

Psychological impact of addictive social media usage among college students.

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Abstract

Keywords

Anxiety,
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college students,
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Anxiety is one of the most serious mental health concerns among today's youth. It's possible that anxiety is a feeling that has existed before man's evolution. It is a crucial clinical focus due to its prevalence in humans and its inclusion in a variety of anxiety disorders. This paper aims at examining the various forms of anxieties, namely economic, social and privacy concern among today's youth and gives an empirical analysis of the various forms of anxieties among the college students. The paper is based on 108 valid answers to questionnaires distributed among the college students. Regression analyses were used to test the proposed hypotheses. The results of the analyses reveal that economic anxiety has significant impact on addictive social media usage. Furthermore, the analyses suggests that social anxiety has a significant impact on addictive social media usage. Moreover, the results also show that privacy concern also impacts addictive social media usage. So this research, in general, offers to both the researchers and the general public an increased consciousness regarding the various forms of anxieties and their subsequent impacts on addictive social media usage (ASMU).

1. Introduction

A crucial component of human nature is a sense of control. Most people attempt to have some kind of control over their lives and the happenings around them (Skaff, 2007). Loss of control frequently causes discomfort and a significant sense of unease.

When control is lost, it frequently causes emotional discomfort and a strong desire to reclaim it (Seligman, 1972). Longer durations of feeling out of control in significant aspects of one's life can exacerbate anxiety symptoms and encourage unhealthy coping mechanisms like excessive alcohol usage (Keeton, Perry-Jenkins, & Sayer, 2008; Volpicelli, 1987).

In the twenty-first century, people who feel that certain aspects of their lives are out of their control and who exhibit more severe anxiety symptoms are more likely to engage in excessive social media use (SMU) (Apaolaza, Hartmann, D'Souza, & Gilsanz, 2019; Atroszko et al., 2018; Brailovskaia, Schillack, & Margraf, 2020; Primack et al., 2017; Ryan, Chester, Ree).

On social media sites like Facebook, they may at least momentarily block off unpleasant feelings (Marino, Gini, Vieno, & Spada, 2018).

Here, kids choose for themselves which representation of themselves to establish, which websites to visit, and who to contact with (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

This gives the sense that they can reclaim some of the control they felt they had lost in the outside world (Ryan et al., 2014). On social media sites like Facebook, they may at least momentarily block off unpleasant feelings (Marino, Gini, Vieno, & Spada, 2018).

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This gives the feeling of regaining some control over their lives that they have lost in the outside world (Ryan).

Positive online interactions, however, can help people form a strong emotional attachment to social media (SM) and a strong need to remain online all the time (Brailovskaia, Schillack, & Margraf, 2020).

According to Andreassen, Pallesen, and Griffiths (2017), this phenomenon is known as addictive SMU and is characterized by six typical characteristics: salience (i.e., constant thought about SMU), tolerance (i.e., more time must be spent on SM to experience positive emotions), mood modification (i.e., SMU improves mood), relapse (i.e., returning to higher amounts of SMU after failing to reduce online activity), and

withdrawal symptoms (i.e. (Andreassen et al., 2017; Griffiths, 2005).

People with higher levels of addictive SMU frequently lose control over their online activities and get quite uneasy when they have to leave the SM for a while (B' anyai et al., 2017).

Currently, addictive SMU is not a recognised mental condition. However, an increasing amount of studies from different nations highlights its growth and potential drawbacks that should not be disregarded (e.g., Kaye, 2019; Marino et al., 2018).

Additionally, in a sample of clinical patients, most of whom had depressive problems, addictive SMU positively predicted the degree of depression and insomnia up to six weeks later (Brailovskaia, Rohmann, Bierhoff, 2019) Margraf & Kollner).

Additionally, it accurately predicted suicidal thoughts and actions in a sample of predominantly young university students up to one year later (Brailovskaia, Teismann, & Margraf, 2020). The attempt to compensate for a loss of control in real life by enhancing sense of control. The level of anxiety symptoms experienced by Chinese college students during the pandemic was favorably correlated with economic difficulties, effects on daily life, and academic delays, whereas social support was negatively correlated with their worry. 2020 (Cao and associates). On social media can therefore be inferred from the described findings that it can lead to additional control loss and have detrimental effects on mental health. (Julia Brailovskaia et al. 2021) underscore the need of using SM correctly and consciously, especially in unusual situations like the COVID-19 outbreak.

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the significance of the following factors:

a) Economic anxiety b) Social anxiety c) Privacy concern on ASMU (Addictive social media usage). This paper, in a nutshell, has an explicit attempt to assess, analyze and focus on the

association (correlation) between ASMU and the different parameters of anxiousness, be it economic or social. Precisely this paper inspects whether there is a positive or negative relationship between ASMU and these 3 parameters.

2. Literature review:

This paper aims to evaluate the impact of a)Economic anxiety b)Social anxiety c)Privacy concern on the addictive social media usage. An exploratory review of literature was conducted to offer insights into the concepts of the various forms of anxieties and identify the relevant causes of anxiety. The literature review is divided into three parts: a) economic anxiety b)social anxiety c)privacy concern.

2.1: Addictive Social Media Usage (ASMU) and Economic Anxiety:

In Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States, economic and health anxieties performed better than routine-change and isolation anxieties (Bojmel et al., 2020).

The level of anxiety symptoms experienced by Chinese college students during the pandemic was favorably correlated with economic difficulties, effects on daily life, and academic delays, whereas social support was negatively correlated with their worry. 2020 (Cao and associates).

Younger folks were more worried than older adults were. Black respondents expressed much higher levels of anxiety, whilst those without children at home had noticeably lower levels of stress. Economic anxiety was connected to poor levels of group self-esteem, diligence, and openness to new experiences. Increased anxiety was associated with high neuroticism, a sense of disease vulnerability, and a sense of belonging obtained from large group activities. (Mann and associates).

2.2: Addictive Social Media Usage and Social Anxiety:

People frequently reinforce behaviors like using social media (SMU) to combat anxiety, stress, and depression (Kir' alY et al., 2020).

Since seeking social engagement and connection is one of the primary causes of SMU, the need to stay in touch with family and friends may have contributed to the increase (Garfin, 2020) and (Brailovskaia et al., 2020a). People that use social media (SM) to connect with loved ones and look for happy emotions are likely to gain from SMU: According to research by Lukat et al. (2016) and Verduyn et al.,(2017), online-based social support can enhance positive mental health (PMH, which is the presence of overall emotional, psychological, and social well-being). It can also lessen the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and loneliness. In contrast, those who use SM to block out unpleasant emotions have a higher risk of developing addictive behavior. Individuals with enhanced levels of addictive SMU often lose control over their online behavior and experience intensive uneasiness when they must temporarily leave the SM (B´ anyaiet al., 2017). Individuals with low sense of control often experience high levels of anxiety symptoms (Keeton et al., 2008). Previous study has shown that stressful situations can impair an individual sense of control, and that this lower sense of control might contribute to depression to a deterioration of mental health (Skaff, 2007). Ongoing COVID 19 has been considered as a burden by majority of the people.

2.3: Addictive Social Media Usage and Privacy Concern:

Immersion in the online world to escape daily issues is a problematic coping mechanism that can encourage the growth of a strong emotional attachment to SM and a strong need to remain online all the time. This phenomenon is referred to as addictive SMU and is characterized by salience (i.e., being preoccupied with SM), mood modification (i.e., using SM to reduce negative feelings), tolerance (i.e., more SM are required to

experience the same pleasure), withdrawal symptoms (i.e., experiencing distress if SM are not available), conflict (i.e., due to neglecting obligations), and relapse (i.e., trying to control SMU but failing (Andreassen et al., 2017; Griffiths, 2005). Addictive SMU is negatively associated with PMH even though it is not currently listed as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) or the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11; World Health Organization, 2019). It has a favorable correlation with loneliness, anxiety, and depression (Huang, 2020; Hussain and Griffiths, 2018). Additionally, it has a favorable relationship to the psychological strain brought on by COVID-19 (Brailovskaia and Margraf, 2021). People sometimes resort to dysfunctional coping mechanisms, like possibly addictive SMU, when they are burdened heavily and lack effective coping mechanisms (Király et al., 2020). This is consistent with recent study that showed increased SMU and a rise in addictive Internet habits during the pandemic (Gao et al.,

2020; Masaeli and Farhadi, 2021). The use of social media by respondents during COVID-19 differs from that of other periods because it is motivated by a common goal: survival. Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, most social media posts resembled a dream or a strong desire that might cause people discomfort. People are in lockdown during the pandemic and share similar feelings and behavioral patterns. Because there is a common goal and fight among users, psychological well-being is not harmed. (Kaya 2020)

Theoretical framework and hypothesis

The numerous hypotheses based on the constructed framework, as well as the theoretical framework employed for this study, are presented in this part. Figure 1 examines the impact of the various factors of anxiety on ASMU. It also examines the impact of the relevance of the anxiety in the context of 3 parameters : a) economic anxiety b) social anxiety c) privacy concern.

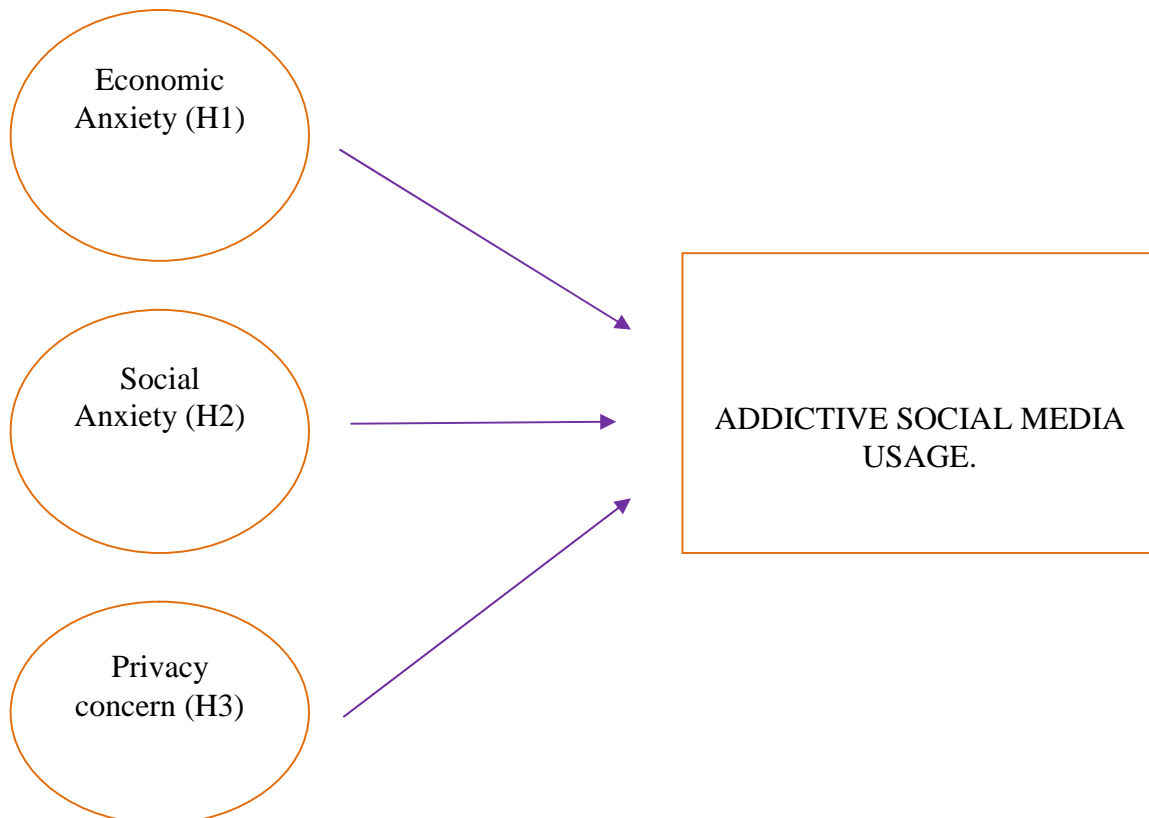


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Economic anxiety and ASMU: There are few available discussions regarding economic anxiety. Despite having limited literature, we have tried to consolidate both academic as well as gray literature in order to identify the potential factors for economic anxiety on ASMU.

Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H1: Economic anxiety impacts addictive social media usage.

H2: Economic anxiety barriers the impact of addictive social media usage.

3.2 Social anxiety and ASMU: This research attempts to examine the impact of social media usage on ASMU. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H3: Social anxiety impacts addictive social media usage

H4: Social anxiety barriers the impact of addictive social media usage.

3.3 Privacy concern and ASMU: This research attempts to assess the impact of privacy concerns on ASMU. Accordingly we hypothesize that:

H5: Privacy concerns impacts addictive social media usage

H6: Privacy concerns barriers the impact of addictive social media usage.

4. Methodology

Since it is essential to understand how the various forms of anxiety impacts the addictive social media usage, our aim is to quantitatively investigate the degree of association between anxiety and ASMU. This article is based on a questionnaire survey that was conducted on the subject in order to achieve the study's purpose. The survey data collection process is described in this section along with how the questionnaire's components were measured.

4.1 Sample and data collection:

To determine the pertinent population, we tried to conduct a survey with the college students. As a result of this process, a total of 156 students were conducted. All students were called by phone and requested to be connected to the survey coordinator; if they accepted to take part, they were then sent the survey through email. In all, 118 students agreed to participate in the survey. Reminder emails were sent to increase the response rate. This process provided us with a sample of 115 students. (Response rate of 73 %) Then, a total of 7 were discarded due to incomplete responses, which means a total of 108 responses. (Response rate 69%). The students' ages were divided into several categories a)18-21 b)21-25 c)25-30 d)>30. Questionnaire included questions related to psychological trends, economic insecurity and pattern of social media consumption. Questions were related to social anxiety, economic anxiety and privacy concerns. The respondents were provided with a clear definition of anxiety so that they can understand the various forms of anxiety.

4.2 Reliability and Validity: Construct validity and content validity are used to evaluate the measurement tool's validity. First, the survey instrument's content validity was established by establishing its theoretical and literary foundations. An exploratory factor analysis was used to evaluate the construct validity. We employed principal components extraction to evaluate four constructs in order to study the pertinent indicators in relation to their underlying factors: a) ASMU B) Economic anxiety c)Social anxiety d)Privacy concern. Four parameters were specifically specified for extraction with varimax rotation. Four factors with eigenvalues more than 1.0 were identified by the results of the factor analysis, and the final factor loadings of the retained items were notably higher than 0.50. (Hair et al. 1995). 76.8% of the variance was overall explained.

4.3 Data Analysis:

The goal of the analysis was to identify the numerous underlying causes of anxiety related to compulsive social media use. It was designed to analyze both the potential drivers and impediments. The hypothesized model was assessed using SPSS 24 software, and the suggested hypotheses were put to the test. Economic anxiety, social anxiety, and privacy concern are the three subtopics covered by the survey's anxieties construct questions. Responses. As a first step, exploratory factor analysis was performed to identify the relevant indicators for four factors: The validity of the indicators' suitability for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity. The proposed models were tested using regression analysis. To test the H1 and H2 hypotheses, linear regression was used because the independent and dependent variables were numerical. To determine how strongly the independent/predictor variable (economic anxiety) affects the dependent/outcome variable, hypothesis H1 was developed (Addictive Social Media Usage). To determine how strongly the independent/predictor variable (social anxiety) affects the dependent/outcome variable, hypothesis H2 was developed (Addictive Social Media Usage). To determine how strongly the independent/predictor variable (privacy concern) affects the dependent/outcome variable, hypothesis H3 was developed (Addictive Social Media Usage).

5. Findings

This section presents the findings from the factor analysis as well as the logistic and linear regression studies. First, Table 1 shows the indications that emerged from the exploratory factor analysis. Regression studies were performed using the chosen indicators for the anticipated factors to test the proposed hypotheses.

Hypotheses H1 and H2 were tested. The result of the linear regression indicates that social anxiety has a positive impact on social media usage among college students and the significance level is 99%. With a t-value of 6.292 ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$), it can be concluded that H1 is statistically significant. Considering this, hypothesis H1 is confirmed.

The hypotheses H3 and H4 were tested. The result of the linear regression suggests that privacy concern has a positive impact on addictive social media usage.

With a t-value of 2.141, it is possible to conclude that H3 is statistically significant, and as a result, H2 is supported.

The hypotheses H5 and H6 were tested. In addition, based on the result of the linear regression, it could be inferred that economic anxiety has a positive impact on addictive social media usage with a T value of 23.69 ($P\text{ value} < 0.05$) & with a significance level of 95%. H5 is statistically significant.

Hypotheses	Relationships	Impact	P-Value	Result
H1	Drivers for economic Anxiety	Positive		
H2	Barriers for Economic Anxiety			
H3	Drivers for Social Anxiety	Positive		
H4	Barriers For social anxiety			
H5	Drivers for Privacy Concern	Positive		
H6	Barriers for privacy concern			

6. Discussions

According to Lee, Lee, Moon, and Sung (2015), intensive SMU can gratify a variety of needs, including the demand to find happy emotions and to lessen negative ones. It can lessen feelings of isolation, promote emotions of social support and belonging, and give one the impression that they have some degree of influence over their lives (Vilnai-Yavetz & Tifferet, 2015). The new research shows that, nevertheless, the good experiences can help people create an emotional connection to the social platform, which can lead to an increase in addictive tendencies (Brailovskaia, Schillack, & Margraf, 2020). According to prior studies (Atroszko et al., 2018; Primack et al., 2017), anxiety symptoms were positively correlated with addictive SMU and negatively correlated with sense of control (confirming Hypothesis 2a) (confirmation of Hypothesis 2b). Additionally, anxiety symptoms influenced both variables' association with one another (confirming Hypothesis 2c). The correlation between a lack of sensation of control and a high level of addictive SMU is stronger the more severe the anxiety symptoms. Particularly, only people with a medium or high level of anxiety symptoms showed any meaningful link between sense of control and addictive SMU. The following factors might at least partially account for this discovery. Theoretically, happy experiences can be found endlessly on social

media networks. SMU may make people feel sheltered from pressing issues, relieved, and joyful (Mauri, Cipresso, Balgera, Villamira, & Riva, 2011). Low levels of these emotions are typical of those with increased anxiety symptoms (Michael, Zetsche, & Margraf, 2007). They might feel all the good emotions and see a decrease in anxiety symptoms on social media platforms (Ryan & Xenos, 2011). This could contribute to the formation of a strong emotional attachment to the SM and the strong desire to immerse oneself in the online environment for mood improvement without realizing there are other options - signs of addicted SMU (Ryan et al., 2014). According to the literature that is currently available, consciously cutting back on daily time spent on SM considerably lessens anxiety symptoms. Additionally, it helps to improve physical activity (Hunt, Marx, Lipson, & Young, 2018; Brailovskaia, Strose, Schillack, & Margraf, 2020). Anxiety over the economy is a really serious situation. As previously mentioned, it is very common, especially among younger people who are in a developing stage of their lives (Fiksenbaum et al. 2017; Marjanovic et al. 2013). According to a recent paper by Joiner and colleagues, economic crises that result in the closure of businesses and places of employment due to the spread of COVID-19 (Reger et al. 2020) are disastrous for mental health and are expected to be followed by an increase in suicidality. Previous studies have identified

detrimental effects of intensive SMU, including decreased life satisfaction, a rise in despair, anxiety, insomnia, addictive tendencies, and suicidal ideation (Brailovskaia et al., 2020b; Marino et al., 2018).

7. Limitations and future scope

No research is perfect, and each one has its own set of limits. This research is no exception, and those constraints must be taken into account for a full comprehension. Firstly, the sample size needs improvement as this study focuses on only college students who are affected by anxiety disorders. Therefore, a bigger sample size that included more generations would aid in more accurate interpretation. Therefore, it is impossible to generalize the results of the current investigation. Future study has the potential to increase our current sample size and verify the results as accurately representing a larger population. Secondly, the research has not thrown light on the gender-based differences for the various forms of anxieties. Therefore, the gender based differences for the various forms of anxieties can be suitable topic for future research scope. Moreover, our study is limited to the extent of anxiety disorders among college students only. Therefore, further studies can be conducted to assess the influence of the anxieties among school students as well.

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