of excessive social media use on anxiety symptoms.

In summary, this study's results demonstrate a significant relationship between social media addiction and anxiety among undergraduate students, which aligns with previous research findings that emphasize the presence of a positive but weak correlation between these variables.

***What Is the Relationship Between Social Media Addiction with Depression?***

The third research question addressed in this study aimed to explore the relationship between social media addiction and depression. The findings presented indicated a significant relationship between social media addiction and depression among undergraduate students. The results in Table 6 revealed a correlation coefficient of  $r=0.343$ , with a p-value of less than .01, signifying a weak positive relationship between social media addiction and depression.

In conclusion, the study established a significant relationship between social media addiction and depression among undergraduate students, as evidenced by the p-value of .000, which is below the threshold of 0.01.

Numerous studies have also investigated the relationship between social media addiction and depression. For instance, Aziz et al (2018) conducted a similar study among Malaysian university students and found a significant association between internet addiction and higher levels of depression among adolescents. These results were consistent with previous studies conducted by (Ithnain et al., 2018).

In summary, the study's findings provide evidence of a significant relationship between social media addiction and depression among undergraduate students, aligning with previous research that also highlighted a positive correlation between these variables, though weak in magnitude.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the participants in this study exhibited an elevated level of social media addiction, with a majority experiencing varying levels of anxiety and depression. The study's results suggest a positive association between social media addiction and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Considering the continuous technological advancements in smartphones and tablets, social media addiction remains a significant concern. It is essential for relevant authorities, including parents, universities, and students themselves, to initiate interventions for effective social media management and mental health development. Raising public awareness regarding the impact of social media addiction on mental health is also recommended.

Several suggestions for future studies are proposed to enhance the findings and research in this field

- Future research should focus on specific social media platforms used by adolescents that exhibit a strong correlation with psychological distress.
- Qualitative research data, such as in-depth interviews, should be incorporated into future studies to provide additional insights into the observed findings.
- Further investigations are warranted to explore other dimensions of problematic social media use among private university students in the context of Malaysia. These aspects may include examining the relationship between social media addiction and students' academic performance, stress levels, disturbed sleep patterns, self-esteem, socialization, and overall well-being.

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