

Role of Social Media Dependency Factors and *Tabayyun* Towards Youth Behaviour on Social Media

Peranan Faktor Pergantungan Media Sosial dan *Tabayyun* Terhadap Tingkah Laku Belia Terhadap Media Sosial

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ABSTRACT

In today's society, social media is a primary source of information, particularly regarding events occurring around us. However, information on social media is not necessarily accurate and true. The social media users need to verify what is being disseminated on social media continuously. Thus, this study is conducted to identify the factors, including tabayyun, that influence youth behaviour on social media. Tabayyun, an Islamic concept, denotes verification and confirmation, surpassing the English equivalent by evaluating the information source's character and trustworthiness. This study used the Media Dependency Theory by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur as the guide study. Some 200 Malay youths aged 15 to 40 responded to a questionnaire about social media usage, tabayyun, awareness, social media systems, social systems, and individual and social information needs. According to the findings, there is a significant correlation between these variables and self-reported youth behaviour. Thus, the notion of tabayyun emerges as a significant aspect in verifying social media information in Malaysia.

Keywords: Media dependency; tabayyun; social media; behavior; youth

ABSTRAK

Masyarakat hari ini menggunakan media sosial sebagai sumber utama maklumat terutamanya peristiwa yang berlaku di sekeliling kita. Namun, maklumat di media sosial tidak semestinya tepat dan benar. Oleh itu, adalah penting bagi pengguna media sosial untuk terus mengesahkan perkara yang disebarkan di media sosial. Justeru, kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor termasuk tabayyun di media sosial yang mempengaruhi tingkah laku belia. Tabayyun adalah konsep Islam yang bermaksud pengesahan dan pengesahan tetapi ia melangkaui bahasa Inggeris yang setara dengan juga termasuk mengesahkan watak dan kredibiliti pembawa maklumat. Kajian ini menggunakan Teori Ketergantungan Media oleh Sandra Ball-Rokeach dan Melvin DeFleur sebagai panduan kajian. Kira-kira 200 belia Melayu berumur 15 hingga 40 tahun menjawab soal selidik tentang penggunaan media sosial, tabayyun, kesedaran, sistem media sosial, sistem sosial, dan keperluan maklumat individu dan sosial. Dapatan menunjukkan

bahawa semua pembolehubah ini mempunyai korelasi yang signifikan dengan pembolehubah bersandar; tingkah laku belia yang dilaporkan sendiri. Oleh itu, konsep tabayyun nampaknya merupakan elemen penting dalam mengesahkan maklumat daripada media sosial dalam konteks Malaysia.

Kata kunci: Ketergantungan media; tabayyun; media sosial; tingkah laku; belia

INTRODUCTION

The development of today's technology is increasingly and drastically exposing its sophistication. As the days go by, new technologies are created to meet the needs of everyday life. The community is increasingly keen to compete in using these sophisticated gadgets to get news and information on issues around them. Various forms of information technology and information communication have dominated today's world and indirectly shaped and changed the way of life, personalities, and human identity in almost every group of the world. According to Baharuddin et al. (2001, 2002), the present day is difficult to survive without the technology of today.

The growth of media today is inevitably tied to the expansion of the Internet where conventional media has an online presence. Revolutionizing the traditional print and broadcast media, social media has emerged and become one of the most popular platforms today. According to Ghazali et al. (2020) social media has taken root in society therefore it is impossible for the youth to be exposed to any social media platform. Besides, social media, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2019) are Internet-based applications that allow users to create, join, and share social networking sites which can be continuously used. Popular networking sites include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and WeChat. The user-friendly platform and easy access make this Social Networking System (SNS) highly sought after. In Malaysia, youth spend an average of 6-8 hours on the Internet every day (Ghazali et al. 2020).

The interactive features of social media are unique and widespread as it is not confined to sharing textual information but includes the ability to access and download videos, photos, audio, and games (Kietzmann & Hermkens 2019). The existence and openness of social media make it easy for people to get information quickly and that is why people use it (Amrullah, et.al. 2019). According to Effendi (2010), social media is widely used for sharing opinions, updating profiles, sending messages, and chatting. Notwithstanding its commercial aims, this online platform provides avenues for emotional expression

and sharing of information and experiences (Dadich, 2009). Society has now taken social media as a mainstream mode of communication on various matters (Destiana et al. 2020) and it serves as a medium for different communities to share their interests and activities (Singh 2008) connecting them with whomever they want.

Utusan Online (2015) reported that Argentina ranks highest in terms of hours of use of social media in the world with an average of 4.3 hours of use of social media daily. Followed by Filipina, Mexico, Brazil, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia is ranked sixth with 3.5 hours a day. South East Asia records high use of social media with the Philippines taking the lead at 4.3 hours a day, Thailand at 3.8 hours, Vietnam at 3.1 hours, Indonesia at 2.9 hours, and Singapore at 2.5 hours a day. In comparison, the use of social media in developed nations like the United States of America is only 2.7 hours a day, in South Korea 1.3 hours, and in Japan 0.7 hours a day while active social media users can take up to 12 hours a day.

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) (2022) study revealed that out of 90.1 percent of internet users in Malaysia, 80.2 percent have access to social media. Internet users on average have four social media accounts and 96.5 percent of them have Facebook accounts. However, 60 percent of users have at least one account for every social media. It is estimated that Malaysians use social media for an average of 240 minutes compared to 106.20 minutes in 2015 and 103.20 minutes in 2014. Some 4.1 percent of users use social media for more than 12 hours a day.

The emergence of social media gives space and opportunity for the public to get information fast. Broad exposure to social media as well as information overload makes content control difficult. Social media has become a major medium in communication and is a major source of information that is quite popular. Media is a powerful tool to control information for individuals, groups, and social organizations who are largely dependent on mass media to meet their goals (Grant & Guthrie, 2019; Loges & Ball-Rokeach, 1993). It cannot be denied that people now are fond of and interested in getting information on social

media than previously sought traditional print and electronic media. However, it was also found that internet users hide their true personalities by having several different identities and names on different sites. As a result, the internet has become a breeding ground for anyone to write and act irresponsibly (Al-Abri 2022).

Malaysian society has experienced various situations where sensitive and inflammatory messages that could have threatened peace and harmony were being disseminated via social media. These messages take the form of propaganda and defamation involving religion, race, language, and the Malay government to cause conflict between the multi-cultural and multi-religious people of Malaysia. For instance, Kosmo Online (2019) reported the dissemination of false information on social sites about the rampant rape of tourists on resort islands around the Terengganu State. Fake information such as this will inevitably lead to damage to image and reputation.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the concept of *tabayyun* in instilling an awareness of the importance of validating information on social media before sharing while taking into account that there could be other external elements namely social environment, motivations, and community affiliation that can also be a factor causing users to rely on social media. *Tabayyun* is an Islamic concept that means verification and confirmation. The concept of *tabayyun* extends further to assume other meanings contextually within the Quran, thus making the English language equivalent of the term superficial. The Islamic concept or terminology of *tabayyun* includes verifying the character and credibility of the information bearer.

For the foregoing reasons, this research seeks to assess the influence of these factors on youth behaviour. The objectives of this study are to identify the level of awareness of *tabayyun* on social media among youth and to assess the relationship between social media dependency factors (frequency of social media usage, *tabayyun*, social media system, social system, interpersonal network, and information needs) and youth behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE ORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SOCIAL MEDIA DEPENDENCY AND INFORMATION SHARING

The revolution of media technology began to evolve after the 1960s bringing a new pattern in society's life in obtaining information (Balaraman & Ibrahim 2019). Cheap transistors and small television stations are owned by every community. As a result of technological advances, communities are exposed to new information and experiences. Information is an essential part of the social life of communities and is a necessary resource for the exchange and sharing of ideas and thoughts (Yusoff & Hanafiah 2015). Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and every individual is given the right and the freedom to obtain the information they need. Such information enhances critical thinking and decision-making strategies to aid problem-solving and conflict resolution which is a necessary community skill.

Social media has become an important agent of information today; whether it is about politics, technology, economy, entertainment, or sports, they can be accessed quickly and easily (Chairil, Maliki & Abd Rashid 2011). The information available on social media may not be available in newspapers or other media. Information from social media can serve as a source for newspapers and television. Social media refers to the collaboration between shared media creations extending to various networks allowing micro-communities to access it (Nugroho 2020).

Usman (2015) notes that social media is a source of dissemination of information and media to share daily activities and events that occur in society, especially on political developments. The dissemination of information on social media helps narrow the information gap generally ignored by political media. Social media allows people to comment and argue on social issues, political activities, and government performance without hindrance. This facilitates political discourse and the sharing of opinions in society.

Kyung-Sun Kim et al. (2014) contend that social media is an important resource for information gathering which encourages networking to obtain up-to-date information, news, and ideas. Ease of use seems to be the main characteristic of social media which attracts students (Destiana et al. 2020). According to Davis (1989), ease of use refers to the extent to which an individual feels the use of a particular system is easy to understand and not difficult to learn. Social media is an easy-to-use medium to access information quickly (Omar et al. 2015). In addition, interpersonal and social networks are also important factors in the use of social media as a medium of communication and socialization. These factors also contribute to the use of social media for activities involving work, family, school, or society (Destiana et al. 2020). Studies by Azul et al. (2015) show that Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp are popular social media applications as they allow users to upload photos easily and quickly while delivering information faster than media. Other reasons include using social media to keep abreast with information regarding current issues in the country and abroad.

The credibility of social media is always open to question. Goldsmith and Wu (2019) highlight the lack of control of the Internet in the borderless world. Unverified sources affect the credibility of information. In their study, Azul et al. (2015) emphasize the importance of monitoring social media applications. The widespread use of social media applications can hurt users because of their large and widespread digital network. Therefore, surveillance issues need to be addressed. Although social media utilization has many benefits to users in terms of information, however, if not monitored and controlled it can lead to negative effects. Users should be aware of the need to carefully verify information on social media.

TABAYYUN ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION SHARING

Tabayyun is an Islamic concept that means verification and confirmation. The concept of *tabayyun* extends further to assume other meanings contextually within the Quran, thus making the English language equivalent of the term superficial.

The Islamic concept or terminology of *tabayyun* includes verifying the character and credibility of the information bearer. The term *tabayyun* goes beyond the linguistic meaning to assume a meaning which has its root in the Quran. The context in which *tabayyun* is presented in the Quran is tied in with the character of the information bearer. The bearer of information should be a trustworthy and credible individual for the information to be accepted (Ahmad bin Muhammad, H. 2010)

According to the 14th-century scholar Ibnu Kathir (Undated), *tabayyun* is the process of verifying news or an event before it is diffused. The concept of *tabayyun* also requires individuals to be more careful in making conclusions. Furthermore, *tabayyun* helps to maintain relations between families, communities, and organizations locally and internationally by Islamic law. History shows that slander and defamation have been prevalent in society since the early days of Islam which has impacted subsequent societies. Slander from the time of the companions of the Prophet has taken diverse forms to operate among the *Ulamas* (religious scholars), rulers, and the common people. Muslims believe that need to carefully examine any information received (see Quran 49, 6). This verse also compels verification of information received. According to one tradition about Prophet Mohammad, "Examination with calmness comes from Allah while hastiness comes from the devil."

The above-mentioned verse confirms the confession of the messenger according to Bani Musthaliq. The verse even gives a humiliating nickname to *Al Walid*, the "*fasik*", which is also defined as a liar. Early Quranic interpreters Ibn Zaid, Muqatil, and Sahl bin Abdullah explain the meaning of the "*fasik*" as a liar (*kadzdzab*), while Abul Hasan al Warraq explains that it means the wicked or a person who does not hesitate to say something sinful (see Hamka, Tafsir Al Azhar, Juzu 'XXVI, pp. 191-192). *Tabayyun* propagates that information shared should not carry with its elements of degrading or defaming others. It should not be based on suspicion and ill intention, devoid of embellishment and concoctions with the intent to bring disrepute to someone (Husaini, 2018). What's more, if the information is available on a social media platform.

Nasicha (2021) explains the concept of *tabayyun* from the perspective of scholars. In general, *tabayyun* can be defined as a thorough examination or research. The prime goal of *tabayyun* is to ensure serenity as it reflects on the cognitive maturity of thought. The legitimacy of a piece of information can be scrutinized by applying the principles of *tabayyun*. New media characteristics necessitate an accurate evaluation of information to determine credibility and trustworthiness (Badron, 2019). Therefore, in addressing this issue, social media users should only accept information on social media after comparing it with other sources of information and making an inference based on *tabayyun* principles. Users also need to investigate the information first and track the credibility of the information by looking at the responses and the comments garnered.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Upon review of theories, Media Dependency Theory is found to be appropriate for this study to identify the influence and extent of social media dependency on information and its effect on youth behavior. Sandra & Melvin's (1985) Media Dependency Theory, has three stages; macro, meso, and micro levels. All three stages are relevant to this study. In this study, the researchers emphasized the three which became the main focus of the study. Elements of the macro level are social systems and media systems; the meso level comprises interpersonal networks and the micro level consists of individual and social needs to meet goals.

The study examined the main factors that induce the reliance of youth on social media for information including factors that influence their cognitive skills of knowledge and thought, attitude and emotions and psychomotor reactions like online sharing. Previous studies have reviewed the media systems, social systems from macro levels, and micro-level requirements that are among the main factors of user dependence on social media in finding and retrieving information such as *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and other social media platforms. However, in this study, the meso aspect of interpersonal networks is also given attention.

This study integrates two additional variables into the Media Dependency Theory namely frequency of usage and *tabayyun* as studies have pointed out that frequency of usage increases dependency on the media (Ellison et al. 2019). Furthermore, the most frequently used media is regarded as highly credible

compared to less frequently used media (Schweiger 2000). However, from the perspective of *tabayyun*, the issue of the credibility of information and the medium itself is always subject to dispute as anyone could be the source of the information contained in social media (Balaraman & Ibrahim 2019).

It is therefore desirable that the concept of *tabayyun* is developed and clearly understood to ensure that any information or news received and disseminated on social media is derived from a valid and credible source. In identifying the factors that influence the dependency of youth on social media it is important to measure the level of awareness in sharing information and news on social media.

Emanating from the literature review and theoretical framework, six independent variables which are frequency of social media usage, *tabayyun*, social media systems, social systems, interpersonal networks, and needs (individual and social needs) will be tested to identify their relationship with the dependent variable (youth behavior). The study, therefore, examines the relationship between the four dimensions of Media Dependency Theory, frequency of social media usage, *tabayyun*, and youth behaviour.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

POPULATION, SAMPLING, AND DATA COLLECTION

Both online and offline surveys involving 200 youth between the ages of 15 and 40 were conducted in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. The youth was studied because they form the majority of the Malaysian population. The respondents were randomly picked from educational institutions, supermarkets, restaurants, hospitals, villages, and other areas of interest. Google Forms links were given to respondents via email and social media applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, and Telegram. Respondents who answered the questionnaire using WhatsApp, WeChat, and Telegram were asked to inform their friends who were within the age range. The process of administering the questionnaires took about two weeks to complete.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was in the Malay language. The items for each variable in the questionnaire were operationalized as per the concepts and related

literature. Factual items make up the questionnaire which collected ordinal, nominal, and interval data, including those based on Likert scales. The data were subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis via SPSS 23.0. For the descriptive analysis, means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) were used to measure the extent of agreement with the items comprising the variables. While Pearson Correlation was employed to measure the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

PILOT STUDY AND RELIABILITY MEASUREMENT

A pilot study was conducted before data collection, to pre-test the survey instrument for accuracy in terms of validity and reliability. 30 respondents were selected using random sampling techniques to answer the questionnaire following Pernerger ‘s (2015) suggestion that 30 respondents should form

the minimum sample size. The respondents were given the chance to express and give feedback on the questions that were perceived as ambiguous and difficult to understand. Furthermore, the researchers conducted a discussion with five of the respondents and two academicians to obtain views and comments on the questionnaire. As a result of the opinions and comments of the selected respondents and academicians, weaknesses in the questionnaire were corrected.

Cronbach Alpha has been used widely in quantitative research involving surveys and the use of questionnaires as it measures the reliability of the survey instrument. According to Hair (2003), a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.7 and above is considered good and acceptable. The alpha values for the variables are above 0.7 indicating the reliability of the items used to operationalize the variables in the study (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Reliability of the Variables (Cronbach Alpha Value)

Variables	Cronbach Alpha		No. of items
	Pilot Study*	Actual Study**	
Frequency of Social Media Usage	0.73	0.81	11
Tabayyun on social media	0.93	0.93	14
Social Media System	0.91	0.93	11
Social System	0.90	0.89	13
Interpersonal Network	0.81	0.88	9
Information Needs (Individual and Social)	0.92	0.91	11
Youth Behaviour	0.95	0.93	24

*N = 30; **N = 200

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This section will present the descriptive and inferential analysis of the results of the study. The descriptive analysis will include frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviation. Meanwhile, the Pearson Correlation is used for the inferential analysis.

DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS

Of the total 200 respondents who were sampled for this study, 107 were males representing 53.5 percent, and 93 female 46.5 percent (Table 2). In terms of age 50 of the respondents were from 15 to 20 years (25%) percent, 48 respondents were from 21 to 25 years (24%), 43 respondents were from 26 to 30 years (21.5%), 29 were from 31 to 35 years, (14.5%) and 30 were from 36 to 40 years (15%).

TABLE 2. Demographic data of the respondents

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	107	53.5
	Female	93	46.5
Age	15 – 20	50	25.0
	21 – 25	48	24.0
	26 – 30	43	21.5
	31 – 35	29	14.5
	36 – 40	30	15.0
	PMR/SRP	8	4.0
Education	SPM	56	28.0
	Diploma	50	25.0
	Bachelors	66	33.0
	Master	9	4.5
	PhD	2	1.0
	Others	9	4.5

N=200

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING *TABAYYUN*

Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of the items under *tabayyun*. In consideration of the acceptable mean score set at 3.5, almost all the items under *tabayyun* scored an above-average mean score, with all the items scoring a mean of 4.0 and above. This indicates that the practice of *tabayyun* is relevant and necessary for the dissemination of information on social media. The youth agreed that “*The concept of tabayyun should be understood*

and disseminated to the public in the face of new issues in society” ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.43$). It is worth mentioning that the respondents were more careful in searching for information/news on social media, “*I am more careful in finding and obtaining information/news on social media*” ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.47$). However, the respondents only have an above-average understanding of *tabayyun* ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.71$) as “*I have a thorough knowledge of the concept tabayyun*” has the lowest mean.

TABLE 3. Understanding and applying *tabayyun* (Means and Standard Deviation)

Items	M*	SD
The concept of <i>tabayyun</i> should be understood and disseminated to the public in the face of new issues in society.	5.40	1.43
I am more careful in finding and obtaining information/news on social media.	5.32	1.47
<i>Tabayyun</i> helps in maintaining stability and harmony in society and country.	5.30	1.50
The <i>tabayyun</i> process gives me more accurate information.	5.20	1.51
I will examine the information/news carefully I read on social media.	5.21	1.56
I will look for more authentic references to get the correct information / news.	5.07	1.55
The basic purpose of <i>tabayyun</i> is to avoid defamation.	5.07	1.83
I know <i>tabayyun</i> is very important in receiving information / news on social media.	4.97	1.70
I will evaluate the information/news I read on social media.	4.97	1.54
I will advise friends and family members to practice <i>tabayyun</i> .	4.94	1.56
I will review bad news/information on social media.	4.92	1.59
I will read information/news on social media repeatedly.	4.89	1.55
I will identify the source of the information/news.	4.76	1.51
I have a thorough knowledge of the concept of <i>tabayyun</i> .	4.21	1.71

N = 200

*Scale (1.0-3.0 = Low) (3.01-5.0 = average) (5.01-7.0 = High)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES (INCLUDING TABAYYUN) AND YOUTH BEHAVIOUR

and independent variables. The strength or weakness level of the relationship between the variables is based on Guilford’s Rule of Thumb guidelines.

Pearson’s Correlation test (Table 4) was employed to determine the relationship between the dependent

TABLE 4. Correlation analysis of the independent variables and youth behaviour

Independent variables	Youth behavior on social media	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Information Needs	0.65	<0.01
Interpersonal Network	0.64	<0.01
Social System	0.56	<0.01
Social Media System	0.55	<0.01
Frequency of social media use	0.49	<0.01
<i>Tabayyun</i> on social media	0.24	<0.01

N = 200

Table 4 shows the results of the Pearson correlation test used to analyze the relationship between the independent variables (frequency of social media use, *tabayyun* on social media, social media system, social system, interpersonal network, individual and social needs) and youth behavior. The relationship between the independent variables and *tabayyun* is significant as per the results in Table 4. The highest significant relationship is individual and social information needs with youth behaviour ($r = .654, p < .01$). This is followed by interpersonal network and youth behaviour ($r = .642, p < .01$). Among all the independent variables, *tabayyun* on social media recorded the lowest level of relationship with youth behavior ($r = .249, p < 0.01$). The correlation coefficient value shows that there is a weak correlation between the practice of *tabayyun* on social media and youth behavior. In contrast to individual and social information needs and interpersonal networks, the correlation coefficient values for the rest of the independent variables and youth behavior indicate a low to an average relationship. Since the relationships between all the independent variables and youth behavior are significant, all the hypotheses of the study are supported.

of information and news is displayed on social media are always subject to question (Teck Peng, 2002). Thus, the practice of *tabayyun* on social media becomes an important aspect in obtaining and disseminating any information. The practice of researching and reviewing every piece of information received by ensuring that its sources are valid enables the public to obtain more accurate information while also avoiding misunderstandings and slander (Ting & Song 2017).

This study sought to measure the level of awareness of *tabayyun* among youth in using social media and to assess the relationship between frequency factor, *tabayyun*, social media system, social system, interpersonal network, and individual and social needs with behavior. The study found that today’s youth are heavily dependent on social media and they often access social media to find out about current issues and to get a wide range of information including matters about religion, health, and others. Individuals may become addicted to the use of social media because of their frequent use. The findings show that the level of awareness among youth on the importance of *tabayyun* on social media is quite high as reflected by the mean score indicating the youth agree it is very important for them to understand and disseminate to the public that *tabayyun* is an important aspect of social media dependence (Zain 2017).

Awareness among youth of the practice of *tabayyun* on social media allows youth to exercise caution, especially when reading, receiving, retrieving, and sharing information on social media. By practicing *tabayyun*, the youth can help in

DISCUSSIONS

THE PRACTICE OF TABAYYUN ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Too much information is found on social media, hence, making the issue of credibility disputable. The source and the extent to which the authenticity

maintaining the stability and harmony of society and the country and can avoid slander (Zulkiple, 2001). Although the youth in this study have a high awareness of the importance of *tabayyun*, they still lack comprehensive knowledge of the *tabayyun* concept.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA DEPENDENCY, *TABAYYUN* AND YOUTH BEHAVIOR ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The role of social media in society today is enormous (Subiakto 2019). The study by Mustafa et al. (2010) has shown that youth rely heavily on social media and the Internet to achieve their goals. Social systems, interpersonal networks, and social and individual needs are among the factors that cause youths to rely on social media and in the course affect their online behavior (Anita & Hamzah 2013; Mustafa & Zin 2011; Deuze 2006; Sunarti 2006). These findings concur with the findings of the present study where all three variables have a significant relationship with youth online or social media behavior.

The findings of this study reveal that the six variables namely frequency of social media usage, *tabayyun* on social media, social media systems, social systems, interpersonal networks, and needs (individual and social) are significantly related to youth behavior about accessing and disseminating information on social media. The study also revealed that the frequency of use of social media is significantly correlated with how youth think, and act upon receiving information on social media. Based on these findings, the study concludes that youth often use social media for a particular purpose, which varies according to the individual. Previous research revealed that information, entertainment, status, fashion, mobility, social interaction, and safety are the driving force behind the use of media (Shim et.al, 2015; Hostut 2010; Peter & Allouch 2005; Leung & Wei 2000).

Social media have propelled the information revolution as they help users to get the latest information (Nicholas et al. 2013). The role of social media is to provide satisfaction and diverse functions in executing online activities; hence, it is not confined to mere social interaction. Youth use social media for entertainment, leisure, and interactions and tend to revisit social networking sites (Ball-Rokeach, 1985) and share with others about the satisfaction they obtained (Paliszkiwicz, Svanadze & Jikia, 2017).

As far as *tabayyun* is concerned the results show that, though it is significant, it is less practiced by the youth. The enormous task of identifying the flow of information in new media technology cannot be denied. Initially, this technology was a dynamic tool that helped ease and accelerate human processes in getting information. However, society now is faced with the “information exponential” phenomenon that causes the user to become more confused. Furthermore, with the diversity of social media platforms, almost any information is now available in the blink of an eye. As such social media users need to be more ethical, sensitive, and thorough when consuming and disseminating information on social media. In line with that, Islam has given guidance that must be followed for Muslims to maintain harmonious communication by relying on the Quran and hadith (Hassan and Ahmad, 2019).

As for the social media system, the study has shown that the social media system is an important factor that affects youth behavior, both online and offline. This finding is in line with Straubhaar (2010) that the media system is not just a medium for new audiences, but also an interactive outlet, which allows users to control the content and present it the way they want.

This study shows that social system factors are relevant to media dependence that can induce changes in behavior. Tolbert and McNeal (2019) found that social media was the medium most accessed during the election season. Social media sites are sources of information engaging both voters and candidates in election campaigns. Interpersonal networks on the other hand are among the major contributors to media dependence, which influences behavior. This lends support to the study conducted by Zaiamri (2016), which shows that dependence on media is encouraged by family members and influences information-seeking activities, distrust, and confusion of perceptions.

The information needs factor was the main driving factor in this study of youth behavior. This finding corroborates with Grant et al. (2019) that individuals use certain media to meet specific goals. Hence, youth use social media to obtain information to fulfill their individual and social information needs.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study support the theory of Ball-Rokeach and Melvin De Fleur, that the media be

they conventional or social media are a powerful system of resources and act as agents of information to the audience including individuals, communities, youth, and organizations. Audiences depend on the media due to the functionality and features the media provides to suit their information needs.

Furthermore, this study illustrates that social media plays an important role in politics, the economy, and social, cultural, educational, and religious affairs. Social media also determine the progress and development of a nation and its people. Hence, the more accurate social media is in disseminating information to the public, the better the progress of the country. If social media provide positive information in society, then society will have a positive thinking pattern. There are too many negative issues that involve information spread on social media which harbors on defamation and provocation prompting the authorities to come out with policies and laws such as the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and Computer Crimes Act 1997 to forcibly instill the principles and practice of *tabayyun*, which demands the checking, validating and confirming of facts. In terms of practical contributions, this study has given useful inputs to the world of media technology, especially social media in understanding the factors that have a relationship with online youth behavior. The study has also given an insight into the practice of *tabayyun* among the youth in the realm of information seeking and sharing on social media. In addition, the understanding of *tabayyun* among the youth, was still at its face meaning or language equivalent, hence, indicating the need to educate the youth on the comprehensive meaning of *tabayyun* which encompasses other aspects beyond the validity and credibility of the message or information, to include the moral character of the bearer.

To conclude, this study has successfully met its objectives in identifying the level of awareness of *tabayyun*, assessing the relationship between the frequency of social media usage, *tabayyun*, social media system, social system, interpersonal network, and individual and social needs with behavior among the youth. Among the variables, the overall findings suggest that there existed a high relationship between social and individual needs on social media with youth behaviour about information sharing and forwarding. More research is needed to better understand the factors affecting youth dependence on social media. Additionally, the practice of *tabayyun* is also an important element

in social media dependency, especially about the comprehensive meaning of *tabayyun* as opposed to the surface meaning. Hence, the knowledge and understanding of *tabayyun* must be practiced in the everyday life of social media users in the face of the challenges and unethical dissemination of information through social media. The authorities' concern should come up with communication campaigns to create awareness of the need to practice *tabayyun* on social media. This is crucial because, in the digital world of today, information could be altered making it easier to spread false information among the masses via social media. In addition to a communication campaign, legal action should be taken against those who share false information, perpetrate false and fake news. Heavy fines should be imposed as a deterrent.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

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