

The Impact of Social Media Addiction on Mental Depression Among Youth in Klang Valley: A Quantitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the relationship between mental depression and its association with social media addiction among Malaysian youth. The research used a cross-sectional survey design, and a self-reported structured questionnaire was used to collect data, including demographic data and the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), which measured the intensity of social media addiction, and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) was administered to a sample of 390 Malaysian youth in Klang Valley. The data analysis was carried out using the 29th SPSS software version. The Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between social media addiction and mental depression. Furthermore, a significant positive correlation and a moderate level of social media addiction ($p = 0.3009$) and ($M=2.80$) towards mental depression ($M=2.41$). The moderating analysis demonstrates that female youths in Klang Valley have a greater correlation between social media addiction and mental depression than males. Theoretical grounding involved Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which shows females may use social media more to meet their requirements for social connection, self-expression, and emotional support. When these gratifications are pursued excessively, they can lead to obsessive behaviour. Thus, UGT helps to explain why gender differences exist, as females' greater reliance on gratification-seeking behaviours may increase the risk of social media addiction. This study aims to shed light on the complex interplay between psychological factors and social media use, with the ultimate goal of identifying potential interventions to mitigate negative outcomes.

Keywords: behaviour, mental depression, youth, social media addiction, tertiary students, Uses and Gratification Theory, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Social media serves as a virtual platform for the exchange of ideas, information, interests, and expressions (Obar & Wildman, 2015). Its applications include education, trade, and international diplomacy (Jiang & Yoo, 2023). However, social media addiction develops when its use begins to impair many aspects of functioning, including professional, practical, educational, and social dimensions, and is frequently caused by an excessive investment of time on online networking platforms (Tarafdar et al., 2020). Previous research has shown that social media harms mental health, such as loneliness and depression, in developing countries (Shensa et al., 2018; Waqas et al., 2018). Studies demonstrate that spending numerous hours on social media might contribute to depression, suicidal ideation, difficulty sleeping, and becoming isolated (Shensa et al., 2017). Thus, spending more time on social media is associated with a negative mood and an increased risk of developing depression symptoms (Dhir et al., 2018).

Social media platforms provide individuals with the opportunity to enhance communication and access to information (Chen et al., 2022). Due to their obsession with social media, the younger generation is unable to avoid using it as a means of stress and anxiety management (Shahid et al., 2024). Social media addiction is one of the issues that arises from this circumstance, in addition to the benefits of social media. Despite compulsive

buying behaviours, social media addiction, also known as behavioural addiction disorder, is mostly caused by excessive use and a lack of control (Wawer et al., 2023). It results in social overload, envy, and anxiety. Mood swings, unfavourable consequences, and excessive time spent on social media lead to a decline in productivity and a sense of loneliness that gradually develops, often accompanied by psychological reliance on social media. This reliance causes users to attempt to use social media as a means to combat unfavourable emotions (Huang, 2022).

Several studies have shown that social media addiction is significantly and positively correlated with depression levels among tertiary-level education students (Aslan & Yasar, 2020). Compulsive use and decreased everyday functioning are hallmarks of social media addiction, which is connected to depression in some ways. Youths often encounter idealised depictions of their classmates' lives, including their social activities and academic accomplishments, which can lead to poor self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy (Sanchez et al., 2023). Due to their increased use of relational social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Threads, and TikTok, women are especially susceptible to this comparison trap. Depressive desire can lead to aggressive behaviour (Roberts et al., 2020). Nonetheless, it remains possible to understand the mechanisms that determine how social media dependency leads to aggressive tendencies, particularly among young individuals, where depression serves as an intermediary element (Zhou et al., 2023). A survey discovered that both Instagram usage and active participation on multiple social networking sites serve as strong markers of depression symptoms (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

The issue of depression among Malaysian youths has received a lot of attention because of its rising incidence and the risk factors that contribute to poor mental health in this demographic. Recent research shows that a significant proportion of Malaysian youths experience varying levels of depression, which has piqued the interest of healthcare experts and policymakers alike. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the social media addiction level among Malaysian youths in Klang Valley associated with depression issues and their sociodemographic factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Usage and Addiction

Social media refers to third-party internet-based platforms that primarily focus on interactions with others, community-based inputs, and content sharing within their user base, and only include content created by their users rather than content licensed from third parties (Asur & Huberman, 2020). Social networking services such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are popular examples of social media that allow individuals to stay connected in an online environment despite geographical distance or other impediments (Boyd & Ellison, 2019). In this new setting, social media has become an integral part of daily life, particularly among young people (Alshamrani et al., 2021). For others, such media are a form of socialisation that brings people close together. Surprisingly, social media is utilised not only for social interaction and enjoyment, but also for exchanging thoughts, learning new things, developing business networks, and launching collaborative projects (Malesev & Cherry, 2021).

The use of social media has become a major source of anxiety and depression due to its potential for addiction among numerous populations, notably youths. A recent study on the prevalence of digital addiction among university students found that social media addiction affects 17.42% of those polled, which is consistent with broader trends indicating that digital addiction, including social media, gaming, and internet addiction, appears to be an international issue, with estimates ranging from 6.04% to 26.99% across different types of digital usage (Al-Mamun et al., 2024). Social media addiction is defined by excessive and compulsive activity, which can harm interpersonal relationships. Addictions to social media can lead to interpersonal difficulties and decreased social connectivity (Savic, 2017). The nature of social media encourages a continual engagement attitude, reinforcing addictive habits as people seek validation through likes and conversations, which can potentially alter the structure and function of the brain (Ding et al., 2023).

The consequences of problematic social media use emerge not just from the amount of time spent online, but also from the types of interactions that take place on these platforms. According to Huvaidd & Maywita (2022),

social comparison and passive content consumption have a particularly strong impact on adolescents' emotions of loneliness and unhappiness. This dynamic demonstrates the complicated interaction between social media usage habits and mental health, stressing that how youths communicate with social media is just as important as how much time they spend on these sites.

Youth Social Media Usage in Malaysia

The growing use of social media among youths has created a complex landscape with both positive and negative consequences. On the other hand, social media platforms provide opportunities for knowledge acquisition, skill development, and social connection. Kadakia et al. (2024) indicated that while some misconceptions about social media point to its potential for addiction and distraction, the platforms have helped many youths advance their careers and learn new skills. However, it is important to note that habitual use of social media can be associated with poorer mental health outcomes, particularly when interaction surpasses three hours each day (Chung et al., 2019).

Research findings indicate that youth might experience both positive and negative outcomes from their use of social media. Mahadi et al. (2023) found that while excessive social media use is common, it increases the risk of addiction, which can harm youths' academic performance and contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. This is supported by Nasser et al. (2019), who discovered that problematic usage of platforms such as Instagram and TikTok was linked to higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among Malaysian youths. The complexities of social media's impact need a more sophisticated understanding of how it affects youth experiences.

However, excessive engagement can have negative consequences, as shown in the literature review of problematic internet usage and its psychological implications. Jaafar et al. (2021) highlighted the potential risks of social media addiction among youths, relating it to social isolation and mental health issues like sadness and anxiety. This dichotomy in social media usage underscores its importance as a component of youth culture, necessitating careful monitoring and supporting actions to prevent potential negative repercussions while encouraging positive exchanges.

Depression and Social Media Addiction Among Youth

The phenomenon of social media usage and addiction among youths has become a global concern, especially as the prevalence of digital platforms has altered the landscape of interpersonal communication and self-perception. Numerous studies have shown that social media addiction is becoming more common, and it involves a complex interaction with several kinds of psychological and societal consequences. A significant aspect of social media addiction is its association with mental health problems such as depression. Hou et al. (2019) in their study indicated that individuals who have poor mental health, such as those with low self-esteem, may turn to social media for comfort and connection, establishing a dependency that worsens their mental health disorders.

Similarly, Mushtaq et al. (2023) found an alarming rise in eating disorders linked to social media addiction across genders, demonstrating that social media may serve as both a refuge and a catalyst for negative mental health outcomes, resulting in a cyclical pattern of addiction and psychological distress. Taha et al. (2023) indicated that more information on the relationship between social media addiction and mental health is needed, revealing a direct correlation between social media usage and disorders such as anxiety and depression among university students in Malaysia's Klang Valley. This data supports the concerns stated by Zaw & Azenal (2021), who claim that social media addiction is common among nursing students regardless of demographic criteria such as gender or academic achievement. This shows that the causes of dependency are more intrinsic to the social media ecosystem than extrinsic social or academic constraints. The consequences of social media addiction extend beyond personal well-being because Fauzi et al. (2021) show a clear negative impact on academic performance caused by excessive social media activity among youths.

Additionally, social media addiction can have a major negative impact on academic achievement, in addition to personal interactions. Contrary research, extended social media use reduces study time, resulting in decreased

concentration levels and educational achievements (Azizi et al., 2019). This negative effect is exacerbated by accompanying issues such as weariness and sleep disruptions, resulting in a cyclical issue in which low academic performance may lead to increasing social media use as a sort of escapism. Similarly, Mahadi et al. (2023) show that increased social media use is associated with worse educational attainment, emphasising the importance of institutions strategically addressing social media's role in youth. The epidemic of social media addiction in Malaysia raises serious concerns about mental health resources, educational programs, and societal attitudes towards youths' technology use.

Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) establishes a foundation for understanding social media addiction by proposing that people utilise media to satisfy distinct wants and desires. The foundation is based on the assumption that users deliberately seek specific gratifications through their interactions with social media platforms, which can lead to compulsive or addictive behaviours. Social media platforms are meant to meet a variety of psychological requirements, including social connection, entertainment, information searching, and self-expression.

Social media usage varies substantially depending on individual reasons, which might lead to addictive behaviours. Kuss & Griffiths (2021) argue that people use social networking sites (SNS) largely for satisfaction, which can parallel tendencies seen in addictive behaviours. This goal-directed usage frequently results in habit building, which can progress to addiction, especially when users are motivated by escapism or a desire for social approval.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) offers a solid foundation for analysing the results of The Impact of Social Media Addiction on Mental Depression Among Youth in Klang Valley. As UGT shows, youths use social media to address psychological demands such as social connectedness, amusement, knowledge seeking, and self-expression. However, pursuing these gratifications excessively might result in compulsive or addictive behaviours. In the Klang Valley, where youths have strong social media penetration, the constant pursuit of these gratifications may result in habitual and excessive use of platforms.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

These studies are using a descriptive and inferential design to explore the relationship between social media addiction and mental depression among the Malaysian youth in public and private universities in Klang Valley. The target population is Malaysian youth between 18 and 25 years old from Klang Valley who utilise social media platforms. Both states were chosen for having the highest incidence of mental health disease cases. The Ministry of Health (MOH) performed the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) in 2018, which indicated a 29.2% prevalence of mental health disorders among those aged 18 to 25 years old. One in every three Malaysians suffers from mental illness, with the highest rates among those aged 18 to 30, as well as individuals from low-income households.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines youth as individuals between the ages of 18 and 40. This age group experiences major physical, emotional, and social changes, which might result in vulnerabilities and challenges particular to this stage of life. The WHO underlines that this definition includes more than just chronological age, such as developmental maturity, obligations in society, and cultural context.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The required sample size was obtained using guidelines from quantitative research design literature, as well as Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) calculation of the sample size table. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) estimation of sample size table, the number of respondents required is proportional to the size of the population under research. Their approach, which assumes a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, offers useful direction for quantitative researchers. In this study, for very large or continuous populations, a minimum of 390

respondents is generally regarded as sufficient to ensure representation. This standardised reference has become one of the more commonly used ways for selecting an appropriate sample size in survey-based quantitative research.

To achieve the required sample size, given the limited resources for conducting random sampling among Klang Valley youths, this study employed a convenience sampling process, a type of non-probability sampling method. Researchers prioritise youth in the Klang Valley region because of its distinct socio-demographic structure and vital role in Malaysia's digital environment. As the most urbanised and densely inhabited neighbourhood in Kuala Lumpur and its neighbouring districts, it has a large proportion of youth who are heavily engaged in digital activities and use smartphones, making it particularly relevant for research on social media and smartphone addiction. A study of youths in the Klang Valley discovered that many spend more than two hours per day on social networking sites (SNS), with habitual use patterns occasionally rising into compulsive behaviours known as social media addiction.

Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool in this study, consisting of two standardised research instruments: the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), which measured the intensity of social media addiction, and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS), which examined the psychological outcomes of depression among youths in Klang Valley. Arslan & Kırık (2013) developed the Social Media Addiction Scale, which includes 25 items to assess time spent on social media, priority placed on platforms, and impact on interactions with others. The DASS measure has 30 items for assessing depression, anxiety, and stress levels. The current study gathered and employed seven items from the DASS that focus on depression. The instrument and all of the pieces were designed in English. This section provides a measurement of social media addiction and despair.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study is conducted using version 29 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Before the research was performed, all recovered questionnaires were thoroughly verified to ensure their eligibility and completeness. Only responses that fully completed the sections on depression and social media addiction were included in the final information set, reducing the potential of bias caused by missing data. The analysis will be conducted in three steps. First, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) will be used to summarise respondents' demographic features and provide an overview of relevant variables. Second, correlation analysis will be used to determine the strength and direction of the links between social media addiction and depression. Finally, regression analysis will be used to establish the predictive influence of social media addiction on depression among youths. This combination of analyses allows for a thorough analysis of the study objectives, resulting in both descriptive insights and inferential testing of the hypothesised correlations.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the Klang Valley's youth, exhibiting numerous key traits. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female (59.0%), with males representing 41.0%. The age distribution shows that the majority of participants were between 26 and 33 years old (45.4%), followed closely by those aged 18 to 25 years old (39.5%), with a lesser proportion aged 34 to 40 years old (15.1%). In terms of educational background, more than half of the respondents (46.9%) possessed a Diploma, while 42.8% had a Bachelor's degree. A lower proportion had pursued further education, with 7.7% holding a Master's degree and only 2.6% obtaining a PhD.

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of participants (55.6%) identified as Malay, followed by Chinese (24.1%) and Indian (19.8%), with only 0.5% identifying as other. TikTok was the most popular platform among Klang Valley youth, with 51.3% of respondents using it, followed by Instagram (32.3%), Facebook (8.7%), X

(Twitter) (5.1%), and others (2.6%). In terms of online engagement, more than half of respondents (50.5%) reported spending more than 8 hours online each day, 38.7% spent 5-8 hours per day, and only 10.8% reported 1-4 hours of usage.

Overall, the results indicate that the Klang Valley's youth population is largely female, extremely active on TikTok and Instagram, and spends a significant amount of time online, with the majority of participants spending more than five hours per day on the internet. This demographic insight emphasises the importance of social media as well as technological platforms in their daily lives, emphasising the value of digital interaction among this population.

Table 1 Respondents' demographic profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	160	41.0
	Female	230	59.0
Age	18 – 25 years old	154	39.5
	26 – 33 years old	177	45.4
	34 – 40 years old	59	15.1
Level of Education	Diploma	183	46.9
	Bachelor's Degree	167	42.8
	Master	30	7.7
	PhD	10	2.6
Race	Malay	217	55.6
	Chinese	94	24.1
	Indian	77	19.8
	Others	2	0.5
Social Media Account	Instagram	126	32.3
	TikTok	200	51.3
	Facebook	34	8.7
	X (Twitter)	20	5.1
	Others	10	2.6
Total Hours Spent Online	1 – 4 hours/day	42	10.8
	5 – 8 hours/day	151	38.7
	More than 8 hours	197	50.5

Social Media Addiction

Table 2 showed that a majority of youths strongly agreed (64.7%) and agreed (25.8%) that they connect with their friends through social media during their free time. This resulted in a high mean score of 4.53 (SD = 0.71), indicating that social media has become the dominant medium for maintaining social connections among youth. The low standard deviation further reflects consistency in responses.

A significant majority of respondents indicated they prefer to use social media rather than watch television, with 41.9% strongly agreeing and 33.6% agreeing. The mean value of 4.11 (SD = 0.94) indicates that social media has replaced traditional media as the principal source of entertainment and recreation for youths. The more substantial standard deviation implies some diversity in preferences, but the general trend confirms the transition from passive television consumption to interactive involvement via digital platforms, which is consistent with global trends among youths.

Youth participants additionally indicated that they check accounts they know and don't know on social media, with 37.6% agreeing and 33.6% strongly agreeing. The mean score of 3.95 (SD = 0.97) indicates moderate to high participation in browsing activities outside of known groups. This behaviour displays curiosity and exploration, which are significant drivers of social media addiction, as participants are constantly looking for novelty and updates. The standard deviation implies some variation in answers, but the pattern emphasises the impact of social media in broadening relationships beyond close networks.

The statement "I spend most of my time surfing social media rather than doing other things" indicated that only 16.8% strongly agreed and 35.3% agreed. The mean score of 3.50 (SD = 1.02) suggests moderate agreement, indicating that, while social media is widely utilised, not all youths reported completely abandoning other activities. The substantially higher standard deviation implies significant disparities in how youth manage their online and offline activities. This research emphasises that, while addictive tendencies exist, some individuals maintain control over their time allocation.

Youths' reactions to content published by others on social media demonstrate that 39.4% slightly agree, 30.6% agree, and 13.4% strongly agree. The mean score of 3.38 (SD = 0.98) is lower than the other items, indicating moderate use of interactive elements such as expressing opinions, liking, or sharing. This implies that, while youths are very active consumers of social media content, not all are significant contributors, which is consistent with research indicating that the majority of social media users engage in passive browsing rather than content creation.

The enjoyment of using social media platforms was reasonably high, with 39.4% strongly agreeing and 33.9% agreeing. The mean score of 3.89 (SD = 0.89) indicates that youths enjoy and are entertained by using these sites. The comparatively low standard deviation shows that perceptions are consistent across the sample. This research emphasises the rewarding and recreational features of social media use, which encourage habitual behaviour and add to addictive behaviours.

On the item of whether life without social media is uninteresting, 38.9% strongly agreed and 35.9% agreed. This resulted in a mean score of 3.97 (SD = 0.93), indicating that a sizable number of respondents see social media as essential to their daily satisfaction. The outcome implies dependency, as ennui without social media reflects psychological reliance. This is congruent with the idea of social media addiction, in which withdrawal from online platforms frequently results in negative emotions like loneliness or discontent.

The data revealed that 39.7% agreed, with 37.9% strongly agreeing, that they engage with friends through social media rather than in person. The mean score of 4.01 (SD = 0.99) suggests a considerable preference for digital over physical engagement, demonstrating how online communication has supplanted conventional face-to-face encounters among young people. Although variability is slightly greater, the findings clearly suggest that digital platforms are regarded as handy and essential for establishing peer interactions. This trend exemplifies the shifting nature of socialisation among digital natives in urban settings such as the Klang Valley.

Table 2 Responses to items assessing youths' addiction to social media (n = 390)

Item	Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1	I connect with my friends through social media when I have free time.	0.5	0.7	8.3	25.8	64.7	4.53	0.71

2	I prefer to use social media rather than watch television.	0.9	5.2	18.4	33.6	41.9	4.11	0.94
3	I check over accounts I know and don't know on social media.	2.1	5.3	21.4	37.6	33.6	3.95	0.97
4	I spend most of my time surfing social media rather than doing other things.	3.2	12.7	32.0	35.3	16.8	3.50	1.02
5	I respond to the content that others share on social media.	3.0	13.6	39.4	30.6	13.4	3.38	0.98
6	I enjoy visiting social media.	3.7	4.0	19.0	33.9	39.4	3.89	0.89
7	Life without social media is boring.	2.5	4.0	18.7	35.9	38.9	3.97	0.93
8	I interact with my friends via social media rather than face-to-face.	1.3	3.0	18.1	39.7	37.9	4.01	0.99
9	I wonder if other people will read what I share on social media.	1.0	19.4	33.2	22.6	23.8	3.51	1.18
Total							3.87	0.96

Note: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Slightly Agree), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree)

The statement "I wonder if other people will read what I share on social media" elicited mixed responses, with 33.2% slightly agreed, 22.6% agreed, and 23.8% definitely agreed. The mean score of 3.51 (SD = 1.18) indicates moderate worry about what others engage with their posts. The bigger standard deviation reflects a difference in opinions, with some respondents being more concerned with audience reaction than others.

Youth's Depression

Table 3 presents that the item "I could not seem to experience any positive feelings at all" had a mean score of 3.07 (SD = 1.24), indicating moderate agreement among respondents. This finding implies that many youths' experience difficulty with happy feelings on occasion, which is a key characteristic of depression. The moderate standard deviation indicates that, while certain youths reported infrequently encountering this issue, a significant number acknowledged challenges in experiencing positive affect, which is consistent with emotional emptiness commonly found in depressive tendencies.

The mean score for the item "I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things" was 3.04 (SD = 1.26). This demonstrates that teens moderately agreed with the statement, indicating that motivational deficiencies exist but are not universally experienced. The comparatively higher variability shows that respondents had different levels of self-discipline and coping methods. This is consistent with previous research, which found that a lack of desire or initiative is a key cognitive sign of depression, particularly among youths juggling scholastic and social responsibilities.

The item "I felt that I had nothing to look forward to" obtained a mean score of 3.10 (SD = 1.26). This reveals that youths have moderate levels of pessimism and reduced future orientation, both of which are fundamental to depressive symptoms. The standard deviation shows that, while many respondents agreed, a portion remained optimistic about the future. This item emphasises the necessity of addressing youth aspirations and life satisfaction, particularly in highly urbanised areas such as Klang Valley, where social and academic competition is tough.

The item "I felt downhearted and gloomy" received the highest mean score of 3.17 (SD = 1.23), indicating that emotions of sadness and low mood were the most strongly supported depressive symptoms in this study. The moderate variability suggests that this was a pretty frequent event among the participants. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that mood disorders, particularly melancholy and gloominess, are

important to the psychological symptoms of depression. The results underscore the emotional strain that many young people face, which is likely worsened by social comparison and a fast-paced urban lifestyle.

Responses to the item "I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything" averaged 3.07 (SD = 1.28). This suggests that responders have a moderate level of lack of enthusiasm, which is frequently associated with anhedonia. The increased standard deviation indicates that some youths continue to participate in activities while others have lost interest. This is consistent with research that loss of excitement is context-dependent and might vary depending on the social support and coping mechanisms available.

Item 6 "I felt I wasn't worth much as a person" had a mean score of 3.14 (SD = 1.17), indicating a moderately high level of self-esteem issues among youths. The lower standard deviation relative to the other items indicates more consistent agreement. This demonstrates the prevalence of self-esteem concerns among respondents, which is consistent with research indicating that low self-worth is an important psychological predictor of depressive symptoms in adolescents and young adults. The feelings of inadequacy are frequently exacerbated by peer comparison and social media expectations.

The last item, which is "I felt that life was meaningless", had a mean of 3.15 (SD = 1.18), indicating a disturbing inclination towards existential pessimism. The somewhat high mean indicates that many youths have unfavourable judgements of life's value, which is a key component of depressive ideation. The relatively moderate variability indicates that this feeling was reasonably frequent among responders. This is especially important since if left untreated, meaninglessness is linked to an increased risk of chronic depression and suicide ideation.

Table 3 Response items assessing the youths' depression

Here's your data neatly converted into a table format:

Item	Statement	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean	SD
1	I could not seem to experience any positive feeling at all.	15.1	17.7	23.2	33.1	10.9	3.07	1.24
2	I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things.	18.0	12.5	27.1	32.0	10.4	3.04	1.26
3	I felt that I had nothing to look forward to.	12.2	23.2	22.1	27.1	15.4	3.10	1.26
4	I felt downhearted and gloomy.	10.9	21.6	21.4	31.8	14.3	3.17	1.23
5	I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything.	14.6	22.1	18.2	31.8	13.3	3.07	1.28
6	I felt I wasn't worth much as a person.	10.4	18.8	29.7	28.6	12.5	3.14	1.17
7	I felt that life was meaningless.	12.0	19.0	25.5	32.0	11.5	3.15	1.18
Total							3.11	1.23

Note: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Slightly Agree), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree)

Level of Social Media Addiction and Depression Among Youth

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents (72.3%) have a high level of social media addiction, with a mean score of 2.80 (SD = 0.53). This implies that the majority of youths in the Klang Valley use social media excessively, demonstrating addictive behaviours such as frequent checking, preferring social media over other activities, and spending lengthy periods of time online. Meanwhile, 23.1% of respondents indicated a moderate level of social media addiction, indicating frequent but less intense usage patterns, and only 4.6% reported a low level of social media addiction, indicating limited engagement with these platforms.

Table 4 Level of social media addiction and depression

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Social Media Addiction				
Low (1 – 2.33)	18	4.6	2.80	0.53
Moderate (2.34 – 3.66)	90	23.1		
High (3.67 – 5)	282	72.3		
Depression				
Low (1 – 2.33)	80	20.5	2.41	0.83
Moderate (2.34 – 3.66)	122	31.3		
High (3.67 – 5)	188	48.2		

In terms of depression, over half of the respondents (48.2%) reported severe depression, with a mean score of 2.41 (SD = 0.83). This research suggests that a sizable proportion of young people have serious depression symptoms, such as hopelessness, low self-esteem, and decreased excitement. Additionally, 31.3% of the subjects were classified as having mild depression, indicating that depressive symptoms are present but less severe. Meanwhile, 20.5% of respondents reported a modest level of depression, indicating little experience with depressive tendencies. The comparatively high proportion of respondents in the high depression group raises concerns regarding Klang Valley youths' psychological well-being, especially given their substantial reliance on social media platforms.

Inferential Analysis

Table 5 shows the findings of a Pearson correlation investigation that examined the link between social media addiction and depression among respondents. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.309$, $p < 0.001$) shows a positive and statistically significant link at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The number 0.309 indicates a moderate relationship, which is stronger than the previous weak association, meaning that as social media addiction increases, so does the risk of depression among the Malaysian youth in Klang Valley area.

The significance of $p < 0.001$ increases the evidence, showing that the correlation is highly unlikely to occur by coincidence. This lends credibility to the theory that social media addiction may be a risk factor for depression in young people. However, while the association is moderate, it does not imply causality, implying that depression may lead individuals to increase their social media use, leading to a bidirectional relationship.

Table 5 Pearson correlation analysis between social media addiction and depression

Variables		Social Media Addiction	Depression
Social Media Addiction	Pearson Correlation	0.309**	1
Depression	p-value	(< 0.001)	
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.309**
	p-value		(< 0.001)

Note. $p < 0.001$; **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

DISCUSSION

This study has substantial psychological implications: excessive social media use is more than just a behavioural habit; it may also have a significant impact on emotional and mental health outcomes. The positive

association is consistent with previous research, which found that individuals addicted to social media are more likely to experience adverse psychological consequences, such as depressive symptoms, due to mechanisms such as online social comparison, cyberbullying, reduced interaction with others, and disrupted sleep patterns (Keles, McCrae & Grealish, 2020).

This study has substantial psychological implications which as excessive social media use is more than just a behavioural habit; it may also have a significant impact on psychological and emotional outcomes. The positive association is consistent with previous research, which found that individuals addicted to social media are more likely to experience adverse psychological consequences, such as depressive symptoms, due to mechanisms such as online social comparison, cyberbullying, reduced interaction with others, and disrupted sleep patterns (Marino, 2018).

There discovered a moderate positive correlation and a significant relationship were discovered between social media addiction and depression. These findings support earlier research that revealed a modest to high positive link between social media addiction and depressive symptoms in youth (Sidani et al., 2016; Woods & Scott, 2016). The results also show that the more time youths spend on social media platforms, the more depressed symptoms they suffer, as previously reported (Li et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the involvement of social media and its impact on youth mental health brings another layer to the issue. While it provides a platform for connection, excessive use has been associated with increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression, especially among youth who are seeking social validation (Khodabakhsh et al., 2021; Halim et al., 2023). Youths who rely excessively on social media frequently suffer negative consequences for their mental health, highlighting a critical subject for future studies and prevention (Halim et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study found that youths in Malaysia's Klang Valley states have a high level of social media addiction. Additionally, moderate levels of depression were reported. Despite the concerns about social media addiction, new research shows that it has good effects on mental health, such as increased self-esteem and supportive connections (Vaingankar et al., 2022). Youths regularly say that using social media can improve their self-image and give critical social support that may not be available elsewhere (Parent, 2023). Thus, while it is critical to address the negative aspects of social media use, it is also critical to identify its potential for improving mental health outcomes and young resilience (Changning et al., 2023).

The conclusion indicates the necessity for aggressive action. Educators, parents, and lawmakers should be aware that excessive usage of social media platforms can lead to mental discomfort, such as depression, among youth. Awareness efforts, digital literacy initiatives, and counselling services could all help to reduce the hazards associated with excessive social media use. Mental health policies should include a focus on the digital environment, recognising it as an important predictor of youth well-being.

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