



SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL INTERACTION: ANALYSING THE RELATIONSHIP THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION THEORY

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Abstract

Research related to the impacts of social media on everyday social interactions, which contributed to two factors. However, there are still extremely limited studies on environment, lifestyle, and social media usage that can contribute to the impact of social media on social interactions. The research objectives for this research are to identify the relationship between the impact of social media and social interaction. This study applied the Social Interactions theory as the main theory to further strengthen the relationship between each variable. Quantitative methods were applied in this study, and data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to 202 respondents. This study's theoretical foundation is based on the social interaction theory. The theory suggests that social interaction plays a significant role in shaping an individual's understanding, learning, and personal development. The results of this study demonstrate that social media plays a new role in the theory that can facilitate and enhance social interaction. Studies have shown that people are more inclined to voice their opinions honestly when they obtain information from social media. This is because social media offers an extensive opportunity for communication and allows many people to freely express their opinions. Social media platforms make it accessible for information to be rapidly and broadly distributed, even among individuals who reside outside of cities. Given today is the time of advanced technology, the majority of people use social media daily, which indicates that people use it as a tool to connect with others in their immediate social circles and a location where they can acquire information more quickly.

Keywords: Media Impacts; Social Interactions; Social Media

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the internet can be traced back to its primitive form during the Second World War and up to the introduction of Windows 95, which boosted its use. Entering the 20th century, social media slowly became a prominent platform in the space. Since people can select their information sources, the Internet may foster an environment that lets social networking flourish. Unlike in low-choice environments, today individuals may access news and political information from social media, search, online, and offline versions of newspapers, television broadcasts, radio, and so on. Thus, there are two possible outcomes from a diverse media environment.

The purpose of social interaction is to allow many individuals to express themselves and complete certain tasks. Social interaction is at the heart of communication between members of the same community. Social interaction has an important function in society. They allow members of the community to socialize and encourage a sense of community (Mondal, 2014). In today's world, there is no denying that social media plays an important role in influencing our culture, economy, and overall worldview. According to Zhao (2009), 93% of American teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 have Internet access. In addition, one study found that 30% of European children aged 11-16 use the Internet excessively, meaning they spend much longer online each day (Livingstone et al., 2011). As mentioned by Daud et al. (2014), adolescents mainly tend to use technology websites for social reasons, such as building social relationships and communicating. With friends and family, while parents use technology and social media for more everyday purposes. such as tracking children's location, calling them, and texting family members.

Social media platforms have become a necessary part of our everyday lives, and there is no denying their influence on society. Social media has helped individuals connect with one another, but it has also been connected to several unfavorable effects, such as addiction, mental health issues, and cyberbullying (Zsila & Eric, 2023). Social media platforms can have a positive impact on students' academic progress by providing them with ongoing opportunities to learn, according to research by Chukwuere (2021). However, due to social media platforms being distracting to students, the effects of these platforms on their academic learning progress are occasionally misunderstood (Chukwuere, 2021). According to a different study, social media has a major negative influence on mental health, increasing stress, the need to compare oneself to others, and feelings of loneliness and melancholy (Amedie, 2015). Consuming social media requires mindfulness (Amedie, 2015).

Social media facilitates communication, which enables users to keep in touch. With just one click, share dimages, movies, documents, and thoughts and ideas are out to the world (Cookingham & Ryan, 2015). Social media makes it easier for people in different parts of the world to communicate messages and data. In addition, Cookigham and Ryan (2015) instilled the term 'media diet'chosen by adolescents. This diet, in return, becomes a reflection of who they believe they are and who they want to be. Thus, this research aims to identify the relationship between the impact of social media and social interaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media research includes the analysis of people's voices on a variety of topics (Cabr  -Oliv   et al., 2017). According to quantitative data from April 2017 published by Statista (Clement, 2020), Twitter and Facebook are

among the top ten global social networks, ranked by the number of active users. Facebook tops the list with 1.968 million active users, and Twitter is 10th with 319 million active users.

Among them are the following social networks: WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook Messenger, WeChat, QQ, Instagram, Qzone, and Tumblr. If we consider alternative metrics, social media tracking for search results mentions includes Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Sina Weibo, and Pinterest. The popular social networks for both sources are Facebook and Twitter. They are also popular platforms with relevant scientific content and easy access to data. According to Fischer and Reuber (2011), the presence of selected keywords on Twitter determines the likelihood that health authorities use social networks to address the concerns and needs of society. In addition, Sawyer & Chen (2012) investigated Twitter's activity in the wake of the 2011 5.8 magnitude earthquake on the US East Coast, concluding that social media content can be useful for following event tracking and can complement other data sources to improve understanding of people's reactions to such events.

Social interactions play an important role in learning, and interacting with other people has proven to be quite effective in assisting the learner to organize their thoughts, reflect on their understanding, and find gaps in their reasoning (Treon, 2018). Underneath the broad umbrella of social interactions and learning, variants can range from peer learning, reciprocal teaching, learning by teaching, learning by observation, learning by doing, and self–other monitoring (Manjur et. al, 2021). These areas overlap in scholarship and are often an optimal way to help students learn. Different forms of collaborative learning can create ideal circumstances when examining the impact of social interactions on learning (Treon, 2018). For instance, Vygotsky thought that social connections, culture, and history are all important for children's cognitive development (Lincoln, 2000).

Higher-order thinking skills were thought to result from internalizing these cultural tools, according to Vygotsky. Children's social contacts with their parents teach them how to utilize these cultural tools for the first time. Teachers or more seasoned classmates, then integrate the knowledge to function on their own (Kelly et al., 2017). This differs from Jean Piaget's theory of child development, which posits that learning occurs after development (Lincoln, 2000). The notion of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) describes the dynamic link that exists between development and learning. ZPD is the region that lies between a learner's autonomous performance level and the one that can be attained with a more experienced peer's help. ZPD not only demonstrates a learner's potential but also suggests that a greater performance level is achievable with help (Kelly et al., 2017). As a result, social interactions are essential for cognitive growth and learning, and it is crucial to conduct a study to determine how social interactions affect learning (Figure 1).

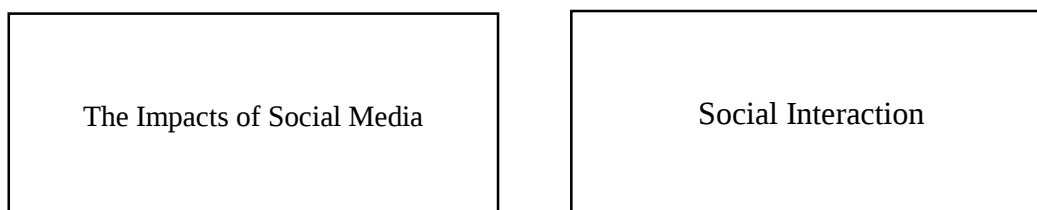


Figure 1: Relationship of the impacts of social media on social interactions

According to Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development, social contact is essential to the growth of the mind. According to Vygotsky, social and cultural elements have an impact on cognitive development, and

community is essential to the process of "making meaning" (Bearworks et al., 2013). He placed a strong emphasis on the contribution that social contact makes to children's development of mental skills like speaking and reasoning. Concepts like the zone of proximal development, private speech, and culture-specific tools are all part of Vygotsky's theory (McLeod, 2014). According to Funders (2006), the more knowledgeable other (MKO) is a person who is more proficient or informed than the learner in a certain task, procedure, or idea. In order to help a kid acquire abilities within their zone of proximal development, the space between what they can accomplish on their own and what they can accomplish with guidance, the MKO can be a teacher, parent, coach, or even a peer (McLeod, 2014). Higher mental capacities could only emerge through connection with others who have greater mental capacities, according to Vygotsky.

METHODOLOGY

The study can carry out its work in one of two ways. Its main objective is to verify that all the information is accurate and enable researchers to use it to examine all issues that may occur. The quantitative research is chosen for this work. When conducting quantitative research, researchers must look at a variety of variables in order to conduct a data analysis. Additionally, quantitative research necessitates that the researcher gather views or ideas from others and form judgments about the study's findings.

Using survey techniques, such as in this study, to ascertain the ideas and opinions of others regarding social interactions, the effect of family relationships on social interaction is one of the variables employed in this study, and common quantitative approaches are used to concentrate more on the relationship between the two. As previously mentioned, respondents were given questions as part of this study's quantitative methodology. This is due to the fact that it not only takes little time, but it will also demonstrate that it is simpler for respondents to react to the questions and that there will be a greater number of respondents. Additionally, the benefit of utilizing this quantitative method is that the results obtained are fully valid, usable, and generalizable to a larger population.

This study uses a survey methodology and a questionnaire that is split into two sections with distinct goals as a research tool. Before giving this research approach its final word, a few points have been emphasized. Additionally, this survey will be carried out using both face-to-face interaction and an online platform called Google Forms. The main goal of this survey is to gather all the information and responses from a variety of people of various ages and thought processes. This study will be divided into 5 parts. First is part A, where all respondents will select and mark about their demographic background. The demographic background consists of only three questions: age, gender, and education level. Section B questions are related to social interaction. For this section, there are 12 questions related to social interaction. The question is more related to how and how often we have social relationships and interact with other people. Next is section C, which has 13 questions about the impacts of social media.

Research studies are conducted on respondents who match those characteristics, actual respondents of the study. BK101 and BK201 students from University Poly-tech Malaysia (UPTM) participated in the research. A total of 202 people participated as respondents for this investigation. This study aims to examine relationships in family relationships in terms of social interaction. In parallel, a study was conducted to assess the questionnaire's clarity, relevance to the study's goals, suitability of the items included in the study, and items' relevancy (Hayes, 2000).

This study used Cronbach's alpha values to analyse the instrument's reliability, which can measure the internal consistency of the instruments used for this investigation. This study 4 variables, namely social interactions and the impact of social media. Table 1 shows the impacts of social media, the alpha value of this variable shows $\alpha = .80$. Next is the social interactions variables show $\alpha = .75$. Overall, the value of Cronbach's alpha is acceptable for this study (Table 1).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha for the Pre-Test Analysis

Variable	Items	α
Impact of Social Media	13	.80
Social interactions	12	.75

The next section discusses correlations between items based on this study's variables. Overall, the association between variables for the roles of impact of social media was strong and acceptable for this study. As a result, no changes to this purpose have been made. Table 2 summarizes the findings of the analysis.

Table 2: Correlation Inter-Item for the The Roles Impact of Social Media

Item	Correlation Inter Item
My usage of social media improves my social interactions	.80
The use of social media improves my communication and sharing of information with friends and peers	.80
The use of social media promotes physical distance among friends	.80
The use of social media encourages students to spend hours (time) online	.80
Usage of social media promotes data privacy issues and the exposure of personal information	.80
The usage of social media is a useful tool in meeting friends	.80
Social media promotes cyberbullying and infringement of privacy	.80
I believe that social media usage enhances your social life and interactions	.80
Indeed, social media is terrible for social interactions	.80
Social media platforms are not favorable for interacting with friends	.80
In all, social media is harmful to special interactions	.80
In all, social media is harmful to special interactions	.80
The use of social media limits time with family, friends, and loved ones	.80

This section discusses correlations between items based on this study's variables. Overall, the association between variables for the roles of the impact of social media was strong and acceptable for the purpose of this study. As a result, no changes to this purpose have been made. Table 3 summarizes the findings of the analysis.

Table 3: Correlation Inter-Item for Social Interactions

Item	Correlation Inter Item
There is someone who helps me by running errands	.75

There is someone who has said or done something to me to take my mind off my worries	.71
There is someone who has given me the information that made me feel anxious	.73
There is someone who has made a helpful suggestion to me about how I might adjust the way I am doing my everyday life activities	.71
There is someone who has said or done something to encourage me to feel better	.71
There is someone who has helped me with my personal activities	.70
There is someone who has helped me with my other activities of daily living	.71
There is someone who has helped me listen to my feelings	.70

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This subtopic covered the respondents' profiles based on the study's feedback. Table 1 shows that 113 (55.9%) of the respondents were female, while another 89 (44.1%) respondents were male. For the age category, Table 4 shows that 109 (54%) of the respondents were aged between 21-30 years old. For those aged 20 and below, there are 93 (46%) of the respondents that involved. None of the respondents aged 31 and above participated in the research.

Table 4: Demography of Respondents

Demography Factors		n	%
Gender			
i.	Male	89	44.1
ii.	Female	113	55.9
Age			
i.	20 years old and below	93	46
ii.	21-30 years old	109	54
iii.	31-40 years old	0	0
Education			
i.	Diploma	175	86.6
ii.	Degree	19	9.4
iii.	Masters	6	3
iv.	SPM	2	1

For the education level category, Table 5 shows that 175 (86.6%) of the respondents were at the diploma level. For the degree level, there were 19 (9.4%) respondents were involved. For the master's level, there were 6 (3%) respondents were involved. For respondents who have SPM, there were only 2 (1%) respondents who were involved. None of the respondents from the STPM level were involved.

This section discusses the hypothesis-based differences between the impact of social media and social interaction. The results indicate a relationship between the two, as shown in Table 5 below. The result proved that there is a relationship between the impacts of social media on social interaction ($r = .589^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). The hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5: Relationship between the Impact of Social Media and Social Interactions

The Impact of Social Media	Social Interactions
r	.589**
n	202
p	0.01

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Based on the findings, the research was successful in achieving its goal. The primary goal of this research is to determine how social media use affects interpersonal relationships. Social media platforms enable people to communicate with one another regardless of distance. Social contacts that would not be possible otherwise are fostered by people interacting with friends, family, and even strangers worldwide.

Also, social media inadvertently facilitates easier interaction between people and groups that share similar interests. This leads to a greater interchange of ideas and the potential for personal growth. The findings found that there is a relationship between the impact of social media and social interactions. The past researchers found that there is a relationship between the impact of social media and social interactions, such as Daud et al. (2014), Zhao (2009), Livingstone et al. (2011), and Cabré-Olivé et al. (2017). It means this research has contributed to a new finding compared to past research, which has the same interest as this research.

Social interaction theory serves as the theoretical basis for this investigation. According to this view, social contact has a substantial impact on understanding, learning, and personal growth. This is because it will be simpler for us to absorb the knowledge if we support one another when working as a group to solve an issue. This illustrates how a person's development as a maker depends more on social contact. Furthermore, better results will be obtained when the student is accompanied on their journey by someone who possesses greater knowledge or capability. Based on these opinions, there are additions to theories that can improve a person's social interaction. The study's findings show that social media may improve and ease social contact, adding a new dimension to the hypothesis. Research has shown that when people get their knowledge via social media, they are more likely to express their thoughts honestly.

As a conclusion, everyone interacts in face-to-face interaction every now and then, which is bound to create limitations for those placed in a different location. But in modern times, social media is the main means of interaction medium used by society. Meanwhile, social media users can use it for capturing personal memories and as a platform for broadcasting new information to the public. Along with that, researchers discovered that social media may help facilitate online interactions between readers and those in their immediate social circles, which is one way that many people can keep up relationships with other individuals in their immediate social circles.

Additionally, the impact of social media can provide an atmosphere for a significant amount of people to openly communicate with unknown individuals about many different kinds of topics, particularly current events that are occurring both domestically and internationally. As a consequence, researchers believe that social media's impact is beneficial for the majority of people who struggle with in-person interactions. Furthermore, it is more straightforward when social media quickly publishes knowledge or information. One social media application comes with a "live" or "space" feature where a host can set up a forum with a subject to discuss. This serves as evidence. The social interaction between people begins at this stage, where there are a lot of people who do not know each other but who are passionate about sharing their opinions.

CONCLUSION

The researcher suggests applying qualitative methods in future studies based on the findings of this one. This is because, in contrast to quantitative methods, which rely on respondents completing a questionnaire, qualitative methods normally employ face-to-face methods like interviews for collecting responses from respondents. This makes it possible for the researcher to gather more information about the topic being studied.

Furthermore, this study merely involves college students. The researcher suggested expanding the study's overall population count. Subsequent studies would need to look at more than just university students; they should instead focus more on people who are employed or professionals who work solely in the Kuala Lumpur region. This tactic may also result in a higher number of responses to the research as well as respondents for the study.

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