

Social media and effects on interpersonal skills: An empirical Investigation on Teenagers from Malaysia

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Abstract:

Background: In the contemporary technologically advanced world, surrounded by packed social media usage, has made communication rapid, easy, interactive, entertaining, and almost free. Interpersonal skills have been regarded critically important for the success of an individual in personal life and professional life for the reason that it is a medium of exchanging ideas, matters, and thoughts from one person to another under socially applicable rules or termed as socialization.

Materials and Methods: For this purpose, data from 361 teenagers aged 13 to 19 was collected voluntarily by the private and government schools upon request. The sample was drawn through convenience sampling technique due to constraints of COVID-19, where a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used for data collection. Meanwhile, for empirical analysis, SmartPLS was used which assisted in the confirmatory factors analysis (CFA) in which structural equation modelling (SEM) or also known as PLS-SEM analysis were conducted. The selection of SmartPLS was due to its user-friendly interface and the that it handles the survey data more appropriately. For reliability and validity of construct, Cronbach's alpha, Composite reliability, and Average variance extracted (AVE) were used, and compliance with discriminant validity was also checked.

Results: There is a positive and significant impact of social media on the interpersonal communication, social skills, and self-esteem of teenagers in Malaysia. Therefore, it can be determined that despite mixed findings from the literature over negative effects of social media, Malaysian teenagers remain positive towards the use of social and find it effective for their inter-personal communication, social skills, and self-esteem. This also implies that social media influences the communication, engagement, and trust among teenagers and influences their self-worth because they can learn to optimize their presentation which positively influences self-esteem. Social media is the era of communication that helps teenagers to have developed communication skills, social relations, exchange knowledge and information which ultimately led to the development of interpersonal skills.

Conclusion: It is suggested for the schools and colleges that teenagers should be encouraged to use social media as a medium of communication which tends to influence their social skills and social relations and improve their self-presentation, self-worth, and self-esteem. However, strict monitoring is also required by the schools, colleges, and parents to ensure teenagers are not affected by the anti-social elements online and for this purpose, awareness initiatives must be brought to mitigate the risk but still benefit from the social. Furthermore, the limitation of the study was that it only focused on teenagers and did not consider the opinion of teachers and parents. Therefore, it is suggested to extend this study by the inclusion of opinions of teachers and parents that how social media is affecting teenagers' interpersonal skills.

Key Word: Social media; Inter-personal skills; Interpersonal Communication; Social skills; Self-esteem; Teenagers, Malaysia.

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I. Introduction

In a contemporary technologically advanced world, surrounded by packed social media usage, has been making communication rapid, easy, interactive, entertaining, and almost free¹. Interpersonal skills have been regarded critically important for the success of an individual in personal life and professional life for the reason that it is a medium of exchanging ideas, matters, and thoughts from one person to another under socially applicable rules or termed as socialization². The socialization term is a comprehensive term that encompasses all skillsets required for successful personal and professional life and includes interpersonal skills, social skills, and self-esteem. However, the word socialization was more appropriate and applicable around two decades ago, but contemporary, the socialization evolved due to the emergence of social media but the essence of socialization remains to be explored in contemporary context³. In this regards, research was conducted to explore how social media has been affecting the interpersonal skills and found that social media has become part of the daily life of youth but affects the social behavior of youth, promotes anxiety and depression^{4,5}; whereas, another study found that half of the students found that social media negatively affects their self-esteem and 50% of students

reported that their self-esteem is positively affected by social media⁶. Meanwhile, another research revealed that over 65% of respondents have positive experiences with social media but the same study also revealed that there are three negative effects of social media on the teen (1) pressure to fit in (2) reduced social skills, (3) harmful and inappropriate content and loss of personal data and privacy concerns⁷. These are three emerging threats that increase over time as usages increases by teenagers.

As of 2021, there are 21 million users of social media in Malaysia, and a 2 million growth in users was observed from 2020 to 2021⁸. Therefore, around 86% of the population of Malaysia has been using social media, and around 16.7% population aged between 13-17 have been using social media mainly Facebook, followed by Instagram frequently on a daily basis⁹. Furthermore, the study also reveals that on average users spend 3.3 hours on social media, and penetration of social media is at 70.4% which is significantly high as compared to other neighboring countries such as India 54.58%¹⁰. Given the higher penetration of social media, the consequences of social media remain intact; were the fact that growing use of social media has put teenagers in social isolation and increased worrisome which led to anxiety and depression among the teenagers⁷. However, previous researches lack to explain empirically that how social media has been affecting interpersonal skills including interpersonal communication, social skills, and self-esteem in Malaysia. For instance, a study on Youth of Malaysia and focused on only interpersonal communication⁶ whereas another study only focused on the use of Facebook only and its relation with anxiety, depression, and psychological distress¹¹. In addition, a similar study was also conducted on Malaysian Youth only focused on the use of Instagram and fear of missing out and self-esteem¹². Meanwhile, these studies have not comprehensively focused on social media use and its influence over interpersonal communication, social skills, and self-esteem.

This is a research gap to which the proposed study aims to fulfill and empirically investigate how does the use of social media in Malaysia has been affecting the interpersonal communication, social skills, and self-esteem of teenagers aged from 13 to 19 specifically. Furthermore, the study holds significant value for the parents and society at large that how could use of social media affecting the teenagers and how could it be controlled by parents to save teenagers being exposed to threats. Meanwhile, the study provides practical implications for the parents and future implications for the researchers to conduct another study by extending the existent study. Meanwhile, the findings of this study could also guide the governments, education ministry, and schools to restrict or limit the use of social media among children through awareness initiatives. Therefore, the study holds significant value for society and literature itself since it explores the area that has not been explored previously.

II. Literature Review

Social Media

The word social media has been referred to as the internet-based networks that allow the individuals or group of uses to interact employing verbal and visual means¹³. The Research conducted by Pew Research Centre found that at least 92% of the teenagers have been active on social media and the age of these youth remains from 13 years old to 17 years old¹⁴. Furthermore, it has also been found that around 87% of youth have access to a computer and 58% of teenagers also use a tablet device for social media use¹⁵. Furthermore, in the modern age, the use of technology has influenced the students and has become a daily life part for purpose of communication and interaction. Meanwhile, Malaysia has 26 million social media active users which makes equal to 86% of the population of Malaysia, and around 16.7% of the population aged from 13 to 17 years, have also been using social media¹⁶. Meanwhile, the social media penetration rate in Malaysia has been 70.4%¹⁷ which is significantly higher than India with a 54.58% penetration rate¹⁸. Therefore, the use of social media among teenagers in Malaysia has been prevailing and a significant number of social media users have exposed threats of anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems but could also benefit from the enhanced interpersonal skills, social skills, and self-esteem. Therefore, social media may have been a source of depression but at the same time also help the youth to effectively learn socialization^{1,3,4}.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills refer to the communication skills and socialization skills through which one interacts with others in the social setting. The importance of communication skills and socialization skills can be determined through its role in influencing one's behavior and attitude in society given the fact that one's image is being judged through communication skills. Therefore, interpersonal skills play a critical role in the success of one's life whereas if the communication skills of teenagers have not been improved at the initial stages then this could affect their personal and professional life¹. Therefore, the following section specifically focuses on the use of social media and its influence on interpersonal skills, social skills, and self-esteem

Inter-personal communication

Social media works as a means of communication and has become part of lifestyle for the teenagers since it allows them to connect with friends and family instantly and conveniently. However, the wide use of social media as the medium of communication has led to the emergence of certain problems among the youth population around the world and in Malaysia^{11, 12}. For instance, it has been argued that the use of social media has reduced human interaction, whereas the face to face communication has been diminished by social media¹⁹. Therefore, teenagers today find the face to face communication uncomfortable since they have relied on social media for communication which is virtual in nature²⁰. Therefore, the overreliance of the youth on social media to communicate has posed serious threats to the overall strength and effectiveness of their face-to-face communication in the real world. Meanwhile, the students have also been exposed to the threat of cyberbully and mostly kids are the primary target of the perpetrators²¹. Hence, this leaves deep mental scars among teenagers due to this online attacks²². However, another found that the use of social media influences the student's communication, engagement, and trust positively given the fact that they can connect with their teachers and lecturers instantly leading to positive effects for the students²³. However, it is also the fact that social media affects the essence of communication skills of teenagers, where they become more reluctant to face-to-face communication which has prevented them to have hard skills of communication in real life.

H1: There is a positive and significant effect of social media usage on interpersonal communication of teenagers

Social Skills

In contemporary literature, social skills have been referred to as the learned behaviors based on the social rules and that allows to interact appropriately and effectively with others in society and is effective in acquiring social skills is the primary function of the development process and mental health²⁴. Furthermore, social skills are referred to as social competence and quality of social behavior which enable humans to construct social relationships at different stages of life²⁵. Therefore, social skills are the source of social adaption that creates and maintain social relationships over the short-term and long-term period²⁶. Furthermore, the teenage phase of age is a critical period for the development of social skills among teenagers that allows teenagers to have a successful relationship with others and has a critical role in the success of personal and professional life^{26, 27, 28}. Therefore, the absence of social skills among the children can be a source of loneliness, mental health problems, and maladjustments²⁸. In this regard, social media plays an important role in the development of social skills among teenagers²⁹. It is because social media has become a primary source of communication, establishing the social relationship, maintaining existing and enables to exchange the knowledge and information³⁰. However, besides the advantage of social media to allow building interpersonal relations, a platform to make new friends, join groups, and also socially support each other²³. It also carries certain disadvantages of anxiety and depression; where the teenager may become the victim of cyberbullying and sexual harassment.

H2: There is the positive and significant effect of social media usage on the social skills of teenagers

Self-Esteem

The core purpose of social media uses is searching information and share interesting pictures and videos with each other³. It has been revealed that human behavior is affected by social media and so the decision making as well. It provides users with comments and feedback which influence the individuals how they behave; hence they learn to optimize the self-presentation³¹. A study also revealed that half of the respondents believe that social media usage has positively affected their self-esteem and half believe that their self-esteem has been negatively affected⁶. Furthermore, social media significantly affects one's self-worth or self-esteem is given the fact that they perceive people to be happier and successful in their lives which becomes a cause of anxiety and depression and affects the self-worth of teenagers³². Therefore, teenagers rather than perceiving it as challenging to achieve they feel and undermine their worth³³. Meanwhile, teenagers are also exposed to fear of missing out given the fact that they follow social figures online and social media which increases their cause of concern and perceive themselves as failed teens since they are not happier and successful than those whom they are following on social media³⁴. Hence, social media as a source of communication and interaction becomes a source of lowering self-esteem for the many teenagers in Malaysia and around the world. Meanwhile, many previous studies have also revealed that social media has become a source of discouragement and has become a primary reason for rising self-harm behavior among teenagers due to increased anxiety and depression. Therefore, it needs to be empirically tested that that does social media usage affects self-esteem negatively.

H3: There is a positive and significant impact of social media on self-esteem in teenagers in Malaysia

III. Material And Methods

Sampling Technique

There are two types of sampling designs being employed within the study by scholars given the suitability and applicability. The first type of sampling design is non-probability sampling design in which each member of the population has no equal chance to be selected in the sample. However, the second sampling design is the probability sampling design in which each of the members of the population has an equal chance to be selected for the sample size³⁵. The former one uses an unsystematic approach to include participants into the sample but in contrast, the latter one uses a systematic approach to include participants. However, in the following study, a non-convenience sampling technique was used which is the non-probability sampling technique. The use of convenience sampling technique is only adopted to meet with the undesired conditions externally and other issues that research could face due to limitation of budget and time constraints³⁶. Therefore, this technique allows the researcher to collect the data from the sample at personal convenience given the circumstances and conditions faced by the researcher at the time of research³⁷. In the following study, only the non-probability sampling technique was applicable and no other technique could be applied feasibly because of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, health regulations, self-protection, and prevalence of social distancing were certain constraints for use of probability sampling technique. Hence, a non-probability sampling technique specifically convenience sampling technique was used to collect data.

Data collection

Furthermore, the population of the study was teenagers aged from 13 to 19 in Malaysia was around 17% which makes the total population of the study equal to 23.3 million teenagers falling in the age group of 13 to 19⁹. However, it was not possible to include all population into the sample size, hence it was initially planned to collect data from 500 teenagers aged from 13 years to 19 years from all over Malaysia online. However, during the data compilation, it was found that around 61 responses were not duly filled and 78 responses were not in a form to be used. Hence, the response rate of the study was 72.2%, or a total of 361 responses. Meanwhile, the remaining responses of those participants were excluded from the sample and it was confirmed through scholars who had suggested to have 350 sample size for the paper that is based on the survey^{38, 39}. Furthermore, for the data collection process, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed and multiple private and government schools and colleges were contacted and survey questionnaire was shared with the authorities of schools and colleges and requested for data collection from the students. This allowed the researcher to remain within the ethical parameters and none of the school or college was forced for the data collection but rather were invited voluntarily.

Data Analysis Techniques

On the other hand, for statistical analysis, SmartPLS was used which assisted in the confirmatory factors analysis (CFA) in which structural equation modelling (SEM) or also known as PLS-SEM analysis were conducted. The selection of SmartPLS was due to its user-friendly interface and the that it handles the survey data more appropriately⁴⁰. The issue of multicollinearity often emerges from the survey data and to handle that issue partial least square (PLS) is more preferred through structural equation modelling (SEM)⁴¹. In addition to this, the SmartPLS also allows to development of complex models easily and conducts statistical tests, and this is not possible into other statistical software that could effectively handle the issue of collinearity as PLS-SEM modeling address the problem⁴². Meanwhile, at the initial stages, the reliability and validity of the construct were determined to assure that construct well represents the interest of study and measures for which it was developed to measure⁴⁰. Therefore, reliability of the construct Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used; where the validity of the construct was examined through the average variance extracted (AVE) which specifically measures how well does questionnaire has captured the variance for which it was designed to capture. Meanwhile, the discriminant validity of the construct was also checked through the ratio of Hetertrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)⁴³. Lastly, about the statistical model, the initial model was developed through the conventional method but the results were not appropriate, thus bootstrapping method was used to achieve higher accuracy in measurement and achieve the research objectives.

IV. Result

Measurement Model

Factor Loadings

The factor loading refers to the variance being explained by each of the factors and its contribution to the overall measurement model. In previous empirical studies, scholars have theorized that the value of factor landing should not be less than 0.7 to be included and retained in the model⁴⁴. Therefore, this cut-off was to be followed to ensure the scholarly practice is followed and no unreasonable decision was made. In the measurement model, there were four constructs and each construct had 3 factors, whereas in the first construct

inter-personal communication, one factor had a factor loading of 0.6 and as per the cut-off value it was to be excluded from the model. However, due to the importance of the factor, the work of other authors⁴⁵ reviewed in which authors had retained the factors falling between factor loading of 0.6 and 0.7. Therefore, with reference to this empirical practice, the factor loading with the value of 0.6 was retained.

Table 1 Factor Loadings

Factor Loadings	Interpersonal Communication	Self-Esteem	Social Media	Social Skills
IPC1	0.747			
IPC2	0.940			
IPC3	0.600 (Retained)			
SET1		0.383 (Dropped)		
SET2		0.952		
SET3		0.944		
SM1			0.841	
SM2			0.869	
SM3			0.894	
SSK1				0.859
SSK2				0.965
SSK3				0.963

However, referring to another problem encountered in the measurement model was that one of the factors of self-esteem has a factor loading of 0.383 which was significantly lower than suggested thresholds^{43, 44}. Meanwhile, another work was reviewed in which authors had supported the factor loading of 0.5 and retained the factor based on the justification that its contribution was more than 50% into the model⁴⁵. However, in the following structural model, the factor of self-esteem was also lowered then 0.5, hence the factor was excluded from the model, and results were generated again on the final structural model.

Reliability and Validity

In survey-based empirical studies, the core problem that emerges is the evaluation of constructs being used to measure the concepts. A construct is a measurement tool that must be reliable enough and valid to be used for the data collection and/or at least it should meet with the defined thresholds to ensure the measurement model follows standard⁴⁶. One of the primary requirements for the constructs is that they should be reliable where reliability refers to the internal consistency in the responses. The core idea behind internal consistency is that a construct should provide similar and identical responses when it is used multiple times under the controlled settings⁴⁷. For instance, in the social survey, the responses of one respondent should be similar and identical to one another to state the construct generates consistent results when used multiple times⁴⁶. Meanwhile, the internal consistency is being measured through Cronbach’s alpha and Composite reliability, these two measurement techniques are common used interchangeably and have a similar stance on reliability⁴⁸. Therefore, to assume that there is internal consistency the value of Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability should have value values exceeding 0.7 to assume that constructs are reliable and there is internal consistency in the responses⁴³. Hence, the presence of internal consistency is also evidence that theoretical concepts have been well measured by the constructs. Furthermore, the second most imperative aspect in the measurement model is the validity of the construct which is also termed convergent validity. It refers to the fact that extent to which measures that should be related are related. In the measurement model, there are multiple constructs, and each of the constructs should measure a different concept but as far as the factors of each construct are concerned then they should be measuring the same concept⁴⁹. Meanwhile, it has also been explained as convergent validity which is assessment and evaluation of the constructs that does construct measures the concept for which it was designed to measure⁴³. Therefore, to determine convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) has been used where it has been used theorized that value of AVE be at least 0.5 to assume the construct comply with convergent validity and there is no error in conceptual measurement⁵⁰. The results of reliability and convergent validity are provided as follows

Table 2 Reliability and Validity of Construct

Reliability and Validity	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Inter-personal Communication	0.707	0.814	0.601
Self-Esteem	0.887	0.947	0.899
Social Media	0.837	0.902	0.754

Social Skills	0.921	0.951	0.866
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Referring to the value of Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability, it is greater than the suggested threshold of 0.7, hence it can be determined that there is internal consistency in the responses which is evidence of a reliable construct being used for the data collection⁴³. Thus, the data collected through this construct can also be stated as reliable enough to be used for the empirical analysis. Furthermore, referring to the convergent validity, the values of AVE are also greater than the suggested threshold of 0.5 indicating constructs comply with the convergent validity⁵⁰. Therefore, the constructs used in the following study can be stated as free from conceptual measurement error.

Discriminant Validity

In scholarly work, discriminant validity has been termed as the most critical aspect of the structural equation model (SEM) given the fact that it assesses and evaluates the conceptual measurement of the measurement model⁴⁹. Similarly, it has also been defined as discriminant validity as a measure of the extent to which the constructs that should be theoretically not related are actually unrelated. A construct measures a different concept, hence the two different concepts should be measured by two different constructs, and thus these constructs measuring different concepts must be unrelated⁴³. Meanwhile, to assess the discriminant validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) has been used to determine the accuracy of the construct that either constructs distinct or not? In previous work of scholars have used the threshold of 0.85 and 0.9 to some extent that the value of HTMT should not exceed the suggested threshold to assume compliance of construct with discriminant validity⁵¹. The result of the HTMT ratio is as follows

Table 3 Discriminant Validity

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)	Interpersonal Communication	Self-Esteem	Social Media
Interpersonal Communication			
Self-Esteem	0.179		
Social Media	0.353	0.388	
Social Skills	0.244	0.742	0.675

The table above demonstrates the results of the HTMT ratio, where it is observable that the values of the HTMT ratio for all key variables are less than the suggested threshold of 0.85 and 0.9. Therefore, it can be determined that constructs used in the following study are distinct in their measurement and concept⁵¹. Thus, it can be claimed that constructs measure different concepts and there is no error in measurement of concepts and can be stated that construct complies with the discriminant validity.

Structural Model

Final Model and Predictive Prevalence

In the initial results, the factor loading of two factors was less than the suggested threshold where the third factor of inter-personal communication has a value of 0.6 and the first factor of self-esteem had a value of 0.383. However, factor loading at 0.6 was supported and retained but factor loading with 0.385 was excluded from the analysis, and results were generated again after exclusion of the factor. Meanwhile, the final model of the study is as follows

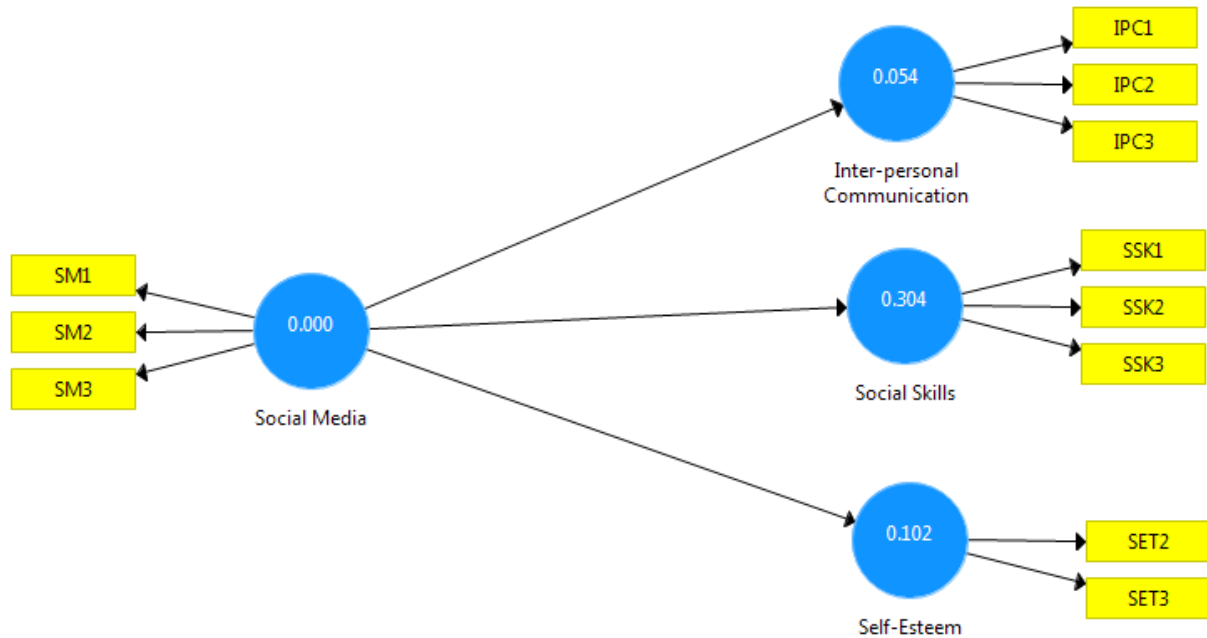


Figure 1 PLS-SEM Final Model

Furthermore, to determine and assess the strength of the path model and predictive prevalence; whereas for the strength of the model, R-square has been used and for predictive prevalence, Q-square has been used. The table below illustrates the R-square and Q-Square

Table 4 Model Estimation and Predictive Prevalence

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q-Square
Inter-personal Communication	0.118	0.116	0.054
Self-Esteem	0.116	0.113	0.102
Social Skills	0.356	0.355	0.304

The table above shows the coefficient of determination which reveals the predictive strength of the path model that how the variance of the observed variable is being explained by the predictor of the model. The r-square of the inter-personal communication, self-esteem, and social skills are 0.118, 0.116, and 0.356 indicating that 11.8%, 11.6%, and 35.6% variance of interpersonal communication, self-esteem, and social skills can be explained and predicted by social media⁴⁹. However, the remaining variance that could not be explained by social media is residual that could only be explained by the factors that have not been included in the model. Furthermore, the Q-square value is also greater than 0 suggesting that there is predictive prevalence means the model has been estimated for which it was designed to estimate⁵².

Path Coefficients

Table below shows the path coefficient where effect size and p-value for each effect is illustrated with t-statistics

Table 5 Path Coefficients

Path Coefficients	Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values
Social Media -> Inter-personal Communication	0.344	7.797	0.000
Social Media -> Self-Esteem	0.340	7.815	0.000
Social Media -> Social Skills	0.597	15.633	0.000

The effect of social media on interpersonal communication is 0.334 [P<0.05] which indicates that there is a positive and statistically significant effect of the use of social media on interpersonal communication in teenagers in Malaysia. Therefore, the use of social media among teenagers has been found to be effective to enhance communication skills virtually which means they do not need to engage face-to-face for enhancing communication skills. This finding is consistent with the previous study that social media usage among

teenagers influences communication, engagement, and trust given the fact that they can interact with a different type of teenagers online²³. Furthermore, referring to self-esteem, it has been found that the coefficient for self-esteem is 0.340 [P<0.00] indicating that there is a positive and significant effect of usage of social media on the self-esteem of teenagers in Malaysia. This implies that social media influences the self-worth among teenagers since they focus on self-presentation which improves and enhance their image and self-esteem ultimately³¹. Similarly, it has also been found that self-esteem of the teenagers is improved if they use social media because they learn to optimize their presentation and another study also found that half of the respondents said that social media has affected their self-esteem positively³².

Furthermore, referring to the social skills, the coefficient is 0.597 [P<0.00] suggesting that there is a positive and significant impact of social on the social skills of teenagers in Malaysia. This implies that if social media is used by teenagers then it can improve social skills but at the same time if not used then it may remain beyond the current social trends and may not be able to effective social skills as does other teenagers who use social media. In this regard, previous studies also revealed that social media plays a critical role in today's age in the development of social skills among teenagers since it allows teenagers to have communication, develop social relations, and enables the exchange of knowledge and information^{26, 27, 28}. Therefore, the core benefit of social media has been the development of interpersonal relations which is a critical part of the social skillset.

Hypothesis Testing

The table below provides the hypothesis along with the results and decision regarding acceptance and rejection of the hypothesis

Table 6 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Results	Decision
H1: There is a positive and significant effect of social media usage on interpersonal communication of teenagers	0.344 (P<0.05)	Accepted
H2: There is a positive and significant effect of social media usage on the social skills of teenagers	0.340 (P<0.05)	Accepted
H3: There is a positive and significant impact of social media on self-esteem in teenagers in Malaysia	0.597 (P<0.05)	Accepted

The first hypothesis of the paper was that there is a positive and significant effect of social media usage on the interpersonal communication of teenagers. Since the value of the coefficient is 0.344 with a p-value less than alpha 0.05; hence the hypothesis has been accepted that social media positively and significantly affects the interpersonal communication of teenagers. Meanwhile, the second hypothesis is that there is a positive and significant effect of social media usage on social skills of teenagers with coefficient being positive 0.340 and p-value less than alpha 0.05 suggests to accept the hypothesis. Meanwhile, the last hypothesis is that there is a positive and significant impact of social media on self-esteem, where the coefficient is positive at 0.597 with a p-value less than alpha 0.05 suggests to accept the last hypothesis that there is a positive and significant impact of social media on the self-esteem of the teenagers in Malaysia.

V. Conclusion

This paper aimed to empirically investigate the effects of social media on the interpersonal skills of teenagers in Malaysia. The paper more specifically focused on how social media has been affecting the interpersonal skills of teenagers in terms of interpersonal communication, social skills, and self-esteem. For this purpose, data from 361 teenagers aged 13 to 19 was collected voluntarily by the private and government schools upon request. Meanwhile, the data was analyzed through SmartPLS in which the PLS-SEM technique was adopted for the estimation. The empirical findings of the study reveal that there is a positive and significant impact of social media on the interpersonal communication, social skills, and self-esteem of teenagers in Malaysia. Therefore, it can be determined that despite mixed findings from the literature over negative effects of social media, Malaysian teenagers remain positive towards the use of social and find it effective for their interpersonal communication, social skills, and self-esteem. This also implies that social media influence the communication, engagement, and trust among teenagers and influences their self-worth because they can learn to optimize their presentation which positively influences self-esteem. In the contemporary study, it has also been found that social media is the era of communication that helps teenagers to have developed communication skills, social relations, exchange knowledge and information which ultimately led to the development of interpersonal skills. Meanwhile, based on the key findings of the study, it is suggested for the schools and colleges that teenagers should be encouraged to use social media as a medium of communication which tends to influence their social skills and social relations and improve their self-presentation, self-worth, and self-esteem. However, strict monitoring is also required by the schools, colleges, and parents to ensure teenagers are not affected by the anti-social elements online and for this purpose, awareness initiatives must be brought to mitigate the risk but still benefit from the social. Furthermore, the limitation of the study was that it only focused on

teenagers and did not consider the opinion of teachers and parents. Therefore, it is suggested to extend this study by the inclusion of opinions of teachers and parents that how social media is affecting teenagers' interpersonal skills.

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