|  |
| --- |
| **Interview Report**  Topic: Whether the amount of time spent on Facebook affects the exam results of Sec 4 RI students.  Done by:  Musawwir (1)  Andrew Tan (2)  Giresh (3)  Choo Ze Yuan (4)  Darren Chua (5)  Teacher Mentor: Mrs. Joycelene Lim |

**Introduction**

As part of our research to find out if Facebook affects the exam results of Secondary 4 RI students, we interviewed our school counsellor, Mr. Leow Hee Khian, as we believe that he has dealt with cases of addiction to Facebook and other social online networking sites. Also, we interviewed the head of character education, Mrs. Jacqueline Chua, as she is in charge of character education and should know pupils’ characters well.

**Interview with Mr. Leow Hee Khian**

Upon asking Mr. Leow about our topic, he answered that excessive usage of Facebook can result in addiction and thus lower the grades of students. However, he also mentioned that spending a small amount of time on recreation would be acceptable and would not affect exam results.

Although Mr. Leow has not come across a case where a student is addicted to Facebook alone, he has dealt with several cases where Facebook is one of the main causes of addiction. Also, addiction does not just affect exam results. It can also hurt relationships and cause the person to become more aggressive. A study, published in the CyberPsychology & Behavior Journal, analyzed the effect of Facebook use on the romantic relationships of college students. The report concludes that there is a “significant association between time spent on Facebook and jealousy-related feelings and behaviors experienced on Facebook.” Specifically, 16.2% of respondents were explicitly linked to Facebook use contributing to jealousy. This shows that relationships can be affected because of the duration of time spent on Facebook. [1]

In our interview, Mr. Leow recommends a few ways to counter Facebook addiction is to try to spend more time with the person instead of letting him spend all his time on the computer so that he can gradually get rid of his addiction. A new study in the January issue of Developmental Psychology conducted by psychologists at the University of Virginia suggest that parents should try to **stay involved with their children and make an attempt** to understand their online world in the same way they would want to understand any other aspect of their lives. [2]

A preventive measure against addiction to Facebook, as our survey results have also shown, is to prioritise. Prioritising helps a student to understand what is more important and therefore what he should spend more time on, thus reducing the amount of time the student spends on Facebook and other social networking sites and preventing addiction. Mr. Leow also recommends spending not more than 2 hours a day on recreation during weekdays, but the amount can be increased on weekends especially if there is no homework to allow time for relaxation.

In general, many of our survey findings agree with our findings for the interview. Prioritising has come up as a preventive measure taken by students, and both show that there is no relationship between the amount of time spent on Facebook and examination results. The results are similar of previous studies carried out before. [3,4]

In conclusion, our interview results show that there is no correlation between exam results and the amount of time spent on Facebook. Despite this being so, addiction to Facebook is a real problem and can cause grades to suffer.

**Interview with Mrs. Jacqueline Chua**

In the interview with Mrs. Chua, she said that the duration of time spent on Facebook might not affect the pupils’ grades significantly, which is consistent with the findings in our survey and other sources. [3,4] She suggested that a possible explanation for this is the length of time spent away from the studies and also whether the pupils spent their time effectively or not.

Besides that, she mentioned that there could be certain applications that pupils spent more time on. For example, the games on Facebook and the chats can take a lot of time. Other additional things are updating one’s own statuses and having conversations with each other on your message boards. In addition, she said that they are addicted to Facebook because it is fun and now one can talk to many people at one time unlike in the past.

Although she, like Mr. Leow, had not seen any pupil specifically approach her to solve a problem relating to addiction to Facebook only, she would suggest that a person addicted to Facebook should find other alternatives, like read a book and spend some time with other people in the real world as opposed to just having virtual conversations with people. Other ways to cut down to amount of time spent on Facebook is by cutting down the actual internet usage and parents could cut broadband access.

According to Mrs Chua, other forms of time-consuming sites are MMPRPG games such as World of Warcraft. However, she said that Facebook is probably not that addictive because one can switch it off, and do other things before coming back and reply another chat. On the other hand, online computer games run into real time and so it prevents a person from doing other things because it is very addictive.

**References**

[1] <http://mashable.com/2009/08/09/facebook-relationship-jealous/>

[2] <http://www.debaird.net/blendededunet/2010/01/study-facebook-and-myspace-enhance-the-positive-relationships-kids-already-have.html>

[3] <http://www.unh.edu/news/docs/UNHsocialmedia.pdf>

[4] <http://blog.taragana.com/e/2009/05/08/facebook-has-no-negative-effects-on-academic-grades-3198/>

**[Appendix A]**

**Interview Transcript**

Date and Time of Interview: 1st July 2010, 1.45 p.m.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Darren: | Do you think that the amount of time spent on Facebook actually does affect our exam results? |
| Mr. Leow: | Yes, I think so. It all depends on how much time this person actually spends on Facebook, and whether it has come to a point where it is at the expense of his studies, his academics. So, Facebook is a social networking platform, it provides… it’s a place that can meet social needs, and social needs is one of the needs that is pretty important to a person, and therefore it can be potentially addictive. The usage of Facebook can be addictive, and of course if someone is addicted to it it could affect many areas of his life including his studies but at the same time, even if you’re not addicted to it, the amount of time spent on it can still affect you. Your usage of Facebook can be excessive even if it’s not addictive and it can be problematic as well. We only have 24 hours a day, so sometimes how you spend your time, you’ve got to prioritise. So if you spend that amount of time on Facebook, something is… you’re giving something up. |
| Darren: | So have you come across any of such cases of addiction to Facebook? |
| Mr. Leow: | Maybe Facebook is quite new, for the last few years I’ve seen more cases of gaming and general usage of computer and Internet. They don’t often come to me and say particularly Facebook. Facebook is cited as one of the activities, in general, but they will say, “Yes, this boy spends a lot of time on the computer, including Facebook, MSN, Facebook games and gaming” and whatsoever or just using the computer to listen to music, or surf the web, but I haven’t had one boy that comes and says, “Sir, I’m addicted to Facebook and Facebook alone.” So, no, not that yet but Facebook as one of the things on the Internet that they are drawn to. |
| Darren: | So what are the effects if you are addicted to the computer, since you’ve seen some cases, so what are the effects of this addiction? |
| Mr. Leow: | Well, your academics would be affected, lots of people who are excessive in computer usage, usually their results drop. Relationships between friends and family members can deteriorate, because this boy would rather spend time on the computer than to socialize with family members and friends, and in that process he may lie, so all these affect the interpersonal relationships that he has with other people. What else… I could think of much more last time... Aggression, ‘cause you asked me about addiction to internet, and if this boy is addicted to games, like… actually, well if he is addicted to the internet, any action to stop him from using the Internet could result in feelings of frustration in him, and possibly will result in aggression. I have many parents who have come to me and said, “My boy has never been violent before, but the moment I stop him from gaming or switch off the computer, he pushes me away.” And there’s aggression, there’s bodily contact. So these symptoms are very, very common in a person who’s addicted to the Internet. These are the current ones that I can think of but there are more. |
| Darren: | So is there any way to curb or prevent this kind of addiction to the computer or the Internet? |
| Mr. Leow: | Preventive measures include having a resistance, having a lifestyle which is fulfilling, meaningful, purposeful, and in that you become resistant to the need of experiencing a mood change. Because why are people addicted to the Internet is because things like gaming, or even usage of certain things on the Internet, it has an ability… it is fun, and being fun, it has the ability to produce a mood change. So that is the thing that keeps people going back for more. But you ask yourself then, who are those people who need that mood change more than other people. It is those people whose moods are always at a low point. So when you are feeling down, you don’t have friends to talk to, you don’t know what to do about it, computer, or gaming or Facebook could be a channel for you to seek and when you do it you felt good about it, you felt better in your feelings. So people who have a lower mood are more predisposed than others who are constantly finding life exciting, fulfilling, purposeful – these are the people that will be resistant towards addiction to the Internet, but those people with a lower mood, those are the people who are more susceptible. If you ask me how to do preventive work, to not have people people be addicted I would say it’s a huge dynamics that involves around family members, friends, and the person’s personality itself, to build a lifestyle that is engaging to the person so that he feels fulfilled or meaningful or purposeful in life. In that sense, games or internet will not be able to draw him that strongly. Make sense? |
| Darren: | Yes. So what do suggest we do if let’s say we have this friend who is addicted to the computer or Internet and we want to spend more time with him instead of letting him spend his time on the computer? |
| Mr. Leow: | That’s a good idea, to spend more time with him, a close friendship that goes beyond talking about, you know, “What did you score for your Maths?”, that goes beyond just asking each other about homework but talk about even vulnerable stuff like your problems or what you like or what you dislike, or what you think you are not good in. We don’t always have to share our successes, because when we share our vulnerabilities, that creates connection, a deeper connection; that create closeness and a feeling of belonging, a feeling of acceptance. And these are strong feelings that can counter against the need to produce a mood change. A lot of people, they go into, say, games like MapleStory because of a strong need to connect socially, that’s why they go to the game. If in real life they have connected socially, there isn’t the need, so what you are doing is great, you’re spending time with your friend, connecting with him as friends, that’s a very good start. |
| Darren: | Oh, our survey shows that actually there is no relation between the amount of time spent on Facebook and exam results, as in GPA. So why do you think this is so? |
| Mr. Leow: | It could be because over here the usage of Facebook might be controlled, meaning after all Raffles students are rather busy, so even if you spend time on Facebook, you could be multitasking, you are still spending time on your studies. It could be that these students, they don’t know the full impact of Facebook on them, or maybe, really, Facebook has no impact on them. You can use Facebook in a proper manner. I’m not saying that nobody should use the Internet, nobody should play games. There is a function that games, Internet and Facebook serves, and that is recreation. We all need to recreate. As long as we keep to good limits of recreation, we don’t go overboard, we don’t go excessive, I think it is fine, and I think in this school, I have less cases of addiction to computer than in other places. Maybe your survey results really show that the students here are pretty diligent, and not as easily affected by the usage of computers. |
| Darren: | So what would you say is be the recommended limit if you want to avoid affecting your studies, like the maximum of time you should spend per week? |
| Mr. Leow: | It’s sometimes quite hard to put a time, because addiction is based on priorities. For example, if you have an exam tomorrow, then the question is can you don’t play today. And if you say yes, I can don’t play today; it means that you are able to meet your priorities, which is [sic] academics. So therefore even if on weekends you may spend half the day playing, I wouldn’t say you are addicted just because of that, maybe 6 hours that you spent during weekends on games, because you are still in control of your actions in regards to your priorities, you are able to prioritise, so you’re not addicted. However, if you are asking me on my personal opinion on the number of hours, which I think I would recommend for students to spend on the computer, I would say if it’s for recreation purposes, not beyond 2 hours on weekdays. If there’s going to be school on the next day, I don’t think that you’ll need to recreate for more than 2 hours. 2 hours of recreation is good enough. You don’t even need to go to 2 hours. Anything above 2 hours, I wouldn’t recommend it, if not then this recreation slowly becomes more and more, you become more and more dependent on this form of recreation that eventually you may even be addicted to it. Weekends, I’m OK with more time spent, I feel it’s OK during weekends; people just want to relax a bit. And if there are [sic] no homework, then it’s alright, as long as you don’t spend the whole day, from the time you wake up to the time you sleep, you are playing whole day, that is not recommended. If you want to spend one morning, one afternoon that is still OK, or one night enjoying I think that’s alright. Just a minute. |
|  | [0 min 15 sec pause] |
| Darren: | So if we prioritise do you think that we can avoid the effects of addiction? Because we asked and a number of students said that they prioritise and so their usage of Facebook won’t actually affect their results. Do you think this is true? |
| Mr. Leow: | It’s a good sign that they are prioritising, and sometimes it’s hard to gage for every individual because every individual has a different capacity. Some, they are really quicker such that they don’t need that much time revising or working on their work. Some people take one hour doing a compo, some take 3 hours. Some take 1 day to finish a project, some take 3 weeks. So, I think it’s good that the students here, they think they are prioritising and they’re not addicted. What I can advise then is that as long as you’re not spending, I guess, 80 percent of your time and Internet is not your only recreation source or your only friend. In fact the lesser percentage of time you spend on the Internet for recreation purposes, and then you have a variety of interests, the better it is, so that you can spend maybe 20% on your time on the Internet, another 10% on sports, another 5% on TV, if that’s a source of recreation, another 10% on Rubik’s cube, you know, whatever, then another 20 to 30% on reading books, on developing web skills, so all these, the more diversified and more varied your interests are, the better it is. |
| Darren: | OK. |
| Mr. Leow: | So that is all? |
| Darren: | Yes. Thank you! |

End of transcript

**[Appendix B]**

**Interview Transcript**

Date and Time of Interview: 7th July 2010, 1.40 p.m.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Darren: | Our topic is, whether the amount of time spent on Facebook affects exam results. |
| Mrs Chua: | We do not know whether the amount of time people spend on Facebook actually affects exam results, because no one has actually done a detailed research on it. So, what are your questions? |
| Darren: | The first question is, do you think the amount of time spent on Facebook will affect pupils’ studies and why or how? |
| Mrs. Chua: | It’s not just the amount of time on Facebook but if you are talking about computer time or surfing time and time away from your studies then obviously yes right, because you only have twelve hours a day, assuming, and if ten hours are taken up, then you’ll only have two hours for studying and what are you going to do? Right? So yes that would be logical...step from there. |
| Darren: | Our next question is, according to our survey that we conducted on RI Sec 4 students, the results show that the amount of time spent on Facebook does not affect the GPA of the pupils significantly. Do you have a possible explanation for this? |
| Mrs. Chua: | Are they using their time effectively maybe? Maybe time on Facebook per say may not be long. So if you are talking about maybe a short like half an hour on it, maybe no. But if you are talking about other uses, then yes. |
| Darren:  Musawwir: | Okay.  So are there any specific applications on Facebook that pupils might spend more time on? |
| Mrs. Chua: | The chat, the games, those two probably take quite a bit. Updating your own statuses and stuff, having conversations with each other on your message boards, yeah. |
| Musawwir:  Musawwir: | Okay.  So what are the possible reasons why pupils spend a lot of time on Facebook? |
| Mrs. Chua: | Because it’s fun, right, and there’s a conversation that you are having and in the past, you would only have to talk to one person at a time but now you can talk to like everybody at one go. Right? |
| Andrew: | What kind of advice would you give pupils on how to manage their time better and not to spend too much time on Facebook? |
| Mrs. Chua: | You must find other alternatives, I mean like, besides Facebook, go and do other things, like read a book, spend some time with other people in the real world as opposed to just having virtual conversations with people. |
| Andrew: | What do you think are the possible ways for pupils to cut down their time spent on Facebook? |
| Mrs. Chua: | Cutting down on your actual internet usage, having your parents to cut that broadband access. |
| Ze Yuan: | As the Head of Character Education, have you counselled any RI students about this problem? |
| Mrs. Chua: | Not for Facebook directly, but for computer usage, yes. |
| Ze Yuan:  Ze Yuan: | Okay.  So, with the new generation being more technologically advanced, do you see more RI Sec 4 students getting addicted to Facebook? And what are your views on it? |
| Mrs. Chua: | Use you will see, yes you will see more people using Facebook, but I’m not sure how that would pen up, maybe like MSN? You have conversations, we have talked about it. I’m not sure how far it will go to become an addiction. |
| Giresh: | Are there any other online networking sites that might also be a source of addiction to pupils to the extent of causing their grades to drop? |
| Mrs. Chua: | Computer games, World of Warcraft, things like that, the MMORPG games, those are the ones that would really suck up your time. If you ask me Facebook then probably not, but because you can switch it off, and you can go and do other things, but it’s a problem when your games run into real time and you’re doing things that’s addictive. Then that prevents you from doing other things. Because like Facebook, after you reply one chat, you can go back and do your work, then you come back and then reply another chat, right? It’s not like when you’re on a quest and you have to kill 20 people in a certain time limit. |
| Giresh: | That is the end of our questions. Thank you so much for your time. |
|  |  |

End of transcript