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THE NEWSLETTER OF
MASSCOMM 2024

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CONNECTED BUT LONELY: STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME FEAR OF MISSING OUT AND PHUBBING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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In today's digitally connected world, two behavioural phenomena that substantially impact our relationships with others and mental health are FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) and phubbing (phone snubbing). Both come from the pervasive influence of smartphones and social media, which have altered how we interact with one another and live in our society (Dempsey et al., 2019; Zhang, Li et al., 2020).

Fear of missing out (FoMO) is one psychological phenomenon that may contribute to poor digital media use. FoMO refers to the pervasive apprehension that others may be having rewarding experiences while one is absent. Persons with a higher FoMO are assumed to have a greater desire to stay constantly up-to-date on what others are doing, such as through social media which can lead to problematic social media usage.

Whereas, phubbing is the behaviour of persons who are immersed in their phones and neglect the people and objects around them in social circumstances. This behaviour is common in the mobile internet era and can be seen in the home, work, and study settings.

Emphasising the importance of face-to-face interactions over online connections can foster deeper, more meaningful relationships. For example, youth can actively participate by joining social activities in clubs, sports, and other group activities that provide social interactions. Moreover, encouraging regular family activities and conversations without digital distractions might also be a good way to distract from dependence on our smartphones. In addition, youth should practise and promote healthy online habits in their life. Encouraging regular breaks from social media can help youth step back from the constant barrage of updates and comparisons (Bloemen & Coninck, 2020; Wang, et al., 2019)

Youth should set boundaries and establish specific times a day when devices are turned off such as during meals and before bedtime. In addition, youth can also set app limits on their devices. This will prevent and limit our time spent on social media platforms. The next prevention that can be taken is parents, teachers and mentors should be a good model of healthy digital behaviour and balanced lifestyles, demonstrating the importance and engagement in real life (Balta et al., 2020; Tunc-aksan & Akbay, 2019). This is important because by sets a good example and shows youth how to balance online and offline activities by practising what you preach. In addition, practising open conversations with youth about the impact of social media and sharing personal experiences related to FoMO and phubbing can help to curb them.

In conclusion, by implementing these strategies, we can help youth develop a healthier relationship with technology and social media, reducing the prevalence and impact of FoMO. Encouraging mindfulness, fostering real-life connections, and promoting healthy digital habits are crucial steps in helping young people navigate the digital age with confidence and well-being.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEHAVIOURAL COMMUNICATION IN MALAYSIAN ACADEMIA AND MEDIA STUDIES

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In the vibrant tapestry of Malaysian academia, mastering the art of behavioural communication is not just a skill but a fundamental aspect of personal and professional growth. With its diverse cultural landscape and dynamic social dynamics, Malaysia presents a unique context where effective communication transcends linguistic boundaries and delves into the realm of behavioural nuances.

From a student's perspective, understanding and applying behavioural communication principles can significantly impact academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and future career prospects. In lecture halls and seminar rooms across Malaysian universities, students are not merely passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in a complex web of interpersonal interactions.

The impact of non-verbal communication on classroom dynamics in Malaysian universities highlighted the importance of non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact in facilitating effective teacher-student communication. By deciphering these subtle cues, students can enhance their understanding of course material, engage more actively in class discussions, and forge stronger connections with their peers and professors.

Furthermore, behavioural communication skills are indispensable for graduates of media studies programs entering Malaysia's dynamic media industry. In an era defined by digitalization and social media proliferation, media professionals must navigate a landscape fraught with diverse audience demographics, cultural sensitivities, and evolving communication platforms.

According to a survey conducted by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC, 2020), media consumers in Malaysia exhibit varying preferences and consumption habits influenced by factors such as age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. By applying principles of behavioural communication, media studies graduates can tailor content strategies, craft compelling narratives, and engage audiences effectively across multiple media channels.

Moreover, the Malaysian media industry increasingly emphasises the importance of ethical and culturally sensitive communication practices. It is also noted in a study on media ethics in Malaysia, media professionals are expected to uphold principles of fairness, accuracy, and impartiality while navigating sensitive cultural and religious issues.

In conclusion, behavioural communication is a cornerstone of academic success and professional development in Malaysia's multicultural society. From the lecture halls of universities to the bustling newsrooms of media organisations, individuals equipped with adept communication skills are better poised to thrive in Malaysia's dynamic academic and media landscapes.

Students can improve their educational experiences, create lasting relationships, and set themselves up for success in the media sector by developing their comprehension of behavioural clues. As Malaysia continues to evolve in the global arena, the significance of behavioural communication in academia and media studies remains as vital as ever, shaping the future leaders of Malaysia.