

Relationship between Facebook Addiction and Loneliness of Filipino High School Students

GRETCHEN B. CHAVEZ

ORCID NO. 0000-0002-6207-166X
gchaves@yahoo.com

FELIX C. CHAVEZ Jr.

ORCID NO. 0000-0002-5359-5293
fchaves@yahoo.com

Brokenshire College
Davao City, Davao del Sur

ABSTRACT

This study determined the relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness of Filipino High School students. The descriptive-correlational research design was utilized in this study. The data were gathered from a total of 112 randomly selected high school students with the use of survey questionnaires. The mean, frequency and percent, and Pearson product moment correlation were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that majority of the students are non-addicted to Facebook, though there were several students who belong to risky groups and addicted to the social media. Nevertheless, the overall level of Facebook addiction and loneliness of students were low. On the other hand, there is a significant and positive relationship between social media addiction and loneliness of high school students.

Keywords: Facebook addiction, Loneliness, High school students

INTRODUCTION

Facebook is a social media site that has been popularly used by teenagers which allows them to create their own profile, add photos and videos, and communicate with their friends and family (Rouse, 2014). With the capability of Facebook to provide a total package that will fit with the interest of the youths, it makes it a regular site for young people to post their experiences, personal information, and share information and as well as their emotions (Special & Li-Barber, 2012; Lee & Ma, 2012).

Even there are lots of personal benefits and advantages of social networking sites like Facebook, the problems caused by substantial usage and exposure to social networking sites may have an effect on the real life of a person. In particular, results of some academic research reveals that adolescents using Facebook more than three hours for a day will lose their time from their social and physical activity times which are so essential for their socialization (Baker & White, 2010). Moreover, the exposure to social media can split the real world to virtual world. In fact, the study of Ísbulan (2011) show that most people have a preference to communicate with their friends and social environment by using social networking sites instead of face to face communication.

The process of too much exposure to social media can turn into an addiction after a while, and it makes user spend more and more time in social networking sites like Facebook, which may lead to seclusion and a feeling of loneliness (Kocak, 2003). Loneliness is considered as one of the problems most evident in relations between persons to its peers which can develop as a psychological problem at every stage in a person's life (Karakose, Yircy, and Ozdemir, 2016). Moreover, loneliness can also lead to negative impact on the physical wellbeing (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009).

One way or another when Facebook is used deliberately, it is an advantageous social networking site for young people. However, despite the popularity of social media use, an empirical research locally among Filipinos which examine addiction to these online social platforms and its relationship with loneliness is less explored. Hence, the majority of the studies were norms of other countries like in Turkey (Karakose et al., 2016), Iceland (Ingvadóttir, 2014), and United States (Shaw, Timpano, Tran, & Joormann, 2015). Meanwhile, the previous studies have conflicting results as to the relationships of Facebook addiction and loneliness of students. While the study of Steggink (2015) show a significant relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness, but a recent study of Karakose et al. (2016) reveals no significant relationship between the two

variables.

With this, it is deemed relevant to study the relationship of Facebook addiction and loneliness among Filipino High School students as they stay vulnerable and in a dangerous position in terms of Facebook addiction. Moreover, this study would also examine whether the relationship of the two variables exists in the Filipino context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness level of high school students. In particular, it sought answers to the following objectives: (1) determine the level of Facebook addiction among the students; (2) determine the level of the loneliness of the students; and (3) determine the relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness level of the students.

FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the notion of Weiss (1973) that loneliness is frequently precipitated by changes in a person's social relationships that lead to a suboptimal level of achieved social interaction. Weiss (1973) added that physical separation from family and friends puts people at risk for loneliness. Thus, indicating that lack of physical contact may affect a person's total network of social relations. As a matter of fact, even with the use of social media which is a form non-contact social networking can make a person lonely, unhappy, and less sociable (Kross et al., 2013).

Another theory of online addiction to which this study is anchored is Caplan's (2010) social skill model of generalized problematic Internet use. This model states that individuals who prefer to communicate in an online environment are at greater risk of experiencing negative outcomes related to excessive online use. These individuals, who demonstrate deficient self-regulation of Internet use, tend to engage in online social communication as a means of escaping from negative mood states, such as loneliness or anxiety. Communicating online alleviates negative moods (known as mood alteration), which then reinforces online use. Given the social focus of SNSs, this theory has the potential to explain SNS addiction.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness level of students. The independent variable is

the Facebook addiction which refers to the time spent by the students in this social media. Typically, it involves a student's use of Facebook that interferes with important activities in life such as school work, or maintaining relationships with family and real friends. On the other hand, the dependent variable is the loneliness level which refers to the feelings that derive from a sense of isolation among the students.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship of the Variables

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive-correlation research design. The descriptive research design is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe (Shuttleworth, 2008). On the other hand, the correlational design is used to determine the relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the levels of Facebook addiction and loneliness of the students were investigated, and also the relationship between the two variables.

This study was conducted in Davao City, Philippines. This city is the commercial center near the country's highest peak, Mt. Apo. It is the largest city in the Philippines which is geographically situated in the province of Davao del Sur.

A total of 119 high school students have participated in this study. The researchers employed stratified random sampling in selecting the respondents wherein the researchers divide the entire population into different subgroups or strata, and then randomly select the final subjects proportionally from the different strata. The strata were Grade 8, Grade 9, and Grade 10 junior high school students.

Sets of survey questionnaire were utilized in the study. The Facebook addiction scale was adopted from Balci and Golcu (2013). On the other hand, the UCLA Loneliness Scale was used to measure the loneliness levels of the students (Russell & Ferguson, 1978). The reliability of the scales were .79 and .86, respectively.

Approval from the Principal and informed consent from the participants were obtained. After getting the consent, the survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents. After all the questionnaires were retrieved, the data were screened, tabulated and analyzed.

Mean was used to determine the levels of Facebook addiction and loneliness of the students. Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness level of the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Facebook Addiction of the Students

Table 1. Level of Facebook Addiction

Facebook Addiction Items	Mean	SD	Description
I stay on Facebook more than I think.	3.38	1.38	Moderate
I block someone on Facebook when she/he bores me when I read writings on her wall	2.01	1.30	Low
Before my responsibilities, I check my e-mail on Facebook	2.67	1.32	Moderate
I create new expectations when I reenter my Facebook Account	2.79	1.35	Moderate
By contacting Facebook, I think that I get out of my problems, stress, bothers and bans.	3.10	1.43	Moderate
I make new attempts to reduce time I spent on Facebook	3.01	1.28	Moderate
When I spent time on Facebook, I talk to myself that these are my last minutes.	2.74	1.47	Moderate
I form new relations with Facebook members.	2.96	1.34	Moderate
I prefer to entertain on Facebook instead of friends	2.19	1.12	Low
I prefer to spend time on Facebook instead of spending time with my friends.	2.04	1.15	Low
I think that without Facebook life is boring, meaningless, joyless, absent and moody	2.42	1.47	Low
I think the events on Facebook, when I am offline	2.24	1.32	Low
People warn you about spending too many times on Facebook	2.55	1.42	Moderate
I embrace a protectionist and preservative personality when my friends warn me about dangers of Facebook.	2.71	1.23	Moderate
My academic performance is affected negatively because of Facebook	2.25	1.31	Low
I have a sleep disorder because of Facebook	2.13	1.39	Low
My grades and works at school are affected negatively because of time I spent on Facebook	2.15	1.3	Low
I freeze my Facebook account because of disputes opposite to my ideas	1.98	1.12	Low
I tell lies to hide my spending too much times on Facebook.	1.93	1.12	Low
Overall	2.49	0.83	Low

Table 1 shows the level of Facebook addiction of the high school students. The results show that the students believe that they stay on Facebook more than what they think is enough ($M=3.38$), which represents the highest mean. Notably, this is followed by the item “By contacting Facebook, I think that I get out of my problems, stress, bothers and bans” ($M=3.10$), which explains why they opt on staying on Facebook since they can feel relief and dodge from life pressures. On the other hand, the lowest mean is presented by the item “I tell lies to hide my spending too many times on Facebook” ($M=1.93$). This denotes that the students only sometimes hide their cravings on Facebook. Meanwhile, the overall mean is 2.49, described as “Low.” This means that the high school students’ addiction on Facebook is sometimes evident. This further indicates that the students have the ability to deal and resist from Facebook persuasion.

This result is congruent to the findings of Steggink (2015) which reveals in his survey among 315 Facebook users in Netherlands were having a low level of Facebook addiction and that the average scores in this study show that only a minimal part of the respondents are actually Facebook addicted.

Table 2. Dispersion of Participants Facebook Addiction Level

Category	Frequency	Percent
<i>Non-Addict</i>	61	54.5
<i>Risky Groups</i>	49	43.8
<i>Addict</i>	2	1.80
Total	112	100.0

To further explain the results, a dispersion analysis was performed to determine the Facebook addiction categories of the students. It revealed that majority of the students are non-addict ($f=61$, 54.5%), followed the risky groups ($f=49$, 43.8%), while only few are addict ($f=2$, 1.8%).

Loneliness Level of the Students

Table 3. Loneliness Level of the Students

Loneliness Level Items	Mean	SD	Description
I am unhappy doing so many things alone	2.63	1.07	Moderate
I have nobody to talk to	1.94	1.11	Low
I cannot tolerate being so alone	2.50	1.11	Moderate
I lack companionship	2.20	1.16	Low
I feel as if nobody really understands me	2.49	1.24	Low
I feel as if nobody really understands me	1.91	1.06	Low
There is no one I can turn to	1.69	1.02	Low
I am no longer close to anyone	2.04	1.23	Low
I feel left out	1.84	1.14	Low
I feel completely alone	1.88	1.09	Low
I am unable to reach out and communicate with those around me	2.18	1.18	Low
My social relationships are superficial.	2.00	1.16	Low
I feel starved for company	2.24	1.28	Low
No one really knows me well	2.09	1.14	Low
I feel isolated from others	2.14	1.10	Low
I am unhappy being so withdrawn	1.99	1.21	Low
It is difficult for me to make friends	2.02	1.19	Low
I feel shut out and excluded by others	1.99	1.15	Low
Overall	2.10	0.78	Low

Table 3 shows the loneliness level of the high school students in Brokenshire College. The result shows that the students have experienced the highest level loneliness when they are doing things alone (M =2.63). Interestingly, this is followed by a related item “I cannot tolerate being so alone” (M=2.50). This means that the high school students need companionship in all of their activities to make them feel happy. On the other hand, the students less feel that there is no one they can turn to (M=1.69). This denotes that the students seek for the company to be with especially when things are getting rough for them. Meanwhile, the overall mean is 2.10, described as “Low.” This indicates that the high school students sometimes feel that they are lonely. Further, this shows that the students’ depiction of loneliness is when they feel isolated and away from

their significant others.

This result is aligned with the study of Gursoy et al. (2006) which revealed in their survey of 300 respondents in Turkey that the average loneliness level is low among high school students. Furthermore, the students' feel lonely if they do not have contact with family and friends.

Relationship between Facebook Addiction and Loneliness Level of Students

Table 4. Relationship between Facebook Addiction and Loneliness Level of Students

Independent Variable	R	P-value	Remarks
Facebook Addiction	.205**	.030	Significant

** Correlation is significant at .05 level

Table 4 shows the correlation analysis which purpose is to show the significance of the relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness level. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between Facebook addiction and loneliness level of the students ($R=.205$, $p<.05$). In other words, the increase in Facebook addiction would also increase the feeling of loneliness among the students. This feeling of loneliness when a person became addicted to Facebook can be attributed to the lack of personal contact with real friends in the virtual environment. Thus, they are detached from the physical world which made them a desire for company. This is reinforced by the loneliness survey results in which the high school students do not want to be alone, and they want to be with their friends. Hence, the students are using Facebook only to avoid life pressures such as problems, stress, and anything that bothers them.

This result is consistent with the study of Skues, Williams, and Wise (2012) in their study about personality traits and loneliness on Facebook use. They found that higher loneliness levels were associated with having more friends on Facebook. Moreover, a prior study from Ryan & Xenos, (2011) revealed that Facebook users have, on a significant level, higher levels of family loneliness than non-users.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study suggest that most high school students are not addicted to Facebook, but there is the threat of addiction among the high-risk groups. On the other hand, most of the high school students feel less lonely in their life. However, those lonely students tend to spend more time on Facebook. Moreover, the greater is the level of addiction, the more that it could increase the level of the loneliness of the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future studies are focusing on construct development for Facebook addiction and loneliness levels to investigate the factor structure of the Filipino norms. Moreover, a study may be conducted to determine the loneliness and another well-being measures on those students who are high risk and those who are already addicted to Facebook.

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