

Bewitching In Social Media: Rising Dangers of Attention-Seeking Behaviour

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ABSTRACT: With social media successfully removing communication barriers and opening its doors for all people to have a voice and participation, it has become a platform of ideas coming from all sorts of background. However, the youth has become too attached, too “disabled” to be without it, and too controlled by the desires to be with it and what it can do for themselves. This research is aimed at understanding teens and young adults on their venture of “bewitching” on social media platforms stemming from an attention-seeking behaviour. It is designed to explore what attention-seeking behaviour is, its link to social media users’ behaviours and what risk factors come with the said behaviour. Referenced documentaries, news articles, and published research until the current date served as secondary sources and evidence to aid in the research that will assist the readers and researchers to the findings of how attention-seeking behaviour on social media [can] poses high risks of dangers to them in both psychological and physical aspect of their lives. The findings show that the development of attention-seeking behaviour to an extreme, when not managed at an early stage, can tempt one’s character to becoming involved in dangerous acts such as catfishing, cyberbullying, harmful online social media challenges that can cause death, spree killings, murder and even exploitation of murder cases online.

KEYWORDS: *social media, attention-seeking, external validation, self-worth, cyberbullying, catfishing, online challenges, death.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief Background

According to the study conducted by ‘We Are Social’ (2020), a socially-led creative agency, partnered with Hootsuite, they have combined the reports on how social media and usage have become an indispensable part of every person’s everyday life. The essential headline numbers count 3.80 billion social media users in January 2020 with the number increasing by more than 9 percent since last year with 89% of internet users aged 16 to 64 use chat apps (messengers) and social networking apps as most used.

Facebook is still ranked as the topmost-used social platform as a messaging and engaging platform for all types of users (Bagadiya, 2021). Known celebrities, actors and athletes are known to be using Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook most often to engage with their followers

and fans online (Johnson, 2019). With the rising figures of known actors, singers, athletes, etc. coming into social media platforms, there is also an increase in social media influencers or “internet celebrities” formed from ordinary users gathering tons of followers and likers daily and sometimes, are being used to market certain products. Looking at We Are Social and Hootsuite’s report found on the table below, we could see that there are millions and billions of active users that can become such influencers like bloggers/vloggers, podcasters, etc. online.

We Are Social: Social Media Statistics 2021				
Social Media Platform	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	TikTok
Demographics Statistics	2.74 billion monthly active users	1.15 billion active users	353 million monthly active users	850 million active users (689 million monthly)
Usage Statistics	1.82 billion people log-in daily, average 58 minutes a day is spent	6 in 10 IG users log in daily, 1 main feed post per day	Total number of 500 million tweets sent per day, with 9,281 tweets sent in one second	Users spend 52 minutes per day with 90% access on daily basis, 68% users watch someone else’s video
Engagement Statistics	Users make an average of 5 comments, 12 post likes, 1 share and 1 page like	Photos with faces perform 40% better than without faces	Generates +31% higher emotional connection	63% of engaged users have liked a video, 63% of engaged users have followed someone, 54% of engaged users have commented on a video

With the numbers presented at the table, we can therefore conclude that the presence of attention-seeking behaviour from a certain quantity of users online can occur especially since there is a profound desire from within each person to become similar to their favourite celebrity, key leader or idol. Other than that, even without becoming influencers, a normal user can attract attention in various ways.

By studying thoroughly on the topic, we can set a line and distinguish a certain person or group of people who are exhibiting this attention-seeking behaviour on social media platforms and make theories on the risks aligned with it.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following two purposes:

- (i) To develop an in-depth understanding of attention-seeking behaviour and
- (ii) To analyse the factors on how attention-seeking behaviour can evolve one's character or actions to greater physical and/or psychological dangers.

1.3 Thesis Statement

The paper analyses that attention seeking behaviour can affect a person's social media behaviour or online personality in the following manner:

- Creating an online persona outside of true character
- Increasing potentials of performing dangerous acts such as cyberbullying, performing unsafe online [trending] challenges, driving spree killings and murder, etc.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Certain age groups such as the Millennials and Generation Y are more open-minded and want to increase their exposure to the public's eye compared to the Baby Boomers and Generation X who is more into privacy. This research, gives us a particular understanding of the potential dangers on how one's innate character can develop into attention-seeking behaviour originating from jealousy, low self-esteem and loneliness. By giving a clear path to such behaviour, this research can serve as an eye-opener for other researchers and readers on how they can see through people and their actions on social media and deal with their situation.

There are various research papers done that are centred on the following topics of narcissism and its connection to seeking attention online; attention-seeking behaviour focused in real-life situations between families (parents and children), students and teachers, peers and colleagues; how social media ignites social comparison affecting self-esteem, impact of social media to the youth; etc. However, this research can further aid in the development of attention-seeking behaviour with important points from above secondary sources yet focused entirely on social media postings and the impact of such conduct to not only themselves but for others as well—openly discussing about the negative effects of attention-seeking behaviour up to the point of potentially engaging in dangerous acts such as harmful online challenges, catfishing, spree killings, etc. in which we should address.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Psychological Implications of Social Media Use

As written previously, social media is normally seen as beneficial for teenagers and young adults to be widely connected with anyone especially for those who feel secluded from society or disregarded by people in real life. Not only that but it can be a platform where you can seek or offer emotional support, find creative ideas and learn how to self-

express, promote or join groups raising awareness on important issues of the current generation, and discover multiple learnings from various people. However, many studies have been conducted and have found that using social media platforms can have a detrimental effect on the psychological health of its users (and that it may gradually affect their physical health). Robinson (2020) conveys these examples of implications that may come from the negative experiences promoted by social media:

1. **Inadequacy about personal life or appearance** – we can still feel inferiority and insecurity about our own lives despite sometimes being aware of the possibility of the content (photo, video, or story) being fabricated or manipulated for the sake of online popularity. Another way to look at it is that even if people are just sharing their small accomplishments in life, this does not lessen the feelings of envy or dissatisfaction for some viewers/readers (leading to further sense of incompetence or frustration).
2. **Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Isolation** – Facebook and Instagram are said to be platforms of aggravating feelings of missing out on certain things that others have especially when they are “living the dream” or going along the current trends in the world. This fuels one’s self-esteem, triggers anxiety and pushes you to even use social media more to check updates or compulsively respond to every alert. The fear means that if you begin to be “out of the game”, you become anxious that others may not become aware of you anymore or dislike it when you are not going along with the flow. With that, it just shows that social media becomes a factor of increasing feelings of loneliness.
3. **Cyberbullying** – Twitter is one example of a social media platform where vile rumours, lies, gossips and abuse can escalate and leave lasting scars to one’s mental and emotional well-being. This affects people to have a surge in anxiety, loneliness, and depressive affect that may lead to physical issues (such as headaches and stomach pain) and suicidal behaviour.
4. **Self-Absorption** – Oversharing one’s personal life—innermost thoughts, photos (particularly selfies), places you go (revealing one’s location always), etc.—can create unhealthy self-centeredness that can detach themselves from reality (real-life friends, families, and connections) and develop into a narcissistic personality disorder (meant having an inflated opinion of oneself that you are more important than others, lacking empathy for others and seeking excessive attention and admiration).

These implications, particularly self-absorption, are highly linked with how teenagers manifest attention-seeking behaviour in social media.

2.2 Attention-Needing and Attention-Seeking Behaviour

Attention-needing behaviour means that they, for instance children, are demanding something from their families on what they need— something that is necessary for living such as crying when hungry, asking for help, when insecure about something, etc. This is the normal behaviour in which we are called to respond accordingly because they struggle to know what it is or how to deal with their personal issues thus, act in such a way as to get others’ attention (Matthew, 2014). On the other hand, Lavonne (2019) imparts that attention-seeking behaviour may start from 10 feelings or reactions of one person to another:

1. Feeling the need to constantly exaggerate situations and gain praise (funnier, more impressive than usual)
2. Posting something that can be conceived as “fishing for compliments” (for example, “I can never look that pretty...”)
3. Constantly showcasing personal knowledge and expertise (making everyone know you are an absolute expert and at one point, no one else is correct)
4. Intentionally being controversial to stir up arguments and reactions online (being riled up on purpose)
5. Making someone else’s post about one’sself (for instance, if someone posts about their vacation, you comment and talk about one’s *better* vacation in another place).
6. Being overly flirtatious even when it’s inappropriate to do so.
7. Constantly posting photos about we just to show off to others.
8. Oversharing personal information or making a situation more desperate than actuality with a sole intent of invoking sympathy from others.
9. Constantly seeking validation based on likes and comments and basing self-worth on the degree, amount and frequency of how other people respond to one’s online presence (becoming more curious and obsessed).
10. Becoming sadder of their own situation when comparing and looking at others’ lives (can be also from envy, anger, jealousy).

Lavonne further expresses that actions 1-8 are perfectly normal and is usually what is happening to teens and young adults from time to time. However, actions 9-10 are different because it speaks more about one’s psychological well-being. Adding to that, Healthline Media’s Dr. Timothy Legg says that those with attention-seeking behaviour pretends to be unable to do something so someone will teach, help, or watch them attempt to do it. This can be driven from jealousy, low self-esteem and loneliness and can be sometimes a result from cluster B personality disorders, histrionic personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, and narcissistic personality disorder (Frothingham, 2020). Also, it is generally accepted to post anything you want on social media because it is one’s own account; however, the motives can differ per person. Once there is a negative motive mixed with one’s post or comment, or simply have negative feelings and reactions towards what you are getting in terms of likes and comments like “it is not enough”, there can be more development to adapting an attention-seeking behaviour where one must be very vigilant.

2.3 Social Media, Self-Worth, and Social Comparison

Nortje, A (2020) shares that “social comparison is a normal behaviour where we seek to better understand our status by comparing themselves to other people”. This comparison can be done either in terms of ability, opinion, emotional reaction, status in life, etc. The direction of social comparison leads us to two: upward social comparison, where we weigh themselves against a person which we perceive to be better than us, and downward social comparison, where we weigh themselves to someone who is performing worse than we are. These directions do not mean give out the outcome but both directions can result in negative and positive effects.

When it comes to social media and social comparison, we would often find themselves in between the direction of social comparison whether upward or downward. However, we end up engaging more on upward social comparisons on social media which ensues feelings of inferiority and envy. When we see someone on social media living a life better than them, we

are filled with awe and astonishment but may harbour jealousy and desire to achieve the same or even be better than that person. Such actions then in turn affects our self-worth. Research studies show that the immediate use of social media results in experience of depressive episodes three weeks later, increased depressive symptoms (Feinstein et al, 2013), lower self-esteem, and lower body image (de Vries & Kuhne, 2015).

Newport Academy (2019) shares one survey conducted by Common Sense Media saying:

- ✚ 35 percent of teenagers on social media are anxious of being tagged in unattractive photos.
- ✚ 27 percent are tensed on how they look when they post pictures online.
- ✚ 22 percent feel bad about themselves when nobody “likes” or comments on their photos.

Since teenagers are spending much time on social media by looking at curated and filtered photos of their friends, favourite celebrities, or colleagues that seem “perfect”, they will often feel inferior thus, having lower self-esteem and negative body image. Having an attention-seeking behaviour meant that we would look down on themselves and their situations based on their comparison to others followed by seeking external validation from either their peers, families, or even anonymous followers (can be done to make themselves feel better, depending on personal motive).

2.4 Validation Seeking and Self-Presentation

External validation can also be associated with trying to compete with others “to be seen as attractive” by attempting various ways on winning approval, support, and care. This is often done by those who feel like they are relatively low in hierarchy or feels inferior to most people that they may lose their status because they have undesirable attributes unlike others. The purpose is to defend their standing in the hierarchy they see or even be better (Gilbert, 2001). Seeking validation in social media meant that you would do anything to “fish for compliments” and garner attention—one would think of going along the current trends that would easily make them popular.

Social media platforms nowadays are the perfect stage for self-presentations to build up. This meant users selectively posting content that are based on their ideal self-views—their own online persona which can be either same or far different from who they really are. When one seeks to validate themselves according to the number of likes and followers they have, they see the need to further strategize and construct a different being, one that is usually emphasizing their most desirable traits that are often not shown in face-to-face interactions because of less flexibility. In this case, when one is too drifted from reality of their true self and face the truth, this may become detrimental for their well-being and self-evaluation.

3. Findings:

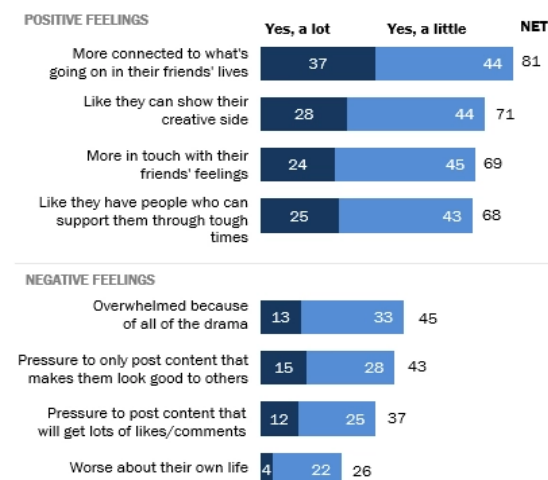
3.1 Bewitching in Social Media: Creating an Online Persona

According to Cambridge Dictionary (2020), the verb “bewitch” means to attract someone so that you can have the power to influence them as if you can control him or her. Social media nowadays, being open and free to all backgrounds, are often coined with people creating their own online persona—an online presence of someone outside their own true character. Anderson and Jiang (2018) conducted a research for U.S. teens, asking what social media makes them feel. Albeit the positive feelings brought by social media in the form of connecting with others, looking onto the negative feelings, 45% says they are overwhelmed with all the drama being posted online and 43% are

pressured to post only content that are accepted in the public’s eye. Adding to that, 37% are also pressured to post content that will garner attention through more likes and comments as well as 26% says that posts on social media make them feel worse about their own lives when compared. All of these are linked with the psychological implications of social media use, social comparison, and self-presentation.

Most teens say social media better connects them to their friends’ lives and feelings, but some also feel overwhelmed by the drama on these sites

% of U.S. teens who say social media makes them feel ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted March 7–April 10, 2018.
“Teens’ Social Media Habits and Experiences”

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get jealous of you or desire the same situation you are in even though it is untrue, but this is not only in the case of posting personal success or achievements.

The second way is, those with attention-seeking behaviour does “sad fishing”, a term used when frequently posting deeply emotional content that may also let the readers or viewers experience anxiety, physical or mental distress (however, take note that sad fishing may be hard to recognize so do not wrongly accuse someone of such action immediately when they just want to reach out for support) (Hand, 2019). Similar to Nena Lavonne’s statements about attention-seeking behaviour, the posts tend to become overexaggerated that seems more desperate—can also be fabricated or invented on the spot. These people post all the dramas in life that enables other people to “relate” with them thus, garner attention coming from those followers or friends. Southern Phone (2018) shares one odd social media behaviour where because of curiosity, everyone admits to repeatedly visiting their “most dramatic” friends’ profiles, even strangers, to catch up with the users who are extremely public with their feuds or relationship problems. The social media ‘soap operas’ enable people to click with each other more and even become more delighted, a kind of *Schadenfreude*. This German word describes how witnessing troubles or humiliation of other people can be a form of entertainment to us, bringing feelings of pleasure, joy or self-satisfaction. This is entirely because people are often dissatisfied with our own lives. In some instances, it is because they feel like they can feel a

part of their lives, so they follow these “dramatic” people so closely because they feel like they have built a personal relationship with them.

The stated research conducted by Pew Research Center shows how the 43% and 37% of U.S. teens feeling/being pressured to post content that will only look good to others and will get more likes and attention can be in the form of attention-seeking behaviour. The 26% are the ones who begin to feel either envious or frustrated by what is seen on social media. This can come from comparing their personal situations on those celebrities or peers they see on these platforms that they feel worse about their own lives, especially if they see how accomplished, talented, or successful they are unlike themselves (predominantly if one’s online identity is far different from who you really are in reality). On the other side, the 45% are feeling overwhelmed with all the drama because of too much “sadfishing” being generated online across different social media platforms.

The third way is, those with attention-seeking behaviour (to an extreme concept) does “catfishing”, a term used to describe people creating an online deception of false identity with a goal of making a romantic connection. The reasons for doing so are various yet all are harmful: they are lonely, they want a relationship they deem impossible to have in real life, to troll or harass others, to scam money from victims, or is part of the first step of kidnapping or physically abusing someone (Corcione, 2020). The deception through catfishing includes posting fictitious photos, biographies and supporting networks as well (D’Costa, 2014). Online dating has become widely accepted in the current generation more than ever, however, research by Smith and Duggan (2013) showed how 54% of online daters perceived some are presenting false information about themselves in their profile and 28% are contacted by people that only left them feeling harassed or uncomfortable.

The truth is, when they come to seek more of the attention online, there will also be an increase in anxiety and dissatisfaction in themselves, especially if one is being compared to their own online persona that is unauthentic and based on true nothings. Furthermore, it can also become the first step of involving oneself in [performing] dangerous acts.

3.2 Bewitching in Social Media: Increasing Performance of Dangerous Acts

Bewitching in social media by means of external validation with fake identities, fake photos, fake life stories, exaggerated gossips, etc. can lead to performance of dangerous acts. As written, the number of users accessing various social media platforms can even be one country itself (or even bigger, looking at just Facebook’s number of monthly active users). With the continuous rise of social media users, it is inevitable that there will be also an increase of those with attention-seeking behaviour whose psychological well-being is linked with being malicious and irresponsible. These people take advantage of the freedom of ideas offered by these known platforms to lie, attack, scam, and hurt others in numerous ways. Catfishing is one dangerous act usually done by those with deceitful intentions that may bring harm or abuse to the victim however, there are other methods where attention-seeking behaviour can be exhibited by even ordinary people. Some examples can be cyberbullying, executing dangerous online challenges, and to some extent, those with deeper psychological issues or mental illnesses can resolve to unlawful deaths, murders and spree killings just for the sake of getting

attention online. All of the following paragraphs will cover real-life case studies supported by secondary research of cases as demonstration of extreme attention-seeking behaviour.

3.2.1 Cyberbullying

As inferred on the psychological implications of social media use, cyberbullying, also known as electronic bullying or online social cruelty, is one of the prominent acts found on social media especially when one wants to garner attention online. Internet Safety 101 (2012) discloses various cyberbullying tactics:

- ✚ Gossiping - posting or sending cruel gossips that tarnishes one’s reputation and relationship.
- ✚ Exclusion – disregarding or ignoring someone from an online group.
- ✚ Impersonation - breaking into someone’s personal account and post embarrassing stories or cause damage to one’s reputation.
- ✚ Harassment - posting pictures or messages that are offensive or rude.
- ✚ Cyberstalking - posting or sending messages that come with threats.
- ✚ Flaming - stirring up online fights with offensive messages on websites, forums or blogs.
- ✚ Outing and trickery - tricking someone to reveal their secrets or private photos/information then sharing it online.
- ✚ Cyberthreats - making remarks on the internet with threats, displaying suicidal tendencies.

Meghan, Augie, and Kenny are few children who shared their stories of experiencing cyberbullying. They spoke about having someone break into their accounts in order to post lies and gossips so that their relationships would bound to fail, body shaming them online, saying damaging words to hurt their feelings and curve their outlook on self-worth and self-esteem but sometimes, the perpetrators are different when in front of them (Enough is Enough, 2020). Ditch the Label (2017) investigated the matters of cyberbullying and the research they have conducted across the United Kingdom with secondary schools and colleges totalled to 10,020 people aged 12-20. The table below summarizes few points from the study. Overall, 69% of all respondents said they have done something abusive towards another person online.

Ditch the Label – UK Study: The Annual Bullying Survey 2017			
Top 3 platforms for cyberbullying	Instagram (42%)	Facebook (37%)	Snapchat (31%)
Top 3 cyberbullying activities	Received nasty private messages (68%)	Had rumours about them posted online (41%)	Received nasty comments on their profiles (39%)
Top 3 cyberbullying impacts	Developed social anxiety (41%)	Developed depression (37%)	Had suicidal thoughts (26%)

In 2018, with 9,150 aged 12-20 respondents from secondary schools and colleges across the United Kingdom, Ditch the Label focused one part of the research to “Perpetration” or experiences of those young people who initiated the bullying behaviour. The table below summarizes few points from the study.

Ditch the Label – UK Study: The Annual Bullying Survey 2018			
Top 3 feelings of the bullies	Guilty (44%)	Angry (42%)	In Control (36%)
Top 3 bullying reasons/motives	“They deserved it” (56%)	“I don’t like them” (55%)	“It’s funny” (39%)

Some of the answers outside of these top three include:

- ✚ Feelings of the bullies - 29% feels powerful; 25% feels indifferent; 21% feels excited; 9% feels jealous.
- ✚ Bullying reasons/motives – 32% “helps me to deal with stress/anger”; 24% “to make my friends laugh”; 14% “it made me feel good about myself”; 11% “to be noticed by others.

Sometimes, cyberbullying (or bullying in general) is a ripple effect from one who is formerly a victim though it does not mean you have the right to do so. Nevertheless, having attention-seeking behaviour means that cyberbullying for you is a way for you to become popular. This is because humans are always interested and curious more about the negatives and the dramas (as stated previously). Like in Twitter, the more negative cyberbullying messages, the more retweets will happen, and negative messages spread faster. The more posts or messages they see online that becomes an entertainment for them, the more they indulge and engage with the perpetrator to the point of not really caring for the victim because the rumours or gossips are “fun.”

3.2.2 Online Social Media Challenges

Going along the trends of online social media challenges are now one of the ways to be noticed online. Up to this date, there are numerous such as the ALS ice bucket challenge “tip the bill” challenge, or the mannequin challenge. However, there are lots of hazardous and unsafe challenges being spread throughout social media that can lead to permanent harm to those who do it. Some of the most daring yet dangerous challenges that are [being] performed across the world are:

- ✚ The Fire Challenge – people are dousing themselves in accelerant, like nail polish remover, then sets themselves on fire while filming the video. They thought it would not be harmful to the skin and will only affect the accelerant, but people suffered second and third-degree burns in critical conditions. If not controlled, the overall surroundings may also be affected and can cause fatal death.

- ✚ The Plastic Bag Challenge – people are asked to hold a plastic bag over their head and breathe heavily inside for as long as they could. This spread throughout the world with a thought that every minute of their experience will let the World Wildlife Fund donate 5 euros to those animals dying of asphyxiation however, the WWF denied this to be true. The challenge actually has fatal consequences where it reduces oxygen supply and can be difficult for those with asthma or heart disease.
- ✚ The Tide Pod Challenge – children are either cooking them on frying pans to chew on them before spewing soap from their mouths or biting into liquid laundry detergent packets. The challenge poses problems to one's health where they can become ill by ingesting it, experiencing a change in blood pressure or may experience seizures afterwards.
- ✚ The Salt and Ice Challenge – people are putting salt on a body part and then taking an ice-cube, holding it down against the salt for as long as they can. This can cause you to have skin discoloration, second-degree and third-degree burns and painful open sores to form on the skin.

These are just some of the dangerous challenges that are being shared across social media that can cause harmful effects to one's psychological and physical wellbeing. Other than these



challenges, Khaleej Times, Sushmita Bose, (2017) talks about the 27-year-old Viktoria Odintsova, a Russian “model” (a known “Instagram celebrity”) who takes on a challenge by dangling precariously from the scaffolding of a skyscraper to gain popularity whilst only relying on the hand of the male assistant or the photographer himself. This type of

online challenge is known as “rooftopping” or “roofing”, a term used to describe one's unsecured ascent to rooftops, skyscrapers, cranes, etc. similar to “buildering” and is often illegally done since they access locations usually restricted to the public. The goal of the rooftopper is to make viral-ready photos or videos. However, there are already known rooftoppers who have died doing such stunts like how the quest for extreme selfies have killed nearly 300 people NBC News (2020) and the well-known Chinese Superman, Wu Yongning who died while performing his dare-devil stunt with hopes of proposing to his girlfriend after accomplishing the challenge.

While some people may join in these social media feats for fun however, they should become really aware of these challenges on what they can do to our physical bodies. The world highly thinks that the more dangerous the stunt is, the better way to grab attention and gain popularity at a fast rate. Having extreme attention-seeking behaviour means you are afraid of being isolated by one's peers or even peer pressured to do so. Therefore, you are letting go of the awareness of how dangerous this action is which can highly cause one's death and going overboard than what the challenge is all about (for instance, may take more tide pods, put whole body into fire, try to hang in a higher building for the sake of photos, etc.).

3.2.3 Spree Killings and Exploitation of Murder

Because of the rising popularity of having the need to become an influencer or a star in the cyberspace, people look to alter their egos and warp according to the virtual demands that supersede personal lives. Now, there are many reports from all around the world about murder or spree killings (a spree killer is someone who murders two or more victims at two or more locations with almost no time or break between the killings) (Aggrawal, 2016) that occurred either for the sake of getting attention or because they did not get the proper attention they were looking for, they went on rampage of performing this dangerous act.

A real-life case study example is when Nasim Najafi Aghdam became obsessed with “views” and “likes” from people around the world, seemingly anonymous to her. The 38-year-old YouTuber was known as a passionate vegan activist who often talks about animal cruelty. She then said on her website that she has targeted YouTube for demonetizing her videos, restricting viewership and cutting her ad revenue, a seemingly case for not only her but for also other YouTubers online. In one of her videos, she exclaimed that she is being discriminated and filtered on the said platform. Because of her hatred, she went straight to YouTube’s main headquarters and left three people wounded before killing herself with the gun (Karma, 2018) (Connor et al., 2018).



Likewise, BBC News (2018) reports how Lacey Spears administered salt into her son’s feeding tube from infancy that caused his death after he had an operation for gastrointestinal symptoms that Spears induced. She had posted pictures of him dying on her Facebook account and later said that the purpose was to use the sick child for

her need of attention. The 27-year-old was described to be mentally ill during the court proceedings and identified her condition as Munchausen by proxy syndrome (a person sickens a child to gain attention from others using the child’s predicament).



The picture above shows the Instagram stories of the killer behind the case of Bianca Devins, a 17-year-old who recently graduated from highschool, whose murder pictures are shared across social media platforms. The killer, Brandon Andrew Clark, was said to be in a relationship with Devins for 2 months prior to the gruesome incident. Clark showed an even more graphic photo of Bianca's body on Discord (a messaging platform for gamers) which showed her fatal injuries such as the cut to her throat. More pictures continued to be posted online from Discord to Instagram and Twitter, thus, police officers had tracked down Clark's location upon the members and concerned friends' plea to check if the offensive content was factual or not. The main problem of this murder story is how Devins' now-memorialized Instagram account grew in number of followers from 2,000 to 160,000 because of the news of her killing. Not only her account but Clark's as well, with even more thousands of followers and overflowing comments, before Instagram deactivated it. Some people had capitalized on the pictures of Devins' murder online as an opportunity to gain more followers saying, "Follow me & DM for full video and picture". They had utilized the opportunity by promising images of her dead body within their private pages, changing their username or creating brand-new accounts that mimic Clark's Instagram handle in order to be searched online for the photographs. One user exclaimed to have accumulated more than 1,000 follower requests and about 100 direct messages with even online payments just to see the images (Cooper, 2019).

Devins' case is another example of how those with extreme attention-seeking behaviour can be overboard with their actions. Posting the murder online is one dangerous example of such behaviour. However, exploiting one's murder case for the sake of getting attention, followers, messages and even money is also worst. As written previously, nowadays people are more up to the ominous side of reality that even worst-case scenarios including death has become a way for them to gain attention, followers, likes, and comments. Since social media platforms are known to be entirely built on the number of likes, retweets, friends, followers that one can accumulate, many, especially violence perpetrators, are taking advantage of how online infamy can they gain out of it. There are many other social media stories of violence being posted, live-streamed, and shared online. Because of this, social media companies are then being questioned on why they would allow such gruesome events to be posted online and not probe into its content at a faster pace.

Thus, if people are not careful enough, the way they perceive themselves in terms of their self-worth and self-esteem may be affected in a sense that they always compare themselves to others and belittle our whole being. On the other hand, they can act superior to others that may hurt others. Seeking external validation is another factor that attention-seeking behaviour implies. If they constantly become curious and more obsessed with likes, comments, shares, compliments, and arguments relating to their lives and what they do on social media, then they are bringing themselves to having an extreme attention-seeking behaviour. This research reveals how the said behaviour can shift a person from just trying to create fabricated online persona for the sake of popularity to being true to self yet involved in dangerous acts or challenges that affects or harms not only themselves, but even other people. According to Gordon (2014), getting attention is necessary for life's vital enterprises but extreme attention seekers have the tendency to go to unhealthy lengths driven by emotional desperation. It is not a character flaw, but the brain's wiring response caused by neglect. In this case, it is not fixable however, is manageable

4. Conclusion

As users of social media, people believe that they should mask their realities to hide their insecurities. However, everyone should become wary of what they do and post on social media. Every little detail about themselves, may it be fabricated for their online persona, exaggerated details about their lives, commenting on others' posts, doing challenges to go along the current trends, etc. hold value to their physical and psychological well-being. If they truly desire to control this innate behaviour, people should learn how to begin accepting themselves, understanding the reality that others may have more compared to them but that does not mean they cannot love themselves and be content on who they are and what they have. People should find creative outlets where they can de-stress themselves and control their emotions properly and not merely adhere to current trends. If possible, just deactivate the social media accounts.

The study recommends that the current generation needs to be trained in developing an understanding and importance of minimizing the usage of social media or engaging in online activities that are not of major importance in their lives. Aligning with one of the objectives, it is better for everyone to be aware of the concept of attention-seeking behaviour and how there are risks that come with it once evolved and not dealt with. This also includes being familiar with different personality disorders such as histrionic personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, and narcissistic personality disorder for further understanding. To have a better approach in dealing with one's needs and inner emotions, schools and enterprises should offer counselling or therapy services that are free and open, especially for those who were cyberbullied. They can also consider organizing more social events to interact with each other more in physical terms rather than via online. (As this research is done during the COVID-19 pandemic period, these events should be done online for safety precautions, however, there are multiple ways on how to interact online that is similar when done off-screen). Social media companies must continue to develop ways on how to prohibit unlawful acts such as pictures or videos of violence being allowed across its platform to be spread by the users. Proper gatekeeping and alternative compensations to such actions must be established especially in the case of cyberbullying and murder cases shared online.

5. Limitations of the Study and Further Research

The current study is targeted on the general social media thus, further research can be done on a specific social media platform such as solely on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. The current study is based on several secondary sources online thus, further research can be done with more primary sources such as a [online] survey, questionnaire or focus groups with interviews to be conducted on a specific age group (e.g. only Millennials or Generation Y, or both) to get to know the person/s more and identify whether they are having personality disorders (a different kind of study is needed for this) where having attention-seeking behaviour is a common ground or whether they are suffering from a personal issue that is driven from jealousy, low self-esteem and/or loneliness. The present research is based on several secondary sources online thus, further research can be done with interviews on field experts or psychologists regarding the attention-seeking behaviour. This will enable the readers and researchers to fully understand the scope and extent of how the said behaviour can evolve to be dangerous.

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