SOCIAL NETWORKING ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AMONG SECONDARY STUDENTS IN SMJK CHUNG HWA, KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN

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SOCIAL NETWORKING ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AMONG SECONDARY STUDENTS IN SMJK CHUNG HWA, KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated and duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at Universiti Sains Malaysia or other institutions. I grant Universiti Sains Malaysia the right to use the dissertation for teaching, research and promotional purposes.

Signature

.. ……

Wang De Khin

Date: 02 / 08 / 2025

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DASS	Depression and Anxiety Stress Scale
DOSM	Department of Statistics Malaysia
IPH	Institute Public Health
NHMS	National Health and Morbidity Survey
SDT	Self Determination Theory
SNA	Social Networking Addiction
WHO	World Health Organization

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SOCIAL NETWORKING ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SMJK CHUNG HWA, KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN

ABSTRAK

Penggunaan rangkaian sosial telah menjadi sebahagian penting dalam kehidupan harian remaja, namun kebimbangan semakin meningkat tentang kesannya terhadap kesihatan mental. Penggunaan secara berlebihan boleh menyebabkan tingkah laku ketagihan dan gangguan emosi, khususnya dalam kalangan pelajar sekolah menengah. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti tahap ketagihan rangkaian sosial (SNA) serta hubungannya dengan kemurungan, kebimbangan dan tekanan (DASS), di samping menilai kaitan antara ciri sosio-demografi dengan SNA dan status kesihatan mental.

Kajian keratan rentas ini telah dijalankan dalam kalangan 176 pelajar sekolah menengah di SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Data telah dikumpulkan menggunakan dua instrumen yang sah: Skala Ketagihan Rangkaian Sosial (SNAS) dan Skala Kemurungan, Kebimbangan dan Tekanan – DASS-21.

Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa 61.4% pelajar tidak ketagih, manakala 38.6% diklasifikasikan sebagai ketagih rangkaian sosial. Dari segi status kesihatan mental, 60.8% mencatat skor kemurungan normal, 68.2% normal bagi tekanan, manakala hanya 43.8% menunjukkan skor kebimbangan normal, menandakan kebimbangan sebagai gejala paling kerap berlaku. Terdapat hubungan positif yang signifikan antara ketagihan rangkaian sosial dan ketiga-tiga dimensi kesihatan mental kemurungan ($r = 0.391$, $p < 0.001$), kebimbangan ($r = 0.283$, $p < 0.001$), dan tekanan ($r = 0.429$, $p < 0.001$). Masa harian yang dihabiskan di rangkaian sosial menunjukkan kaitan yang

signifikan dengan tahap ketagihan dan kemurungan ($p < 0.05$). Tahap akademik berkait rapat dengan kemurungan ($p = 0.033$), manakala jantina menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan dengan tekanan ($p = 0.034$).

Sebagai kesimpulan, kajian ini mendapati tahap sederhana ketagihan rangkaian sosial dalam kalangan pelajar, dengan kaitan ketara terhadap gejala kesihatan mental, khususnya kebimbangan dan tekanan. Dapatan ini mencadangkan keperluan untuk program pendidikan kesihatan yang menumpukan kepada pengurusan masa, penggunaan digital yang selamat dan kesedaran kesihatan mental dalam kalangan remaja sekolah.

SOCIAL NETWORKING ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SMJK CHUNG HWA, KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN

ABSTRACT

Social networking use has become an integral part of adolescents' daily lives, raising growing concerns about its potential impact on mental health. Excessive use may lead to addictive behaviours and emotional disturbances, especially among secondary school students. This study aimed to determine the level of social networking addiction (SNA) and its association with depression, anxiety, and stress (DASS), as well as to examine the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and both SNA and mental health outcomes.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 176 secondary school students from SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Data were collected using two validated instruments: the Social Networking Addiction Scale (SNAS) and the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21).

The results showed that 61.4% of students were not addicted to social networking, while 38.6% were addicted. In terms of mental health status, 60.8% had normal depression scores, 68.2% had normal stress scores, and only 43.8% had normal anxiety scores, indicating a higher prevalence of anxiety symptoms. There was a significant positive correlation between SNA and all three mental health dimensions, depression ($r = 0.391$, $p < 0.001$), anxiety ($r = 0.283$, $p < 0.001$), and stress ($r = 0.429$, $p < 0.001$). Average daily time spent on social networking was significantly associated with both SNA and depression levels ($p < 0.05$). Academic level was significantly

associated with depression ($p = 0.033$), and gender was significantly associated with stress ($p = 0.034$).

In conclusion, the study found a moderate prevalence of social networking addiction among adolescents, with notable links to mental health symptoms, particularly anxiety and stress. The findings suggest the need for targeted health education programmes focusing on time management, digital wellness, and mental health awareness among school-aged children.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation aims to examine social networking addiction and mental health status among secondary school students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This chapter outlines the background of the study, followed by a detailed problem statement, research questions, and objectives. It will also present the study's hypotheses, the significance of the research, and the operational definitions of key terms utilised throughout the study.

1.2 Background of Study

Recent years have witnessed substantial global growth in internet usage and social networks, with platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok facilitating content sharing and communication. By July 2024, 5.45 billion people, or 67.1% of the global population, accessed the internet, and 5.17 billion actively used social media (Statista, 2024).

While these platforms provide benefits, they also pose risks such as cyberbullying and social networking addiction (SNA). Excessive use has been linked to negative physical, cognitive, and emotional outcomes, including depression and anxiety (Yu & Du, 2022). Ironically, platforms intended to foster community can sometimes exacerbate feelings of isolation (Jahagirdar et al., 2024).

In Malaysia, social network usage has surged, with 96.4% of households having internet access and 99.4% of internet users engaging in social networking especially among those aged 15–19, where participation reaches 99.8% (DOSM, 2024). The

National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2022 revealed that 1 in 6 children face mental health challenges, a burden that has doubled since 2019 (IPH, 2022). The World Health Organization (WHO) data indicates that adolescents under 18 have the highest prevalence of mental health issues, underscoring the need to address the mental health crisis among Malaysian youth amid rising social media use (Singh et al., 2019).

Despite growing research, understanding how social networking addiction specifically affects Malaysian secondary students remains limited. Prevalence rates of Internet addiction among students vary by country (Kuss et al., 2013), complicating actual rate determination due to differing psychometric tools (Andreassen, 2015). However, few studies have employed standardised instruments like the Social Networking Addiction Scale (SNA) and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) to assess the relationship between SNA and mental health outcomes, which are essential for understanding the impact of social media on depression, anxiety, and stress.

1.3 Problem Statement

Social networks have become essential in daily life, with students using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for communication, education, and entertainment. While these networks offer benefits, they also pose risks, negatively impacting academic performance and mental health (Azizi et al., 2019). Concerns about social networking addiction (SNA) and its effects on well-being have increased, particularly due to the constant online presence (Shahnawaz & Rehman, 2020).

Excessive use of social networking sites (SNS) can lead to SNA, which mirrors symptoms of substance-related addiction, including mood modification, tolerance, and withdrawal (Kuss et al., 2013). Research indicates that extensive social media activity

is linked to depressive symptoms (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011), yet few studies have explored the impact of overuse on mental health among youth.

Young people are particularly susceptible to SNA, often engaging in excessive virtual activities without awareness. Poor mental health indicators such as stress, anxiety, and depression are both causes and consequences of social media addiction (Hou et al., 2019). Increased engagement can foster feelings of isolation, exacerbating anxiety and depression (Fardouly et al., 2020). The addictive nature of these platforms contributes to a mental health crisis among youth.

Studies consistently link SNA to negative psychological outcomes, including depression and anxiety (Kuss et al., 2013; O'Reilly et al., 2018). Jahagirdar et al. (2024) noted that addictive behaviours harm productivity and mental health, with children and adolescents spending more time on smartphones and social media, leading to increased psychological distress. Extended SNS use shares traits with behavioural addictions, such as withdrawal symptoms and mood alterations (Hou et al., 2019).

The implications for academic performance are significant, as excessive social media use distracts students from their studies. While these networks can aid collaboration and information access, they often hinder academic focus. Casa-Coila (2023) found a negative relationship between social media use, envy, and depression among college students, highlighting detrimental effects on learning outcomes. Similarly, it is observed that excessive use of platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook negatively impacts academic performance.

Unchecked social media use may hinder students' ability to form meaningful face-to-face interactions, which are crucial for emotional well-being (Fardouly et al.,

2020). The long-term consequences such as depression, anxiety, and stress can significantly affect their academic performance and personal development.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What is the level of social networking addiction among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan?
2. What is the mental health status of secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan?
3. Is there a correlation between social networking addiction and mental health status (depression, anxiety and stress) among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan?
4. Is there an association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level, ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and social networking addiction among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan?
5. Is there an association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level, ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and mental health status among (depression, anxiety and stress) secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess social networking addiction and its association with mental health status among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives for this study are as follows:

1. To determine the level of social networking addiction among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
2. To assess the level of depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa.
3. To determine the correlation between social networking addiction and mental health status (depression, anxiety, and stress) among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
4. To determine the association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level, ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and social networking addiction among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
5. To determine the association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level, ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and mental health status (depression, anxiety, and stress) among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1 **(H_0):** There is no significant association between social networking addiction and mental health status (depression, anxiety, and stress) among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

(H_1): There is a significant association between social networking addiction and mental health status (depression, anxiety, and stress) among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

Hypothesis 2 **(H_0):** There is no significant association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level, ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and social networking addiction among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

(H_2): There is a significant association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level, ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and social networking addiction among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

Hypothesis 3 **(H_0):** There is no significant association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level,

ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and mental health status (depression, anxiety, and stress) among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

(H_3): There is significant association between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic level, ethnicity, house location, parent's income, daily time spent on social media and types of social networking sites used) and mental health issues (depression, anxiety, and stress) among secondary students in SMJK Chung Hwa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

1.7 Significance of study

Understanding social networking addiction is crucial due to its links to various emotional, relational, health, and performance issues (Hou et al., 2019). As social networking sites become increasingly prevalent among adolescents, it is essential to explore their impact on mental health, particularly among secondary students. While much research has focused on university students and adults, studies examining the effects of excessive social networking on Malaysian secondary students are limited. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the prevalence of social networking addiction and its relationship with mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

The rising prevalence of mental disorders among adolescents presents significant challenges for education and healthcare systems worldwide (O'Reilly et al., 2018). In Malaysia, the underexplored impact of social networking addiction on youth