

Social Media Usage: The Impact on Malaysian Student Life

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Abstract

Social Media has become tremendously important and the usage of it will have a positive and negative impact on students' lives. Academic fatigue is one of the common issues that happened due to the excessive use of social media among students. Therefore, this study will discuss the relationship between academic fatigue and social media usage among university students. Besides, this study will also investigate the impact of social media on students' lives in Malaysia. Appropriate steps that should be taken by individuals and institutions will be discussed as well in order to educate the healthy use of social media among the student. A quantitative method was chosen in this study and questionnaires were distributed by using an online platform to 202 respondents. The findings reveal that 63.1 percent of respondents strongly agree they use social media for the purpose of entertainment and 43.8 percent of respondents strongly agree that procrastinating daily work and failing to manage time is a negative effects of social media on students' daily lives. Therefore, the appropriate steps that have been discussed in this article should be taken seriously by students and educational institutions to promote the healthy use of social media.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Fatigue, Impact

Introduction

Social media is used in every aspect of our lives, from obtaining news to communicating with family and friends and it cannot be avoided and will always be present (McCarthy, 2021). Students are one of the communities who rely on social media the most. Applications like Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, WeChat, and other communication channels that need Internet connectivity are categorized as social media (Nazir et. al., 2020). However, the excessive use of social media among students will create an issue of academic fatigue. According to Li et. al. (2022), fatigue is a psychophysiological state of decreased effectiveness and ability that typically occurs during highly demanding tasks and it will have a great impact on the individual's well-being and performance. Meanwhile, academic fatigue is a negative psychological state of students as a result of stress experienced in the teaching and learning process (Abdul Malik et. al., 2022). It is often caused by high pressure to achieve excellent academic performance. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between academic fatigue and the use of social media among university students.

Instead of academic fatigue, past literature shows other positive and negative effects of social media on student's life. Over the past few years, social media has been consistently used for interpersonal connections, and it has become one of the alternatives to alleviate boredom (Stockdale & Coyne, 2022). Meanwhile, an article written by Amalina (2015) highlights sleep disorders among adolescents that will lead to concentration disorders, mood disorders, behavior regulation disorders, and cognitive impairment due to the usage of electronic devices. On the other hand, Abi-Jaoude et. al. (2020) stated that social media can promote self-harm among youth and can cause mental health issues. In addition, Brailovskaia and Margaf, (2023) stated that addiction to social media is positively associated with low life satisfaction, an increase in interpersonal issues, signs of depression, and consequences connected to suicide. Warahma et. al. (2020) who conducted a study in Indonesia stated that social media will cause students to have less direct social interaction. To enrich the literature reviews related to this topic, this study will explore the impact of social media on students' lives in Malaysia.

Individuals and university institutions should play an active role in encouraging the healthy use of social media to combat the issues discussed earlier and handle the negative effects of social media among students. Therefore, this study will identify and suggest appropriate steps that individuals and institutions can take to promote healthy social media use. This research is expected to provide useful guidance and insight to university students, teaching staff, and administrators of educational institutions to face challenges related to academic fatigue and the use of social media among students.

In conclusion, this study highlights three objectives which are:

- To investigate the relationship between academic fatigue and social media usage among university students
- To explore the impact of social media on students' lives in Malaysia
- To identify appropriate action that should be taken by individuals and institutions to promote healthy usage of social media

Methodology

This study used a quantitative approach by using a survey method. Data were collected using an online platform through the distribution of Google Forms. This approach is appropriate, more comfortable, and makes data collection easier. For this study, 202 university students in Malaysia were randomly selected as a sample study. The questionnaire consists of several

sections including Demographic Information (Part A), Social media preference (Part B), The impact of social media (Part C), and Steps taken to control the usage of social media (Part D). Part D included the Initiative of Educational Institutions and steps taken by students for the healthy use of social media. A 5-point Likert scale has been used which consists of statements strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and, strongly agree.

The data that have been collected through Google Forms was exported into Microsoft Excel and underwent the data preprocessing stage. Incomplete and missing data was handled accordingly. Next, the data were loaded into the IBM SPSS Statistics 27 application and were analyzed by using descriptive statistics analysis to fulfill the objective of the study.

Findings

This section will discuss the results of the study that have been obtained from the Google Form. The findings consist of several sections including demographic information, social media preference, the impact of social media, and steps taken to control the usage of social media

Demographic information

Table 1 shows the demographic of respondents in terms of age, gender, race, and highest level of education. Table 1 below shows that the majority of the respondents are between 18 to 24 years old which consists of 71.3 percent and students with a low age level are under 18 years old as many as 2.5 percent. In terms of gender, there are 72.7 percent of female respondents, 24.3 percent of male respondents, and 3 percent of respondents do not want to state their gender.

Based on the findings, out of the 202 respondents, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are Malays which is 93.9 percent, followed by Chinese and others with 2.2 percent for each category, and 1.7 percent of the respondents were Indian. Table 1 also shows that the respondents that have a Bachelor's degree have the highest percentage with 62.4 percent, followed by Diploma students with 24.8 percent, and 8.8 percent of the respondents have SPM/O-level/IGCSE. Meanwhile, 2.8 percent of the respondents fall under the category of not related, and 0.6 percent of the respondent has master's degrees and Ph.D.

Table 1:*Respondents Demographic*

Demographic Information	Category	Percentage
Age	Under 18	2.5%
	18 – 24	71.3%
	25 – 34	9.9%
	35 and above	16.3%
Gender	Female	72.7%
	Male	24.3%
	Don't want to say	3.0%
Race	Indian	1.7%
	China	2.2%
	Malay	93.9%
	Others	2.2%
Education Level	SPM/O-level/IGCSE	8.8%
	Diploma	24.8%
	Bachelor's Degree	62.4%
	Master's Degree	0.6%
	Ph.D	0.6%
	Not related	2.8%

Social media preference

Table 2 shows the social media platforms which were frequently used by the respondents. For this question, respondents can choose more than one social media based on their frequent usage. Results show that the frequency of respondents who use the Instagram platform is the highest with 144 people, followed by the TikTok platform with 135 people, and the Twitter platform shows 100 people chose this platform. Besides, the Facebook platform was chosen by 49 people, Snapchat by 44 people, LinkedIn by 16 people, and other platforms were chosen by 6 people.

Table 2:*Social Media Platforms that were frequently used by the respondents.*

Social Media Platform	Frequency
Tiktok	135
Instagram	144
Facebook	49
Snapchat	44
Linkedin	16
Twitter	100
Other	6

Based on Table 3, 63.1 percent of respondents strongly agree that entertainment is the main purpose of using social media. 48.3 percent of respondents strongly agree that personal social relationships are the main purpose of using social media. In addition, 35.8 percent and 34.1 percent of respondents strongly agree that professional social relationships and education are the main purpose of using social media.

Table 3:*Main purpose of using social media*

Purpose	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Entertainment	0.6%	2.8%	11.4%	22.2%	63.1%
Education	1.1%	6.3%	15.3%	43.2%	34.1%
Professional Relationships	3.4%	7.4%	28.4%	25.0%	35.8%
Personal Social Relationships	0.6%	8.0%	18.8%	24.4%	48.3%

Based on Table 4, 39.2 percent of respondents spend time on social media for 4 to 6 hours, 27.8 percent of respondents spend time on social media for 2 to 3 hours, 26.7 percent of respondents spend more than 6 hours, and 6.3 percent of respondents spend less than 1 hour on social media.

Table 4:*Time spent on social media every day*

Time spent on social media every day	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	6.3%
2 - 3 hours	27.8%
4 - 6 hours	39.2%
More than 6 hours	26.7%

The Impact of Social Media

Based on Table 5, 43.8 percent of respondents strongly agree that procrastinating daily work and failing to manage time is a negative effect of social media on students' daily lives. Besides, 33 percent of respondents strongly agree that the negative effects of social media affect students' ability to focus and pay attention to academic tasks. In addition, 29.5 percent of respondents strongly agree that they have sleep difficulty, and 24.4 percent of respondents strongly agree that lack of self-confidence when comparing the academic achievements of other students is a negative effect of the use of social media on students' daily lives.

Table 5:*Negative Effects of Social Media Usage on Students' Daily Lives*

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Sleeping Difficulty	4%	9.7%	24.4%	32.4%	29.5%
2.	Procrastinating daily work	1.7%	3.4%	14.8%	36.4%	43.8%
3.	Lack of self-confidence when comparing academic achievements with other students	8%	10.2%	28.4%	29%	24.4%
4.	Failure to manage time	0.6%	2.8%	18.2%	34.7%	43.8%
5.	Affects students' ability to focus and pay attention to academic tasks	0.6%	6.3%	28.4%	31.8%	33%

Based on Table 6, 52.3 percent of respondents strongly agree that following the latest developments and trends in the field of student studies is a positive effect of using social media on students' daily lives. 43.2 percent of respondents strongly agree that the positive effect of using social media on students is that they can join online communities to share scientific materials and discuss. Next, 35.8 percent of respondents strongly agree that social media was used as a platform to showcase their academic achievement, which can positively impact other users.

Table 6:*Positive Effects of Social Media Usage on Students' Daily Lives*

No.	Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Join the online community to share scientific material & discuss	1.7%	4%	22.7%	28.4%	43.2%
2.	Follow the latest developments & trends in the field of student studies	0.6%	2.8%	17%	27.3%	52.3%
3.	Platform to showcase their academic achievement	5.1%	8.5%	23.3%	27.3%	35.8%

Steps taken to control the usage of social media

Table 7 shows 43.3 percent of respondents stated that their educational institutions encourage physical social activities to minimize the use of social media among students. Besides, 26.2 percent of respondents stated that the initiative taken by educational institutions is to provide counseling services to promote mental health. In addition, 15.7 percent and 8.6 percent of respondents expressed initiatives taken by their educational institutions including organizing seminars on self-control and time management specific to the use of social media and limiting the number of assignments given to students each week. Among other initiatives taken is to monitor and control internet access on campus specifically for entertainment platforms after 12 pm which was chosen by 6.2 percent of respondents.

Table 7:*Initiative of Educational Institution*

No.	Initiative of Educational Institution	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Monitor and control internet access on campus specifically for entertainment platforms after 12 pm	21	6.2%
2.	Organize seminars on self-regulation and time management specific to the use of social media	53	15.7%
3.	Encourage physical social activity	146	43.3%
4.	Provide counselling services to promote mental health	88	26.2%
5.	Limit the number of assignments given to students each week	29	8.6%

Based on Table 8, 29.1 percent of respondents have an opinion that avoiding the use of social media 10 minutes before bedtime to ensure that they are not careless with time is one of the good steps that students can take to control the use of social media. 24.4 percent have an opinion that keeping electronic devices during the learning session can control the use of social media among students. Besides, 24.1 percent and 21.4 percent of respondents think that setting reminder alarms on student devices to limit access to social media during study time and providing a specific workspace or study area that is free from social media interference is a step that they can take to control their use of social media. The remaining 1 percent of respondents think there are other steps that can be taken to control the use of social media among students in addition to the steps that were mentioned above.

Table 8:

Steps Taken by Students to Control the Use of Social Media to Avoid Academic Fatigue.

No.	Steps Taken by Students	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Store electronic devices during learning sessions	99	24.4%
2.	Provide a specific workspace or study area that is free from social media distractions	87	21.4%
3.	Set reminder alarms on student devices to limit access to social media during study time	98	24.1%
4.	Avoid using social media 10 minutes before bedtime to ensure that you are not careless with time	118	29.1%
5.	Others	4	1%

Discussion

This section consists of three different subtopics including the relationship between academic fatigue and the use of social media among students, steps by individuals (students) to work on, and steps that need to be taken by institutions to encourage the healthy use of social media.

The relationship between academic fatigue and the use of social media among students.

Sleeping Difficulty

The relationship between academic fatigue and the use of social media among students can be concluded based on Table 5. A total of 32.4 percent agreed and 29.5 percent strongly agreed that sleeping difficulty is one of the negative impacts of social media. Excessive use of social media at night can disrupt a student's sleep cycle. According to Zhu and Chen (2015), people use social media for different purposes including following celebrities, as entertainment, and seeking information about their family/friends. Social media applications that were used mostly for entertainment purposes such as TikTok, Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram have strong stimulation because these applications are filled with interesting content and repeated notifications. This can be seen from the statistics in Table 3 which shows 63.1 percent of respondents use social media for entertainment. According to Kaya et. al. (2020), excessive usage of smartphones will cause physical problems including sleep problems. To be specific, electronic devices used to access social media emit blue light that can create eye problems and disrupt sleep. Blue light is the most energetic part of the visible light spectrum. It has a very short wavelength and makes this blue light contribute to higher light energy. The effect of blue light at night is that it will stimulate the brain, delaying or stopping the production of the hormone melatonin. This directly disrupts the process and

time of students' sleep and makes it difficult for them to sleep soundly and sufficiently which will prevent them from functioning well the next day. If this continues to happen, students can also face Insomnia, a condition where an individual does not get enough sleep for himself either in terms of quality or quantity.

Delaying daily work and neglecting time management

Social media is a platform with all kinds of attractions. It gives access to users to join, share, and upload various types of media to share information in the form of pictures and videos. The development of social media also causes the number of users to increase rapidly. However, the effect of this excessive use of social media will encourage the habit of procrastinating. Based on Table 5, we can see that the negative effect of the habit of procrastinating daily work and failure to manage time show a high percentage with 43.8 percent of students strongly agreeing with both items. This data is also supported by evidence from the year 2021, which stated that 60.9 percent of Generation Z which mostly consists of students who are still in school prefer to interact on social media (Astro Awani, 2021). This is due to students preferring and choosing to give their attention to the entertainment found in social media. They will follow more trends and influences found in social media. This in turn causes a lack of discipline in carrying out responsibilities as a student and the academic tasks that should be carried out will no longer be given as a priority. In addition, the probability of being exposed to unhealthy symptoms will also increase. For example, the habit of postponing work due to a lack of discipline in managing time occurs as a result of students becoming more negligent in managing time since they too much focus on the use and self-involvement towards social media. This will also make the situation more difficult because this habit will increase stress due to doing work in a hurry. Stress can be defined as an environmental effect on an individual that overtaxes its control systems and results in adverse consequences, eventually reduced fitness (Broom, 2001). In addition, stress is an experience or event that is often experienced by an individual. It can cause disruption to thoughts, feelings, and daily activities (Mohd Majzub, 1998). The resulting work will also be imperfect and cause academic results to decline.

Lack of self-confidence

Table 5 shows as many as 29 percent agree and 24.4 percent strongly agree that the negative effect of social media use on students is a lack of self-confidence when comparing academic achievements with other students. These results support the statement written by Azizan (2016) that one of the negative symptoms that exists among teenagers is a lack of confidence. Lately, the involvement of students in social media is expanding. This group of students is not limited to students of higher education institutes but also school students. The Malaysian society recorded approximately 26.8 million social media users with 99.8 percent being from Gen Z and Millennials (Meltwater, 2023). With the new norm following the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, it encourages students to choose their own social freedom and most of them choose to be with their gadgets almost all the time. Lately, social media has often become a place for students to compare themselves with others, and through media social they always see that people have a better lifestyle and life achievements. A study conducted by researchers at the National University of Singapore (NUS) explains that an individual shares moment that happen in video recordings and photos because generally, we tend to present a positive figure about ourselves on social media. Furthermore, the existence of photography filters helps them to improve their editing skills and can create an image as if there is a

significant difference between themselves and others. As an effect, this can cause students to be depressed and lack self-confidence due to their feelings of inferiority when they compare themselves to other people on social media. The use of social media clearly affects the way we see ourselves and also affects our behavior and psychological well-being.

Affecting students' ability to focus and pay attention

Academic fatigue is seen as a significant academic problem and needs to be investigated. Students who experience symptoms of academic fatigue will affect their academic achievement negatively (Law, 2010). Besides, students who spend a lot of time on social media cause them to experience addiction to accessing social media all the time (Mustaffa & Ibrahim, 2014). This can also be seen when 63.1 percent of respondents strongly agree that entertainment is the main purpose of using social media compared to only 34.1 percent of respondents strongly agree that education is the main purpose of using social media. When students prioritize the use of social media for entertainment, it will result in complacent students. Complacent and addiction to social media cause students to lose focus and not be able to give attention to their studies. Students' indifference and fanaticism to social media can cause their academic achievement to decline. From the survey conducted in Table 5, 33 percent of respondents strongly agree that the negative effects of social media use can affect students' ability to focus and pay attention to academic tasks. Excessive use of social media can cause the time that should be allocated by students to study or complete their assignments not to be used at an optimal level. Students may become too attached to social media, spending hours without realizing how much time is wasted causing them to lose focus in their studies. This is because of the lack of social media, eventually, all assignments are neglected to the point where students forget to complete and submit the assignments that have been given to them at the appointed time.

Steps by individuals (students) to work in encouraging the healthy use of social media.

Individuals play an important role in promoting the healthy use of social media. Here are ways in which individuals can work to encourage healthy use of social media:

Increasing the frequency of physical activity

One of the efficient techniques to reduce the negative effects of social media use is to increase the frequency of physical activity compared to cyberspace. In this way, individuals such as students can reduce their obsession with virtual worlds and gadgets that are closer to them than physical social relationships. Based on research that has been done, the data shows that students in Malaysia waste a lot of their time using social media for entertainment purposes. Negative effects such as missing the time guide and seeing content that is not useful are also some effects that have a great impact on students to focus on their studies and daily life. They are more likely to spend time on social media such as TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram to fill their spare time. Based on the study, statistics show that 144 out of 202 students use Instagram to fill their free time, which is 71.29 percent of the respondents. However, as many as 72.3 percent of students agreed that their educational institutions encourage them to carry out social and physical activities by giving merit rewards for the purpose of guaranteeing student placement in their respective universities as well as giving achievement awards from the dean. Besides, students should also take the initiative to implement physical social activities especially part-time students who are not full-time at their university. This can also improve students' physical and mental health. Almost all respondents agreed that they have

difficulty sleeping which is insomnia, so it is clear that increasing daily physical activity can use the energy of students so that they can sleep easily at night.

Make a schedule for self-monitoring

Preparing a schedule for self-monitoring is the most simple but difficult skill to apply among students. Students are individuals who have the most flexible schedules when compared to working individuals, especially full-time students. They have the option to arrange their schedule flexibly. So, it is their loss if they do not organize their lives because this can help them to increase their daily productivity and self-control. However, it will become more difficult when students already immerse themselves in social media. Many benefits can be achieved through schedule preparation such as the ability to plan students' days in advance, ensuring students have enough time for important activities, and avoiding procrastination or wasting time on unproductive tasks. By having a regular schedule, they can optimize their productivity. Students can also allocate certain hours for different activities such as work, exercise, recreation, and self-development. This can help them to stay focused and motivated, leading to greater efficiency and achievement. A self-schedule allows them to set goals and break them down into actionable tasks. With daily planning, they can do daily objectives systematically and make progress step by step. This helps them stay on the right track in a positive and productive way.

Self-awareness and good time management

Excessive use of the internet refers to conditions where individuals cannot curb and limit their desire to use the internet, lose time when using the internet, and show excessive anxiety and aggressiveness when losing internet use, and can lead to social and life problems (Suryaningsih et. al., 2021). According to Khan et. al. (2014), social media consists of numerous addictive activities that can cause people to become unproductive. Besides, Bentley (2021) stated that the use of social media causes mental health issues among adolescents which will impact their success. Therefore, individuals need to increase self-awareness about the impact of social media use on productivity and mental health. They should limit their usage of social media and ensure that social media does not interfere with their academic work or other important activities. Individuals who can manage time wisely can allocate enough time for social media without neglecting academic and social responsibilities.

Class blog writing

Students can take the initiative by getting involved in writing class blogs for discussion sessions so that they can interact "virtually" with their classmates and make learning activities more fun and efficient. According to a study conducted by Malik et al. (2020), students who use social media to communicate about school-related academic topics are more likely to have better grades than those who use social media for non-academic-related matters. Encouraging students to upload digital content about a learning subject into the class's social channels will help students conduct discussions and make comments in an easier way. These activities help students interact socially with other classmates and not waste time browsing useless links that can lead to academic lethargy.

Steps by the institution to work on to encouraging the healthy use of social media.

Institutions play an important role in promoting the healthy use of social media among university students. Here are ways in which institutions can work to encourage healthy use of social media:

Conducting beneficial social programs

Institutions play an important role in promoting the healthy use of social media among university students. Actions that can be taken include improving digital literacy by including digital literacy education in the curriculum, building positive online communities through discussion groups and social media campaigns, and helping to develop awareness of the importance of healthy social media use through reading material and talk sessions. Institutions also need to provide resources and support students in the management of social media use, collaborate with families in promoting healthy use of social media, be role models in social media use, and conduct assessments and monitoring to understand usage patterns of social media among students and take appropriate action. In addition, institutions need to produce practical guidance on time management, privacy care, and stress management strategies in the use of social media. Besides, institutions should provide counselling services or psychosocial support that can help students cope with negative effects or stress related to the use of social media. By implementing this program, institutions can help to protect students from academic fatigue and foster healthy social media use among university students. Through this effort, the institution can build a culture of smart social media use and provide the necessary resources and support to students in facing challenges related to social media use, as well as promote awareness of the impact of social media on mental well-being and academic performance.

Monitoring internet usage on campus

Monitoring internet usage is one of the ways that can be applied to educational institutions. This is because it can help to monitor students' internet usage. This monitoring can be done at night because at that time most students are actively surfing the internet. The purpose of this monitoring is to find out and identify the activities of university students in using the Internet in their daily lives. Through this monitoring, we can also find out how many students use the internet for things that are beneficial or otherwise. Not only that, this monitoring can also help students be more disciplined in completing their assignments. They will be more sensitive and use the internet in a healthy and regular manner.

Communicate with students

Educational institutions can connect with students through social media networks such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, and Twitter. This channel can be used to deliver institutional news, make announcements, and provide students with useful information. This will build a relationship between the educational institution and the students and will help them to deal with many problems through group interaction. Besides, institutions can share supportive services that can reach all students that were connected to social media networks. Video is a prominent tool in the trend of effective social media and we can use it to share useful videos that inspire students and help them in their course subjects. Through social media such as TikTok, Facebook, or Instagram live videos, the relationship between students and institutions can be maintained.

Conclusion

The effect of using social media was found to have its own pros and cons based on the way of their usage. Therefore, in an effort to promote the healthy and effective use of social media, individuals and educational institutions play an equally important role in forming students who are sensitive to the prudent and ethical use of social media. Students who have a positive perspective and way of thinking will be able to utilize social media appropriately for their academic and everyday needs. Besides, academic burnout is seen as a complex issue that requires strategic intervention to prevent students from experiencing emotional stress which can lead to a more critical level of academic burnout. In addition, academic fatigue is interconnected with the use of social media. Since the level of academic fatigue varies from individual to individual, the adapted strategy also needs to have a suitable solution scope for the use of all students. Prolonged academic fatigue will have an impact on student's academic performance and lead to academic failure. Therefore, the efforts of both parties, i.e., individuals and educational institutions, need to be applied intensively in every level of learning to obtain more positive effect. Students as the future leaders of the country need to have full control in the aspect of using social media so that they are not stuck on the wrong and negative side of social media. Using social media for academic purposes can certainly increase students' interest in mastering a subject. In addition, lecturers on behalf of educational institutions also need to be active in encouraging students to use social media by suggesting online sites that display informative information to help students have the right navigation guide so that they do not waste time browsing entertainment sites that damage their minds. In the case of students who have experienced critical academic fatigue, they should meet with professionals such as educational counsellor to share their problems and get practical solutions. This can help to prevent students from experiencing emotional problems caused by excessive academic fatigue. To face the problem of academic fatigue, all parties should sufficiently cooperate in helping students overcome educational challenges and achieve outstanding achievements.

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