

P#82 Social Media Usage Among Young Adults at a University in Trinidad and Tobago

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INTRODUCTION

Social media usage has greatly increased among the young adult population. Some studies have indicated that even though young adults spend more time online they are not necessarily more socially connected.

The more time spent on the Internet has been associated with loneliness. Researchers have revealed that many persons may have a shorter lifespan and mental health challenges as a result of loneliness.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of image based social media and loneliness among young adults.

METHODS

During September – November 2018 cross-sectional data was anonymously collected from 345 students at the university.

The students were selected from general education classes.

Demographic data and data on social media usage were self reported.

The 20 item UCLA loneliness scale was used to measure loneliness.

A four point scale was used with O indicating often feeling this way and N = never feeling this way.

Sample items included “I lack companionship” and “I feel starved for company.”

The data were analyzed using SPSS to determine correlations.

RESULTS

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of participants

Demographics	Total (N 345)	Percentage
Male	55	15.9
Female	287	83.2
Age		
18- 21	227	65.7
22-25	106	30.7
≥25	38	11.0
Student Status		
Freshman	120	34.8
Sophomore	79	22.9
Junior	78	22.6
Senior	60	17.4

Table 2 Social media usage among university students

Social Media Usage	N	Percentage
I don't use	10	2.9
Less than ½ hr	28	8.1
1 hour	48	13.9
2-3 hours	84	24.3
4-5 hours	56	16.2
More than 6 hours	119	34.5

There was a significant correlation between social media usage and loneliness among the students surveyed $r=0.209$ ($p= \leq 0.01$).

Sixty percent of the participants indicated that they preferred to

visit social media sites even when there were people around.

Thirty-two percent indicated that their social media usage sometimes prevented them from focusing on their studies. Social media usage amounted to more than 6 hours daily for 34.5% of the students in the past 30 days.

CONCLUSION

The university environment is a difficult one as students attempt to make friends.

Increased social media usage may be as a result of loneliness.

Loneliness is a significant risk factor for suicide which has been on the increase.

Interventions can be created to target loneliness which is a significant public health crisis among university students.