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## Addiction On Mobile Social Networking Site: A Study Among Digital Generation

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### Abstract

This research investigates mobile social networking site addiction among the Z-generation, focusing on the roles of enjoyment, information value and social influence. Data were collected from 221 respondents using a non-probability purposive sampling method. Statistical analysis was performed using Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25 and Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results indicate that both information value and social influence significantly contribute to mobile social networking site addiction. The importance-performance matrix analysis (IPMA) highlights the significant impact of information value on addiction behaviour. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address mobile social networking site addiction among the Z-generation.

**Keywords:** social networking site, digital generation, addiction



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**Introduction**

In the contemporary era, technology has seamlessly integrated into our daily lives. Without its presence, life would undoubtedly become more challenging, hindering our collective progress and stifling innovation within our nations. The roots of technology trace back over two million years, with the advent of stone tools marking humanity's earliest known technological advancements. Broadly defined, technology encompasses a spectrum of techniques, skills, methods, and processes utilized in the production of goods and services, as well as the pursuit of objectives such as scientific inquiry.

The proliferation of technology has bestowed upon humanity a myriad of benefits, facilitating problem-solving and the acquisition of new information through inventions like cars, VR systems, and more. Consequently, the integration of these innovations often necessitates internet access. The internet, defined as the global network of interconnected computer systems employing the Internet Protocol Suite (TCP/IP) for communication, serves as a gateway to a vast array of websites and social media platforms, offering users access to news and information.

Furthermore, the internet provides numerous advantages, including online bill payments, distance learning opportunities, family communication, and e-commerce. However, it also exposes users to certain drawbacks, such as the risk of addiction, cyberbullying, and online deception. Notably, among the plethora of social media platforms available, Facebook reigns as the most prominent and widely used worldwide.

Facebook, the frontrunner in the market, was the inaugural social network to exceed one billion registered accounts and presently boasts over three billion monthly active users. Meta Platforms, the parent company, holds ownership of four of the largest social media platforms, each boasting one billion monthly active users: Facebook (the core platform), WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram. During the third quarter of 2023, Facebook disclosed approximately four billion monthly active users across its core Family products (Dixon, 2024).

Statista Research Department (2024) reported that between 2024 and 2028, the projected trend suggests a continual decline in the number of Facebook users in Malaysia, with an estimated total decrease of 2.2 million users over this period. Based on this forecast, by 2028, the Facebook user base is expected to have dwindled for the sixth consecutive year, reaching a total of 21.33 million users. In Malaysia, among the various age groups of social media users, those belonging to the demographic born during the internet boom and aged between 25 and 34 are the most engaged. This cohort constitutes approximately 31.5% of the



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total population, translating to roughly 8.4 million users (Howe, 2024). Additionally, the Generation Z cohort in Malaysia, comprised of individuals aged 16 to 24, exhibits the highest level of addiction to social networks, particularly among women. On average, Malaysian Generation Z spends approximately 3 hours and 11 minutes online, exceeding the average of 2 hours and 40 minutes spent by men in the same age group (Lifestyle Asia, 2022).

Social media addiction constitutes a behavioural dependency on social media platforms, characterized by individuals' strong attachment to these platforms. Symptoms of this addiction encompass mood fluctuations triggered by experiences on social media. Across various platforms, a significant portion of Malaysians perceive social media as a contributor to their overall happiness and find it challenging to abstain from its use. While previous research has explored addiction to technology-driven activities, such as Social Network Games (Chatterjee et al., 2022) or technology addiction broadly (Chopdar, et al., 2022), there is a lack of specific focus on addiction to Social Networking Sites (SNSs) among the digital generation. Hence, it is noteworthy to highlight that limited studies have comprehensively assessed the factors influencing the digital generation's propensity towards addiction to mobile social networking sites in Malaysia.

### Objectives

The overarching objective of this research is to analyse the relationships between enjoyment, sociability, information value, social influence, social skills, and Generation Z's inclination towards addiction to mobile social networking sites.

### Research Scope

The research focuses on understanding the dynamics of addiction to mobile social networking sites among Generation Z individuals in Malaysia. With a specific emphasis on variables such as enjoyment, sociability, information value, social influence, and social skills, the study aims to elucidate the intricate relationships between these factors and the propensity for addiction to platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. By honing in on the unique characteristics and behaviours of Generation Z, particularly those aged between 16 and 24 years old, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the drivers of social media addiction within this demographic, shedding light on the underlying mechanisms that contribute to excessive engagement with online platforms.

Through rigorous data collection methods, including surveys and questionnaires tailored to capture the nuances of Generation Z's social media usage patterns, the research



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endeavours to generate empirical evidence that can inform interventions and strategies aimed at mitigating social media addiction in Malaysia. By delving into the intricate interplay between enjoyment, sociability, information value, social influence, and social skills, the study aspires to offer practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals seeking to address the growing concern of excessive social media consumption among the younger generation. Ultimately, the research strives to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex phenomenon of social media addiction, fostering awareness and facilitating proactive measures to promote healthier digital habits among Generation Z in Malaysia.

Figure 1 presents the proposed research model used in this study based on the literature review and hypotheses developed.

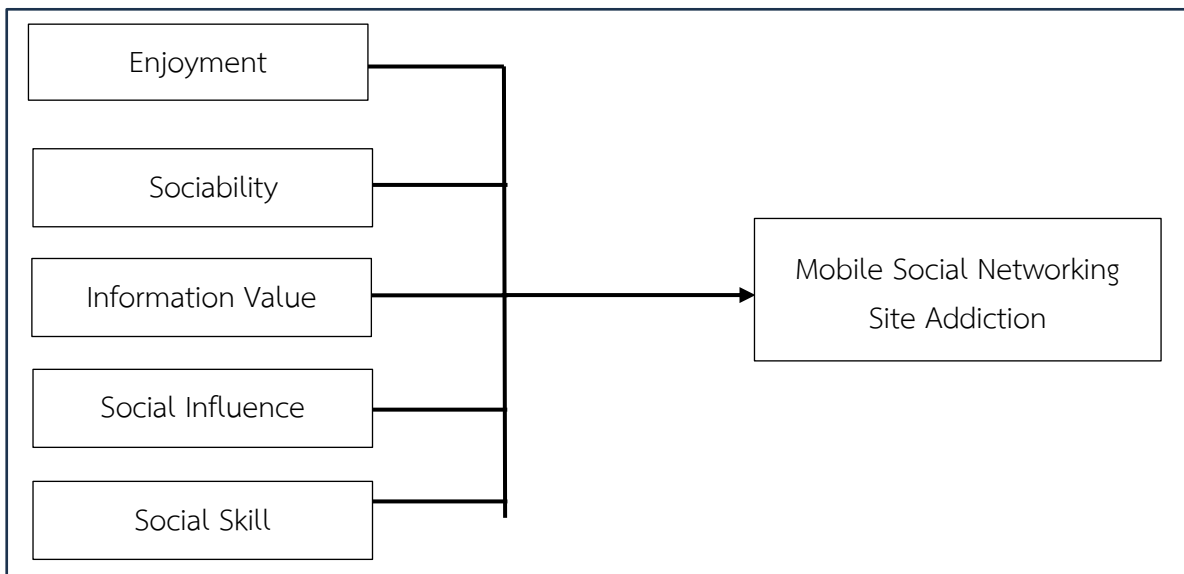


Figure 1: Proposed research model of Mobile Social Networking Site Addiction.

**Literature Review**

**Mobile Social Networking Site addiction**

Mobile Social Networking Site addiction involves a range of activities like sharing information, seeking solace, and escaping daily routines, along with convenient communication with others. Despite the benefits of social media, excessive usage can lead to negative consequences, impacting other commitments. While social media offer advantages such as improved communication and sharing experiences, it is essential to acknowledge the





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### Information Value

Information value refers to the role of social media in providing individuals with opportunities to discover and exchange information (Wan, et al., 2016). Mobile SNS platforms allow users to effortlessly share various types of information, such as text and videos, and easily search for desired information by entering keywords (Kumar, et al., 2018). Users can conveniently access the latest information through features like hot searches on mobile SNS, enhancing their experience. The primary goal of using mobile SNS is often centered around sharing and seeking information (Gong, et al., 2019), fostering connections and enabling individuals to maintain relationships even when physically apart. Research indicates that users who engage in sharing, documenting information, and self-presentation on platforms like WeChat tend to feel more at ease (Gan & Li, 2017). Younger SNS users are inclined towards sharing personal experiences and seeking specific information on social media platforms (Zhang et al., 2018). Miranda, et al. (2023) found that information plays a crucial role in enhancing users' experience on Social Networking Sites (SNS) and can lead to addiction. The impact of information value on flow is particularly pronounced among young users, who are more susceptible to addiction when experiencing flow during SNS usage. Based on past findings, this study hypothesises the following:

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between information value and mobile social networking site addiction*

### Social Influence

Individuals are inclined to be influenced by social factors as they tend to rely on the opinions and judgments of others for guidance. This susceptibility to social influence stems from the inclination to seek information from others, conform to societal expectations for rewards or avoidance of penalties, and associate one's identity with others by adopting specific products or brands. Social networking platforms enable users to enhance brand awareness, shape brand image and reputation, and express preferences for particular brands. Consequently, these platforms serve as a channel for social influence, where users may consider the perceptions and judgments of others in their consumer decision-making processes (Ruiz-Mafe, et al., 2018). Female consumers tend to be more susceptible to social influence, aligning with previous research findings (Koivisto & Hamari, 2019). Conversely, male consumers are less affected by social influence, with the impact of social influence on the intention to use gamified systems considered insignificant for male consumers (Aydin, 2018).







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Table 2: Discriminant Validity HMTM

	Enjoyment	Information Value	Mobile Social Networking Site Addiction	Social Influence
Enjoyment				
Information Value	0.7			
Mobile Social Networking Site Addiction	0.656	0.636		
Social Influence	0.799	0.621	0.765	

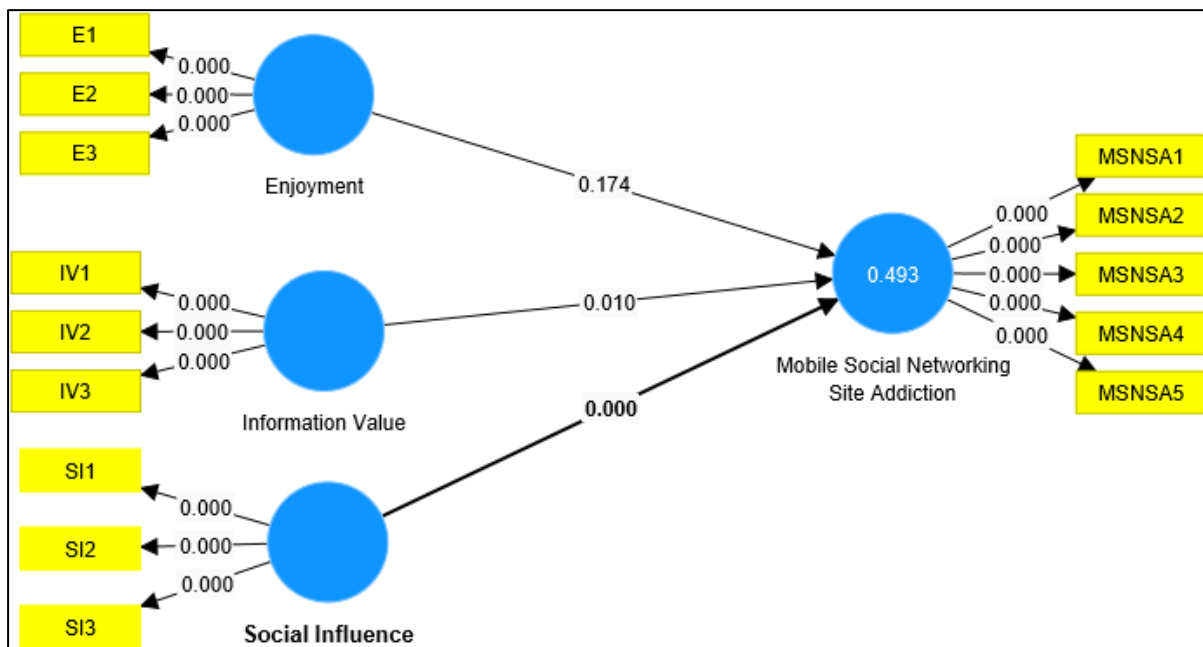


Figure 2: Results of structural modelling analysis

The structural model in this study represents the relationships between the constructs or latent variables hypothesized in the research model. The R2 value for the endogenous construct of repurchase intention was high at 0.439, indicating a high level of predictive accuracy. Bootstrapping analysis was performed on 5000 subsamples to test the significance of the regression coefficients, which can be used to determine if the proposed hypotheses were significant or not. From the initial set of paths, three were found to be significant at the 0.01 level, and the remaining paths were insignificant. The path coefficients of mobile social networking site addiction with information value and social influence were 2.572 ( $p < 0.01$ )





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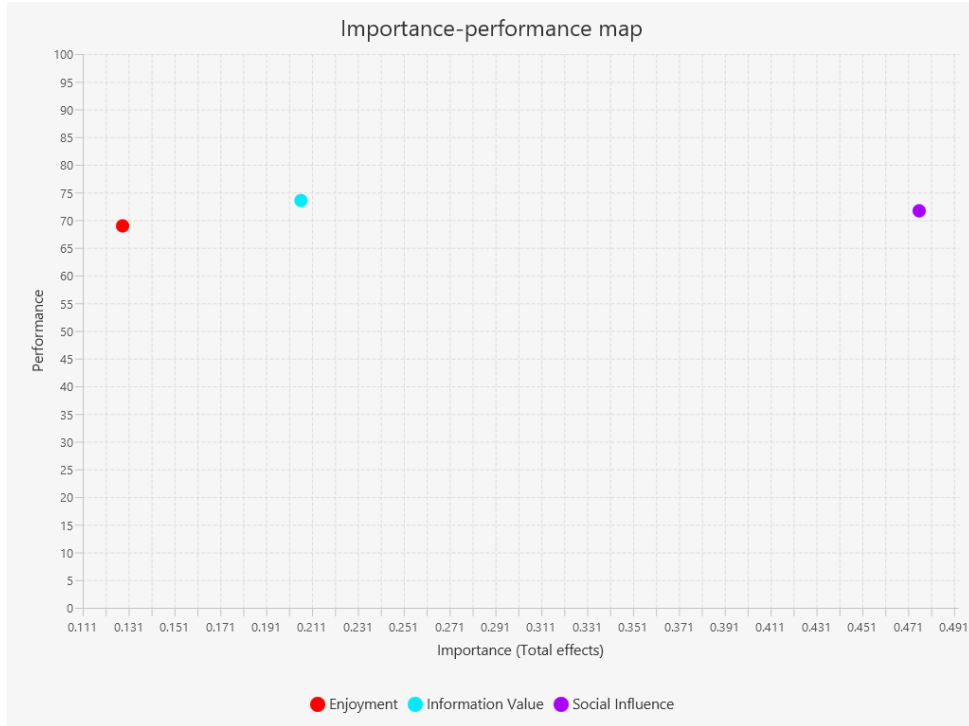


Figure 3: Importance-Performance Map by constructs

The Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) data indicated that while the information value demonstrated high performance, it was not a significant predictor of addiction on mobile social networking sites. The IPMA results highlighted that social influence emerged as the most crucial factor influencing addiction on these platforms. Specifically, a one-point increase in social influence performance correlated with a 0.447 increase in addiction performance, while sociability, enjoyment, and information value contributed to addiction performance by 0.061, 0.070, and 0.138, respectively. These findings underscore the areas requiring enhancement in factors influencing addiction to mobile social networking sites within the Malaysian context.

### Conclusion and Discussion

While this study offers valuable insights into the progression and patterns of mobile social networking site addiction among Malaysian users, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, the exclusive focus on Malaysia may limit the generalizability of these findings to other cultural contexts. Variations in cultural nuances and societal norms across different regions and countries could impact the manifestation of addiction behaviours. Secondly, the quantitative nature of the investigation may restrict the depth of understanding



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regarding the intricate sociocultural factors influencing addiction. Future research endeavours could benefit from employing qualitative methodologies to provide richer contextual insights into the complexities of mobile social networking site addiction within the Malaysian context.

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