Social Media Disorder and Self-Compassion among University Students in Malaysia

Kecelaruan Sosial Media dan Belas Kasihan Kendiri dalam Kalangan Pelajar Universiti di Malaysia

Nelly Nurhidayah Binti Mohamad and NurFarhana Ardillah Aftar
Universiti Malaysia Sabah

*Corresponding author: farhana@ums.edu.my

The younger generation in Malaysia is now more exposed to technology and use of the internet, especially social media such as Facebook and Instagram. However, excessive use of social media may lead to an unhealthy pattern of frequent use that can result in an addiction. This can then lead to disregard for self-love, self-appreciation, or self-care. Self-compassion includes the ability to notice the experience of suffering, the ability to empathize or "suffer with" the individual's self, and the ability to offer kindness and understanding to oneself. Previous studies have shown that high levels of self-compassion in individuals can be beneficial as a way of coping or buffering negative and harmful threats received through social media. However, there is insufficient study regarding whether excessive and unhealthy use of social media can result in a decreased level of self-compassion in an individual. This research aimed to identify the presence of Social Media Disorder and the levels of self-compassion among youths, specifically university students in Malaysia. Further, this study also attempted to identify any significant correlation between Social Media Disorder (SMD) and the level of self-compassion. A total of 142 Malaysian university students consisting of 72 female students and 70 male students within the age range of 18 to 26 years old participated in this study. They completed the Social Media Disorder (SMD) Scale and the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS). Results show that only 18% of the participants obtained results indicating the presence of a Social Media Disorder. As for the level of self-compassion, 78% were found to have moderate levels of Self-Compassion. A significant but weak positive correlation was identified between Social Media Disorder and Self-Compassion. Despite concerns regarding the use of social media, the findings of this study suggest that social media use among university students may not necessarily be at a level that it is concerning. However, the presence of correlation between the two variables, suggests that further exploration in this area may be needed.

Keywords: Social Media Disorder (SMD), self-compassion, Self-Compassion Scale (SCS), Social Media Disorder (SMD) Scale

Generasi muda di Malaysia lebih terdedah kepada pelbagai penggunaan internet dan teknologi terutamanya media sosial seperti Facebook dan Instagram. Namun begitu penggunaan media sosial yang berlebihan boleh menyebabkan sikap penggunaan tidak sihat yang boleh membawa kepada ketagihan. Ini seterusnya boleh menghasilkan pengabaian terhadap perasaan cinta terhadap diri sendiri, penghargaan diri atau belas kasihan terhadap diri. Belas kasihan kendiri meliputi kemampuan untuk mengambil tahu mengenai penderitaan, berempati atau "menderita" dengan diri individu itu sendiri, dan menawarkan pemikiran yang baik serta pengertian terhadap diri sendiri. Kajian terdahulu menunjukkan bahawa belas kasihan diri yang tinggi pada individu dapat membantu sebagai cara untuk mengatasi kesan negatif dan berbahaya yang disebabkan oleh media sosial. Walaubagaimanapun, masih belum terdapat kajian yang mencukupi mengenai penggunaan media sosial yang berlebihan atau tidak sihat dan kebarangkalian perkara tersebut menyebabkan penurunan tahap belas kasihan kendiri pada seseorang individu itu sendiri. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kehadiran Kecelaruan Social Media dan tahap Belas Kasihan Kendiri dalam kalangan belia, lebih spesifik lagi dalam kalangan pelajar universiti di Malaysia. Seterusnya, kajian juga mengkaji korelasi antara Kecelaruan Social Media dan tahap Belas Kasihan Kendiri. Sejumlah 142 pelajar universiti dari Malaysia iaitu terdiri daripada 72 wanita dan 70 lelaki dalam lingkungan umur 18 ke 26 tahun telah menyertai kajian ini. Peserta kajian telah diberi soal selidik yang mengandungi Skala Kecelaruan Sosial Media dan Skala Belas Kasihan Kendiri. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan hanya 18% daripada peserta menunjukkan simptom Kecelaruan Social Media. Manakala bagi tahap Belas Kasihan Kendiri, 78% didapati mempunyai tahap Belas Kasihan Kendiri yang sederhana. Sebuah kolerasi yang signifikan tetapi lemah didapati antara Kecelaruan Social Media dan Belas Kasihan Kendiri. Walaupun terdapat kerisauan mengenai penggunaan media sosial, dapatan kajian menunjukkan penggunaan media sosial dalam kalangam pelajar universiti tidak semestinya berada pada tahap merunsingkan. Namun, kehadiran korelasi antara kedua pembohelubah mencadangkan bahawa kajian yang lebih mendalam diperlukan dalam bidang ini.

Kata kunci: kecelaruan media sosial, belas kasihan kendiri, Skala Belas Kasihan Kendiri, Skala Kecelaruan Sosial Media.

According to Montag, Lachmann, Herrlich, and Zweig (2019a), social media platforms are designed to increase and maintain engagement through social media to maximize profits from advertisement revenue. Hence, Eyal (2014) suggested that it may not be surprising that many individuals often feel "hooked" on or addicted to social media use. Researchers have studied individuals who reported feeling "addicted" to social media use in the context of the wider diffusion of social media use. Albeit researchers are moving away from "addiction" terminology in terms of digital technology use as suggested by Panova and Carbonell (2018), and again by Montag, Wegmann, Sariyska, Demetrovics, and Brand (2019b), more attention has been focused on the study of the potentially negative effects of social media overuse over the past years (Rozgonjuk, Sindermann, Elhai, & Montag, 2020). More recently, researchers have started utilizing "Internet/smartphone use disorder" terminology to depict the adverse effects and influences of excessive Internet or smartphone use on daily-life and interpersonal as well as intrapersonal functioning. Likewise, the terminology "social networks use disorder" (SNSUD) has been introduced by Montag et al. (2019b). The terminology aims to bring about consistency in this field of research to study similar concepts, most of which is largely inspired by the inclusion of Gaming Disorder into the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) (World Health Organization, 2018). Past researches have linked SNSUD with several mental disorders or conditions such as the severity of depression, psychological distress, social anxiety, poorer subjective well-being, as well as more distractions in academic settings, and insomnia. Higher levels of SNSUD have been correlated with personality traits, including more neuroticism and impulsivity (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020). According to a study by Cheng and Li (2014), it has been continuously proven that several online activities, such as online gaming and social media use, may be possibly lead to addiction in a small minority of individuals, especially adolescents and emerging adults. In addition to Internet Gaming Disorder, as suggested by Kuss and Griffiths (2017), social media addiction seems to be another growing issue. One of the major contributive factors in the growth of addictions relating to internet use is the growing presence of smartphone use. As smartphones provide people with mobility and therefore an easier way to access a lot of different types of content that may be potentially addictive to a small minority such as social media. However, according to Kuss, Griffiths, Karila, and Billieux (2014) in the literature including internet addiction and related topics, there has yet to be consensus on the usage of the terminology to explain problematic use of the internet due to it being diversely described as internet dependence, internet addiction, pathological internet use, problematic internet use, internet use disorder, and internet addiction disorder along with others terms. There have also been debates concerning whether specific internet applications problems inclusive of social media use and gaming or behaviors deemed problematic via other types of Wi-Fi-enabled hardware. As an example, "smartphone addiction" should be classified as problematic behaviors in their own right or assumed within the umbrella term of 'internet addiction' (Leung et al., 2020).

Albeit social media addiction being excluded from the DSM-5 may give the idea that social media addiction is not a real mental disorder, there has been a growing source of proof proposing otherwise. Furthermore, there is empirically proven evidence claiming that compulsive use of social media is increasing mental health issue, especially among adolescent smartphone users. However, the lack of a clear definition and a clear measure for social media addiction restrict studies regarding the prevalence of this type of behavioral disorder, hence hindering crucial next steps in the research field of social media addiction. Thus, Van Den Eijnden, Lemmens, and Valkenburg (2016) developed and validated a new instrument to measure social media addiction known as the Social Media Disorder (SMD) Scale. The SMD contains a clear diagnostic cut-off point to distinguish between disordered such as addicted and high-engaging non-disordered social media users (Van Den Eijnden, Lemmens, & Valkenburg, 2016).

Compassion and self-compassion are among the various identified factors associated with psychological health and well-being. According to Gu, Cavanagh, Baer, and Strauss (2017), compassion and self-compassion as proposed by Neff (2003) are vital promising resources. They are important factors in order to promote healthy organizations, in the context of individual well-being as well as the advancement of prosocial behaviors towards each other. The construct of compassion according to Gu et al. (2017), is described as the emotional perception and acknowledgment of the suffering of others and the inclination to relieve it. It also includes understanding the generality of suffering, feeling moved by the person suffering, and emotionally connecting with their distress, as well as tolerating uncomfortable feelings such as fear or distress so that individuals remain open to accept of the person suffering. Neff (2003) extended compassion in the context of the self. In which, self-compassion reflects as a regulation strategy in which feelings of worry or stress are not avoided or denied. Instead, an individual is able to be open and sensitive to their experience of suffering, experiencing feelings of care and kindness to oneself, having an attitude of understanding and not judging the experience as their own inadequacies and failures, and recognizing the experience as a part of the ordinary human experience. Self-compassion is also correlated with feelings of compassion and concern towards others so that being compassionate towards an individual's self does not mean being focused only on the person's own personal needs. Particularly, self-compassion recognizes that suffering, failure, and inadequacy as part of the human condition and that all people not excluding themselves are worthy of compassion (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2020).

Social Media Disorder / Addiction

Social Media is defined as any website in which messages are posted for a group of audience. This includes Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and many other social media websites there are. According to We Are Social Ltd, it was estimated in October 2019 that approximately 3.73 billion, which makes approximately 48% of the total population are active social media users in the world (2019). The top five social media platforms used are Facebook with 2.414 billion users, Facebook Messenger with 1.3 billion users, Youtube

with 2 billion users, WhatsApp with 1.6 billion users, WeChat with 1.133 billion users, and Instagram with 1 billion users as well as Snapchat with estimated approximately 314 million active users (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2016). In Malaysia, the use of Social Media (SM) shows significant growth in recent years. Internet users in Malaysia alone consist of 16 million in the first quarter of 2009, with the number of cellular subscriptions in the third quarter of 2009 has reached 29.6 million (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commissions, 2010). Nine of the top 20 websites in Malaysia are social networking sites in which the top six sites are Yahoo!, Facebook, Google.com.my, YouTube, Google.com, and Blogger. These indicate that the demand for social media in Malaysia is growing. The use of Facebook, Friendster, and Twitter had recorded 7.5 million users from Malaysia alone (Shawkath Azde, 2010, as cited in Hamid, Ishak, Ismail, & Yazam, 2013).

Due to the limited number of previous research in the field of Internet addiction, there remain to be problems in terms of definition and measurement. However, according to Meerkerk, Van denEijnden, Vermulst, and Garretsen (2009), the concept of Internet addiction may be referred to as compulsive, problematic Internet use as described by Caplan (2010), which is further explained to be multi-dimensional by nature. Hence, this means that it can refer to various forms of compulsive online behaviors. Individuals may not necessarily be addicted to the Internet itself, but instead to particular online activities. Studies on Internet addiction have mostly been linked to gaming and the use of social media. However, the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) has recognized Internet gaming disorder as a tentative disorder in the appendix. Thus social media addiction is not currently an official disorder based on DSM-5. This may give the impression that social media addiction is not a legitimate disorder, even though there is a growing body of research findings suggesting otherwise. The first empirical evidence suggesting compulsive social media use as a growing mental health problem was conducted by Van Rooij and Shoenmakers (2013) in their study on adolescent smartphone users. More recently, developed and validated a new instrument for measuring social media addiction known as the Social Media Disorder (SMD) Scale, which is used in this current study (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2016).

Self-Compassion and Social Media Disorder

The definition of self-compassion may be described as being "kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings…" (Neff, 2020). In which self-compassion allows an individual to act the same way towards themself when facing difficult situations as they would act towards a dear friend. In this context, self-compassion includes the ability to notice the suffering, empathizing, or "suffering" with the individual's own self, offering kindness and understanding to oneself as explained by Ackerman (2019). A high level of self-compassion means an individual can be kind and understanding, even when facing personal failings, instead of being critical and judgemental to themselves. There are three primary elements of self-compassion, which are self-kindness vs. self-judgment, common humanity vs.

isolation, and mindfulness vs. over-identification (Neff, 2020).

A previous study by Christopher Modica (2019) suggests that the use of Facebook and specific Facebook activities were correlated with body esteem and body surveillance in adult women. Hence, the study also studied whether self-compassion and appearance-contingent self-worth affected the relationship between Facebook appearance comparison with body esteem, and the relationship between Facebook appearance comparison with body surveillance. The composite index of MySpace and Facebook, research by Tiggemann and Slater (2013; 2016) on pre-adolescent girls and adolescent girls has found that time spent on the social media platforms mentioned was associated with lower body esteem and higher body surveillance. Another study with single-items was used to assess both body dissatisfaction and Facebook use. In this study of men and women in New Zealand by Stronge, Osborne, West-Newman, Milojev, Greaves, Sibley, and Wilson (2015) showed that Facebook use was associated with body dissatisfaction in all age groups from 18 to 65. Several other social media platforms such as Instagram have also gained attention in previous research. For example, overall Instagram use has been associated with body dissatisfaction in male and female adolescents by Marengo, Longobardi, Fabris, and Settanni (2018) and another similar research by Arroyo and Brunner (2016) among young adults. The use of Instagram has also been associated with body surveillance and self-objectification, similar to what was proposed by Feltman and Szymanski (2017). Appearance anxiety and body dissatisfaction in young adult women have also been associated with the use of Instagram. This is specifically applied in a sample of young adult women. According to Cohen, Newton-John, and Slater (2017), following health and fitness accounts on Instagram was associated with the drive for thinness. Similarly, following celebrity accounts was associated with body surveillance (Modica, 2019). Self-compassionis therefore defined as a way of relating to an individual that involves a non-judgmental, patient, kindhearted to self, and the person's experience of suffering as well as perceived shortcomings. Thus self-compassion is described as self-kindness, mindfulness, and common humanity. Self-kindness is involved in being caring, forgiving, and kind towards the self when suffering, instead of adopting a critical or punitive attitude. Mindfulness is a broader construct as being non-judgmental and aware of the person's experience of suffering or distress in a way that allows individuals to recognize their experience of suffering without being consumed by it. Lastly, common humanity reflects the perspective that an individual's suffering, failure, or inadequacies are not just unique only to them, but instead shared experiences by all individuals in the world. Therefore, self-compassion is linked with various positive indicators of health such as optimism, positive affect, and happiness (Neff, Kirkpatrick, and Rude, 2007; Modica, 2019).

Other studies by Cash (2002) and Tiggemann (2001) claim that in contemporary society, especially young women are more often exposed to live, vicarious, and virtual images. This then may represent threats to their body image. Appearance-related threats may potentially evoke body image concerns such as increased negative body image

and/or decreased positive body image. An aspect of negative body image that may be provoked during an appearance-related threat is a reduction in an individual's state of body satisfaction. An aspect that may also be aggravated is state-appearance anxiety, which is explained as a state of uneasiness or apprehension about an individual's body parts falling short of the beauty standards defined by culture (Seekis, Bradley, & Duffy, 2017). These threats, as mentioned before, may be found within the many platforms of social media. Self-compassion is explained so as to not require individuals to adopt an unrealistic view of themselves. Hence, it should be easier and more effective to raise people's self-compassion than to raise their self-esteem. Consequently, negative threats such as cyberbullying, unrealistic life expectations, and comparison may be very harmful to self-esteem (Chu, Fan, Liu, & Zhou, 2018). However, there has yet to be a study on whether these harmful threats may harm or affect self-compassion in which they may decrease the level of self-compassion and self-empathy in an individual.

This same literature has suggested that two strategies to cope and promote adoption against the self-esteem and/or body image and appearance issues are through adapting self-compassionate perspective in terms of the acceptance and kindness towards an individual's own imperfections that are inherent, as well as promotion of individual's self-esteem or overall evaluation of self-worth (Seekis et al., 2017). As mentioned, both of these strategies are associated with one another. However, the kinds of literature as discussed above propose self-compassion in general as a form of meditation or strategy and coping mechanism against the threats or harmful influences from usage of social media platforms. Hence, limited research has been done to assess whether there are correlations in terms of the negative effect of frequent and excessive use of social media on an individual's self-compassion. In another sense, whether social media may have an effect in decreasing or the detriment of an individual's self-compassion as well as whether there is a correlation between frequent or excessive social media use and low level of self-compassion. This study in particular aims to find answers to the questions arising regarding the state of Social Media addiction or better known as Social Media Disorder. This study was conducted among university students in Malaysia. The objectives of this research are to identify the presence of Social Media Disorder (SMD) and the level of self-compassion among university students in Malaysia, as well as to identify presence of a correlation between Social Media Disorder (SMD) and the level of self-compassion among university students in Malaysia.

Method

Participants

This study uses a quantitative approach to collect data from 142 participants. The participants consist of 72 female and 70 male University students in Malaysia between the ages of 18 and 26 years old. Each participant completed a brief demographic questionnaire, the Social Media Disorder Scale (SMD) and the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS). All questionnaires, including the SMD Scale and the SCS were translated to Malay language and they were distributed via a google form.

Procedure

Collection of data began with the developing a questionnaire consisting of three (3) parts in which the first part of the questionnaire contains the demography questions to be filled in by participants and a consent form to allow participants to give consent for the use of their data, for the research, the second part of the questionnaire consist of the 9 items from the Instrument Social Media Disorder (SMD) Scale used to measure Social Media Disorder (SMD) and the third part of the questionnaire contains the 26 items from Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) used to measure Self Compassion. The Social Media Disorder Scale requires participants to only answer yes or no to the 9 statements for each item in the instrument. As for the Self-Compassion Scale, the instrument consists of 26 situational statements that require to be answered according to the 5 Likert scale, in which 1 represents 'almost always' and 5 represents 'never always'.

Researchers have translated both questionnaires to Malay language for this study and both versions of Malay language and the original English version were included in the questionnaire that was distributed.

The questionnaire was distributed using Google form to a total of 142 university students within Malaysia who are currently living in Malaysia and are between the ages of 18 and 26 years old. Link to the Google form questionnaire was shared as an invitation and spread through advertisements via Whatsapp groups, messages, and Facebook posts.

Data collected were then transferred to SPSS to analyze, and test the hypotheses. The Social Media Scale was scored by simply calculating the number of questions answered with 'yes', if the participant answers 'yes' to five or more to the questions from the items the participant meets the criteria for a formal diagnosis of a 'disordered social media user'. As for Self-Compassion Scale, scoring was done by adding up all the items for self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, however, the items for the other three subscales had to be reverse-scored before adding them together to create a sub-score. To get an overall score the mean of all items was calculated in which higher scores represent higher self-compassion.

Measurement

The Social Media Disorder Scale is a 9-question survey designed to distinguish healthy and unhealthy social media use. It is well-vetted and psychologically sound. The questions test the impact of social media use on the dimensions of preoccupation, tolerance, withdrawal, persistence, displacement, interpersonal problems, deception, escape, and conflict. The scale was developed and validated as a new instrument for measuring social media addiction (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2016). Respondents respond with a 'yes' or 'no' to each item in the SMD scale.

The Self Compassion Scale (SCS) is an instrument that consists of 26-items rated on a 5 Likert scale from 1

representing "almost never" to 5 representing "almost always." The instrument aims to measure the level of self-compassion in six different components which are self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification (Neff, 2020).

Reliability was tested for both the Social Media Disorder Scale and Self Compassion Scale including all six dimensions of Self Compassion Scale which are Self Kindness, Self Judgement, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, and Overidentification.

Table 1
Social Media Disorder Scale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.669	.685	9

Reliability testing on Social Media Disorder Scale overall shows Cronbach's Alpha of 0.669 as seen in Table 1.

Table 2
Reliability Statistics of Self Compassion Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.854	.857	26

The Reliability test for Self-Compassion Scale as seen in Table 2. It shows a high internal consistency value of Cronbach's Alpha of 0.85, which is higher than 0.70. This indicates that the scale is indeed reliable. Reliability testing was also conducted for each of the dimensions of the Self Compassion Scale, and results as stated in Table 3, indicate the reliability for all six dimensions were relatively high with Cronbach Alphas ranging from 0.728 to 0.818.

Table 3
Reliability Statistics for Each Dimension

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Self-Kindness	.773	.772	5
Self-Judgement	.730	.729	5
Common Humanity	.784	.785	4
Isolation Reliability	.796	.796	4
Mindfulness	.817	.818	4
Overidentification	.732	.728	4

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software. Descriptive tests were used to determine the status of SMD and the level of self-compassion. The Spearman's rank correlation test was run to analyze the overall correlation between Social Media Disorder (SMD) and the level of self-compassion.

Results

Participants consist of 72 (50.7%) females and 70 (49.3%) males, as shown in Table 4. The range of ages of participants was between 18 and 25, and most of them were 22 and 23-year-olds. Specifically, 53 participants were reportedly 22-year-old, and 40 participants were 23-year-old, summarised in Table 5, which is consistent with the age expected for Malaysian university students.
.

Table 4
Gender of Participants

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	72	50.7	50.7	50.7
	Male	70	49.3	49.3	100.0
	Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Table 5
Age of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	1	.7	.7	.7
	19	4	2.8	2.8	3.5
	20	9	6.3	6.3	9.9
	21	19	13.4	13.4	23.2
	22	53	37.3	37.3	60.6
	23	40	28.2	28.2	88.7

24	14	9.9	9.9	98.6
25	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

A total of 142 data obtained from participants was successfully used to identify Social Media Disorder (SMD) and level of self-compassion among university students in Malaysia. Participants were picked at random from around 20 different universities in Malaysia. There was no missing value or rejected and deleted data. A total of 4 participants obtained a score of 8 on the SMD Scale. No participant obtained the maximum score of 9 on the SMD Scale. According to Van Den Eijnden et al., (2016), results are divided into two groups, the first group of participants obtaining a score between 5 and 9 indicates the presence of social media disorder symptoms, and the second group of participants obtaining a score of less than 4 indicates no symptoms of social media disorder. In this particular study, it was found that 82% (n = 117) had no symptoms of SMD and 18% (n = 25) had symptoms of SMD as seen in Table 6.

Table 6
Frequency Statistics of Social Media Disorder

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	117	82.4	82.4	82.4
	Yes	25	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	142	100.0	100.0	

According to Neff (2020), higher scores on the Self Compassion Scale indicate a higher level of self-compassion with the highest possible score is 130. The highest score obtained on the SCS was 112 (n = 1) and the lowest score was 37 (n = 2). Scores on the SCS were split into three (3) categories which represent low level (lowSC = 0 to 44) of self-compassion, moderate level (moderateSC = 45 to 87) of self-compassion, and high level (highSC = 88 to 130) of self-compassion. Results as shown in Table 7 indicate that 3% (n = 4) were in lowSC group, 78% (n = 111) were in the moderateSC group, and 19% (n = 27) were in the highSC group.

Table 7
Descriptive Frequency of Level of Self Compassion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	lowSC	4	2.8	2.8	2.8
	moderateSC	111	78.2	78.2	81.0
	highSC	27	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	142	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 8, a Spearman's Rho Correlation test on Social Media Disorder and level of Self Compassion shows that that the presence of social media disorder has a significant but weak positive correlation with high self-compassion (rs = 0.294, p = 0.00) as well as no social media disorder with also a weak but significant negative correlation with high self-compassion (rs = -0.294, p = 0.00). Hence indicating a significant correlation is present with $p < 0.01$. This suggests that there is evidence of a relatively weak correlation between the presence of social media disorder and the level of self-compassion among university students in Malaysia.

Table 8
Spearman's Rho Correlation Test on Social Media Disorder and Level of Self Compassion

	lowSC	moderateSC	highSC
SMD Symptoms	-.079	-.248[**]	.294[**]
No SMD Symptoms	-.079	-.248[**]	.294[**]

** $p < .01$.

Discussion

The descriptive analysis of the scores for the Social Media Disorder Scale in this research shows that the majority of the participants show absence or little symptoms of Social Media Disorder. Findings of this study indicate that 82.4% of participants in this research do not show symptoms of possible Social Media Disorder. One possibility that led to this result, could be the fact that the target participants in this study are university students most of whom are particularly busy with studying, assignments, and other university-related work. Students have been claimed to report high levels of daily hassles, workload, lack of meaning, manageability, and understanding throughout their university years (Shankland et al., 2018). It is said that cultural influences and increased competitive pressure

imposed upon the younger generation will often result in them having work schedules similar to those of adults (Henriques, 2009). Therefore, this could mean that the students have less time to spend on social media which would lessen their chances or possibilities of developing Social Media Disorder. Use of social media is likely associated with low work performance, less healthy social relationships, sleep problems, low life satisfaction, and feelings of jealousy, anxiety, and depression (Sun & Zhang, 2020), which could be the reason why one would refrain from engaging too much in the activity. Nonetheless, to define and measure problematic social media usage is not consistent in the literature of previous studies. For instance, according to the rational addiction theory mentioned by Turel (2015) and Wang, Lee, and Hua (2015), individuals decide on their own to continuously engage in excessive social media use after considering the benefits and drawbacks of the behavior. Furthermore, an individual's experiences of social overload, disclosure, and invasion on social media may cause an outlook on social media as a stressor (Sun & Zhang, 2020). Therefore, individuals coming from a social group that favors social media uses have the tendency to conform to this subjective norm for example compliance as well as internalizing that particular group's value as their own might foster addictive use. This may include social ties people maintain online and the social support that they expect to receive from social media which may also motivate them to use social media frequently (Sun & Zhang, 2020). From this, we can assume that participants in this study may have the cultural background or social support that allows them to not depend on social media or indulge in excessive use of social media. For instance, as proposed by Mahamid and Berte (2018), citizens may choose to seek refuge in social media when they are living in a geopolitical environment with high stresses and few opportunities for open socialization. Similarly, cultural differences for example individualism in Western culture versus collectivism in Asia have also been found to relate to SMA in which Western people possibly have a higher risk or tendency of developing SMA (Sun & Zhang, 2020).

The data on Self Compassion scores among university students in Malaysia indicate that most participants obtain scores indicating moderate levels of self-compassion. Since the target participants of this study are university students in Malaysia within the age range of 18 to 26 years old, a theory that may be applied to this finding would be Erikson's stages of psychosocial development in which are most pertinent during early and middle adulthood, specifically known as identity, intimacy, and generativity. According to Erikson (1968), it is said that identity formation compromises the dynamic processes of self-reflection and observation of the meaning of an individual's life and the individual's place in relationships and society. Therefore, the goal of this stage would be to increase differentiation and connection to others. In short, the task for the young adult would be to develop a balance between the opposing social and personal demands associated with intimacy versus isolation (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). Hence, from this statement, it is known that the reason that the young adult is unable to fully focus on oneself is due to the reason that he or she would have to balance between compassion for the self and compassion or connection for others, which in turn could

explain the possibility that most young adult would most likely have a moderate level of self-compassion.

Another reason that could be taken into consideration is the participant's honesty when answering the questionnaire. Applied to both scales included, the stigma surrounding the questions as well as the possibility of participants being able to predict the outcome of the results from the questions may result in dishonest or inaccuracy while answering. As reported in a study, according to Smith (2004), "response biases" otherwise known as "response tendencies" usually reflect styles that may be culturally dependent, to represent the different styles of communications that characterize a culture. It is mentioned that participants tend to over-report favorable attitudes while under-reporting unfavorable attitudes in which this response bias is known as "socially desirable responding". Past research also mentioned that there is a phenomenon in which participants often tend to agree with survey items or respond positively to questions irrespective of these questions' content. This occurrence of response style is known as "acquiescence" or "yea-saying" as described by Krosnick (1999). This particular response style often occurs when answering questionnaires with a positive attitude or favorable question structures. Hence, may lead to the over-reporting of the trait. On the contrary, certain participants as well tend to answer all questions negatively, irrespective of the questions' content. This response style is known as "nay-saying" as explained by Baumgartner and Steenkamp (2001), which most likely occur when the structure of the questions is built negatively. Thus, could lead to the under-reporting of the true trait (Tellis & Chandrasekaran, 2010).

The results show that the presence of social media disorder has has a weak positive correlation with the high level of self-compassion whereas the absence of social media disorder has a weak but significant negative correlation with high self-compassion. This means that more frequent use of social media is associated with a higher level of self-compassion. Research has stated that individuals are driven by certain motivations and psychological needs which may end up turning to social media excessively to achieve this. The uses and gratifications theory, as well as the self-determination theory, have explained social gratifications such as maintaining relationships, interacting with others, and receiving social support and socio-psychological needs such as the need to belong and need for relatedness are major types of motivations to predict addictive social media use. Therefore, social media has also been mentioned as entertaining and relaxing of which predict Social Media Addiction (SMA). However, it can turn into a rather maladaptive coping mechanism adopted by individuals to temporarily escape from pressures or negative perceptions of the self such as a result of school-related burnout and suicidal ideas (Sun & Zhang, 2020). This can be seen in terms of being self-compassionate as giving oneself space and break that it needs in times of struggle and psychological suffering, however, in the long run, it may lead to addictive social media use. This can still be prevented as mentioned in a research based on the theory of planned behavior (Ho, Lwin, Yee, & Lee, 2017), wherein positive attitudes and subjective norms towards social media may predict addictive use, but an individual's high levels of perceived behavioral control have the chance to reduce the

possibility of developing addiction (Sun & Zhang, 2020). Phelps, Paniagua, Willcockson, and Potter (2018) discovered that the six subtypes of self-compassion were strongly associated with a higher risk of substance use disorder. Furthermore, Wisener and Khoury (2020) stated that self-compassion indirectly affects alcohol-related issues such as drinking to cope with anxiety and an indirect effect on marijuana-related issues in cases where individuals use it as a method of coping. It can be inferred that self-compassion might have a direct relationship with individual adaptation, in which it may also intermediate the effects of unfavorable factors from the environment towards individual psychosocial development. It is established that self-compassion reflects an effective coping strategy that deals with difficult conditions therefore facilitating greater psychological resilience as well as emotional regulation. Hence, high levels of self-compassion may contribute to a positive state even after dealing with negative events or experiences. The mindfulness in self-compassion acts as a stress-buffering medium which functions as a unique buffer against the negative effects or outcomes of stress by improving cognitive appraisal and stress coping (Liu, Yang, Hu, & Zhang, 2020). From this, we can contemplate on the idea that self-compassion may serve as a coping method or facilitate the need to acquire coping mechanisms against stress in which the use of social media may come in handy. However, there have been claims that this tends to lead to excessive use in which may gradually result in addiction.

Conclusion

From this research, it is discovered that there is a significant correlation between Social Media Disorder or excessive use of Social Media and a high level of Self-Compassion. As previously mentioned, this provides an opportunity and space for future research to identify and investigate deeper the extent to which this correlation and relationship between the two variables take place. This is due to the lack of previous research on the coexistence of higher levels of Self-Compassion with excessive or addictive use of Social Media. It has been stated in past research, as previously mentioned in the discussion, that Self-Compassion may serve to help or aid an individual against negative drawbacks from Social Media, however, there has not yet been exclusive research on the direct relationship between the two variables. The current study was also able to conclude that the majority of university students in Malaysia that participated in this study possess moderate levels of Self-Compassion and are less likely to excessively use or become addicted to Social Media. Hence, this may serve as primary data or information to further study Social Media Disorder and Self Compassion, collectively as well as separately, within different target populations of different demographics. However, throughout this research especially within this target population, it had been noted that participants may have come from different and various forms of cultural background as well as ethics and beliefs, which had been overlooked in this particular research.

Thus, the several limitations faced in this study which included the current situation with Covid-19, as questionnaires were unable to be distributed physically and respondents were not able to meet face to face, hence, requiring the aid of Google Form to distribute questionnaires and collect data. This has caused several doubled answers or submissions that had to be removed. However, it would have still been necessary to obtain data online regardless of the Covid 19 situations due to some participants being from different states. Data for this research was collected from a specific population of university students within the age range of 18 to 26 years old in Malaysia. Hence, the relevance of this result is only applicable and limited to this demographic population. Results may not be applicable or relevant for populations of different backgrounds primarily cultural or geographical backgrounds such as Western communities, as well as different stages of life or age group. For instance, the children, adolescents, adults, or elderly.

In summary, there is a relatively significant correlation between Social Media Disorder and level of Self Compassion among university students in Malaysia. Results show that excessive use of social media or individuals with Social Media Disorder is more likely to have higher self-compassion. In the target population of this study, findings show that among university students in Malaysia, most are not likely to overuse or unhealthily use social media and are more likely to have moderate levels of self-compassion. It is hoped that the findings and implication from this study may help future researchers to study and carry out more research regarding these two fields separately and collectively as there is still a crucial lacking of literature and research on these subjects.

The following are a few thoughts to be shared and considered for future studies regarding Social Media Disorder and Self-Compassion. Since there is still a noticeable lack of research in the field of Social Media Disorder, future studies may want to investigate and research deeper on the associations and correlations of Social Media Disorder with individual disposition or personality as well as the cultural influence on this matter. The findings of the current study allow future research to understand deeper the relationship of Social Media usage and positive self-development particularly in the context of Self-Compassion. Additionally, this study may be replicated on a bigger number of participants and population to be able to produce a more general conclusion and results that apply to a wider population.

Furthermore, the finding of this study also provides the opportunity to research the factors young adults, particularly university students, have lower usage of Social Media as suggested by the results of this study. Similarly, this also suggests future researchers to study more in-depth regarding the factors relating to moderate levels of Self Compassion in young adults, specifically university students. Hence, research in the future could include possible theoretical, lifestyle, personality, and psychological wellbeing or conditions as certain aspects to be taken into consideration when studying this matter. Discussions of the adaptability or compatibility of the scales for different cultural contexts may encourage further investigation on these issues.

Last but not least, results from this study also provide the opportunity for future studies to research the possible connection between Self-Compassion and the tendency of developing addiction as a means of coping which has not been studied enough in previous literature and research.

References

Ackerman, C. (2019). *What is self-compassion and self-love?* Positive Psychology.com. Retrieved from https://positivepsychology.com/self-compassion-self-love

Aparicio-Martínez, P., Ruiz-Rubio, M., Perea-Moreno, A., Martínez-Jiménez, M., Pagliari, C., Redel-Macías, M., & Vaquero-Abellán, M. (2020). Gender differences in the addiction to social networks in the Southern Spanish university students. *Telematics and Informatics*, *46*, 101304. doi: 10.1016/j.tele.2019.101304

Arroyo, A., & Brunner, S. (2016). Negative body talk as an outcome of friends' fitness posts on social networking sites: body surveillance and social comparison as potential moderators. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *44*(3), 216–235. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2016.1192293

Beaumont, S., & Pratt, M. (2011). Identity processing styles and psychosocial balance during early and middle adulthood: The role of identity in intimacy and generativity. *Journal of Adult Development, 18*(4), 172–183. doi: 10.1007/s10804-011-9125z

Bernardi, R., & Guptill, S. (2007). Social desirability response bias, gender, and factors influencing organizational commitment: An international study. *Journal of Business Ethics, 81*(4), 797–809. doi:10.1007/s10551-007-9548-4

Caplan, S. (2010). Theory and measurement of generalized problematic internet use: A two-step approach. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *26*(5), 1089–1097. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.03.012

Cheng, C., & Li, A. (2020). *Internet addiction prevalence and quality of (real) life: A meta-analysis of 31 nations across seven world regions*. Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers. Retrieved from http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2014.0317.

Chu, X., Fan, C., Liu, Q., & Zhou, Z. (2018). Cyberbullying victimization and symptoms of depression and anxiety among Chinese adolescents: Examining hopelessness as a mediator and self-compassion as a moderator. *Computers in Human Behavior, 86*, 377–386. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2018.04.039

Cohen, R., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (2017). The relationship between Facebook and Instagram appearance-focused activities and body image concerns in young women. *Body image*, *23*, 183–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.10.002

Di Fabio, A., & Saklofske, D. (2020). The relationship of compassion and self-compassion with personality and emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 110109. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2020.110109

Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis.* Norton & Co.

Eyal, N., & Hoover, R. (2014). *Hooked: How to build habit-forming products*. New York, New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

Feltman, C. E., & Szymanski, D. M. (2018). Instagram use and self-objectification: The roles of internalization, comparison, appearance commentary, and feminism. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 78*(5-6), 311–324. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0796-1

Gu, J., Cavanagh, K., Baer, R., & Strauss, C. (2017). An empirical examination of the factor structure of compassion. *PloS One*, *12*(2), e0172471. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0172471

Henriques, A. (2009). 118 sleep, daily habits, workload and academic sucess in technologic university students. *Sleep Medicine, 10*, S32–S33. doi:10.1016/s1389-9457(09)70120-0

Ho, S., Lwin, M., Yee, A., & Lee, E. (2017). Understanding factors associated with Singaporean adolescents' intention to adopt privacy protection behavior using an extended theory of Planned Behavior. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *20*(9), 572-579. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2017.0061

Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). Social networking sites and addiction: Ten lessons learned. *International journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *14*(3), 311. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14030311

Kuss, D. J., Griffiths, M. D., Karila, L., & Billieux, J. (2014). Internet addiction: A systematic review of epidemiological research for the last decade. *Current Pharmaceutical Design*, *20*(25), 4026–4052. https://doi.org/10.2174/13816128113199990617

Leung, H., Pakpour, A., Strong, C., Lin, Y., Tsai, M., & Griffiths, (2020). Measurement invariance across young adults from Hong Kong and Taiwan among three internet-related addiction scales: Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), Smartphone Application-Based Addiction Scale (SABAS), and Internet Gaming Disorder Scale-Short Form (IGDS-SF9) (Study Part A). *Addictive Behaviors, 101*,105969. doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2019.04.027

Liu, Q., Yang, X., Hu, Y., & Zhang, C. (2020). Peer victimization, self-compassion, gender and adolescent mobile phone addiction: Unique and interactive effects. *Children and Youth Services Review, 118*, p.105397.

Mahamid, F., & Berte, D. (2018). Social media addiction in geopolitically at-risk youth. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, *17*(1), 102–111. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-017-9870-8

Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. (2010). Retrieved from https://www.mcmc.gov.my/en/home.

Meerkerk, G. J., Van Den Eijnden, R. J., Vermulst, A. A., & Garretsen, H. F. (2009). The Compulsive Internet Use Scale (CIUS): Some psychometric properties. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior: The impact of the internet, multimedia and virtual reality on behavior and society*, *12*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2008.0181

Modica, C. (2019). Facebook, body esteem, and body surveillance in adult women: The moderating role of self-compassion and appearance-contingent self-worth. *Body Image, 29*, 17–30. doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.02.002

Montag, C., Lachmann, B., Herrlich, M., & Zweig, K. (2019a). Addictive features of social media/messenger platforms and freemium games against the background of psychological and economic theories. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *16*(14), 2612. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16142612

Montag, C., Wegmann, E., Sariyska, R., Demetrovics, Z., & Brand, M. (2019b). How to overcome taxonomical problems in the study of internet use disorders and what to do with "smartphone addiction"? *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 1–7.

Marengo, D., Longobardi, C., Fabris, M., & Settanni, M. (2018). Highly-visual social media and internalizing symptoms in adolescence: The mediating role of body image concerns. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *82*, 63–69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.003

Neff, K. (2003). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, *2*(3), 223–250. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309027

Neff, K. (2020). *Definition and three elements of self-compassion* | Kristin Neff. Retrieved from https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compasson-02

Neff, K. D., Rude, S. S., & Kirkpatrick, K. L. (2007). An examination of self-compassion in relation to positive psychological functioning and personality traits. *Journal of Research in Personality, 41*(4), 908–916. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2006.08.002

Panova, T., & Carbonell, X. (2018). Is smartphone addiction really an addiction? *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, *7*(2), 252–259. https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.7.2018.49

Phelps, C., Paniagua, S., Willcockson, I., & Potter, J. (2018). The relationship between self-compassion and the risk for substance use disorder. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *183*, 78–81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2017.10.026

Rozgonjuk, D., Sindermann, C., Elhai, J., & Montag, C. (2020). Fear of missing out (FoMO) and social media's impact on daily-life and productivity at work: Do WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat use disorders mediate that association? *Addictive Behaviors*, 106487. doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106487

Shankland, R., Kotsou, I., Vallet, F., Bouteyre, E., Dantzer, C., & Leys, C. (2018). Burnout in university students: The mediating role of sense of coherence on the relationship between daily hassles and burnout. *Higher Education, 78(1)*, 91–113. doi: 10.1007/s10734-018-0332-4

Seekis, V., Bradley, G., & Duffy, A. (2017). The effectiveness of self-compassion and self-esteem writing tasks in reducing body image concerns. *Body Image, 23*, 206–213. doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.09.003 Kong: Exploring gender differences. *Personality Individual Differences, 101*, 288–292. doi:10.1016/j. Paid.2016.06.011

Stronge, S., Osborne, D., West-Newman, T., Milojev, P., Greaves, L., Sibley, C., & Wilson, M.S. (2015). The Facebook feedback hypothesis of personality and social belonging. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 44*, 4.

Sun, Y., & Zhang, Y. (2020). A review of theories and models applied in studies of social media addiction and implications for future research. *Addictive Behaviors*, 106699. doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106699

Tellis, G., & Chandrasekaran, D. (2010). Extent and impact of response biases in cross national survey research. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, 27*(4), 329–341. doi: 10.1016/j.ijresmar.2010.08.003

Tiggemann, M., & Slater, A. (2013). NetTweens. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *34*(5), 606–620. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431613501083

Tiggemann, M., & Slater, A. (2016). Facebook and body image concern in adolescent girls: A prospective study. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, *50*(1), 80–83. https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.22640

Turel, O. (2015). An empirical examination of the "vicious cycle" of Facebook addiction. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, *55*(3), 83–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/08874417.2015.11645775

Ursachi, G., Horodnic, I., & Zait, A. (2020). How reliable are measurement scales? External factors with indirect influence on reliability estimators. [online] Semanticscholar.org.

Van Den Eijnden, R., Lemmens, J., & Valkenburg, P. (2016). The Social Media Disorder Scale. *Computers in Human Behavior, 61*, 478-487. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.038

Wang, C., Lee, M., & Hua, Z. (2015). A theory of social media dependence: Evidence from microblog users. *Decision Support Systems*, *69*, 40–49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2014.11.002

World Health Organization. (2018). *International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision.* Retrieved from https://icd.who.int/en/.