



# Can You Still be Lonely in the Digital World?

## Mixed Method Study of the Moderating Effect of Social Networking Sites Usage to Loneliness Among Freshmen

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### RESEARCH PURPOSE / BACKGROUND / RATIONALE

#### The world is in the midst of Loneliness Epidemic

Loneliness is defined as 'subjective distress', the discrepancy between the social relationships you want and the social relationships you have;

Inability to connect with others on a deeper, more intimate level.

Lack of authenticity in relationships.

Overwhelming feeling of isolation.

Negative feelings of self-doubt and self-worth.

Unreciprocated responses from others when you try to connect or reach out

Negativity bias, more prone to pick up signs of potential rejection.

#### Symptoms of Loneliness

##### Social Networking Sites Postive Benefit

- Solution for people with social phobia
- Alternative to widen social interactions.
- Online Self-disclosure in SNS can predict user's friendship quality

##### Social Networking Sites Negative Benefit

- Ambiguous satisfaction of one's social relationships
- Ethnic language users experience acculturative stress
- Overuse of SNS may lead to Internet addiction and feelings of loneliness over time

##### Survey

N=308 (52% female, 42% male, 8% undeclared)  
62% Local students, 35% international students  
Scale: Type, Purpose and Frequency of digital communication, Frequency of SNS usage;  
R-UCLA Loneliness Scale



##### Email Interview

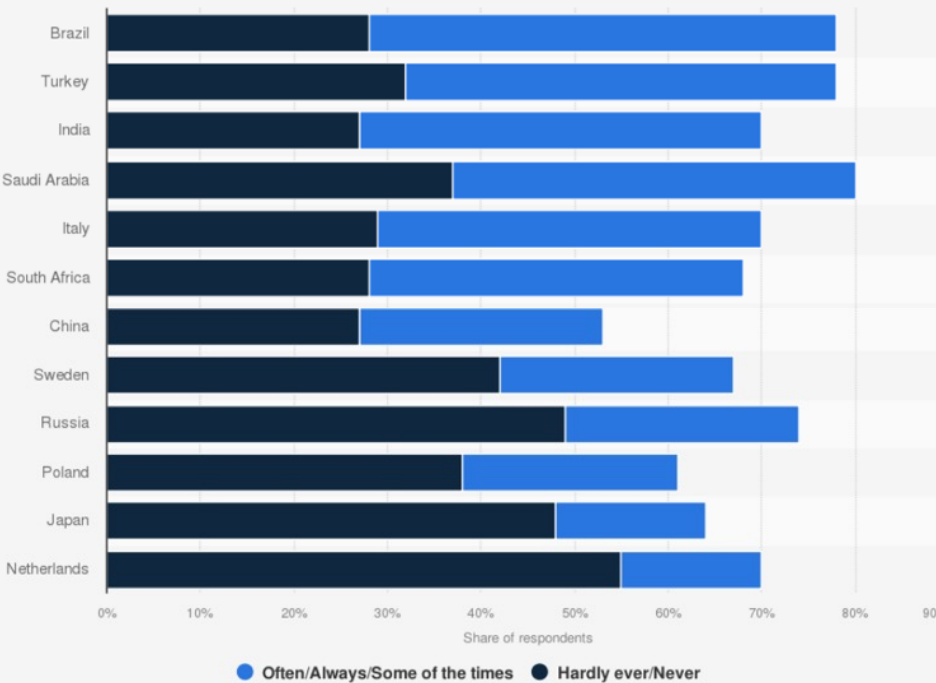
N= 9 (international students)

Question: Do you feel lonely? If you are lonely, what do you do? How often do you use social network sites (SNS)? In what way do you think SNS can help you to overcome loneliness?



Result

How often do you feel lonely?



Source  
Ipsos  
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##### Additional Information:

Worldwide; December 23, 2020 to January 8, 2021; 23,004 respondents; 16-74 years; Online

statista

### CONCLUSION

- SNS usage only provide temporary solution to loneliness but cannot replace traditional ways of relationships maintenance.
- Using SNS can be maladaptive to social cognition, which if not fulfilled, may lead to loneliness feelings.
- Feelings really matter. Loneliness is a perceptual state that depends more on the quality of a person's relationships than on their sheer number.
- People with few friends can feel fulfilled; people with vast social networks can feel empty and disconnected.

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