Emerging Adulthood Uses and Gratifications of Social Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Mixed Methods Study Among Filipino College Students

Jerome V. Cleofas[1] $\bullet$, Blulean T. Albao[2], and Julienne Celina S. Dayrit[1]

Abstract

This exploratory mixed methods study examines how the emerging adulthood development tasks of autonomy, intimacy, and identity are reflected in the social media (SM) uses and gratifications during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research draws its analysis from qualitative and quantitative data from an online survey of 1003 Filipino college students aged 18–29. Convenient sampling was done via online recruitment on social media sites. Qualitative findings reveal subcategories characterizing how respondents use social media to meet three developmental needs of EA: (1) *autonomy,* by practicing informational control and performing adulthood-related tasks; (2) *intimacy*, by maintaining relationships with peers and family; and (3) *identity,* by engaging in educational experiences and in entertainment and self-expression. Quantitative strand results suggest that sex, household income, Instagram and Tiktok use, and the number of active SM sites are significantly associated with the use of SM for at least one emerging adulthood development task ($p < 0.05$).

Introduction

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts on society have affected the development of individuals across the lifespan. Even as the number of infections subsides globally and economies are gradually easing restrictions, there are concerns that this long-standing public health crisis will have lasting effects on the development of children, youth, adults, and older individuals beyond the outbreak (Settersten et al., 2020). Individuals, families, schools, workplaces, industries, and other sectors of society had to innovate and incorporate technologies to perform their daily activities amid pandemic-induced restrictions and challenges. One of the digital technologies that was widely used to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic is social media (SM). In 2020 and 2021, the first and second years of the pandemic, Kepios (2022) estimates a 10% average yearly increase in global SM users (totaling 4.62 billion users worldwide by the end of 2021), which can be attributed to the need to maintain social connections amid the lockdowns and physical distancing measures that disrupted in-person interactions. Aside from maintaining social wellbeing, COVID-19 research has demonstrated other functions of SM and other online platforms to help support various aspects of quality of life during the pandemic, such as education, health, and human development, economic productivity, and political participation (Mouratidis & Papagiannakis, 2021). Specifically, this present study focuses on the use of social media in gratifying the development needs of Filipino emerging adults during the pandemic.

The coronavirus crisis has introduced many challenges in the lives of emerging adults. Studies have indicated that emerging adults experienced disruptions of routines, lack of social contact, financial strain, family-related stress, unhealthy behaviors, school- and work-related stress, emotional distancing, fear of infection, negative perceptions of the future, and overall decreased quality of life during the COVID-19 outbreak (Bianchi et al., 2021; Dotson et al., 2022; Hall &

[1]Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines
[2]Arts and Design Track Department, Senior High School Division, Integrated School, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Corresponding Author:
Jerome V. Cleofas, Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences, De La Salle University, 2401 Taft Ave, Malate, Manila, 1004, Philippines.
Email: jerome.cleofas@dlsu.edu.ph

Zygmunt, 2021; Halliburton et al., 2021; Preetz et al., 2021). The Philippines, a country that belongs to the list with the longest lockdown and poorest COVID resilience scores (Chang et al., 2022), also present similar problems, especially in the college population (Cleofas, 2021a, 2021b; Egcas et al., 2021). Even as the country is slowly easing its restrictions due to decreasing cases at the beginning of 2022 (Tomacruz, 2022), the threat of new life-altering waves of COVID cases among Filipino emerging adults continues to loom because of high rates of vaccine hesitancy in the said age bracket (Cleofas & Oducado, 2022). We note that many of these challenges are not unique to emerging adulthood, but we suspect that the effects of these challenges can differ across developmental stages.

Even before the pandemic, social media has become an integral part of the lives of emerging adults, especially among the Y and Z generational cohorts. Emerging adults comprise 86% of people worldwide who actively use SM in 2021 (Khoros, 2021). Thus, it is unsurprising for emerging adults to turn to SM to meet development needs, as evidenced by recent research (Cleofas, 2021; Karayiğit et al., 2021; van den Berg et al., 2021). This is especially true in the Philippines, which was recognized as the "*Social Media Capital of the World*" for registering the highest number of active SM users and longest daily use since the beginning of 2010 (Ichimura, 2020). This present study extends the literature on SM use by focusing on its function in facilitating the achievement of emerging adulthood development tasks.

Theoretical Framework

Emerging Adulthood Theory

Emerging adulthood (18–29 years old) is a period in the lifespan between adolescence and young adulthood. This age bracket has been characterized as a time of exploring identity, feelings of instability, being in-between, self-focus, and optimism regarding the future (Arnett, 2006). Emerging adulthood affords individuals the opportunity to flourish (e.g., obtaining an advanced degree, entering the workforce, expanding worldviews, finding love), flounder (e.g., engaging in risky behaviors, succumbing to mental health issues), and generally shape the trajectory of their lives towards adulthood (Nelson, 2021). Coyne et al. (2013) forwarded three developmental tasks for emerging adults which are autonomy, intimacy, and identity. While these tasks are also observed during adolescence, Arnett (2006, 2010) argued that the exploration of these tasks is developmentally distinct in emerging adulthood. Adolescents realize these developmental tasks while still largely dependent on adults and experiencing bodily changes. Meanwhile, emerging adults work toward these developmental tasks with more social independence and a semblance of adulthood (e.g., financial independence; maintaining social and sexual relationships beyond recreational motives; developing a career identity) (Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2010).

The ways individuals go through emerging adulthood (EA) and the extent of affordances it provides them also vary based on culture and socioeconomic status (Arnett, 2006, 2010). Specifically, in the Philippines, emerging adulthood has been described as a period of expressing oneself, immersion in pop culture, increased consumption behaviors, engagement in travel, leisure, and sports, the pursuit of education and professional advancements, use of digital technologies and sociopolitical arrangements (Velasco, 2020). Unlike their Western counterparts, whose emerging adulthood is characterized by emancipation from home (Arnett, 2006), the lives of Filipino emerging adults remain close to and influenced by their parents and other family members (Hock et al., 2018; Velasco, 2020).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

This study appeals to the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory in attempting to understand the vital role of social media in the lives of emerging adults amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The U&G approach posits that audiences' motivations to engage in a specific media type or content are based on the gratification of identified social and psychological needs and desires (Ruggiero, 2000). U&G theory suggests that individuals are aware of these needs and intently choose to use media to satisfy them (Katz et al., 1974; Rubin, 2002). Scholars have used various typologies of motives, which vary based on the type and content of the media of interest and social context (Ruggiero, 2000). Recent research among youth and emerging adults has indicated that their motives for using social media are to maintain existing relationships, socialize with new people, express, and be popular, manage tasks, engage in entertainment, and achieve informational and educational benefits (Kircaburun et al., 2020).

This present study draws its focus on how emerging adults use SM to gratify their development needs. Hence, we use the three motives proposed by Coyne et al. (2013) in their extensive state-of-the-field work that integrates emerging adulthood theory and media U&G in this development stage. Aligned with Coyne et al. (2013), we conceptualize emerging adulthood uses and gratification of social media (EA-U&G-SM) as the attainment of developmental tasks during this period: *autonomy, intimacy,* and *identity*. While these tasks are not exclusive to emerging adulthood—as these are tasks for adolescents and other adults as well—scholars argued that the context and the manner in which emerging adults pursue these tasks, and the way they use various forms of media to meet these developmental needs differ from teens and young to middle adults (Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2010; Bjornsen, 2018; Coyne et al., 2013)

Literature Review

Social Media U&G for Autonomy in EA

The development of autonomy during emerging adulthood is related to the performance of adult functions in society

(Arnett, 2006). Most emerging adult university students view themselves as "adults in some ways, but not in others" (Nelson, 2021). Emerging adults have identified the ability to make independent, unsupervised decisions and take responsibility for their actions as key to being an adult (Nelson & Barry, 2005). While it is expected for Filipino emerging adults to practice obedience to their parents, they are able to make important life decisions compared to when they were younger (Cruz et al., 2001). Coyne et al. (2013) posit that emerging adults have greater control over decisions related to media selection and usage, and less parental monitoring for media use. This freedom is further expanded by social media, which affords emerging adults boundless information and diverse ways to engage with people and ideas (Bjornsen, 2018). Another affordance of emerging adulthood is the ability to consume media products intended exclusively for adults, such as R-18 games, music with explicit lyrics, and pornography (Coyne et al., 2013). For non-student emerging adults, social media is also a platform to present their adult professional activities (Velasco, 2020). Taken together, these EA studies demonstrate themes of social media use to meet the development need of autonomy that revolve around having greater agency for media consumption, using social media to perform mature/adult roles, and consuming adult content.

Social Media U&G for Intimacy in EA

Social media allows emerging adults to initiate and improve relationships (Coyne et al., 2013). With features like sharing and private messaging, SM sites are ideal platforms for emerging adults to receive social support among their peers, family, and other significant others, especially those who are distant from them (Chen, 2011; Ezumah, 2013; Coyne et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2012; Yang & Brown, 2013). Literature also indicates the benefits provided by SM in starting and maintaining romantic relationships (Bjornsen, 2018). In the Philippines, emerging adults use SM to publicize their relationships with friends, family, partners, and colleagues (Velasco, 2020). However, evidence has also dealt with the negative impacts of SM on emerging adults' social relationships, as it also becomes a platform for social conflicts, distracted conversations, creeping, cyber-infidelity, cyberbullying, and catfishing (Bjornsen, 2018). The aforementioned EA literature reveals the importance of social media to establish and sustain relationships with different social entities, like peers, romantic partners, and family.

Social Media U&G for Identity in EA

Emerging adulthood is considered the longest period in the lifespan that affords individuals to explore, develop, and enact their identities in the aspects of career, worldviews, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion (Arnett, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2013; Waterman, 1999). Literature demonstrates how emerging adults use SM to explore their identity by posting statements and various content on the feeds as a form of experimentation on attempting various possible selves (Coyne et al., 2013). Michikyan (2020) suggests that online presentation in SM is linked with identity coherence and integration among emerging adults. The pop culture-related content that emerging adults share on SM also contributes to their expression of identity (Coyne et al., 2013). For instance, in the Philippines, entertainment has been identified as one of the needs significantly gratified by SM use among college students (Basilisco & Cha, 2015). Moreover, Filipino emerging adults also make use of SM for political expressions and engagements (Velasco, 2020). Possible negative aspects of social media on identity include unrealistic societal beauty standards that can lead to body image disturbances (Bjornsen, 2018). The extant literature on emerging adulthood demonstrates various ways to realize the need for identity exploration during this life stage using social media. This includes online self-expression, entertainment, cultural consumption, and sociopolitical participation.

Demographic Characteristics, Social Media Profile and U&G

Pre-pandemic evidence suggests that certain demographic characteristics are linked with specific U&G of SM. In terms of gender, studies among university students revealed that females are more likely to use SM to maintain existing relationships, pass the time, accomplish tasks, and pursue educational goals, while males use SM to meet new people (Karayiğit et al., 2021; Kircaburun et al., 2020). As regards to age, the same studies showed that younger students have higher uses and gratifications for SM. Furthermore, income has been positively linked with Internet use (Cho et al., 2003). Also, the specific social media used (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram) were found to be significantly correlated with U&G of SM among university students (Kircaburun et al., 2020). Social and digital inequalities in well-being outcomes have been noted among Filipino college students during the early months of the pandemic (Cleofas & Rocha, 2021). Thus, there is reason to suspect that their developmental tasks and the way they use social media to realize these tasks would demonstrate disparities as well.

Social Media Use Motives Among Emerging Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Several research studies involving emerging adults explored social media use motives during the coronavirus crisis. A US-based study among college emerging adults revealed that gratifying the need for entertainment was the highest motivation for using social media during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by information, social connectedness, and social recognition (Karayiğit et al., 2021). On the other hand, a study from the Netherlands indicated that emerging adults primarily

turn to social media to seek social support from family and friends while on lockdown (van den Berg et al., 2021). These findings are corroborated by another university-based US study that indicated keeping up with friends and having fun as the primary purposes of using social media, followed by communicating, procrastinating, killing time, and reading news during the coronavirus crisis (Pressly, 2021). Shafer et al. (2022) suggested that social media was used as a form of surveillance for their romantic partners. Emerging adults also made use of social media for political participation and civic engagement during the pandemic (Dayrit et al., 2022; Yazdani et al., 2022). In the Philippines, a qualitative study indicated that emerging adult college students use social media to maintain their ties with peers during pandemic-induced community quarantine. Still, informants claimed that it does not fully substitute the social gains of in-person interactions (Cleofas, 2021a).

Based on the literature mentioned in this review, there is teeming evidence of the role of social media in the attainment of developmental tasks of individuals during the period of emerging adulthood. Meanwhile, emerging adulthood research during the time of COVID-19 also reveals how social media addressed pandemic-induced challenges and improved lives during this public health emergency. However, none of these recent endeavors investigated social media use utilizing Coyne et al.'s (2013) classification of uses and gratifications (autonomy, intimacy, and identity). Using Coyne et al.'s (2013) framework can help frame the motives based on developmental tasks experienced by emerging adults to address the unique needs of individuals in this developmental stage. There is reason to suspect that the pandemic may have induced changes in the social media is used in the name of these three developmental tasks. Cognizant of these knowledge gaps, this present mixed methods study aims to:

1. Qualitatively examine the specific emerging adulthood uses and gratifications of social media (EA-U&G-SM) among Filipino college students during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of autonomy, intimacy, and identity.
2. Determine the significant associations between demographic and social media profile of the respondents and their EA-U&G-SM in terms of autonomy, intimacy, and identity.

Methods

Research Design

This paper is a component of a larger research project that examines social media behaviors and digital health among college SM users during the pandemic. For the present study, we used an exploratory mixed methods design and adhered to the guidelines of *Good Reporting of a Mixed Methods Study* (GRAMMS, O'Cathain et al., 2008). In an exploratory mixed methods design, qualitative data analysis is accomplished first.

Then, the concepts that emerged from the qualitative data are further tested using quantitative analysis (Plano Clark et al., 2008). For this study, the qualitative strand (QUAL) used a deductive qualitative descriptive approach and addressed the first research question (subcategories of EA-U&G-SM under the three developmental tasks of emerging adulthood). On the other hand, the quantitative strand (QUAN) used a descriptive cross-sectional approach (association between demographic and social media profile and EA-U&G-SM). We used a mixed methods design to identify emergent subcategories from narrative data while also examining if these concepts vary in distribution across social gradients, as suggested in previous research (Cho et al., 2003; Kircaburun et al., 2020). Figure 1 shows a visual diagram of our mixed methodology.

Population and Sampling

The target population of this study is Filipino social media users (students) who are enrolled in an undergraduate program in any college/university in the Philippines. Another eligibility criterion is being within the age range of 18–29, which is the period of emerging adulthood (Nelson, 2021). A screening question was asked on the first page of the survey tool to ascertain their college status and age. Based on G*Power computation, the minimum number of respondents required to employ the statistics in the quantitative phase for three outcome variables is 435 (w = 0.3, p = 0.05, power = 0.95). Participants were recruited via our SM accounts. Convenient sampling was employed in the study; those who accessed the online survey link via our posts in our public and private social media accounts were initially included in the study. A total of 1152 individuals accessed the survey link, and only 1087 of them fit the eligibility criteria based on the screening questions and were able to enter the formal questionnaire. The dataset was then rid of entries with no answer to the survey's open-ended question, bringing the final sample size down to N = 1003.

Majority of the respondents are within the 18–20 years old age group (n = 606, 60.4%), female (n = 609, 60.7%) and came from low-income households (n = 685, 68.3%). In terms of social media profiles, 902 (89.9%) respondents were active on Facebook, 571 (56.9%) on Twitter, 699 (69.7%) on Instagram, and 830 (82.8%) on YouTube, and 476 (47.5%) on Tiktok. The majority of them are active on four or more SM sites (63.6%).

Data Collection and Ethical Procedures

The study protocol was granted ethical clearance by the researchers' home department at the university. The survey was constructed using Google Forms. The link to the online form was posted on the researchers' social media accounts and through a Facebook Page post. The post included details on the project and the eligibility criteria for potential participants. We boosted the post using Facebook Ads and targeted
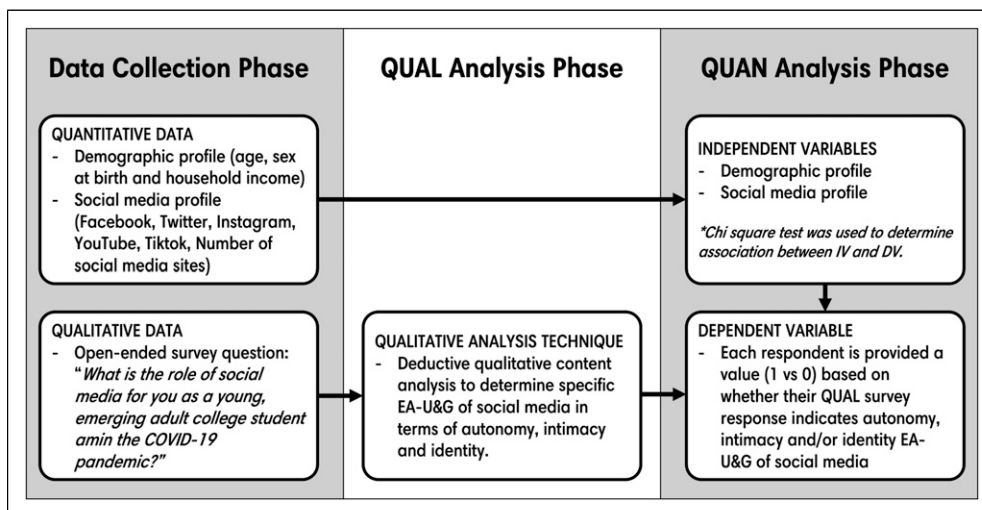
Figure 1. Overview of the mixed methodology of the present study.

accounts within the 18–29 age range and geolocated in the Philippines. We also shared our links through private and direct messaging through our personal online networks. We secured informed consent through the first page of the form, where we indicated the research problems and procedures and their rights as respondents of the study. Clicking "yes" on the informed consent page signified their willingness to participate. Data was stored in a two-factor authenticated cloud storage that only the researchers had access to. No personal information was collected; each participant was assigned with a unique numerical control number (e.g., #001, #500).

Instruments

Demographic and Social Media Profile. To measure demographic characteristics, we asked the respondents' age (coded as 0 = 18–20 years old and 1 = 21–29 years old), sex assigned at birth (coded as 0 = females and 1 = males) and estimated household income (coded as 0 = low-income [PhP 43,827.00/ 837 USD and below] and 1 = middle-to high-income). These income brackets were based on the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (Domingo, 2020). The merging of middle- and high-income levels was to address variability issues (there was only 7.4% of the respondents from high-income households). For social media profile variables, we asked the respondents if they actively used the following SM sites: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Tiktok (coded as 1 = yes, 0 = no). The respondents were provided another blank wherein they can enumerate the other SM sites outside the list. Number of sites used was counted for each respondent. These variables were used for the QUAN phase of the study.

Emerging Adulthood Uses and Gratification of Social Media (EA-U&G-SM). To describe the respondents' EA-U&G-SM, we

asked the open-ended question, "*what is the role of social media in your life as a young, emerging adult college student in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic?*" The respondents were afforded a paragraph box to type in their answers in the online survey and were encouraged to answer as liberally as possible. A brief definition of emerging adulthood was placed in the introduction part of the survey to help respondents familiarize themselves with this developmental stage. This strategy of inquiring respondents open-endedly has been used in traditional U&G research (Ruggiero, 2000). Asking a general open-ended question in surveys without a specific prompt is a strategy to elucidate deeper insights and respondent-driven answers, which has been used in recent public perception research (Knudsen et al., 2021). The questions were administered in English. All the narrative answers that were received were also in the English language. These narratives were used for the content analysis in the QUAL phase of the study and were then numerically coded for the QUAN phase.

Data Analysis Procedure

For the QUAL phase of the study, the deductive qualitative content analysis by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) was used to analyze the respondents' narratives to draw out the specific subcategories of EA-U&G-SM among the respondents. A deductive approach was pursued because the emergent subcategories were subsumed under three pre-set categories based on the development tasks of emerging adulthood (i.e., autonomy, intimacy and identity). The first step of analysis is the preparation phase, where we immerse ourselves in the data by reading and rereading the narratives. The second step was to reduce the narratives into codes. The third step is the organization phase, where we created a categorization matrix to assign the codes and narratives based on the developmental

task manifested by the answers of the respondents. Within categories, further abstraction was pursued by identifying emerging patterns that depicted specific EA-U&G-SM subcategories. Theoretical and empirical underpinnings on emerging adulthood and uses and gratifications theory (e.g., Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2010; Coyne et al., 2013) were frequently consulted in clustering codes and subcategories within the three major categories of autonomy, intimacy, and identity. Trustworthiness in the data analysis process was ensured by employing consensual analysis among researchers to determine codes and subcategories, memoing of the process, and thick description of each emergent subcategory of EA-U&G-SM in the results. We also computed inter-coder reliability (ICR) for each subcategory. ICR scores ranged from 81.56 to 100.00% (acceptable value is from 75% and up). Microsoft Excel was used to organize the narratives and assign them the codes that designated their categories and subcategories.

For the QUAN phase of the study, the association between demographic and social media profiles and the general EA-U&G-SM categories based on the three development tasks was determined. First, the responses were quantified by assigning them values: 1 if the response depicted a specific development task and 0 if it did not. Some respondents can be classified into more than one development task based on the content of their answers. These values served as the dependent variables of the study, which were then linked with the profile variables using the chi-square test for association. Crude odds ratios were computed using bivariate logistic regression. The significance level was set at 0.05. JAMOVI 2.0.0 was used for the statistical computations of this study.

Results

QUAL: Subcategories of EA-U&G-SM Based on Narrative Responses

From our qualitative analysis of the narrative survey responses of the college students emerged seven subcategories of emerging adulthood uses and gratifications of social media under the three EA development tasks. Table 1 shows the overview of these subcategories of EA-U&G-SM and sample codes, together with representative excerpts from the narrative answers from the survey.

Subcategories of EA-U&G-SM for Autonomy

Practicing Informational Control. During emerging adulthood, individuals get to practice more agency in choosing the type and content of media that they consume compared to when they were adolescents (Coyne et al., 2013). From the narratives of more than half of the respondents (53.0%; ICR = 100%), we gleaned ways that EA college students use SM to enact a sense of autonomy by practicing agency over the information they consume and are exposing themselves to. EA students demonstrate the capability to navigate the sea of content they find on SM. A common favorable type of information they intentionally access is formal news. For instance, #245 wrote, "*Social media serves as my key to the world… I rarely watch news; that is why I use social media to get updates about what is happening.*" A specific type of news that the EA students frequently consume is about COVID-19 and the external environment that they have been restricted from exploring because of the pandemic; as #612 shared, "*The role of social media during this time for me is more of an informative type… to gather information about the current situation of our country concerning COVID-19 and other problems of different countries.*"

Another way that EA college students practice informational control is by exercising the ability to discern the quality of the information afforded to them by SM. Many respondents recognize and lament the proliferation of misinformation on SM and express the need to avoid and fight against 'fake news.' According to #879, "*Social media is very important nowadays because of the information we can collect but be mindful that sometimes there is fake or unreliable information that we need to look at to prevent misinformation.*" Aside from misinformation, EA students are aware that there are posts that would not be beneficial for their wellbeing; hence, they exercise autonomy by choosing to stay away from 'bad' types of content on SM; as #850 mentions, "*…the people who spread fake news, negativities, and nudity across the internet make me sick. But, as an emerging adult, I am learning how to just focus on what's important and helpful, and just ignore the unnecessary ones.*" Codes under this category are ***accessing information*** and ***consuming social media content critically***.

Performing Adulthood-Related Tasks. During the time of emerging adulthood, individuals are gradually gaining a sense of being an adult and starting to engage in activities that are socially expected of adults, such as generating income, managing finances, and community engagement (Arnett, 2006). A small portion of the respondents (7.5%; ICR = 87.50) report that they use SM to do tasks that are socially expected of adults. One of these is engaging in economically productive work and career development. There are respondents who run their own business through SM, like #640, who verbalized, "*…It helps me to make money online... one of my businesses is networking.*" Other EA students use SM to look for and engage in employment, such as #293, who utilizes SM "*…to look for something may help me for my future [on-the-job training] and job opportunity.*" Other students also earn money and manage their own finances through SM by using their skills, like #928, who responded, "*[social media is] heavily important to me, as an artist who tries to make money through commissions….*" SM also allows EA college students to perform adulthood by being a channel they can use to engage in community building and social advocacy. For instance, #831 mentioned, "*…I am a council member in our community, I should be aware of any developments about the school and our village right away.*" Codes under this

Table 1. Overview of Categories and Subcategories of Uses and Gratification of Social Media Based on the Emerging Adulthood Development Tasks of Autonomy, Intimacy, and Identity (*N* = 1003).

EA-U&G-SM categories based on EA developmental tasks (*n*, %)[a]	Subcategories of EA-U&G-SM for each EA developmental task (*n*, %)[a]	Sample codes	Representative excerpts
Autonomy (560, 55.8%)	Practicing informational control (532, 53.0%) ICR = 100.00%	Accessing information Consuming social media content critically	#032: "*Social media is a platform where this generation's adults and college students can communicate. Although it is easy to spread fake news, it is not impossible to find credible sources. Social media is a necessity, but can be bad if overused…*"
		Accessing information Consuming social media content critically	#302: "*…I think as an emerging adult, [social media] has made it easier to access news and updates but you still need to be wary about the things you see or read in social media these days.*"
		Consuming social media content critically	#854: "*…I do think that restraining and having much discipline is what we ought to have while using this platform. Therefore, I can say that social media is a tool that must be mindfully and thoughtfully used due to the fact that it affects one's aspect and perspectives…*"
	Performing adulthood-related tasks (75, 7.5%) ICR = 87.50%	Doing online-based work	#150: "*I can promote my online business, as well as help other people through my online job. Throughout my experiences, I'm confident that I will be able to benefit when it comes to searching through the internet.*"
		Exploring income opportunities	#582: "*…social media, such as Instagram and FB marketplace, have also both helped me build connections with small businesses…*"
		Performing financial transactions online	#720: "*…Another thing is that most of transactions such as payments now can be done through social media making it more important…*"
Intimacy (459, 45.8%)	Maintaining relationships with peers (442, 44.1%) ICR = 97.00%	Communicating with classmates and friends Establishing friendships online	#187: "*…social media is the only way we could communicate with our classmates… social media helps a lot in making friends since we could not socialize with others physically at home…*"
		Connecting with friends Easing loneliness	#353: "*It helps me keep tabs on friends and loved ones even though we are apart, I feel like there's a thing that still connects us to the outside world even when we are in a pandemic. It helps me feel less lonely at home when I miss my friends.*"
		Communicating with significant others	#945: "*…I believe that communicating with important people and colleagues are one of the many important roles of social media during these trying times…*"
	Maintaining relationships with family (347, 34.6%) ICR = 94.44%	Communicating with distant relatives	#557: "*As a young adult, social media have helped me to be able to communicate with my friends and other relatives who are far away from me…*"
		Communicating with distant relatives	#976: "*…It also lets me communicate freely to my loved ones who is in faraway places…*"
		Knowing status of family members	#1002: "*For me, social media is a means to stay updated with what is happening around, as well as to see families and relatives' status…*"

Table I. (continued)

EA-U&G-SM categories based on EA developmental tasks (n, %)[a]	Subcategories of EA-U&G-SM for each EA developmental task (n, %)[a]	Sample codes	Representative excerpts
Identity (599, 59.7%)	Engagement in educational experiences (246, 24.5%) ICR = 97.00%	Communicating with school entities	#240: "…social media has been our only way of communication with regards to our academic works and social life with professors and classmates we've never met due to the situation."
		Engaging in online school activities	#412: "…social media also became a platform to conduct online school activities and most of our school activities, groupings, and other important announcements are posted on it…"
		Accessing school-related information	
		Discussing academics with classmates	#874: "…I can also discuss topics in our courses with my classmates, and it makes me feel better to realize that online learning may be interesting if you have people with whom to share your struggles."
	Entertainment and expression (368, 36.69) ICR = 81.56%	Consuming art	#513: "…it keeps me entertained by the inspirational videos or posts by Christian pages."
		Consuming pop-culture content online	#794: "…I just follow pages about memes, news, and K-pop. So, I think the role of social media for me is for entertainment."
		Finding and sharing art	#968: "The role of social media for me is to share my art and to find inspiration."
		Expressing opinions online	#407 "…[it is] a way to get information about the current social and political situation around the world. I use social media to inform others and voice out my opinions too."

Note: A narrative can be assigned to more than one category or subcategory.
[a]The denominator of the percentage is the total number of the population (*N* = 1003).

subcategory are ***doing online-based work, exploring income opportunities, performing transactions online,*** and ***community engagement.***

Subcategories of EA-U&G-SM for Intimacy

Maintaining Relationships With Peers. Peers remain to be an important social group among emerging adults (Arnett, 2006). Almost half of the respondents (44.1%; ICR = 97%) addressed their intimacy needs during the pandemic by using SM to maintain peer relationships. Many EA college students expressed that pandemic-induced community quarantine had disrupted their social relationships with friends; however, SM has helped maintain their connection with peers. Related to this, #827 mentioned, "…*It can help us communicate with our friends since we cannot see each other personally….*" Connecting with friends via social media makes EA students feel less isolated. Related to this, #430 responded, "…*being online is kind of good for me because I still get to check up on other peers and connect. It's just nice not to feel alone—even if it's just virtually.*" Moreover, respondents have shared that SM helped them deepen their relationships with classmates and other school entities during pandemic-induced online learning, especially those that they have not seen in-person in campus, "*Social media has been our only way of communication with regards to our academic works and social life with professors and classmates we've never met due to the*

situation." Codes under this subcategory include ***communicating with classmates, friends, and significant others, establishing friendships online,*** and ***easing loneliness.***

Maintaining Relationships With Family. For Filipinos, the family remains to be a central social group among emerging adults (Cleofas, 2021; Velasco, 2020). Some EA college student respondents (34.6%; ICR = 94.44%) used SM for intimacy needs through online communication with family and relatives. From the narratives, it can be gleaned that sustaining social connection with family members is essential during emerging adulthood. Respondent #564 mentioned, "*other social media platforms allow me to communicate with my friends and extended family because I can't see them physically because of the pandemic.*" There are respondents whose family members live in distant locations and even abroad, such as #240, who wrote, "…*during this pandemic, social media could really be helpful for us nowadays through communicating to our relatives from other countries or other places….*" Being able to interact with family members online improve the emotional well-being of some respondents. In line with this, #330 shared, "…*online emotional support sent by family thru online platform is the main role of social media for me.*" SM has helped some of the EA students strengthen their ties with their families, like #635 who verbalized, "…*social media helps me to stay connected with my loved ones and to*

make our bond or relationship stronger than ever because [even if] we are only talking virtually… we can still get in touch…." Codes under this subcategory include **communicating with distant relatives** and **knowing the status of family members.**

Subcategories of EA-U&G-SM for Identity

Engagement in Educational Experiences. Arnett (2000, 2006) argues the importance of receiving formal education in the identity exploration of emerging adults, as college is instrumental in developing their worldviews and career identity. Around a quarter of the respondents (24.5%; ICR = 97.00%) posted narratives signifying that SM helps them perform the role of a student. It is evident that SM had been instrumental in accomplishing the academic tasks of students during the era of pandemic-induced online education in the country. EA college students access announcements from professors and schools via social media, such as #210, who mentioned, "*the use of Facebook groups and messenger groups were utilized as a platform for teacher-student communication… it's hard to go to see announcements related to school without these essential apps….*" Moreover, respondents report that SM applications facilitate groupwork among students; as #015 shared, "*Since some professors still assign group activities often, social media platforms are means to which you can connect and brainstorm with your group mates.*" Also, the information they can get from SM regarding current events can help their learning. Related to this, #725 wrote, "*social media also allows me to be updated about what's happening in our society… social media is also a big help [to] gain information that we can use in our study.*" Codes under this subcategory include **communicating with school entities, engaging in online school activities, accessing school-related information,** and **discussing academics with classmates.**

Entertainment and Expression. Identity exploration among emerging adults is facilitated by media through the consumption of cultural activities and products and using the platform to express oneself (Coyne et al., 2013). Another way that EA college students express their identity through the entertaining and leisure-related content they consume and post on social media, primarily to escape from their worries (16.7%; ICR = 81.56%). Respondents reported that they use SM to access fun and relaxing content to address the boredom and isolation that they experienced during confinement, like #624 who shared, "*…social media [can be] used to spread good vibes in the context of memes, life hacks while people are bored staying at home*." Others use SM to be updated with their music idols and other pop culture icons. "*Social media led me to knowing BTS (a K-Pop Group), which I am very thankful for because BTS helped me a lot in healing,*" #699 wrote. Moreover, SM has become an avenue for them to explore their hobbies and meet other people with the same interests, such as #084 who mentioned, "*…I have a decent number of hobbies, and because of [social media], I am able*

to see what others are doing related to my hobbies." Identity exploration and formation among EA students are also facilitated by their engagement in social issues. For #560, social media is "*…a decent platform to share thoughts and opinions with other people, mostly about sociopolitical stuff; it's nice to know different perspectives and opinions so I could analyze and weigh my own.*" Codes under this subcategory include **consuming pop-culture content online, finding, consuming, and sharing art**, and **expressing opinions online.**

QUAN: Association of Demographic and Social Media Profile on EA-U&G of Social Media

Table 2 shows the results of the chi-square tests and odds ratios that determine the demographic and social media profile variables that are significantly associated with the general categories of EA-U&G-SM in terms of the three developmental tasks of emerging adulthood.

Among the independent variables, only Tiktok use was significantly associated with EA-U&G-SM for autonomy. Respondents who are active on Tiktok have 0.626 times lesser odds of using social media for autonomy compared to those who are inactive on the application ($X^2 = 13.4$, $p < 0.001$).

Household income, Instagram use, and the number of sites were significantly associated with EA-U&G-SM for intimacy. Specifically, respondents who live in middle-to high-income households have 0.737 times lesser odds of using SM for intimacy than those from low-income households ($X^2 = 5.04$, $p = 0.025$). Furthermore, respondents who are active on Instagram have 0.679 times lesser odds of using SM for intimacy compared to non-active respondents ($X^2 = 7.70$, $p = 0.006$). Finally, students who used four or more SM sites have 1.43 higher odds of using SM for intimacy than those with less ($X^2 = 7.12$, $p = 0.008$).

Sex and household income were significantly associated with EA-U&G-SM for identity. Specifically, females have 1.58 times higher odds of using SM for identity than males ($X^2 = 12.0$, $p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, respondents from low-income households have 1.33 times higher odds of using SM for identity than middle-to-high income ($X^2 = 4.26$, $p = 0.039$).

Discussion

The objectives of this present study are to explore the subcategories of emerging adulthood uses and gratifications of social media based on the three developmental tasks among college students during the pandemic and to identify the demographic characteristics and social media use attributes that are associated with the EA-U&G-SM for these developmental tasks. While there is substantial literature on SM use in this specific population, not many studies specifically focused on the development features of EA in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Southeast Asian populations are underrepresented in social media and emerging adulthood research. This discussion integrates the QUAN and

Table 2. Tests for Association of Demographic and Social Media Profile, and EA-U&G-SM in Terms of Autonomy, Identity, and Intimacy (N = 1003).

Profile Variables	Autonomy				Intimacy				Identity			
	n (%)[a]	X^2	OR[b]	p-value	n (%)[a]	X^2	OR[b]	p-value	n (%)[a]	X^2	OR[b]	p-value
Demographic profile												
Age												
18–20 years old	333 (59.5)	0.483	1.09	0.487	290 (47.9)	2.70	0.808	0.100	372 (62.1)	1.77	0.840	0.184
21–29 years old	227 (40.5)				169 (42.6)				227 (37.9)			
Sex assigned at birth												
Male	234 (41.8)	3.33	0.788	0.068	167 (36.4)	2.98	1.25	0.084	209 (34.9)	12.0***	1.58	<0.001
Female	356 (58.2)				292 (63.6)				390 (65.1)			
Household income[c]												
Middle to high income	178 (31.8)	0.004	0.992	0.951	162 (35.3)	5.04*	0.737	0.025	175 (29.2)	4.26*	1.33	0.039
Low income	382 (68.2)				297 (64.7)				424 (70.8)			
Social media profile												
Facebook												
Yes	499 (89.1)	0.948	1.23	0.330	421 (91.7)	3.00	0.689	0.083	533 (89.0)	1.48	1.31	0.224
No	61 (10.9)				38 (8.3)				66 (11.0)			
Twitter												
Yes	330 (58.9)	2.07	.0832	0.151	274 (59.7)	2.64	0.812	0.104	331 (55.3)	1.69	1.18	0.193
No	230 (41.1)				185 (40.3)				268 (44.7)			
Instagram												
Yes	389 (69.5)	0.0308	1.02	0.861	340 (74.1)	7.70**	0.679	0.006	422 (70.5)	0.915	0.406	0.524
No	171 (30.5)				119 (25.9)				177 (29.5)			
Youtube												
Yes	465 (83.0)	0.0716	0.956	0.789	389 (84.7)	2.37	0.770	0.124	494 (82.5)	0.0822	1.05	0.774
No	95 (17.0)				70 (15.3)				105 (17.5)			
Tiktok												
Yes	237 (42.3)	13.4***	0.626	<0.001	226 (49.2)	1.08	0.877	0.300	290 (48.4)	0.909	0.546	0.460
No	323 (57.7)				223 (50.8)				309 (51.6)			
Number of sites used												
3 or less	204 (36.4)	0.105	0.958	0.746	145 (31.6)	7.12**	1.43	0.008	229 (38.2)	3.23	0.784	0.072
4 or more	356 (63.6)				314 (68.4)				370 (61.8)			

[a]Total number and percentage based on those who reported general EA-U&G-SM (autonomy, identity and intimacy).
[b]Crude odds ratio.
[c]Low-income = 837 USD and below (based on the Philippine Institute of Development Studies).
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p = <0.001.

QUAL findings of the study, ties the insights with the broader literature, and highlights how specific Filipino contexts are possibly linked with the respondents' categories and sub-categories of EA-U&G-SM.

On Autonomy

Qualitative findings suggest that emerging adults exercise autonomy when critically consuming the information they are exposed to on social media. During emerging adulthood, individuals no longer need guidance from parents or teachers to access a wide range of content on SM and to discern the quality and possible impacts of these contents (Coyne et al., 2013). This necessity to search and temper information in SM is heightened because of the socially restrictive and worrisome period of COVID-19 when misinformation is easily spread on online platforms (Zarocostas, 2020). This increased information literacy and agency during emerging adulthood has been noted in previous studies (Bjornsen, 2018; Coyne et al., 2013). The generational cohort of the Filipino emerging adults in this study have been exposed to the subject, "Media and Information Literacy," which was recently introduced in the new senior high school curriculum; hence, their enhanced critical understanding of the online information ecosystem (Bautista, 2021). Furthermore, the attainment of autonomy may be facilitated by SM by affording emerging adults the ability to assume more adult roles, like starting a business and earning their own income (Arnett, 2006, 2010), as seen in a small portion of our respondents.

Moreover, quantitative results indicate that those who do not use Tiktok are more likely to demonstrate autonomy-related SM use. Recent evidence suggests that the micro-video blogging format and overall interface of Tiktok make it more engaging and addictive compared to other SM apps (Husin et al., 2021; Smith & Short, 2022); thus, it is unsurprising that respondents who use this app are less likely to exercise autonomy in filtering content to consume.

On Intimacy

Consistent with recent research (Cleofas, 2021a; Cleofas, 2021b; Cleofas et al., 2021; Shafer et al., 2022; van den Berg et al., 2021), our qualitative analysis drew out themes that demonstrate how emerging adults use SM to maintain their social relationships with peers and family members to meet their development need of intimacy during this period. However, unlike pre-pandemic evidence (e.g., Bjornsen, 2018) that advocates for a balance of online and offline socializing among emerging adults, our findings reveal that due to COVID-19-induced mobility restrictions, respondents have no other choice other than SM and going online for them to interact with distant friends and relatives. This is especially true in the Philippines, the country with the longest lockdown in the world (mid-March 2020 to the end of February 2022) (Chang et al., 2022). Data for this study were collected in the middle of community quarantine and remote learning mode in schools; hence, in-person socializing with peers was limited.

Contrary to previous evidence that noted the non-significance of the correlation of income status with the use of SM for connectedness (Chen, 2011), our quantitative results suggest that emerging adults from low-income households are more likely to use SM to gain intimacy. While Filipino emerging adults prefer in-person interactions over online during the pandemic (Cleofas, 2021a), traveling for family members and friends to meet in person has become costly during the pandemic (i.e., COVID-19 screening test requirements to cross borders, increased transportation fees) and may only be accessible to richer individuals (Cleofas et al., 2021; Mayo et al., 2021). Social media is a cheaper way for Filipinos to socialize with friends and family members; hence, the reliance of poorer students on social media for social connection. Furthermore, our findings indicate the significant link of non-Instagram use with the gratification of intimacy, contrary to earlier research that used the application for social interactions (Huang & Su, 2018). This may be attributed to the changing interface, and features of Instagram introduced in the time of COVID that more frequently present more promoted accounts, brands, and advertisements rather than the people/accounts that one actually follows and has personal relations with (Olinga, 2022). Finally, our quantitative results suggest that those active in at least four different sites use them for intimacy purposes. Being active

in more SM applications, or poly-social-media use (Tandoc et al., 2019) may help individuals manage their relationships and reach more friends or family members who may be active in other apps as well.

On Identity

Emerging adults demonstrate various ways they use SM to gratify the need for identity formation and expression. The first is using SM for educational engagement. Evidence has shown how the positive use of SM for academic purposes improves student achievement (Bjornsen, 2018). In the Philippines, many schools experienced challenges in institutionalizing the learning management system during the time of COVID-19 (Toquero, 2020); thus, students and teachers make use of SM to fill in these gaps. Second, consistent with social media research in the EA age group (Basilisco & Cha, 2015; Coyne et al., 2013), EA students use SM for entertainment and expression. Even before the pandemic, Filipino emerging adults have used SM as a platform for sharing their thoughts and feelings and engaging in leisure activities and pop culture (Basilisco & Cha, 2015; Velasco, 2020).

Moreover, quantitative results suggest that female EA college students from poorer households were more likely to use SM to gratify the need for identity. Previous research in the Philippines has indicated that females and low-income students are disproportionately affected by the pandemic in terms of educational outcomes (Basilisco & Cha, 2015). Moreover, Karayiğit et al. (2021) suggest that females are more likely to use social media for entertainment and social recognition, which could be concerning since evidence has demonstrated the detrimental effects of social media on self-esteem and body image of young women (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016).

Taken together, the results of the present study confirm the body of pre-pandemic literature on social media use motives towards the attainment of emerging adult developmental tasks, such as having more autonomy for media use, maintaining social connections, school engagement, and identity exploration (Basilisco & Cha, 2015; Coyne et al., 2013; Velasco, 2020). Our findings indicate that from the perspectives of college students, these tasks remain to be important during the time of the pandemic. However, our findings also extend the literature by offering new insights into the context of emerging adulthood development amid the pandemic. First, our findings demonstrate how the increasing complexity of the informational ecosystem and economic affordances on social media shapes the lives of emerging adults during the coronavirus crisis. The emerging adults in our study must navigate the social media online space which facilitates the viral spread of false information or infodemic (Zarocostas, 2020) and increasing affordances for income generation, artistic avenues, and academic achievement. These phenomena were not as apparent in pre-pandemic literature (Basilisco & Cha, 2015; Coyne et al., 2013) as they were when this research was conducted. Hence, this research was able to capture more

nuanced ways of realizing developmental tasks (i.e., practicing informational control through critical consumption, and engaging in online student activities), which have been more pronounced during the time of the pandemic compared to pre-COVID (Mouratidis & Papagiannakis, 2021; Toquero, 2020). Second, another unique insight that our study offers is how these uses and gratifications for developmental tasks differ based on social position and social media sites used. While there has been a study in the same age group that associated demographics with social media motives (Karayiğit et al., 2021), the U&G concepts used were not specific to the development tasks of emerging adulthood. This insight is important so that sectors involved in the needs and wellbeing of emerging adults in the Philippines are aware of social groups (i.e., females from low-income households, Tiktok, Instagram and polymedia users) that may need more assistance in realizing specific development tasks.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The main strength of this study is its mixed methods design and relatively large sample size. However, we admit some limitations. First, ours was a convenient sample that relied on college students who would be exposed to the link and willing to answer the said survey. No English proficiency test was employed for the respondents before formal data collection. Since recruitment was done online, there was no other confirmatory step in validating the eligibility criteria other than screening questions. Moreover, our sample had a slight overrepresentation of females and students coming from low-income households. These factors might affect the generalizability of our results. In addition, the narratives analyzed in this study are answers on a survey form, so it missed a full exploration that other qualitative techniques such as interviews and focus group discussions can afford. For our quantitative strand, we only used non-adjusted statistical tests. It must also be noted that ours is a college sample; hence, the findings may not reflect the experience of working emerging adults and other non-university-based populations. Also, since there were no comparison groups from other developmental stages (e.g., adolescents, young and middle adults), it is uncertain whether the tasks and the categories under them are truly unique to EA. Future researchers can consider involving a non-student sample, employing more immersive qualitative techniques and/or complex quantitative modeling. Future research can also look into associating EA-U&G-SM with mental health outcomes and examining the ability of emerging adults to decipher falsehoods online compared with other age groups.

Conclusion

This study contributes to emerging adulthood and social media literature by highlighting how college students navigate the pandemic and its restrictive societal impacts to meet their autonomy, intimacy, and identity development needs using social media. Furthermore, our study provides new insights on how the use of social media for a particular development need can significantly differ among emerging adults, based on gender, income status, and the nature and number of social media sites used.

The emerging subcategories of EA-U&G-SM signify the "new normal" ways to address emerging adulthood developmental tasks in online environments as we enter the post-pandemic era. Initiatives to facilitate emerging adulthood development in this volatile, transitionary period may include the improvement of local and global online information ecosystems, ensuring the safe return to in-person social interactions, promoting safe online spaces, and enhancing digitalization of schools and workplaces.

Author Contributions

Cleofas, J. contributed to conception and design contributed to acquisition, analysis, and interpretation drafted manuscript critically revised manuscript gave final approval agrees to be accountable for all aspects of work ensuring integrity and accuracy Albao, B contributed to design contributed to acquisition critically revised manuscript gave final approval agrees to be accountable for all aspects of work ensuring integrity and accuracy Dayrit, J contributed to design contributed to acquisition critically revised manuscript gave final approval agrees to be accountable for all aspects of work ensuring integrity and accuracy.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Open Practices

The raw data and analysis contained in this manuscript are not openly available due to restrictions indicated in the ethics approval of the department, but can be obtained from the corresponding author following the completion of a privacy and fair use agreement. No aspects of the study were pre-registered.

ORCID iD

Jerome V. Cleofas ![ORCID] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9203-0212

References

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469

Arnett, J. J. (2006). Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In J. J. Arnett, & J. L. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 1–19). American Psychological Association.

Arnett, J. J. (2010). Emerging adulthood (s). In L. A. Jensen (Ed.), *Bridging cultural and developmental approaches to psychology: New syntheses in theory, research, and policy* (pp. 255–275). Oxford University Press.

Basilisco, R., & Cha, K. J. (2015). Uses and gratification motivation for using Facebook and the impact of Facebook usage on social capital and life satisfaction among Filipino users. *International Journal of Software Engineering and Its Applications*, 9(4), 181–194. https://www.earticle.net/Article/A245400

Bautista, A. (2021). Teaching media and information literacy in philippine senior high schools: Strategies used and challenges faced by selected teachers. *Asian Journal on Perspectives in Education*, 1(2), 22–33. https://www.feu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AJPE-V2I1-Bautista-2021.pdf

Bianchi, D., Baiocco, R., Pompili, S., Lonigro, A., Di Norcia, A., Cannoni, E., Longobardi, E., Zammuto, M., Di Tata, D., & Laghi, F. (2021). Binge eating and binge drinking in emerging adults during COVID-19 lockdown in Italy: An examination of protective and risk factors. *Emerging Adulthood*, 10(1), 291–303. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211058501

Bjornsen, C. A. (2018). Social media use and emerging adulthood. In M. Zupančič, & M. Puklek Levpušček (Eds.), *Prehod v odraslost: Sodobni trendi in raziskave [emerging adulthood: Current trends and research]* (pp. 223–261). Znanstvena založba Filozofske Fakultete.

Chang, R., Varley, K., Lew, L., Gitau, M., & Munoz, M. (2022). *The covid resilience: Ranking the best and worst places to be as the omicron threat fades*. Bloomberg. https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-resilience-ranking/

Chen, G. M. (2011). Tweet this: A uses and gratifications perspective on how active twitter use gratifies a need to connect with others. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(2), 755–762. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.10.023

Cho, J., De Zuniga, H. G., Sueng, A., Nhumane, A., Hyunseo, H., & Rojas, H. (2003, May). Beyond access: Digital divide, Internet use and gratifications gained. In Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, Washington, DC.

Cleofas, J. V. (2021a). Life interruptions, learnings and hopes among Filipino college students during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 26(6), 552–560. https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2020.1846443

Cleofas, J. V. (2021b). Self-care practices and online student engagement during covid-19 in the Philippines: A mixed methods study. *Issues in Educational Research*, 31(3), 699–717. http://www.iier.org.au/iier31/cleofas.pdf

Cleofas, J. V., Eusebio, M. C. S. C., & Pacudan, E. J. P. (2021). Anxious, apart, and attentive: A qualitative case study of overseas Filipino workers' families in the time of COVID-19. *Family Journal*, 106648072110063. https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807211006339.

Cleofas, J. V., & Oducado, R. M. (2022). Demographic, health and pandemic-related determinants of covid-19 vaccination intention among filipino emerging adults. *Emerging Adulthood*, 10(3), 815–820. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968221084876

Cleofas, J. V., & Rocha, I. C. N. (2021). Demographic, gadget and internet profiles as determinants of disease and consequence related COVID-19 anxiety among Filipino college students. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(6), 6771–6786. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10529-9

Coyne, S. M., Padilla-Walker, L. M., & Howard, E. (2013). Emerging in a digital world: A decade review of media use, effects, and gratifications in emerging adulthood. *Emerging Adulthood*, 1(2), 125–137. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696813479782

Cruz, G. T., Laguna, E. P., & Mejia-Raymundo, C. (2001). *Family influences on the lifestyle of Filipino youth*. East-West Center.

Dayrit, J. C., Albao, B. T., & Cleofas, J. V. (2022). Savvy and woke: Gender, digital profile, social media competence, and political participation in gender issues among young Filipino netizens. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 7, 966878. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.966878.

Domingo, K. (2020). *Who are identified rich, poor? Gov't shows income class brackets in ph*. ABS-CBN News. https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/17/20/who-are-identified-rich-poor-govt-shows-income-class-brackets-in-ph

Dotson, M. P., Castro, E. M., Magid, N. T., Hoyt, L. T., Suleiman, A. B., & Cohen, A. K. (2022). "Emotional distancing": Change and strain in US young adult college students' relationships during COVID-19. *Emerging Adulthood*, 10(2), 534–545. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211065531

Egcas, R. A., Oducado, R. M. F., Cleofas, J. V., Rabacal, J. S., & Lausa, S. M. (2021). After over a year of pandemic: Mental well-being and life satisfaction of Filipino college students. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 29(4), 2401–2416. https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.29.4.17

Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107–115. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x

Ezumah, B. A. (2013). College students' use of social media: Site preferences, uses and gratifications theory revisited. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 4(5), 27–34. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1047.5769&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Fardouly, J., & Vartanian, L. R. (2016). Social media and body image concerns: Current research and future directions. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 9, 1-5. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.005.

Hall, S. S., & Zygmunt, E. (2021). "I hate it here": Mental health changes of college students living with parents during the COVID-19 quarantine. *Emerging Adulthood*, 9(5), 449–461. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211000494

Halliburton, A. E., Hill, M. B., Dawson, B. L., Hightower, J. M., & Rueden, H. (2021). Increased stress, declining mental health: Emerging adults' experiences in college during COVID-19.

Emerging Adulthood, *9*(5), 433–448. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211025348

Hock, R. S., Mendelson, T., Surkan, P. J., Bass, J. K., Bradshaw, C. P., & Hindin, M. J. (2018). Parenting styles and emerging adult depressive symptoms in Cebu, the Philippines. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *55*(2), 242–260. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461517748813

Huang, Y. T., & Su, S. F. (2018). Motives for Instagram use and topics of interest among young adults. *Future Internet*, *10*(8), 77. https://doi.org/10.3390/fi10080077

Husin, N. A., Khairi, M. S. H., & Mohamad Nazeri, N. S. (2021). Determinants of "TikTok" addiction among university students. In *E-Proceeding for Asian Conference on business, economics and social science (ACBESS)* (pp. 73). Center for islamic Philanthropy and Social Finance (CIPSF).

Ichimura, A. (2020). *Filipinos lead the world in. Social media 'addiction': Social media addiction? Or just slow internet?* Esquire. https://www.esquiremag.ph/money/industry/filipinos-social-media-addiction

Karayiğit, C., Groter, A., & Thompson, M. (2021). Addictive use of social media and motivations for social media use among emerging adult university students. *Bağımlılık Dergisi (Journal of Addiction)*, *22*(3), 266-274. https://doi.org/10.51982/bagimli.897708.

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J. G. Blumler, & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communication: Current perspectives on gratifications research* (pp. 19–32). Sage.

Kepios (2022). *Global social media stats*. Datareportal. https://datareportal.com/social-media-users

Khoros (2021). *The 2021 social media demographics guide*. https://khoros.com/resources/social-media-demographics-guide

Kircaburun, K., Alhabash, S., Tosuntaş, Ş. B., & Griffiths, M. D. (2020). Uses and gratifications of problematic social media use among university students: A simultaneous examination of the big five of personality traits, social media platforms, and social media use motives. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, *18*(3), 525–547. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-9940-6

Knudsen, E., Dahlberg, S., Iversen, M. H., Johannesson, M. P., & Nygaard, S. (2021). How the public understands news media trust: An open-ended approach. *Journalism*. (Ahead of Print). https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211005892

Mayo, F. L., Maglasang, R. S., Moridpour, S., & Taboada, E. B. (2021). Exploring the changes in travel behavior in a developing country amidst the COVID-19 pandemic: Insights from Metro Cebu, Philippines. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, *12*(4), 100461. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2021.100461

Michikyan, M. (2020). Linking online self-presentation to identity coherence, identity confusion, and social anxiety in emerging adulthood. *The British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *38*(4), 543–565. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjdp.12337

Mouratidis, K., & Papagiannakis, A. (2021). COVID-19, internet, and mobility: The rise of telework, telehealth, e-learning, and e-shopping. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, *74*, 103182. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2021.103182.

Nelson, L. J. (2021). The theory of emerging adulthood 20 years later: A look at where it has taken us, what we know now, and where we need to go. *Emerging Adulthood*, *9*(3), 179–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696820950884

Nelson, L. J., & Barry, C. M. (2005). Distinguishing features of emerging adulthood: The role of self-classification as an adult. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *20*(2), 242–262. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558404273074

O'Cathain, A., Murphy, E., & Nicholl, J. (2008). The quality of mixed methods studies in health services research. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, *13*(2), 92–98. https://doi.org/10.1258/jhsrp.2007.007074

Olinga, L. (2022). *Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook bow to the kardashians*. TheStreet. Retrieved July 31, 2022, from https://www.thestreet.com/technology/new-instagram-sucks-zuckerberg-facebook-bow-to-the-kardashians

Plano Clark, V. L., Huddleston-Casas, C. A., Churchill, S. L., O'Neil Green, D., & Garrett, A. L. (2008). Mixed methods approaches in family science research. *Journal of Family Issues*, *29*(11), 1543–1566. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X08318251

Preetz, R., Filser, A., Brömmelhaus, A., Baalmann, T., & Feldhaus, M. (2021). Longitudinal changes in life satisfaction and mental health in emerging adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic. Risk and protective factors. *Emerging Adulthood*, *9*(5), 602–617. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211042109

Pressly, V. (2021). *College students' use of social media and its effects on well- being during COVID-19*. [Honor's thesis, The University of Southern Mississippi]. The Aquila Digital Community. https://aquila.usm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1779&context=honors_theses

Rubin, A. M. (2002). The uses-and-gratifications perspective of media effects. In J. Bryant, & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 525–548). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century. *Mass Communication & Society*, *3*(1), 3–37. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301_02

Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Luyckx, K., Meca, A., & Ritchie, R. A. (2013). Identity in emerging adulthood: Reviewing the field and looking forward. *Emerging Adulthood*, *1*(2), 96–113. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696813479781

Settersten, R. A., Bernardi, L., Härkönen, J., Antonucci, T. C., Dykstra, P. A., Heckhausen, J., Kuh, D., Mayer, K. U., Moen, P., Mortimer, J. T., Mulder, C. H., Smeeding, T. M., van der Lippe, T., Hagestad, G. O., Kohli, M., Levy, R., Schoon, I., & Thomson, E. (2020). Understanding the effects of covid-19 through a life course lens. *Advances in Life Course Research*, *45*(100360), 100360. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2020.100360

Shafer, J., May, R. W., & Fincham, F. D. (2022). Exploring temporal evaluations of interpersonal social media surveillance during the COVID-19 lockdown. *Emerging Adulthood*, *10*(1), 282–290. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211046073

Smith, T., & Short, A. (2022). Needs affordance as a key factor in likelihood of problematic social media use: Validation, latent profile analysis and comparison of TikTok and Facebook

problematic use measures. *Addictive Behaviors*, *129*(3), 107259. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2022.107259

Tandoc, E. C. Jr., Lou, C., & Min, V. L. H. (2019). Platform-swinging in a poly-social-media context: How and why users navigate multiple social media platforms. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *24*(1), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy022

Tomacruz, S. (2022). *Guide: Alert level 1 rules as Philippines enters 'new normal'*. Rappler. https://www.rappler.com/nation/guide-things-to-know-philippines-new-normal-alert-level-1/

Toquero, C. M. (2020). Challenges and opportunities for higher education amid the COVID-19 pandemic: The Philippine context. *Pedagogical Research*, *5*(4), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.29333/pr/7947

van den Berg, Y. H., Burk, W. J., Cillessen, A. H., & Roelofs, K. (2021). Emerging adults' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: A prospective longitudinal study on the importance of social support. *Emerging Adulthood*, *9*(5), 618–630. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211039979

Velasco, J. C. (2020). Millennials as digital natives: Examining the social media activities of the philippine Y-generation. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *28*(3), 1939–1957. http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/pjssh/browse/regular-issue?article=JSSH-5841-2020

Wang, Z., Tchernev, J. M., & Solloway, T. (2012). A dynamic longitudinal examination of social media use, needs, and gratifications among college students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *28*(5), 1829–1839. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.05.001

Waterman, A. S. (1999). Issues of identity formation revisited: United States and The Netherlands. *Developmental Review*, *19*(4), 462–479. https://doi.org/10.1006/drev.1999.0488

Yang, C., & Brown, B. B. (2013). Motives for using Facebook, patterns of Facebook activities, and late adolescents' social adjustment to college. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *42*(3), 403–416. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9836-x

Yazdani, N., Hoyt, L. T., Maker Castro, E., & Cohen, A. K. (2022). Sociopolitical influences in early emerging adult college students' pandemic-related civic engagement. *Emerging Adulthood*, *10*(4), 1041–1047. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968221098296

Zarocostas, J. (2020). How to fight an infodemic. *The Lancet*, *395*(10225), 676. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30461-X

Author Biographies

Jerome V. Cleofas, PhD, RN is an associate professor from the Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences of De La Salle University, Manila Philippines. He is a registered nurse and health sociologist. He is a member of the Research Capability Building Committee of the Metro Manila Health Research and Development Consortium. His research interests include health social sciences, youth, SOGIE, family and social media.

Bluluean T. Albao is a faculty member from the Arts and Design Track Department, Senior High School Division, Integrated School, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines. She is currently a graduate student under the MA in Language and Literature Major in Literature Teaching program of the Department of Literature, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines.

Julienne Celina S. Dayrit is a development worker for World Vision Development Foundation and a college instructor at Colegio De Sebastian, San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines. She is currently a graduate student under the MA in Behavioral Sciences Program of the Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines.