


## Social Media Influence to the Life of Malaysian Pre-University Students

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### ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to investigate the usage and influence of social media to the life of a group of Malaysian pre-university students. Instrument of this study involved a set of closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires that were distributed online to 123 students of the ASASipintar pre-university program in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The results showed that the students used social media as an entertainment mainly when they were bored. Even though most of the students felt that social media impacted them positively rather than negatively, 55.3% of them claimed that their eyes were not in a good condition after spending hours on social media while 12.2% had lack interaction with parents due to the usage of social media. Besides that, 52% of the students used social media more than seven times daily and 66.7% agreed that the social media had helped them with their studies. In conclusion, social media was a valuable tool for the students to kill their free time and helped them with their studies. However, the usage of social media should be monitored to avoid its negative influence to the students' social life and physical health.

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### KEYWORDS:

Social media usage  
Social life  
Physical health  
Influence

### CITATION:

Chen, Y. S. et al. (2022). Social Media Influence to the Life of Malaysian Pre-University Students. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 7(8), e001654.  
<https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v7i8.1654>

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**Contribution/Originality:** This research contributes to the existing literature on the influence of social media to the Malaysian youth.

## 1. Introduction

The term social media refers to a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities (Dollarhide, 2021). Social media is different from traditional media. For social media, there are some social media platforms with over 100 million registered users nowadays, such as Facebook, Instagram, WeChat and Twitter. Besides, for traditional media, there are television, newspapers and radio broadcasting.

Social media is more convenient, higher quality and more permanent than traditional media. Due to the evolution of technology, social media has become an indispensable part of life, especially to the youth.

Social media allows youth to build social networks and create their identities. During COVID-19 pandemic, youth cannot meet with their classmates and colleagues face to face. However, they still can keep in touch with their classmates and colleagues through social media. Besides, as youth use social media to share their daily lives and interests, they can get to know new friends with the same interests. Moreover, youth can easily acquire the latest news and issues with social media.

On the contrary, if youth overshare their personal information on social media, they are at a high risk to put themselves in danger of being cyberbullied. Social media have made it possible for bullies to attack their victims online at any time and no matter how far away the victim and the bully are from each other. This will cause mental problems, depression and low self-esteem among the victims. For instance, the whole society is aghast over the death of Choi Sulli on October 14, 2019, a famous female singer from South Korea, due to depression after being cyber-bullied for a long time on Instagram and Facebook, the most popular social media nowadays (Kasulis, 2019; Kholam, 2020).

Hence, this research is conducted in order to determine the usage and influence of social media towards a group of Malaysian pre-university students aged 17 to 19. The research questions are as follow:

Research question 1: How the students use social media?

Research question 2: How the students perceive the impact of social media to their life?

## 2. Literature Review

Malaysia is ranked in the six highest users of social media in Asia and has penetration about 53% (Go-Globe, 2015). The number of users continually increases each year. This was supported by the statistic from Statista (2021) that the social media users in Malaysia are approximately 62 percent of the entire population of Malaysia in 2021 and it was an increase of 24 percent compared to social media users in 2016. In the same study, they found out that social media users in Malaysia spent about 3.06 hours every day on social media. Hence, this proved that people in today's society frequently use social media in their life. Moreover, according to the Ministry of Communication and Multimedia Malaysia, approximately 28 million users of social media in Malaysia and it will increase in two million just a year from 2020 due to the current situation which is in pandemic Covid-19 (Malay Mail, 2021). In addition, Subramaniam (2014) states that social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are frequently utilized by people to show that social media is important in their daily life. In a small scope, 67.4% of youth used social media

and it used 16-30 times a month according to the findings revealed from (Ahmad, Ismail & Nasir, 2015). In fact, Malaysian youth use social media in various aspects, which are for socialization and communication, searching for information, education and for entertainment (Ismail, 2014). It is also supported by Mun and Fernandez (2011) that youth use social media due to peer-to-peer communication.

For everyone living in the 21st century, it may be said without fear of contradiction that social media is an integral part of our lives. It brings positive impacts to adults and youth. Social media enables social purposes and social interactions. The availability of profile set up and creation in social media allows adults and youth to share thoughts, interact and engage with others. This helps the adults and youth to create their identities and build social networks.

Furthermore, adults and youth are able to connect with anyone in a way that is faster and easier than ever before. It is particularly helpful for those who are studying or working overseas to stay in touch with their families by sending messages, having video calls or uploading photos.

Moreover, social media provides a good education platform for students to conduct e-learning (Brady, Holcomb & Smith, 2010). Students can learn and enhance their communication skills and technical skills after attending live group coaching.

On the other hand, as cliché as it sounds, social media actually brings numerous harms to youth, especially students as well. The existence of social media creates an immense peak of youth that uses it. When students often use social media as a source of entertainment, this actually has a negative impact on their studies. This can be proven by a research by Karpinski and Duberstein (2009) in which he found that the Internet causes an increase of students using social media and it brings more cons than pros. As he stated, students who use social media frequently allocate less time on their studies and obtain a lower GPA compared to those who are not obsessed with social media. Besides, cyberbullying has been a well-known issue since the creation of social media. Around 10% of teens who use social media have reported the experience of being bullied online via social media platforms through offensive comments.

In a survey by Jan et al. (2017) that one hour spent on Facebook daily results in a 5.574% decrease in the self-esteem score of an individual. Those addicted to social media will continue to compulsively utilize social media even if their social media use results in unwanted consequences, such as lack of sleep or relational conflicts (Andreassen, 2015). It is supported by the research that the use of social media has been related to sleep deprivation, insomnia and continual illnesses (O'keeffe & Pearson, 2011). However, those statements contradict with the survey that no interactions have been detected between social media usage and other lifestyle habits (Bou-Hamad, 2020). Furthermore, blue light, such as the light from cell phones, computers, stimulates the brain. It is enough to disturb the body's natural circadian rhythm. This disturbance could lead to harder to fall asleep or make a person feeling less alert the next day (Chang et al., 2015).

### 3. Methodology

A qualitative and quantitative research design has been selected for the data collection and analysis in order to understand the use and influence of social media towards a group of students of ASASIpintar pre-university program session year 2022 in Universiti

Kebangsaan Malaysia. The population considered is 179 students and only 123 students used as sample. Participants were randomly selected, have an equal and fair chance of being selected. Qualitative data were obtained from questionnaires with multiple choice answers and quantitative data were obtained from questionnaires to gain the degree of agreement using Likert scale. The survey is divided into three parts. First part is about the participants' backgrounds (A1-A3). Second part consists of open-ended questions of the students' perception on social media (B1-B7). Third part consists of closed-ended questions with Likert scale: totally disagree, disagree, agree or totally agree, for the responses (C1-C5). The survey was created in GoogleForm for which the link was being shared with the selected students through media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp and Facebook. The students were asked to complete giving response to the survey in at most seven consecutive days.

#### 4. Result

The respondents' backgrounds are summarized as shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Gender and academic achievement from past examination

Background	Frequency (percentage)
Gender:	
Male	43 (35%)
Female	80 (65%)
Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA):	
2.00 – 3.66	21 (17.1%)
3.67 – 4.00	102 (82.9%)

Social media has impacted the lives of targeted respondents positively and negatively. As for the uses of social media, most students use it for entertainment whenever they feel bored. [Table 2](#) ranks top uses of social media based on students' preferences while [Table 3](#) ranks the situations to access social media platforms.

Table 2: Top uses of social media

Uses of social media	Frequency (percentage)
Entertainment	123 (100%)
Information	116 (94.3%)
News	93 (75.6%)
Study	83 (67.5%)
Shopping	77 (62.6%)
Communication	4 (3.3%)
Inspiration	1 (0.8%)
Reading	1 (0.8%)

Table 3: Situation to access social media platform

Situation to access social media platform	Frequency (percentage)
Boring	118 (95.9%)
Sleeping	90 (73.2%)
Eating	65 (52.8%)
In class	46 (37.4%)

In class whenever sleepy	1 (0.8%)
Whenever you want	1 (0.8%)

According to [Figure 1](#), 68.3% students think that social media brings a positive impact while 31.7% students think that social media brings a negative impact. Furthermore, [Figure 2](#) shows that 92.7% students use social media everyday. While 52% students use social media more than seven times ([Figure 3](#)) only 17.1% spent more than seven hours on social media in a day ([Figure 4](#)). Other than that, [Figure 5](#) indicates that 81.3% students open their social media before going to sleep.

Figure 1: Students' view on the impact of social media to their life

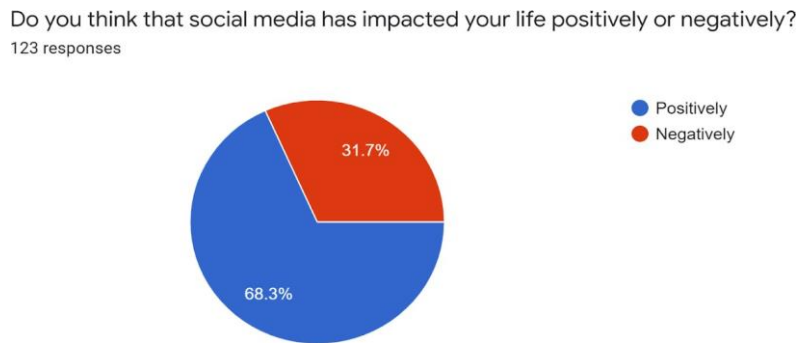


Figure 2: Social media use in a year

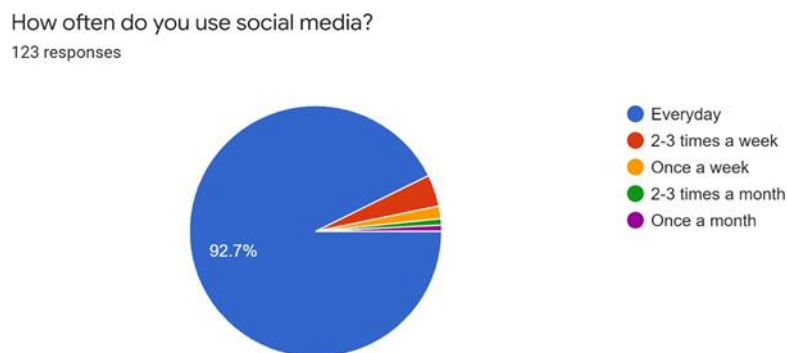


Figure 3: Social media use in a day

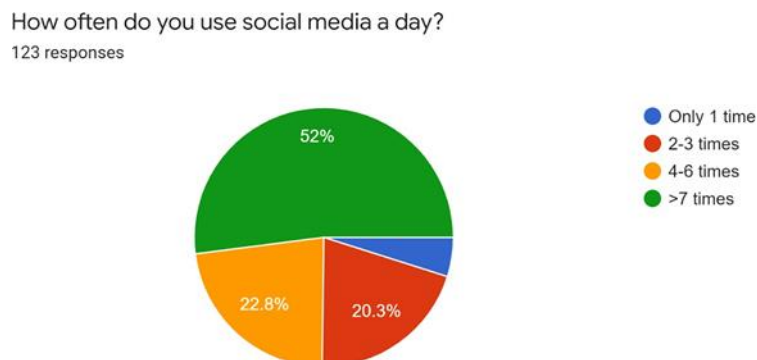


Figure 4: Hours spent on social media in a day

How many hours do you spend on social media a day?

123 responses

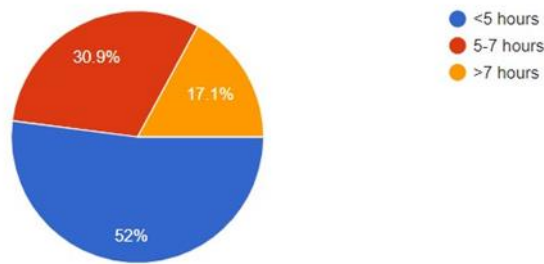


Figure 5: Social media use before sleep

Do you open your social media before going to sleep?

123 responses

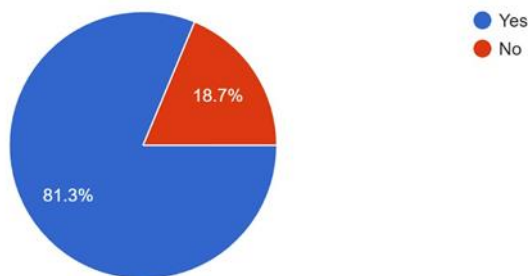


Table 4 shows that, 13.8% students have problem to limit the social media use which has caused them to ignore chores and interaction with family.

Table 4: Response of whether or not social media has affected the relationship with family

Response	Frequency (percentage)
None	100 (81.3%)
Lack interaction with parents due to the usage of social media	15 (12.2%)
Social media sets unrealistic expectations toward people	1 (0.8%)
Communicate with parents more than before	5 (4.1%)
Spend too much time on social media until accidentally ignore all the chores	2 (1.6%)

The results obtained from closed-ended questionnaires are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Item analysis for the effect of social media on physical health and studies

Item	Totally disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally agree
You do not have a problem with your eyesight when using social media	21	45	30	27
Your eyes are in good condition after spending hours on social media	23	45	30	25

You can focus on class because you sleep early at night	20	38	35	30
You wake up from sleep early and energetically	20	44	37	22
You are having a good relationship with your parents although you always spend time on social media	2	12	50	59
Social media helps you with your study	8	33	47	35

With regard to the eye sight, upon the statement: “You do not have a problem with your eyesight when using social media”, 21 (17.1%) students totally disagree, and 45 (36.6%) students disagree with the statement. Meanwhile, 30 (24.4%) students agree that they do not have eyesight problems when using social media. Next, 27 students (22% of total sample size) totally agree with the statements. Other than that, regarding the statement “Your eyes are in good condition after spending hours on social media.”, 23 (18.7%) students totally disagree with it, 45 (36.6%) disagree, 30 (24.4%) agree with the statement and 25 (20.3%) students totally agree with the statement. This tells us eyesight is obviously a crucial problem for the students when using social media.

Move to the other side, with regard to sleep quality, regarding the statement “You can focus on class because you sleep early at night.”, 20 (16.3%) students totally disagree, 38 (30.9%) students disagree, 35 (28.5%) students agree and 30 (24.4%) students totally agree with it. Furthermore, regarding the statement “You wake up from sleep early and energetically.”, 20 (16.3%) students totally disagree, 44 (35.8%) students disagree, 37 (30.1%) students agree and 22 (17.9%) students totally agree with the statement. Regarding the statement “Social media helps you with your study”, 8 (6.5%) students totally disagree, 33 (26.8%) students disagree, 47 (38.2%) students agree and 35 (28.5%) students totally agree with the statement. This shows that most students admit that social media had helped them with their study and that many students had no problem in focusing on class as they slept early at night. Nevertheless, this results also show that there were many students who had problem in waking up early.

In addition, regarding the statement “You are having a good relationship with your parents although you always spend time on social media”, 2 (1.6%) students totally disagree, 12 (9.8%) disagree, 50 (40.7%) agree and 59 (48%) students totally agree with the statement. This indicates that most students felt that they had a good relationship with parents even though they frequently spent time on social media.

## 5. Discussion

A percentage of 68.3% students agree that social media has a positive effect towards them and is very useful for their life. They are frequent users of social media as most of them use social media every day, at various times to serve different functions such as sharing information, learning, entertainment and news. Moreover, 92.7% of students use social media every day and 52% use more than seven times a day. This indicates the high level of social media usage among the students. However, 52% of the students only spend less than five hours on social media. Hence, this proves that students could balance their life and social media. Plus, it is obvious to see that students used social media as their learning tools as 94.3% students use them for searching information and 67.5% of the students use them for study. Majority of students utilize their social media in the way that benefits them. Social media can be an extraordinary tool if it’s used in a positive way (Brydolf, 2007).

Advanced social media tools and a variety of networking sites encourage students to express and share their talent and creativity through it in many aspects including learning.

Moving to the other side, 53.7% students said they have problems with their eyesight when using social media and 55.3% claimed their eyes were not in a good condition after spending hours on social media. This result is supported by UAB Medicine News that, higher usage of screen time can result in eye strain to some people but the chances of permanent vision damage are low. However, this result might be influenced by the fact that their phone screen is different for different types of phones. For example, Samsung brand phones have Eye Comfort Shield settings that can remove blue light from the screen phone and comfort the eyes.

Next, with regards to relationships with parents, most students said that social media did not affect their relationships with parents. In fact, social media can be a medium to strengthen the bond between the family if they are far away from each other. As an example, students are far away from their home and family, this is why social media can make them closer to their home and family because applications such as Whatsapp and Messenger can enable them to video call their family at home.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study investigated the social media usage among students aged 17 to 19 years and how social media usage influences their lives. Although social media was mostly used for entertainment, it was also an important tool for the students in their study. Since the level of usage is high, the use of social media should be carefully monitored so that it brings more positive impact to the students rather than the negative ones.

## **Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate**

The consent of participation had been obtained from the respondents before they entered the research.

## **Acknowledgement**

We thank all the participants who gave full support and cooperation for this research.

## **Funding**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agencies.

## **Conflict of Interests**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.



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