

# THE EFFECT OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION ON SOCIAL ANXIETY IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH COPING STYLES

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**ABSTRACT--***Social anxiety in social media was related to the anxiety formed due to the fear and uneasiness towards social interactions in a social media setting. A person's attitude towards emotional expression was a factor that is related to social anxiety in social media. Positive attitude towards emotional expression can reduce the social anxiety in social media whereas negative attitude can worsen the social anxiety in social media. Effective coping style can be used to reduce the level of social anxiety in social media. The research objective was to investigate the effect of the attitude towards emotional expression on the level of social anxiety in social media among university students. This research also aimed to investigate the relationship between coping styles and social anxiety in social media. A total of 210 public university students of Psychology Program involved in this quantitative research. The data obtained was analysed through correlation test and simple regression test. Research result show that there was attitude of emotional expression predicted the level of social anxiety in social media among university students. In addition, this research also found that denial, behavioural disengagement and self-blame coping style is positively correlated with social anxiety in social media. Therefore, avoidance in using of these coping styles may aid in reducing the social anxiety in social media.*

**Key Words--** *Social Media, Social Anxiety, Emotional Expression, Coping Style*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a new approach of communication that revolutionised the way people interact with each other. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, various social media sites were established and introduced to the public such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. These platform is a sign of globalization which induced social changes in the society such as exchanges of cultures and values, along with vast amount of information and technologies (Abdul Hamid, 2016). Such advancement in communication technology represents the changes in the way people communicate with each other. From the two-way communication in the past, the human interactions have evolved to a more all-directional communication with the emergent of social media where the users can share and receive

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contents from other users easily due to the convenience and accessibility of social media. In addition, due to the benefits of controlling the specification for communicating such as who to communicate with as well as where and where to conduct the interaction, social media proved to provide various benefits to its user (Scealy, Phillips & Stevenson, 2002).

This phenomenon of social media is also common in Malaysia setting and can be reflected through the statistic for usage of social media in Malaysia. According to the Internet Users Survey in 2016, total of 80% of the internet users in Malaysia are active social media users (MCMC, 2016). Facebook was the most popular social media consisting of 80 % of the total internet user in Malaysia, followed by WeChat at 60.2%, Instagram at 46.0% and YouTube at 42.1%.. In average, each social media user possessed 4 social media account in various social media platform. Study by Sannusi, Ibrahim, Shaari and Subhi (2019) shows that teenagers in low income group (B40) had access to social media and used social media moderately. According to study by Salman, Mohammad Salleh, Mustafa & Ali (2015), Malaysian youth generally use social media as a media for entertainment and social networking. Many past studies were conducted to understand the phenomenon of social media in Malaysia (A. Rahman, HJ. Hassan, Osman & Waheed, 2017). These showed that Malaysians are engaging in social media actively in their daily life.

However, the revolution of social media also presented some challenges to the mental health of social media users. Various of psychological effects are found to be related to social media uses such as depression (Jones et al., 2016), anxiety (Vannucci, Flannery, Ohaannessian, 2013) and low self-esteem (Woods & Scott, 2016). A study by Young Health Movement & Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) discovered that the main four social media application, namely Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter negatively affect mental health of the users (RSPH, 2017).

Mental health issues in Malaysia had been showing an increasing trend in number of cases in the past 20 years. Based on the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2015 Volume III (NHMS) conducted by the Ministry of Health Malaysia, for each ten individuals aged six and above, three individuals were found suffering from at least one type of mental health problems with prevalence at 29.2%. Comparing this statistic with the statistics in NHMS Volume I and Volume II carried out in 1996 and 2013 respectively, the prevalence of mental health problems has doubled from 10.7% in 1996 and 11.2% in 2006. Such data showed that the mental health among Malaysian community is getting worse and critical. Depression, anxiety and stress were mental health issues that were prevalent among university students in Malaysia (Shamsuddin et al, 2013). Salina et al. (2008) studied on the prevalence of social anxiety among university students in Malaysia and found out that more than half of the respondents facing social anxiety in daily life. A similar research was conducted by Al-Naggar (2012) with a similar finding as the study above.

Among all the mental health issues, social anxiety is one of the mental problem that was often said to be related to the usage of social media. Pierce (2009) did a study on the use of social media in relation with social anxiety. This study found out that people with higher tendency to experience social anxiety in daily life prefer to

communicate through social media compared to face-to-face interaction, thus social media may act as an escape tool for these people. This finding is supported by study from Lee-Won, Herzog & Park (2015). Many past studies investigated on the relationship between social anxiety and the use of social media. These studies were conducted based on different parameters to measure the use of social media. A study by Primack et al. (2017) found out that the higher number of social media accounts used by an individual is related to higher tendency to be affected by social anxiety. In addition, the number of hours spent in social media is related to the level of social anxiety (Murphy and Tasker, 2011).

One of the factors for the increasing trend of social anxiety is said to be associated to the way people see human interaction in life. Nowadays, humans are concerned about other people's opinions towards themselves during social interaction. A constant concern about how to present oneself in public can increase the risk of social anxiety in that individual (Hulme, Hirsch & Stopa, 2012; Di Blasi et al., 2015). A study by Spokas, Luterek and Heimberg (2009) found out that individual with social anxiety tends to generally have a more negative belief towards expression of emotions. These people tend to have perceptions that expression of emotion is a weakness that may cause social rejection, thus having a greater fear to experience or loss control of their emotions. Kashdan, Volkmann, Breen dan Han (2007) reported a similar finding which shows that suppression of negative emotions helps those with social anxiety to enhance their capabilities in building more ideal relationships. However, due to the preference of those with social anxiety to use social media for daily human interaction nowadays (Pierce, 2009; Lee-Won, Herzog & Park, 2015), it is essential to understand if the relationship between attitudes towards emotional expression and social anxiety, with social media as the platform, matches those in the past studies.

In order to cope with the mental health issues, various coping styles are being applied to cope in daily life. Coping styles were found to be associated with mental health problems, such as depression (Bullare @ Bahari, Ismail, Madlan @ En dalan and Lajuma, 2015) and anxiety (Legerstee, Garenfski, Verhulst and Utens, 2011). Plunckett, Radmacher and Moll-Phanara (2000) divided coping styles into two categories, productive coping and non-productive coping. Productive coping are the coping styles that aim to solve a problem proactively without involving in activities that may cause harm to oneself whereas non-productive coping are referred to coping with an objective to be in avoidance of the problem or that may bring physical or mental harm to that particular individual. A study by Bahari, Rathakrishnan and Ismail (2009) investigated on the coping style used by university students found out that students prefer to use productive coping style compared to non-productive coping style. Thus, it is important to choose the suitable coping style when facing a problem.

The relationship between social anxiety and coping style has been established through past studies. Tamannaefar dan Sanatkarfar in 2017 conducted a research and found out that coping style, through classification into problem-focused and emotional focused was related to the social anxiety. Problem-focused coping styles were negatively related to social anxiety whereas emotional-focused coping styles were positively related to social anxiety. This finding proves that emotional-focused coping may cause or worsen social anxiety. Roohafza, et al. (2014) classified coping style into active coping style and passive coping style, discovered that active coping styles acted as

buffer for social anxiety level which was more effective than passive coping style. These finding is supported by past study which reported that emotional and passive copings are positively related to social anxiety (Pozzi et al., 2015). However, there is lack of study that focused in the setting of social media despite being one of the emerging platform for human interaction.

Thus, the objective of this study is to identify the effect of attitude towards emotional expression on the level of social anxiety in social media. The researchers also aims to study the relationship between coping style and the level of social anxiety in social media.

The research question for this study are:

RQ1: What is the level of social anxiety in social media among undergraduate Psychology students?

RQ2: What is the attitude of undergraduate Psychology student towards emotional expression?

RQ3: What is the coping style commonly used among undergraduate Psychology students?

RQ4: What is the relationship between social anxiety in social media and attitude towards emotional expression among undergraduate Psychology students?

RQ5: Does the attitude towards emotional expression affect the level of social anxiety in social media among undergraduate Psychology students?

RQ6: What is the relationship between coping style and the level of social anxiety in social media among undergraduate Psychology students?

## **II. METHODS**

### ***Design of the study***

The design used in this study is quantitative study. The data obtained in this study is collected through survey method through distribution of questionnaires. Three variables were involved in this study, that is attitude towards emotional expression, coping style and social anxiety in social media.

### ***Population and Sampling Method***

The population that is targeted in this study is undergraduate Psychology student enrolled in the National University of Malaysia within the age range of 19 years old to 30 years old that uses social media actively in daily life. Total number of 210 respondents were involved in the study. Due to a small number of population, the researcher used a non-probability sampling method by involving the whole population as the sample group. Despite this sampling method may causes the data obtained to be in violation of normality, it enables the researcher to identify and understand the issue in specific and detailed.

### ***Instrument***

The instrument used in this quantitative research consists of five section. The first sections consist of questions related to the demographic information of the respondents which includes gender, ages, ethnicity and year of study.

In the second section, the questionnaire asked about the social media behaviours of the respondents through questions related to the usage of gadgets and the tendency of respondents to use social media under certain situation.

The third section contain questions to measure the attitudes of respondents towards emotional expression. This sections uses the Attitude towards Emotional Expression Scale (AEE) by Joseph, Williams, Irving and Cammock (1994). This questionnaire consist of 20 questions with 5 point Likert scale which the respondent are required to answer the question within the range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 9=(strongly agree). The higher the score obtained by the respondents represents a more negative attitudes toward emotional expression. This scale proven to be highly reliable with  $\alpha=0.90$ (Joseph, Williams, Irving and Cammock,1994).

Forth section in the questionnaire is the Brief COPE Scale or the Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced – COPE – Inventory introduced by Carver in 1997 based on the original COPE Scale by Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989). The purpose of this section is to measure and identify the coping style used by the undergraduate students. Total number of 14 dimensions of coping styles is being studied through 28 questions in the scale. The researcher modified the scoring of the scale by replacing the 4 point Likert scale used in original version of the scale into a 7 point Likert scale to  $\alpha=0.5$  which is within the range of acceptable to measure the coping style of respondents (Carver, 1997).

The last section in the questionnaire contains the Social Anxiety Scale for Social Media Users (SAS-SMU) by Alkış, Kadirhan and Sat (2017). This scale is used to measure the social anxiety level of respondents when using social media. This scale can be separated into four different factors which are :1) shared content anxiety, SCA, 2) privacy concern anxiety, PCA, 3) interaction anxiety, IA, and 4) self-evaluation anxiety, SEA. Total of 21 questions is asked in this scale. As the scale uses a 5 point Likert scale, the respondents are asked to answer these question in the range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scores are summed up for the dimensions and a total score is calculated through the addition of the scoring of the dimensions. The higher the score obtained by the respondents represents a higher level of social anxiety in social media by that respondents. This scale has a high level of reliability for each of the dimensions that is within the range of 0.80 and 0.92. (Alkış, Kadirhan and Sat, 2017).

### ***Procedure***

Data in this research was collected through the use of hard copies of questionnaires prepared by the researcher. Data collection was conducted during the break of lectures involving Psychology undergraduate students in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities in the National University of Malaysia. The researcher had obtained permission from the lecturers before approached the respondents in person and asked for consent from the respondents. The respondent were informed that the information and data collected through the questionnaires will be kept in confidential and will not be used for any other purpose without consent from the respondents. An estimated 30 minutes time limit were given to the respondents to answer the questionnaires as truthful as possible.

### *Data Analysis*

The data collected were analysed with the use of Statistical Packages for the Sosial Science (SPSS version 23). Two type of analysis were conducted which were descriptive analysis and inference analysis. Descriptive analysis was carried out to analyse the mean and standard deviation of the variables and thus determine the level for each variables. Inference analysis was used to understand the relationship between the variables. A simple regression analysis was conducted to measure the effect of attitude towards emotional expression towards emotional expression towards social anxiety in social media. Correlation test was carried out to identify the relationship between coping styles and the level of social anxiety in social media.

## **III. RESULT**

### *Demographic Data*

Total number of 210 respondents were involved in this study. Majority of the respondents were female at 159 respondents (75.7%) while only 51 male respondents (24.3%) were involved in this study. The respondents were divided into three academic years. 46 respondents (21.9%) were enrolled as first year students, followed by 90 respondents (42.9%) in their second year while 74 respondents (35.2%) reported to be in their third academic year. Majority of the respondents were from Malays ethnicity at 155 respondents (73.8%) followed by Chinese ethnicity at 31 respondents (14.8%) and 7 respondents (3.3%) were reported to be from Indian ethnicity. In addition, 6 respondents (3.9%) were Sabah Bumiputera while 4 respondents (2.9%) reported as Sarawak Bumiputera. There were 5 respondents reported their ethnicity as others aboriginal ethnicity reported the lowest number of respondents with a total number at 2 respondents (1.0%).

### *Descriptive Analysis*

Table 1 represents the result obtained from the descriptive analysis on the three variables in the study. For the variable attitude towards emotional expression e, it can be seen that the respondents reported a moderately positive attitudes towards emotional expression ( $M=60.59$ ,  $SD=11.18$ ).

The next variable involved is the coping style used by the respondents when facing stressful problems. The data shows that religion coping were the most used coping style among the respondents ( $M=11.13$ ,  $SD=2.6390$ ), followed by planning ( $M=11.06$ ,  $SD=1.7254$ ) and self-distraction ( $M=10.90$ ,  $SD=1.9843$ ). Substance use were the least used coping style ( $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=0.8587$ ), followed by behavioural disengagement ( $M=5.6$ ,  $SD=2.5869$ ) and denial ( $M=7.03$ ,  $SD=2.3557$ ).

Based on the same table, a moderate level of social anxiety in social media were reported among the respondents ( $M=69.68$ ,  $SD=13.5752$ ). Among the four dimension in social anxiety in social media, privacy concern anxiety have the highest level of score ( $M=3.75$ ,  $SD=0.6994$ ) whereas interaction anxiety has the lowest score

(M=2.91, SD=0.8985) This shows that the respondents were most anxious about their privacy in social media and least anxious about the interaction with others in social media.

**Table 1:** Descriptive analysis on attitude towards emotional expression, coping style and social anxiety in social media

	Mean	Standard deviation
Attitude towards emotional expression	60.59	11.18
Self-distraction	10.90	1.9843
Active coping	10.59	1.7125
Denial	7.03	2.3557
Substance abuse	2.24	0.8587
Emotional support	10.22	2.1504
Instrumental support	10.76	2.2055
Behavioural disengagement	5.60	2.5869
Venting	9.05	2.5287
Positive reframing	10.88	1.9589
Planning	11.06	1.7254
Humor	8.20	3.2115
Acceptance	10.87	1.9445
Religion	11.13	2.6390
Self-blame	8.18	3.113
Social anxiety in social media	69.68	13.5752
Sharing content anxiety	3.29	0.8388
Privacy concern anxiety	3.75	0.5994
Interaction anxiety	2.91	0.8985
Self-evaluation anxiety	3.47	0.8449

### *Inference Analysis*

#### *Correlation between attitudes towards emotional expression and social anxiety in social media*

Table 2 shows the result from correlation test between attitudes towards emotional expression and social anxiety in social media. It can be seen that there is a significant relationship between attitudes towards emotional expression and social anxiety in social media. The relationship is reported to be moderate and positive [ $r(210)=0.344$ ,  $p,0.01$ ].

**Table 2:** Correlation between attitudes towards emotional expression and social anxiety in social media

	Social anxiety in social media
	R
Attitude towards emotional expression	0.344**

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

***Correlation between coping style and social anxiety in social media***

Based on Table 3, there are a few coping style that shows significant relationship with social anxiety in social media. Self-blaming [r(210)=0.260, p<0.01] and behavioural disengagement [r(201)=0.231, p<0.01] were found to have a very significant positive relationship with social anxiety in social media whereas a significant relationship were found between denial and social anxiety in social media [r(210)=0.142, p<0.05]. This result shows that the more these coping style is being practiced, the higher the level of social anxiety in social media. The relationships between other coping style and social anxiety in social media are reported to be non-significant.

**Table 3:**Correlation between coping style and social anxiety in social media

Coping Style	Social Anxiety in Social Media
	r
Self-distraction	0.087
Active coping	-0.040
Denial	0.142*
Substance abuse	-0.113
Emotional support	0.010
Instrumental support	0.029
Behavioural disengagement	0.231**
Venting	0.097
Positive reframing	-0.127
Planning	-0.013
Humor	0.041
Acceptance	-0.110
Religion	-0.160
Self-blaming	0.260**

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

***Effect of attitude towards emotional expression on social anxiety in social media***



Table 4 shows the regression table of the effect of attitude towards emotional expression towards social anxiety in social media among the respondents. Regression analysis shows that there were a moderate significant relationship between the attitude towards emotional expression towards social anxiety in social media [ $F(1, 208) = 27.836, p < 0.000$ ] and the attitude towards emotional expression factor contributed 11.8% variance towards the level of social anxiety in social media among the undergraduate Psychology students.

**Table 4:** Effect of attitude towards emotional expression on social anxiety in social media

Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	P
Attitude towards social anxiety	0.344	0.118	0.411	0.078	0.344	5.276	0.000

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### ***RQ1: What is the level of social anxiety in social media among undergraduate Psychology students?***

The analysis of data showed that the level of social anxiety in social media among undergraduate Psychology students is moderate. One of the reason that can explain this result is that Psychology students are mostly equipped with various knowledge and skills in controlling and avoiding social anxiety in social media. This is because the student will be required to learn and identify similar behaviours to be able to provide assistance to other people in the profession. In addition, it is to be believed that most Psychology students have effective and high level of communication skills as such profession requires the students to be highly sociable and able to interact with other people without the feeling of anxiety and worried (Parson, 2018). Therefore, researcher believed that this causes the students to be more opened while interacting and less susceptible to be influenced by other people.

Result from data analysis found out privacy concern anxiety was the most serious dimension among the four dimension in social anxiety in social media based on the scale whereas interaction anxiety was the least serious. This showed that most undergraduate Psychology students are mostly worried about the breach of personal information on social media. In other hand, they are not worried about interacting in social media which is supported by the notion that Psychology students should possess high level of communication skill (Parson, 2018).

##### ***RQ2: What is the attitude of undergraduate Psychology student towards emotional expression?***

The result showed that most of the undergraduate Psychology students have moderately positive attitude towards emotional expression. Openness is one of the most important elements in learning Psychology as the profession requires to be highly interactive with other people and willing to open to emotional expression from clients and those in need of help. Therefore, it is common for Psychology students to be taught about the importance of openness and learned about ways to promote positive attitudes towards emotional expression in lectures. However, it is undeniable that there were other factors that may affect their attitudes towards emotional expression such as personality (Laghai & Joseph, 2011) towards a more negative attitudes.

***RQ3: What is the coping style commonly used among undergraduate Psychology students?***

Result from this study showed that undergraduate Psychology students have highest tendency to apply religion coping style, followed by planning and positive reframing as the coping style of choice. In other hand, coping style related to substance abuse is the least used coping style by the students, followed by behavioural disengagement and denial.

According to Plunckett, Radmachar and Moll-Phanara (2000), coping style can be divided into two categories that is productive coping and non-productive coping. Productive coping are the coping styles that aim to solve a problem proactively without involving in activities that may cause harm to oneself such as active coping, positive reframing, seeking for emotional and physical support or seeking for guidance from religion whereas non-productive coping are referred to coping with an objective to be in avoidance of the problem or that may bring physical or mental harm to that particular individual such as being in denial, self-blame and substance abuse. This result obtained from this study shows that the undergraduate Psychology students practiced productive coping style and avoided using non-productive coping style. This can be due to the knowledge learned from various subjects in lecturers as coping and self-regulation is one of the basic topic in Psychology.

The students involved in the study have highest tendency to apply religious coping This matches the culture of Malaysians where religion is practiced actively in daily life. Religion was used as a common coping strategy in Malaysia and found to be effective as a buffer against depression (Ibrahim, Desa & Kong, 2015) Religion also found to be effective in reducing suicidal ideation (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Thus, these student may turn toward religious coping through mediation and prayers when facing problems in life. In addition, as substances such as drugs and alcohol are classified as highly controlled substances in Malaysia, students will have less tendency and opportunity to use substance use coping as a way to cope with problems in life. These result can also be related to the lessons learned from the Psychology course where students will learned about the importance of religions as guidance in life and the harm of abusing drugs and alcohol to their physical and mental health

One interesting take from the result is that these students still practice avoidance as a way to cope with problems despite self-distraction coping is classified as non-productive coping style. This result matches the data obtained from a research by Jensen, Forlini, Partridge dan Hall (2016) showing that self-distraction is the most used coping style among university student, An explanation for this result is that self-distraction coping is generally used as a method of coping by detaching oneself from the problems temporary. According to Rankin, Walsh & Sweeny (2019), self-distraction with flow-inducing activity is an effective method of coping that allow that particular individual to avoid unhealthy habits and may produce a positive outcome in a long run. This is can be achieved based on the notion that self-distraction act as a brief break in between the time-consuming process of trying to solve the problems. This is also supported by Wolgast and Lundh (2017) stating that distraction can be adaptive as

an emotional regulation strategy. Therefore, this can be used to explain the wide use of self-distraction as coping among the undergraduate Psychology students.

***RQ4: What is the relationship between social anxiety in social media and attitude towards emotional expression among undergraduate Psychology students?***

This study found out that there high level of social anxiety in social media is significantly related to the negative attitude towards emotional expression among the students. This finding is supported by Spokas, Luterak and Heimberg (2009) with a finding that shows positive relationship between social anxiety and attitude towards emotional expression. Therefore, it can be concluded that similar relationship is also reflected in social media setting.

***RQ5: Does the attitude towards emotional expression affect the level of social anxiety in social media among undergraduate Psychology students?***

Study found out that the attitude towards emotional expression do affect the level of social anxiety in social media among undergraduate Psychology students. Negative attitude towards emotional expression predicted higher level of social anxiety in social media whereas positive attitude towards emotional expression predicted lower level of social anxiety in social media.

Individuals with negative attitude toward emotional expression will have a negative belief towards the emotional expression behaviours. They will have a belief that emotional expression is weakness that should not be shown to other people. Therefore, these people will have a compulsive behaviours to ensure that they do not express out their inner emotions and only keep those emotions to themselves In addition, they worried that expressing such emotions will give negative impressions to other people thus affecting their opinions toward them. Based on the cognitive model by Beck, Emery and Greenberg (1985), such mind set will construct a dysfunctional belief, causing high level of social anxiety.

In other hand, individuals with positive attitude toward emotional expression are more opened to expression emotions. Thus, they can accept the behaviours of expressing emotions by themselves and other people during social interaction either in face-to-face communication or through social media. This allowed them to be less concern and worried during the process of interaction and therefore reducing the risk of being socially anxious in social media.

Based on the result obtained, three copings style, self-blaming, behavioural disengagement and denial are positively related to the level of social anxiety in social media. This shows that the more these coping style is used the higher the level of social anxiety in social media.

Based on the cognitive model by Beck, Emery and Greenberg (1985), a person with social anxiety tends to have dysfunctional belief towards themselves and the their environment. Individuals with tendency to use self-blaming as coping will have high tendency to blame themselves under various situations and thus having a low self-evaluation.

This causes a positive feedback loop thus reinforcing the dysfunctional belief engraved in themselves. Thus, it can be suggested that this interaction also is true in a social media setting.

Behavioural disengagement and denial are two coping styles that aim to detach themselves from the problems. This finding matches the finding from Pozzi et al. (2015) which stated that passive coping style worsen the severity of social anxiety of an individual. In social media, individual with social anxiety tends to reduce effort in building interaction or in denial of their weakness in human interaction. However, such coping styles only remove themselves from social interaction by not facing the problem directly. Thus, these coping styles do not improve the social anxiety in themselves, but may cause increase in the social anxiety level in social media. Avoidance from using these coping style may aid in reducing the level of social anxiety in social media.

## V. CONCLUSION

In overall, the attitudes towards emotion expression is found to be a significant predictor for social anxiety in social media. A positive attitude or belief towards emotional expression can reduce the level of social anxiety in social media and vice versa. This finding showed that the belief of emotional expression should be one of the aspects to be focused on when dealing with the issue of social anxiety in social media setting. This study also found that the coping style used is related to the level of social anxiety in social media. Denial, behavioural disengagement and self-blaming are coping styles that show significant and positive relationships with the level of social anxiety in social media. Thus, researcher reckon that these coping style should be focused in the effort to reduce the level of social anxiety in social media.

### *Implications, Limitations and Recommendations*

This study presented a few implications. The behaviour and belief related expressing emotions in social media is often left out when discussing about the mental health issues in social media. However, the finding of this study shows that the attitudes towards emotional expression presented effect on the level of social anxiety in social media. Thus, it can be implied that the belief of emotional expression may be one of the reason of the increasing trend of mental health issues in social media settings and worth to be focused on. In addition, this study found out that most coping style are not significantly related to the level of social anxiety in social media, except denial, behavioural disengagement and self-blaming. It is implied that reducing the usage of these coping style may present a more effective result in lowering the level of social anxiety in social media, compared to controlling the usage of other coping style. This finding may present a new perspective for the effort in tackling the social anxiety in social media. A number of limitation of this research are worthy to be addressed. Firstly, the method of data collection that is being used in this research. The result and discussion that can be formed are only limited within the scope of the questions in the questionnaire. A more advanced method may be able to provide a more insightful discovery regarding the issue that is being studied. Secondly, the size of the instrument used in this research which consist of more than 80 questions can be overwhelming for the respondents. The respondents may felt pressured when

answering the questionnaire which may cause them to answer untruthfully . Such incidents may affect the validity and reliability of the result of this research. Finally, the population that is being studied in this research is only limited to undergraduates enrolled in Psychology program in the National University of Malaysia. Due to the small size of population, the researcher used a non-probability sampling method in this research by taking the whole population as the sample. This type of sampling method may causes the data obtained to be in violation of normality, thus difficult to be generalised to a wider population.

Future researches in this area are strongly suggested to adapt a wider population with a better sampling method in order to achieve a better understanding regarding the social anxiety in social media. In addition, future studies can conduct research with more than one population in order to allow comparison between groups. Researchers are also recommended to use more advanced data collection methods such as interview in order to fully understand the relationship between attitudes towards emotional expression, coping style and social anxiety in social media.

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