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SOCIAL MEDIA INDICATE LONELINESS AMONG TEENAGERS

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ABSTRACT

Loneliness is not something all of us want to have but some of us can't escaped from that feeling. The feeling itself comes within yourself and need to be controlled if not it will lead to mental health problem. One of the reason teenagers (millennials) nowadays could feel lonely is because the amount of time they spend on their phone scrolling thru social media. This study use in-depth interview to get to know why the millennials spend more time on their phone rather than doing activities than need to be communicate face-to-face. Qualitative results shows that , social media are easy to access on the go with portable internet everywhere which majority of them have each one.

INTRODUCTION

Millennials nowadays always have their phones on their hand. The increases of modern technology makes the millennials more and more into technology. This will lead them to spend too much time on their gadgets. As people can see by the millennials nowadays, the addictive social media

What millennials do when they have time to spare and feel bored? Of course they will have their phones on their hand. But sometimes, they just spend too long on their phone, most likely on social media. Frequent social media usage might be a sign of loneliness. As the world keep improving with technologies, the usage of technologies and internet (e.g social media) are uncontrollably to have a negative effects on psychological well-being, such as loneliness and depression (Moody, Internet use and its relationship to loneliness, 2001) . Spending too much time on social media can lead to loneliness and loneliness had been increasingly recognized as a major social problem (Schmidt, 1983)

In 1973, Robert Weiss theorized that there are at least two types of loneliness: social loneliness and emotional loneliness. Emotional loneliness is a feeling of emptiness and restlessness due to the lack of intimate relationships. Social loneliness is the feeling of boredom and marginality due to the lack of meaningful friendships or a sense of belonging to a community. Being too frequent on social media could define as social loneliness as the adolescences are not interacting with people around them.

Murray and Lopez (1996) specified that depression is the leading cause of disability among individuals aged 18-44 years, and it will become the second foremost source of disease related disability among folks of all ages by the year 2020. According to Sols24/7 Organization, another recent study, 76.5% of Malaysians don't understand how important a sound mental health is vital to in their lives (Seaberry, 2000). Thus, lonelines may lead to low self-esteem and depression that can harm oneself. The time they spend on social media shows that they don't socialise face to face and may lead to being introvert. This shows that from not socialise with people in real life can lead to feel lonely as the person did not having an interaction with people surrounding.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most researchers from U.K and U.S national health services approve that loneliness is now becoming greater health risk than obesity and comparable with smoking (J. Holt-Lunstand, 2015) Therefore, most of us in developed countries spend a large amount of time connected in different ways where studies prove we are lonelier than ever. The study shows that through spending long hour on a social media could effects overall emotional health which can lead to feel lonely and depressed. Based on Oxford dictionary, loneliness defines as "sadness because one has no friends or company". Regardless of how one defines it, loneliness is a big matter in Malaysia as it postures threats to physical well-being. Loneliness brings the risk of mortality same like smoking and obesity which loneliness can cause death (Olien, 2013). The levels of loneliness mostly happens in young adulthood, then begin to decrease to through the middle adult years of an individual's life later increases again into an old age. Research has recognized additional loneliness risk factors that are noticeable for young adults. These three groups are at risk, those who are applying for a new job, students changing schools or individuals that avoid from existing social contacts are going through emotional changes. These changes often lead to perceptions of isolation which linked to lower of self-rated physical health (Waite, 1999)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) Why teenagers spend too much time on social media ?
2) What will happen to individual's relationship to those who spend too frequent on social media?
3) How social media affects your life into loneliness?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reasons teenagers spend too much time on social media

Real life conversations occur in real time, so immediacy is important for social presence. Thanks to near-instataneous speed of digital technology, text-based social media grant users immediacy but they lack the other component-intimacy-that is needed to more accurate replicate face-to-face conversations.The advent of more specific and intimate platforms for use between friends has

likely modified its role to be more centered around general news and alleviating boredom. It makes sense, then, that we observed virtually no relationship between text-based social media use and psychological well-being. (Matthew Pittman, 2015). Users share photos to gratify needs of affection, attention seeking, disclosure, habit, information sharing, and social influence. It is unclear, however, what role photos and images play in gratifying social and affection needs, and how meeting those needs might migitate loneliness (Matthew Pittman, 2015)

Since it is presumed that those who spend most of their time online will have little time to actually engage in relationships on a face-to-face basis, it is expected that they will have a higher rate of emotional loneliness. Likewise, because of the high rate of time online, it is presumed that they will spend a great deal of energy cultivating a network of relations and support from other users and will feel a sense of belonging to a community. As a result, they will experience lowered social loneliness. (Moody, Internet Use and Its Relationship to Loneliness, 2001). Spending too much time on social media might led to reduced sleep duration, whilst incoming alerts in the night and fear of missing out new content could cause sleep disruptions (Yvonne Kelly, 2018)

In this research, Social Presence Theory fits its meaning to this topic. As in Social Presence Theory, defined by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) as, "the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships." A more modern definition of social presence theory was refined by Gunawardena (1995) to state, "the degree to which a person is perceived as a 'real person' in mediated communication."

Effect to individual's relationship to those who spend too frequent on social media

Social media is a topic that have been known famous for a long time ago. Many research or investigation have been done in order to gain the knowledge about it but not all people know those who addicted to the social media will have an effect toward individual relationship. Mostly when we talk about individual relationship regarding social media it will be major in men side compare to women since it is said that men since social media more compare to girl and it will have a great effect toward how they find relationship in society. (womenJacqueline V. Hogue∗, 2019)

Those who became addicted toward social media was because of its fun and contain a good amount of entertainment that can satisfy the need of the people which make them think that life in media is better that going along with society. The picture that was put in social media can change the people image from ugly to beautiful and make the person became more confident to live in social media compare to have a relationship in society life since the real them are not beautiful like in the image. (Matilda Ståhla, 2019)

The active user of social media can create their own life in the social media individually if they became obsessed with social media. According from previous research we can found that social media also bringing their own good and bad toward both sides. However, the amount of time that is spend by every individual need to be right and not too much because it is not the right way to make a good relationship with everyone. The way we use the social media will have a good effect on us but if we use it in the wrong way it will cause harm to our health and how we want to have a normal life like other people and create a good relationship with others. (Gergely Szolnokia, 2018)

Social media affects life into loneliness

During teenage years, teens change from a quite great dependence on parents for interaction and support to a greater reliance on friends. Failure in dealing with this shift may lead to feelings of loneliness or "the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way" (Perlman & Peplau, 1981). This is related to the study of how social media can affect teenagers' life into loneliness. Given that loneliness is one of the big mental health problem (Qualter et al., 2013) and one of the main reason this thing happened is from social media.

Today adolescence are more likely to interact and communicate with people via SNSs which is social networking sites and get connected with them. As a result, many researchers have investigated whether SNSs, such as Facebook, make people feel less or more lonely (Lou, Yan, Nickerson, & McMorris, 2012; Pittman & Reich, 2016). This study also shown that people will feel lonely after a while using facebook.

However, the development of intimate attachment bonds that can reduce loneliness takes time (Bowlby, 1978). Similarly, the building of a network of peers requires personal efforts and time investments (Bowlby, 1978). This thing was related to the time taken for a teenagers to feel lonely because of social media because it takes time for the effect to be seen. These conditions may not be met when active SNSs use is rather low. As such, low levels of active Facebook use may not decrease one's feelings of loneliness, but rather be associated with high levels of loneliness.

With the widespread use of SNSs, interest in whether SNSs may harm or enhance users' well-being rapidly increased. Similar to research on the effects of Internet use, these studies revealed both positive and negative associations between SNS use and loneliness (Lou et al., 2012; Pittman & Reich, 2016; Primack et al., 2017). This study show that social media may have a positive effect and negative effect and its include loneliness.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research Method

This research uses purposive sampling where only a qualified informants information will be accepted. Through this method, it is easier to make generalizations about our research compared to those who is not what the research is about. Each informants will be given a sheet of paper to answers the research questions.

Data collection strategy

- In-Depth interview

In-depth interviews usually used to ask open-ended questions that elicit depth of information from fewer people(as opposed to surveys, which tend to be more quantitative and are conducted with larger numbers of people). (Guion L., 2011)

- Unit of Analysis

Unit analysis for this research are teenagers that are studying at university. The researcher used individual analysis where they interview different student on different day.

- Purposive Sampling

Also known as judgmental sampling. This study focuses on teenagers in university who spend most of their time on social media.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

RQ1: In your opinion, why teenagers spend too much time on social media ?

i)   Part of their daily routine.

According to candidate B, he spent too much time on social media because it has become part of his daily routine. He doesn't have anything to do at room and decided to scroll social media during his leisure time. This statement also stated by candidate C and candidate E. They believe that, spending too much time at the social media will not affect their life.

ii)   Social media connecting life better than reality.

Candidate A stated that some to the extent that her day revolves around social media because she do not communicate in reality but on the web, she are more connected to the people around her and she enjoy that dose of attention. She also told the researcher that she willing to communicate just from social media rather than reality because she afraid of rejection and bad perception of her. Candidate B also stated this reason but with different point of view. He just use social media to communicate but still go out and socialize but still in his circle.

iii)   Way to kill time.

Other than that, they sometimes bored and social media is the only way to kill time. Plus, it is addicting because they can keep on scrolling feeds without realizing the time passing. All the candidates responded that when they felt bored, they will use scrolling social media as their time killer.

iv)   Strengthen their friendship

Candidates B and E believes that social media can strengthen their friendship with their friends and make them feel less lonely and connected more with others. But here come the real problem

when they spend too much time on social media, they don't have time to spend with their beloved. Spending too much time on social media can lead to loneliness and loneliness had been increasingly recognized as a major social problem (Schmidt, 1983)

RQ2 What will happen to individual's relationship to those who spend too frequent on social media?

i)   The neglected of individual significant causing feeling of unwanted.

Candidate C, candidate D and candidate F believe that, when they are on social media, they tend not to speak with anyone including their family and friends. Over excessive use of social media alone is harmful to one social health. An individual that obsessed and spending too much time would most likely neglect their significant and causing their important people to feel unwanted.

ii)   The relationship between individual and people getting duller.

The relationship depends on how the individual controls their live. For family it is do or die so no matter how dull the relationship is, it is not going to change so much except from the lack of communication. If the relationship between friends, they can feel it is getting duller being anti-social. Candidate A, candidate B, and candidate E thought that when they are so obsessed with social media, their relationship with their loved are getting duller. Candidate B who have problem with their family and have dull relationship with them are the most effected respondent. He found that his relationship with his family are getting worst and he felt obligated and lonely.

RQ3 How social media affects your life into loneliness?

i)   The slow downed of popularity.
Sometimes it can ruin people's relationship if everything is shared on social media. Jealousy and hatred from others can ruin the relationship and nothing will be personal since everything is posted on social media and this happened to one of the candidates, candidate F who used to be a 'insta-famous' way before she felt into loneliness. When being on social media, it is always that craze of popularity that keeps teenagers on the line. But when it starts to slow downed and it is getting bored, then

they will feel lonely even they are enjoying it or when they start to notice people are not there for them when it matters.

ii)   Social media make us as an introvert

Social media can make teenagers feel lonely even when they are with other people because they tend to not talk with others and scroll on social media instead. This make them look like an introvert when they are really not one. Plus, it is addicting so usually teenagers forgot about the surrounding people sometimes and this thing were stated by all the candidates because it is the main factor to their loneliness. There are plenty of things that can entertain people on social media but they still feel lonely because it is not something in reality. It is at times as a space-goat from reality. However, even though social interaction via social media achieves satisfaction at a certain level, social interaction with real people always the best. Means, although social media is never short of entertainment, an individual would not always be rid of the feeling of wanting more real social interaction.

CONCLUSION

To be concluded, most of the people who spend too long on their phone for social networking, they are more likely being lonely than those people who are not in the real world. As example, some social influencers tend to have more than 100 thousands of followers in their social account but then they still do not have their own circle that they can stick around to share their thoughts together.

Furthermore, when they are comfortable with their phones, they start to be addicted and obsessed with the internet. Make them to ignore the surroundings hence people nearby are feel uncherished. This would ruin the relationships between individuals because lack of communication. This situations also always happen between the child and their parents in current. The individual start to develop the anti-social behaviour.

In addition, loneliness is both physically and mentally damaging. Lack of confidence is the effect in further because of being introvert make them insecure to interact with people. Comparing themselves to others is one of the root causes for feelings of unhappiness and depression. But on the brighter sides, the individual itself should use the social media to make the bond with other

people not break the bond. There are so many awareness campaign been raised to help the individuals get connected with the society.

Social media websites are the most common activity of adolescents nowadays. For instance, social media is considered as social interaction by browsing internet such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Besides, the uncontrolled internet usage has its own negative effects on psychological well-being like depression and loneliness. People who are engaging with the social media are likely lack of communication skills by face to face communication.

 Due to the reason above, the parents are the most important role to aware their children since not all the media social are good to use constantly. Sometimes, adolescents are at some risk as they navigate and experiment with social media. Most of them end up adding additional problems to their lives besides their loneliness.

 However, the parents should work on their participation gap in their own homes by educating the children about the advantages that can be used for them. Next, they can discuss about supervising the children' online activities.

Lastly, people who uses social media repetitively can affect their behaviour and reflect personality traits. This is because, they only communicate by typing words and symbols instead of face-to-face communication that includes spoken words and gestures.

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