

Social Media Fatigue

Causes and effects on 18 to 29 years old Finnish social users

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Master Thesis

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Abstract

The purpose of this Master's thesis was to examine what causes young adults from Finland to take a break from their social media usage. In addition, it aimed to find out why social networking sites create so many well-being issues for their users, especially young adults. What are the symptoms of social media fatigue? And lastly, the aim was to find out how young adults replace the time they have spent on social media when they take a break from it.

The methods used for this research were quantitative and qualitative, and the purpose was to have young adults share their experiences and thoughts on social media fatigue, which is caused by the overuse of social media. Data was first gathered by using an online voluntary social media fatigue-themed survey with 14 questions in it to which 30 participants from Finland within the age range of 18 to 29-year-old responded within the period of one month. In addition, an analysis of a Finnish TV show *Pause* was conducted for this thesis to gather information on how the challenge of taking a two-week social media break would affect six Finnish social media influencers. The results were then compared to each other to find out if there would be any similarities between the results of the online survey and *Pause*. To support both findings, additional research was done.

The results of the online survey showed that Finnish young adults have taken breaks from their social media usage due to either having trouble with concentration, sleeping, feeling too much pressure to be online since their friends are there, or struggling with self-esteem due to comparing themselves to other users or fighting unrealistic body image standards. In addition, the analysis of the TV show *Pause* showed, that because the six participants were challenged to take a two-week-long break from social media, most of them managed to stay offline the whole time. However, during their break, all six missed the connections they've built online and the social interactions they experience on social media daily.

When comparing the results of the online survey and the analysis of *Pause*, the following similarities and differences were found. Both, the six social media influencers and the participants of the social media survey identified with 1) the idea that too much social media can interrupt sleep and thinking process, 2) they easily compare themselves to others while being online and 3) they wish to inhabit the methods of being more in control of their social media usage into their future social media using habits. In addition, *Pause* showed that influencers can experience social media as a positive place to be compared to non-influencers since it is their work platform, and they use it to communicate with their follower community that they have grown over time.

Finally, it became clear that social media plays an active role in communication when it comes to today's young adults and therefore it is difficult for them to stay offline. Therefore, for them to have more positive experiences while using social media in the future, the youth should be educated on how they can control their social media usage so that it does not cause them to suffer from so many of its negative effects causing social media fatigue.

Key words: social media fatigue, dark side of social media, social media addiction, self-determination theory, cognitive load theory, compensatory internet use, fear of missing out, social comparison theory and young adults.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Background	5
1.2	Defining key concepts	7
1.3	The purpose of this research and research questions	8
1.4	Research questions	10
1.5	Structure	10
1.6	Methodology	11
1.7	Ethics	12
2	Theoretical framework	14
2.1	In general	14
2.2	Fear of missing out on social media and the dark side of it	15
2.3	Cognitive load theory by John Sweller	17
2.4	Social comparison theory by Leon Festinger	18
2.5	Self-determination theory	18
2.6	Theory of compensatory internet use	19
2.7	The Social Dilemma	20
2.8	Social media fatigue affecting Finnish influencers – TV show <i>Pause</i>	21
3	Gathering data and analysis through theories	23
3.1	Preparing to collect data	23
3.2	Collecting data of the social media survey and the TV show <i>Pause</i>	24
3.3	Analyzing data of the social media survey and the TV show <i>Pause</i>	24
3.3.1	Information of the participants of the survey and the TV show <i>Pause</i>	25
3.3.2	The most significant findings of the survey presented through categories	27
3.3.3	The most important findings of <i>Pause</i> presented through categories	29
3.3.4	The findings from the TV show <i>Pause</i> compared to the online survey	31
4	Conclusion and discussions	67
4.1	Conclusion	67
4.2	Reflection regarding future research	68

4.3	Self-analysis of this research process	69
5	Summary of this thesis in Finnish	71
5.1	Suomenkielinen yhteenveto	71
	References	77
	Social Media Survey	77
	Media Material	78
	Literature	78
	Appendices	84
	Appendix 1. Privacy form in order to collect data for the survey	84
	Appendix 2. Invitation to participate in the online survey	85
	Appendix 3. Social media survey	87
	Abbreviations	93
 Charts and tables:		
	Chart 1. Ages of the online survey participants	26
	Chart 2. Social media platforms used by the online survey participants	27
	Chart 3. Symptoms of social media fatigue experienced by the online survey participants.....	33
	Chart 4. Experiences of online survey participants regarding taking a social media break.....	40
	Chart 5. Reasons for online survey participants to take a break from social media	42
	Chart 6. Length of online survey participants' social media breaks	48
	Chart 7. Online survey participants' well-being after taking a social media break.....	54
	Chart 8. Signs of social media addiction experienced by the online survey participants.....	59
	Chart 9. Ability of online survey participants to stay away from social media completely during their social media break.....	62
	 Table 1. Genders of the online survey participants	26
	Table 2. Connections between survey questions and findings of the survey	28
	Table 3. Most important findings between the show <i>Pause</i> and the research questions	30
	Table 4. Similarities and differences between the findings of the TV show <i>Pause</i> and the findings of the online survey	31

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

“Sometimes when I get back home from a long day at work, I struggle with the idea of going online and checking my messages, because I want to reply to my friends after not talking to them for a day, but I feel exhausted about the idea of having to be reached all the time”.

- Survey Participant 1

Since the first social media platforms came to be available for our use almost three decades ago, social media has not only allowed us to use it as a tool of communication making the interaction between two or more individuals effortless regardless of time or place, but it has also become a platform where users can scroll through and upload endless amounts of information and content for each other to see. Social media such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, BeReal, and more allow us today to keep in touch with one another while offering an endless amount of entertainment and information. However, despite social media being first created to make our everyday communication with one another easier, due to its measurable progression over the years, it has slowly started to show us some of its negative effects, previously also known as the dark side of the online world. Petri Saarikoski wrote about the history of the dark side of the internet in the book called *The Short History of Social Media*¹ (“Sosiaalisen median lyhyt historia) published in 2013. According to Saarikoski, the dark side of the internet is something researchers have been aware of since before the year of 2010². The definition of it has however changed over the centuries, but as of today one of the dark sides of the internet lies within the use of excessive social media usage. Moreover, some of the dark sides of overusing social media cause the following in its users: media fatigue, social media addiction, sleeping problems³ as well as difficulty focusing on simple tasks or a conversation without using one’s phone. I will give the proper modern definition of the term dark side of social media later in this paper.

¹ Saarikoski 2013.

² Saarikoski 2013.

³ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

Over the years a lot of research has been done regarding the negative side effects caused by social media fatigue, and many researchers have written about the topic, how social media fatigue can be measured, and how the symptoms of it could be minimized. To mention a couple examples of these, 1) Bo Han's "Social Media Burnout: Definition, Measurement Instrument, and Why We Care", published in the *Journal of Computer Information Systems* back in 2016⁴. Bo Han explains in the article why it is important that we care about the presence of social media fatigue and how a scale was made to measure social media fatigue. This scale was inspired by the next worth mentioning previously done research work, 2) Maslach's Burnout Inventory (MBI), a scale developed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson to test out burnout in working people. Maslach and Jackson wrote an article in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* back in 1981⁵ with the title "The measurement of experienced burnout", in which they discussed what burnout is, how serious its consequences are for those who suffer from it, as well as it they explain the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which according to Maslach and Jackson was "...designed to measure hypothesized aspects of the burnout syndrome..."⁶. 3) In addition to these works, a third research work I came across while searching about social media fatigue is an article called "5 Ways to Overcome Online Social Media Fatigue For Mental Well-Being"⁷ written by Dr. Pragya Agarwal in 2018 for the *Forbes*– American Business magazine. In this article, Dr. Agarwal discusses the pressure and overwhelming thoughts and emotions business marketers might come across while working through social media, such as the "pressure to be perfect"⁸ or "feeling low about their business" or that "no one wants what I am offering"⁹. She then tells the reader how business owners online can take five steps to overcome social media fatigue. One of the biggest of them is that the user should step away from social media for a while and focus on themselves.¹⁰ In her paper, Dr. Agarwal reminded users that even though social media might show "...someone's reality..."¹¹ it is just a part of it and not "...the sum total of it"¹².

⁴ Han 2016.

⁵ Maslach 1981.

⁶ Maslach 1981.

⁷ Agarwal 2018.

⁸ Agarwal 2018.

⁹ Agarwal 2018.

¹⁰ Agarwal 2018.

¹¹ Agarwal 2018.

¹² Agarwal 2018.

These articles and research work show that even though we, as a society, have been made aware of social media fatigue, its symptoms, and what could be done to minimize the negative effects of social media among its users, not enough has been done yet since social media fatigue continues to be a problem. Overall, I wanted to mention these works in my thesis because they each show that even though steps have already been taken to minimize social media fatigue amongst its old and new users, it continues to be an ongoing problem and therefore we are lacking something to see effective results. One of the biggest concerns that researchers have is how our face-to-face communication skills are suffering due to ongoing social media usage and therefore it's important to make sure that even though it's great to have social media as a tool of communication, we should not forget the world around us or the communication skills we need in our everyday lives in the physical world.

1.2 Defining key concepts

In this master's thesis, I will be using the following terminology through the text: social media, social media fatigue, dark side of social media, fear of missing out, burnout, online social comparison, young adult, and social media stalking.

Here are the definitions for these terms:

Social media according to the book *Social media's short history*¹³ (*"Sosiaalisen median lyhyt historia"*) written by Jaakko Suominen, Petri Saarikoski, Riikka Turtiainen and Sari Östman back in 2013, is a term that can be used to "...refer to any of the current online platforms, which has a lot of content sharing and communication by its users"¹⁴. **Burnout**, according to *World Psychiatry* journal, "...a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job,¹⁵". **Social media fatigue** means according to *Computers in Human Behaviour* is "...user's tendency to back away from social media participation when s/he becomes overwhelmed with information"¹⁶. **The dark side of social media** means according to Luukela-Tandon's doctoral dissertation "Fear of Missing Out on Social Media – Implications for private and professional life" is "...excessive engagement with social media and specific activities on these platforms, which may lead them (the user) to

¹³ Suominen et al., 2013.

¹⁴ Suominen et al., 2013.

¹⁵ Maslach 2016.

¹⁶ Bright et al., 2015.

experience negative consequences...”¹⁷. **Fear of missing out** means according to Luukela-Tandon’s doctoral dissertation “Fear of Missing Out on Social Media – Implications for private and professional life” is: “...considered as a psychological state arising specifically from individuals’ use of social media...worries...about missing updates, events and information about the contents being shared on these platforms, which are often exacerbated by social pressure resulting from users’ perceptions about peers being continually connected to social media”¹⁸. **Social media stalking** means according to Dhir et al., “The dark side of social media: Stalking, online self-disclosure and problematic sleep” 2021, p.3, “...intentional or unintentional information-seeking about others on the social media platforms...”¹⁹. Lastly, **online social comparison** means according to Verduyn, P.²⁰, that users tend to check on other people’s profiles and posts and compare those to our lives to determine how we are doing compared to them.

1.3 The purpose of this research and research questions

In this Master’s thesis I have chosen to dive into the topic of social media fatigue and its causes and effects on Finnish young adults within the age range of 18 to 29 years old. The inspiration for this topic had its start back in 2016, while I was finishing my bachelor’s degree and I decided to write my BA thesis on Social Media Manipulation, Teenagers’ Behaviour Online. I was fascinated with how obsessed Western teenagers are with checking on their comments, followers and likes on such platforms as Facebook, Youtube and Instagram. I finished my thesis but felt like there was more to research. One of the online sources that I had picked for my BA thesis talked about an influencer Essena O’Neill who quit social media because “it consumed”²¹ her. This stuck to me; the use of social media and obsessing over likes and comments had taken over her life.

For my Master’s thesis, I wanted to continue researching social media but go from the obsession of likes and comments into researching what happened for example to Essena O’Neill – social media consuming the time of young adults to the point of them wanting to

¹⁷ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁸ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁹ Dhir et al., 2021.

²⁰ Verduyn 2020.

²¹ Hunt 2015.

pull away due to feeling overwhelmed by it. I wanted to focus on the other side effect of being addicted to social media; its overuse and how that can affect 18- to 29-year-olds in Finland. We spend so much time online that our face-to-face communication has fallen short, our attention span has shortened, as well as our energy levels are down due to the constant feeling of having to be present online. According to a column²² published in the Finnish newspaper *Satakunnan Kansa* written by Rami Mähkä and Jukka Huhtamäki called “Do you want to become famous on social media? Spreading hate and misinformation is the key to capturing viewers’ attention online” (“*Haluatko suosiota somessa? Vihaa, valehtelee ja vehkeile!*”) the apps in our mobile phones are all three at once; useful, irritating, and have taken a grip of our lives. In recent years, not only social media influencers but also other social media users, especially young adults, have often felt the need to take a break from social media due to feeling overwhelmed after being online. They have complained about it negatively affecting their well-being.

Often when searching information online regarding social media fatigue another term that you can come across is *social media burnout*, since the symptoms of the fatigue caused by the overuse of social media are somewhat similar to a burnout. Bo Han defines social media burnout in the article²³ “Social Media Burnout: Definition, Measurement Instrument, and Why We Care”, published in the *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, as the experience of feeling exhausted while using social media²⁴. However, when talking about social media fatigue, one should not compare it to a burnout, because *burnout* itself is an actual illness caused by overworking.

A burnout, according to the *World Psychiatry* journal, is “...a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job.²⁵” In other words, when a person suffers from a *burnout*, they often find it difficult to perform at their job as well as other daily activities. On the contrary to a burnout, according to a Journal called *Computers in Human Behavior* social media fatigue is “...user’s tendency to back away from social media participation when s/he becomes overwhelmed with information”²⁶. Due to there

²² Huhtamäki & Mähkä, 2023.

²³ Han 2016.

²⁴ Han 2016.

²⁵ Maslach 2016.

²⁶ Bright et al., 2015.

being such a radical and clear difference between the definitions of the terms *burnout* and *fatigue*, I have chosen to use the term social media fatigue for this thesis.

The master thesis aims to find out what causes social media fatigue in 18-29-year-old Finnish social media users. In addition, the purpose of this research is to find out why young adults using social media step away from it temporarily or permanently. The reason for choosing this age group as a target audience for this master thesis is that the ages of 18 to 29 are the ones to mostly use social media as a tool of communication but also to find entertainment from it. Moreover, the reason why I chose to delimit the research of this paper around the young adults of Finland is because they present one age group of social media users from within Scandinavia and therefore allow me to focus on one culture instead of multiple ones.

1.4 Research questions

In this research paper I will answer four research questions, which are the following:

What causes 18 to 29-year-old Finnish social media users to take either temporary or permanent breaks from social media?

In addition, I will be answering to the following questions:

Why do social networking sites, which have been developed to make our communication easier, create so many well-being issues for their users, especially young adults?

What are the symptoms of social media fatigue?

How do young adults replace the time they have spent on social media when they take a break from it?

1.5 Structure

The structure of this thesis will consist of the following parts. At first, in Chapter 2 I will go over the theoretical framework for this thesis. The theoretical framework consists of seven subsections each holding a theory or other research relevant to the topic of social media

fatigue. In addition, each of them will help me analyze the data gathered for this master's thesis and answer the research questions mentioned earlier in this paper. I will discuss a doctoral dissertation article written about the fear of missing out, as well as four different theories that help analyze young adults' social media usage and how it affects them. In addition, I will be mentioning the Netflix documentary *Social Dilemma* since it discusses the development of social media over the years and the negative sides of it as well. Finally, I will conclude chapter 2 by discussing a Finnish TV series called *Pause*, in which six Finnish influencers are challenged by a two-week-long social media break. I will discuss the importance of the show, as well as why I have chosen to analyze its content in this thesis. Next, in chapter 3 of this master's thesis, I will first explain how I came to collect data for this thesis to answer the research questions and what had to be taken into consideration ethics-wise while gathering the data together. I will then move on to discussing the most important findings from both, *Pause* and the social media survey and analyze the findings by using the theories and research mentioned previously in the theoretical framework. In Chapter 4 I will conclude my whole thesis, review why it was written, and what was found while conducting the research for this paper. Finally, I will reflect on future research and self-analyze my writing and research process for this thesis. Chapter 5 of this master's thesis is a summary of this paper in my native Finnish language.

1.6 Methodology

When writing any kind of research paper and analyzing results a methodology must be taken into consideration. According to *Simply Psychology* qualitative research is "...is the process of collecting...non-numerical data, such as text, video, photographs, or audio recordings"²⁷, whereas quantitative research according to *Simply Psychology* "...collects numerical data and analyzes it using statistical methods...data that can be measured and expressed in numerical terms"²⁸.

For this master thesis, I intended to first use the qualitative descriptive method, but after receiving the results of the social media survey which was conducted to gather data for this paper, I realized that I would need to use both, quantitative and qualitative methods. Before I had the survey results, I chose to qualitative research method because to succeed in my

²⁷ Mcleod, 2023.

²⁸ Mcleod, 2023.

research, I needed to reach the age group of 18 to 29-year-old Finnish social media users. The qualitative research method allowed me to reach the possible participants through an online survey, which consists of 14 questions. Of those 14 questions, 12 were different quantitative data-gathering questions which allowed me to gather the experiences of social media fatigue, information of social media usage, gender, and age of the possible participants in numbers. Of these 14 questions, 9 were choice- and multiple-choice questions. In addition, among those 12 questions, to three of them, I added a section where the participants had the chance to add in any additional thoughts and comments regarding that specific question. This way I was able to gather deeper and more descriptive information on the users' experiences and thoughts regarding how social media has made them feel. The quantitative research method on the other hand allowed me to gather percentages of experiences, and data on the ages of the participants, as well as later analyze the results of 12 survey question's answers that held quantitative data in them. In addition, question 14 was a free-choice question that gave the participants the chance to add any other additional thoughts they had in mind regarding social media fatigue.

Finally, to understand better the impact of taking a social media break, I chose to use the Finnish TV show *Pause* as a second material for my research. In the TV show *Pause*, six Finnish social media influencers take part in a two-week-long social media break challenge during which they record their thoughts, experiences, and daily lives without the use of social media. I will analyze the findings made from the show through the same theories and research mentioned in the theoretical framework and will compare the results with the findings of the social media survey. As for the methodology regarding *Pause*, I also used the qualitative analysis method since it can be used when analyzing media research material. Choosing to have *Pause* as part of my thesis and comparing its findings to the online survey responses will help me find out the effects social media can have on various users. In addition, it will provide me with more information on the effects of taking a social media break.

1.7 Ethics

Before publishing the survey, it was important to think about the ethics of the questionnaire - the safety and privacy of the possible participants. Before publishing the survey, I wrote out a Data Protection Form through which I let the possible voluntary participants know that their personal details, such as names and email addresses wouldn't be published anywhere at all. This way I made sure that the participants knew I respect their privacy throughout the whole

research process, as well as I made sure they knew their responses were to be used for academic use only. In addition, I made sure that they knew that when going through the responses of the survey and analyzing them, I would do so as going through them as one anonymous response at a time rather than one responder at a time.

The online survey was created through Google Forms and was shared through two email lists of my university that reach the targeted age group of this survey. In addition, the link to the survey was shared on my Instagram story, my Facebook page, and at my degree program's Instagram and Facebook pages. I also shared the link with my social circle, so that they could forward it to their social media channels. The process of collecting data from the survey took the time of almost one month, as the survey ended up gathering data from 30 Finnish people in the age range of 19 to 29. The survey was conducted between the time period of 9th of June 2023 to 4th of July, 2023. Not only does this report include numbers to show the results of the survey, but also shares the voices and thoughts of the 30 individuals, who responded speaking their concerns, dependency, thoughts and possible experiences on social media usage and social media fatigue. When going through the survey results, I analyzed them as anonymous individual research questions and as anonymous answers rather than trying to find out who responded what. This way I made sure that the respondents' identities stay safe throughout the whole process as promised.

Regarding of analyzing the material of the Finnish TV show *Pause*, according to the Finnish website *Vastuullinen Tiede* ("Responsible Science") and its article²⁹ "Taitavasti eettistä verkkotutkimusta" ("Skillful ethical online research") written by Salla-Maaria Laaksonen in 2018, any publicly available information can be used as research material without having to ask for a separate permission to use it. Since the series is available to public in the Yle Areena streaming platform, I was able to use it as research material without having to ask for any permission.

²⁹ Laaksonen, 2018.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 In general

In every research work, a theoretical framework is needed to show how previous research can be used to guide new research and how they can balance each other out. According to *National Education Policy Center*, Margaret A. Eisenhart defined in her paper³⁰ theoretical framework as the following: “theoretical framework is a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory...constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships”³¹.

For my theoretical framework I have chosen theories and works that focus on previously done research regarding social media fatigue. They each support my thesis topic one way or another focusing on why social media fatigue is important to talk about, how it affects us, as well as what can be done in order to minimize the symptoms of it. I will discuss an article from a Doctoral dissertation by Anushree Luukela-Tandon called “Fear of Missing Out on Social Media – Implications for private and professional life”, which will help me explain and discuss the fear of missing out (FoMO). In addition, I have chosen a few theories that help me discuss and explain the negative effects social media can create in its users: 1) Cognitive overload theory by John Sweller, 2) social comparison theory, 3) self-determination theory, and 4) theory of compensatory internet use. These four theories will help me explain why young adults are so addicted to keeping up with communication online, as well as they will help me analyze the answers of the social media survey.

In addition, I will be mentioning and discussing a Finnish series called *Pause* and the Netflix documentary *Social Dilemma* as a part of my theoretical framework. Both of these talk about the problems that the overuse of social media causes on its users and *Pause* specifically focuses on what can happen when we take a break from social media.

Although I earlier mentioned that I won't be referring to social media fatigue as social media burnout in this thesis, I have chosen one article for my theoretical framework that talks about social media fatigue using the term *social media burnout* instead. I did this because I wanted to show that even though I have decided to use the term *social media fatigue* in my thesis to

³⁰ Eisenhart, M. 1991.

³¹ Eisenhart, M. 1991.

keep it separate from the term *burnout*, a lot of research has been done on the topic while referring to it as social media burnout since the symptoms from the overuse of social media have been looked as to be similar to a burnout.

2.2 Fear of missing out on social media and the dark side of it

As my first piece of theoretical background, I have chosen an article from a Doctoral dissertation by Anushree Luukela-Tandon, a recent doctoral graduate from the University of Turku with the name “Fear of Missing Out on Social Media – Implications for private and professional life”.

In her doctoral dissertation, in one of its five articles called “Dark consequences of social media-induced fear of missing out (FoMO): Social media stalking, comparisons, and fatigue”, Luukela-Tandon discusses one of the dark sides of social media, none other than social media fatigue³².

Before I continue, I would like to remind you of the terms *social media stalking* and *online social comparison* so that we have the correct understanding of the term as I continue explain why I chose this article for this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, social media stalking means the “...intentional or unintentional information-seeking about others on the social media platforms...”³³ and online social comparison means the users tendency to check on other people’s profiles and posts and compare those to our life to determine how we are doing compared to them³⁴.

For this article³⁵, Luukela-Tandon had three research questions in order to understand the consequences of FoMO: why we stalk on social media, why we compare ourselves to others there and the fatigue social media causes us. The three research questions are the following: 1) How are FoMO, social media and stalking associated with fatigue? 2) How do online social comparison and stalking mediate the association between FoMO and fatigue? 3) How do individual usage behavior and emotions moderate the associations between FoMO and social comparison, stalking and fatigue.

³² Tandon, A., et al., 2021.

³³ Dhir et al., 2021.

³⁴ Verduyn, 2020.

³⁵ Tandon, A., et al., 2021.

In the article Luukela-Tandon stated that FoMO³⁶ may relate to user's tendency to stalk others online while comparing one's life and situation with others' posts and life events. In addition, the hypothesis was that there would be a connection between online social comparison and social media fatigue, stating that FoMO could either trigger or motivate users to compare themselves to others online³⁷.

According to the article³⁸ a survey was launched through Google Forms in the UK with the target audience of the age range of 18 to 25 years old and the results confirmed that there is a link between FoMO and social media stalking, online social comparison, and social media fatigue³⁹. Findings also confirmed that social media stalking relates to online social comparison suggesting that users may unintentionally engage in online social comparison and while scrolling through others' profiles and information online. In addition, online social comparison according to the findings seems to be connected to social media fatigue. Moreover, these results, as according to the article, indicate that prolonged use of different social media platforms and therefore exposure to information and communication may result in the user experiencing social media fatigue. Luukela-Tandon added that online social comparison was found to be a link between FoMO and social media fatigue⁴⁰.

As I read this article, it concluded that because FoMO, online social comparison and social media fatigue seems to be connected to each other, users cannot stay away from social media, because they do not want to feel disconnected to the conversations and posts and information being shared online⁴¹. This leads to the users staying online while scrolling through endless amounts of content, which then leads to them experiencing social media fatigue.

I chose this article for my thesis because it focuses on how users' possible FoMO can cause social media fatigue in the long run, as well as how users online social comparison is linked to FoMO and social media fatigue. These are important points for my thesis. Throughout her doctoral dissertation Luukela-Tandon has also used several theories including social

³⁶ Tandon, A., et al, 2021.

³⁷ Tandon, A., et al, 2021.

³⁸ Tandon, A., et al., 2021.

³⁹ Tandon, A., et al, 2021

⁴⁰ Tandon, A., et al, 2021.

⁴¹ Tandon, A., et al, 2021.

comparison theory, self-determination theory and theory of compensatory internet use which I find to be relevant with my research as well.

2.3 Cognitive load theory by John Sweller

For my second theoretical framework I have chosen the cognitive load theory by John Sweller. According to an article⁴² in *Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, written by John Sweller, as humans, we only have a certain amount of capacity in our brain to work with both long-term and short-term memory, and if that capacity is overdriven, we get overloaded with information. In other words, we get overwhelmed by the amount of information we cannot process, and we begin to avoid it⁴³.

I chose this theory for my thesis because it can be applied to social media fatigue in the following way: when we spent too much time scrolling through social media with all the information it can provide for us, we begin to pull away from it because we feel too overwhelmed by all the information it has to offer for us and we do not know how to process it.

To take a few examples of how cognitive load theory works, I wanted to mention a few articles that talk about social media fatigue due to information overload online. According to an article⁴⁴ called “Why Are You Running Away From Social Media? Analysis of the Factors Influencing Social Media Fatigue: An Empirical Data Study Based on Chinese Youth” from the Journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, written by Liu, Yixuan, and Jianping He in 2021, “When users are surrounded by an overwhelming amount of information and...spend a lot of time dealing with these social contacts, some users will choose to stay away from and give up social media”⁴⁵. Lastly, according to Elizabeth Bernstein’s article on *The Wall Street Journal* called “How Facebook ruins friendships”⁴⁶, some researchers have pointed out that while social media fatigue symptoms show as exhaustion and depression, it also shows up as a decreased will to go online.

⁴² Sweller, J. 2011.

⁴³ Sweller, J. 2011.

⁴⁴ He, J., & Yixuan, L.,2021.

⁴⁵ He, J., & Yixuan, L.,2021.

⁴⁶ Bernstein, E., 2009.

2.4 Social comparison theory by Leon Festinger

Another theory related to social media fatigue that I wanted to include in this thesis is the social comparison theory. According to the *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, Chapter 22 *Social Comparison Theory* written by Jerry Suls and Ladd Wheeler, a man named Leon Festinger⁴⁷ was the first one to consider the theory of social comparison. According to her doctoral dissertation⁴⁸ “Fear of missing out on social media implication for private and professional lives” by Anushree Luukela-Tandon, social comparison theory means that a person has the tendency to compare themselves to others in their social groups and environments in order to evaluate their own beliefs and abilities⁴⁹. To put it simply, when we communicate with each other, we compare our own beliefs and abilities to others and try to see if we can level with them. In addition, according to Jerry Suls’s and Ladd Wheeler’s article on “Social Comparison Theory” published on *The Handbook of theories of Social Psychology*, we use social comparison in order to find our self-worth amongst other people⁵⁰.

I chose this theory for my thesis, because comparing ourselves to others online and trying to find our self-worth while putting ourselves on a scale against other people can easily result in the negative effects of social media usage. In addition, social comparison can easily add unnecessary pressure on the users and has a risk of causing social media fatigue.

2.5 Self-determination theory

According to Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan’s article “The General Causality Orientations Scale: Self-Determination in Personality” published in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, self-determination theory is when an individual seeks to find a better understanding on well-being, they adjust their behavior to meet the three needs: autonomy, relatedness or closeness with others, and competence⁵¹. In addition, Deci and Ryan discuss in their article how the self-determination affects person’s self-esteem and self-consciousness⁵². In her doctoral dissertation’s “Fear of missing out on social media implication for private and professional lives”, Article II, Anushree Luukela-Tandon states that social determination

⁴⁷ Suls, J., & Wheeler, L, 2011.

⁴⁸ Luukela-Tandon, 2023.

⁴⁹ Greenwood, D.2017.

⁵⁰ Suls &Wheeler, 2012.

⁵¹ Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M.1985.

⁵² Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M.1985.

drives the user to go online to search for something they can relate to and at the same time they avoid missing out on anything⁵³. By doing so they increase their amount of time spent online.

I chose this theory for my thesis, because it can be used to explain social media fatigue in the following way: when a user is trying to find something or someone to relate to online or trying to feel more connected and closer to people, and they adjust their behavior to what they find online. This can result in a decreasing self-esteem and self-consciousness as they can easily feel extra pressure on being something else, they are not for example not meeting image standards or they try to stay online in order not to miss on anything and feel connected to others. Moreover, by continuing to do so to meet their needs online, they soon reach social media fatigue.

2.6 Theory of compensatory internet use

One of the last theories I chose for my thesis is called the theory of compensatory internet use (TCIU). According to “Fear of missing out on social media implication for private and professional lives”, the doctoral dissertation’s by Anushree Luukela-Tandon, TCIU “...suggests that individuals’ excessive engagement with social media could be an attempt to compensate for or cope with their negative feelings...”⁵⁴. In addition, Luukela-Tandon’s doctoral dissertation states that social media addiction might be a coping mechanism for people to escape their real-life problems⁵⁵. In other words, we escape our reality and possible negative emotions by going online and distracting ourselves with the information provided to us by social media and our social community within online.

In addition to these theoretical frameworks, I wanted to mention the following in this master thesis, due them being relevant with my topic:

The Social Dilemma – Netflix Documentary on the dark side of social media and *Pause*, a Finnish TV show that can be viewed through a Finnish streaming service Yle Arena platform.

⁵³ Luukela-Tandon, A., 2023.

⁵⁴ Tandon, A., et al, 2021.

⁵⁵ Kardefelt-Winther, D.2014.

Next, I will explain what both are and why I chose to include them for my thesis.

2.7 The Social Dilemma

In 2020 Netflix released a documentary called *The Social Dilemma*. The documentary according to Swinburne's University of Technology article⁵⁶ by Senior Media lecturers Dr Belinda Barnert and Dr Diana Bossio titled "Netflix's The Social Dilemma highlights the problem with social media, but what's the solution?" focuses on "...how big social media companies manipulate users by using algorithms that encourage addiction to their platforms..."⁵⁷.

In addition, the documentary talks about why social media was created in the first place – to make our communication with each other effortless regardless of time or place. However, the documentary makes a crucial point on the way social media has come to manipulate us and make us become addicted to its use. The documentary has the creators of different online platforms being interviewed on the disadvantages that social media usage has created for us. One of the most interesting things about the documentary is that when the creators are asked whether they would let their kids use social media, they answer no⁵⁸. This shows the viewer an interesting insight on how the usage of social media has started to become in between us and the physical world and our communication face-to-face. Knowing that the ones who created these online platforms wouldn't want their children to be affected by social media's negative side, is an important note for our society.

I chose to include this documentary as part of my thesis, because it makes such an important point on how social media affects us and that if its creators are worried about the dark side of social media, we should also pay more attention to how we use it and how it affects us. The documentary was made to bring awareness for us regarding social media and how it can negatively affect us. I found the documentary to be both, important and interesting on the side of my thesis topic.

⁵⁶ Barnert & Bosso 2020.

⁵⁷ Barnert & Bosso 2020.

⁵⁸ Orłowski 2020.

2.8 Social media fatigue affecting Finnish influencers – TV show *Pause*

For social media influencers, their platform is their place of work. It's where they connect with their followers, upload content, and build and connect with their community.

For a few years now social media users have started to complain about their social media usage affecting their well-being. Many public figures, influencers, and other social media users have informed their followers online and/or friends that they will be deleting or taking a break from their social media platforms because they have felt overwhelmed by the amount of content others are uploading online or they have felt exhausted from the constant need to be reached. According to *USA Today.com*'s article⁵⁹ “Billie Eilish, Selena Gomez And What We Can Learn From Celebrities Stepping Back From Social Media” written by Hannah Yasharoff and Sara Moniuszko, celebrities such as Billie Eilish, Selena Gomez, Chrissy Teigen, and Lana Del Ray have been vocal on their social medias about social media affecting their well-being negatively and having the need to delete their apps for a while and choosing to focus on other things instead⁶⁰.

In addition to celebrities, social media influencers have also faced the negative side of social media usage. According to an article⁶¹ “Young Creators Are Burning Out And Breaking Down” written by Taylor Lorenz for *The New York Times*, many social media influencers are dreading the idea of creating more content for their platforms, because it has started to consume too much of their energy and time⁶². In addition, according to Finnish news site *Yle*'s article⁶³ on “Moni Tubettaja Kärsii Mielenterveysongelmista – Kysyimme Miksi” (“Many Youtubers suffer from mental health issues – we asked why.”) written by Annika Veteli, many Finnish Youtubers have trouble separating work and free time from each other which increases their chances of experiencing social media fatigue.

In Finland, six social media influencers were challenged to take a complete social media break for two weeks in a TV show called *Pause*⁶⁴, while documenting their experiences and thoughts on it in a video diary style, also known as vlogging. *Pause* was launched on a

⁵⁹ Yasharoff & Moniuszko 2023.

⁶⁰ Yasharoff & Moniuszko 2023.

⁶¹ Lorenz 2021.

⁶² Lorenz 2021.

⁶³ Veteli 2019.

⁶⁴ Grönlund, Kullas, & Vierikko 2022.

Finnish streaming platform called Yle Areena back in October of 2022⁶⁵. The show is six episodes long and sheds light on both, the negative and positive impact of social media usage and spreads an important message to its audience about how social media can affect young adults and what can be the benefits of being away from online⁶⁶. During those two weeks, they keep a vlog-type diary of how they feel about being completely offline and if they notice any differences in their moods, thoughts, or actions whilst doing the challenge. Because the influencers use social media as their work field, each of them has experienced an overwhelming feeling relating to social media usage⁶⁷. The TV-show brings an important insight and message to the Finnish society, especially to young adults on how much social media can affect our lives. In my opinion *Pause* provides its viewers a good insight into how a social media usage can affect a user's daily life from the needs of having to post all the time to how difficult it can be to stay away from online. Moreover, I wanted to include this show in my thesis, because it spreads awareness of the negative and positive effects of social media usage and does so from the point of view of an influencer, which have an impact on today's young adults. Moreover, the show brings an important message to the Finnish society on how much social media usage affects our everyday lives.

⁶⁵ Grönlund, Kullas, & Vierikko 2022.

⁶⁶ Grönlund, Kullas, & Vierikko 2022.

⁶⁷ Grönlund, Kullas, & Vierikko 2022.

3 Gathering data and analysis through theories

3.1 Preparing to collect data

To proceed with the social media survey, I came up with 13 open-ended questions that focused on the topic of social media fatigue, from which six were mandatory to reply to and the rest were not. The mandatory questions were 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 12. The first four questions were basic questions regarding the participants' gender, age, apps they use, as well as how many hours a day they have spent online. I found it important to ask these questions since there is a slight difference in how we use social media depending on the gender we hold, and the answers to question 2 would provide me with an estimate of the participants' age range. The last nine questions cover the subjects of social media fatigue, social media addiction as well as FoMO making sure that the participants would provide me with the most of their experiences and any additional thoughts they may have had on the topic. As a bonus question, number 14, I gave the participants the freedom to tell me more about their experiences, thoughts, or anything else they might have in mind in regards to social media fatigue.

After finalizing the survey questions, I had to figure out the time and place - where and when to publish the survey for the possible participants to access it the easiest. Moreover, because the target audience was going to be from Finland, I had to think about the way the survey was going to be presented to them - in Finnish. I would later translate the answers and questions into English, and when this time would come, I would need to do so carefully in order not to lose any important information during translation. The answers to the questions of the online survey start on section 3.3.1.

I chose the age range of 18 to 29-year-olds as a target group, because they are the ones to use social media as a communication tool the most. Due to the survey's topic being social media fatigue and the audience of the survey being 18 to 29-year-old social media users, it made the most sense to publish the survey through different social media platforms, as well as through a couple of email lists. This way I made sure that the participants fit within the target group.

Before publishing the survey, I made sure I had prepared everything ethically the right way regarding the survey before sharing the link to the questionnaire with the public.

For the TV show *Pause*, I knew that since the show can be viewed publicly online, I would not have to ask for a permission to use it as research material for my thesis⁶⁸.

3.2 Collecting data of the social media survey and the TV show *Pause*

The online survey was created through Google Forms and was shared through two email lists of my university that reach the targeted age group of this survey, as well as on my Instagram story, my Facebook, and my degree program's Instagram and Facebook pages. In addition, I shared the link with my social circle so that they could share it on their social medias. The survey was a voluntary one meaning that the description of the survey mentions the survey being meant for social media users who have experienced social media fatigue and possibly taken or considered taking a break from social media. When I published the survey, I made sure to include a little description in order for its audience to see whether they were the right people to respond to the survey or not.

The process of collecting data from the survey took the time of almost one month, as the survey ended up gathering data from 30 Finnish people in the age range of 19 to 29. The survey was conducted between the time from the 9th of June 2023 to the 4th of July 2023. Not only does this report include numbers to show the results of the survey, but also shares the voices and thoughts of the 30 individuals with social media fatigue who responded by speaking about their concerns, dependency, and thoughts on social media usage and the possible fatigue it has caused them.

For the Finnish TV show *Pause*, I watched the six episodes-long series a couple of times during the process of writing this thesis to gather screenshots and direct quotes from the social media influencers participating in the social media break challenge.

3.3 Analyzing data of the social media survey and the TV show *Pause*

Before starting the analysis process of the survey responses, I went through all the responses anonymously with the aim of finding something that would be related to social media

⁶⁸ Laaksonen, 2018.

addiction causing social media fatigue. To my pleasant surprise, many of the 30 survey participants had really taken the time to answer to the questions and shared their experiences and thoughts throughout the whole survey.

After receiving the answers to the online survey, I decided to categorize questions 5 to 13 into four different categories each having 2-3 survey questions within them. I categorized the survey questions into the following categories: 1) experiences regarding social media fatigue, 2) social media break and possible causes for it, 3) benefits of social media break, and 4) experiences with the fear of missing out. Each of these categories helped me analyze the responses through different theories.

While watching the TV show *Pause*, I kept in mind my research questions and therefore it was easier to pick out the most important quotes, time frames and screenshots from the show to use as research material for this research paper. While watching the different episodes I was able to make connections of the influencers' experiences and connect them to the different theories mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework. I then took the findings from the show and the findings of the social media survey, compared them to each other and realized that there were some similarities and differences between them. I will present these findings later in this paper in the section 3.3.4 "The findings from the TV show *Pause* compared to the online survey". In addition, I will explain the findings made from the show *Pause* together with the findings made from the online survey in the categories below. This way I can show the connections between the social media survey results, as well as the analysis of *Pause*.

3.3.1 Information of the participants of the survey and the TV show *Pause*

As previously mentioned, the social media survey created for this Master thesis gathered responses from possible participants anonymously. However, since the first two questions asked the participants their gender and age, the survey results helped me to gather a little bit of the responders' background: the information is presented below through data.

Table 1. Genders of the online survey participants.

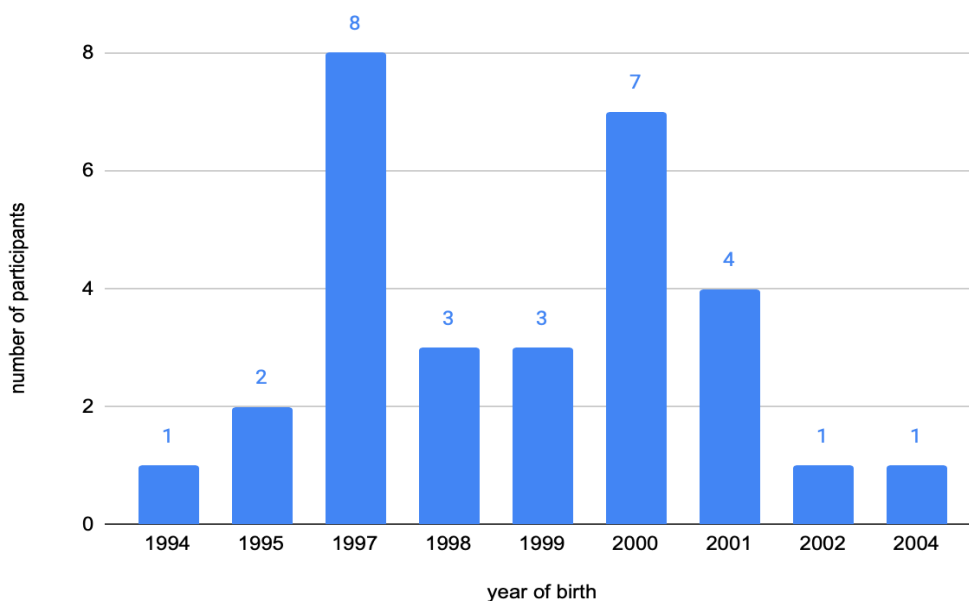
This table below shows the information regarding the 30 survey participants' gender in percentages.

Gender	n	%
Female	22	73.3
Male	6	20
Rather not say	2	6.7
All	30	100

From this table we can see that out of the 30 participants of the online survey, majority with the number of 22 (73.3%) were female, while 6 (20%) were male and 2 (6.7%) participants chose not to share their gender.

Chart 1. Ages of the online survey participants.

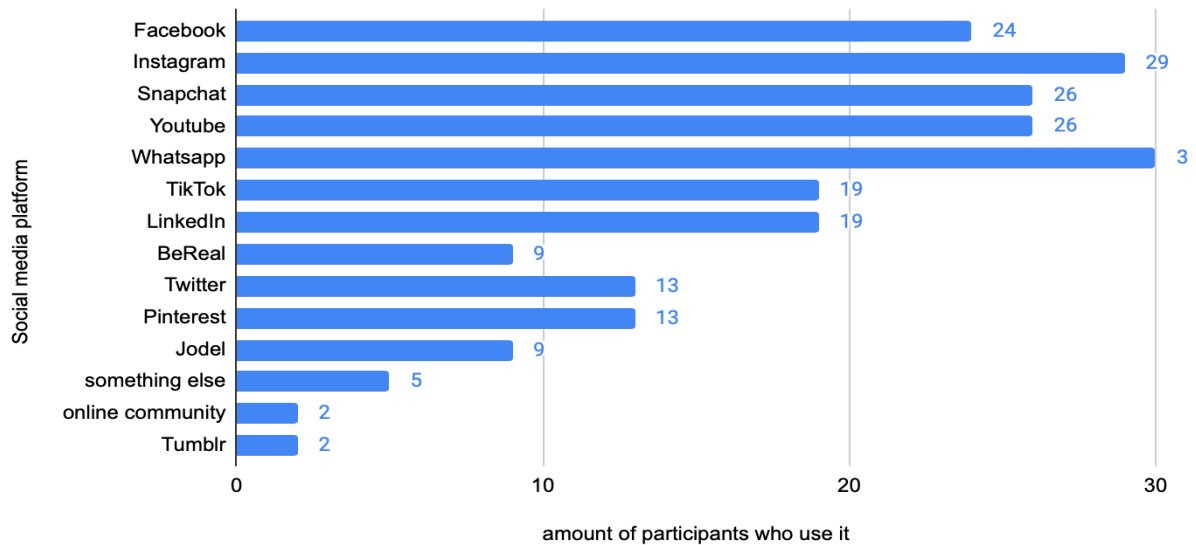
This chart below shows the information regarding the 30 survey participants' ages.



When looking at the data regarding the ages of the participants, majority of them were born either in the year of 2000 (7 responders), 2001 (4 responders) and 1997 (8 responders). Others were born in the years of 1994, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2002 and 2004.

Chart 2. Social media platforms used by the online survey participants.

This chart below shows what social media platforms the survey participants use.



Regarding the social media platforms that the participants use, among the 30 participants all 30 (100%) use WhatsApp, 29 (96.7%) participants responded that they use Instagram, 26 (86.7%) participants were marked for both Snapchat and YouTube, 24 (80%) use Facebook and 19 (63.3%) participants was marked for both TikTok and LinkedIn. In addition to these according to the survey results the following social media platforms were also used by some of the participants; Twitter, Pinterest, BeReal, Jodel, another online community, Tumblr, Reddit, Discord, a gaming community, or a dating app.

The average social media usage on a daily basis among the responders according to the survey results varied from 1 hour to up to 8 hours a day.

From the TV show *Pause*, the six social media influencers that took part in the show were Mona Bling, Maiju Voutilainen, Joonas Hellman, Phuc Luu, Katri Norrlin, and Alexandra Illman⁶⁹. Four of the influencers were women and two were men.

3.3.2 The most significant findings of the survey presented through categories

I previously mentioned how I categorized the survey's nine questions into four different categories. In this subsection I will go over the four different categories in detail and through them I will be able to discuss the biggest findings of the social media online survey. I will also be presenting some direct quotes, as well as the survey participants' experiences and

⁶⁹ Yle, *Pause* 2022.

thoughts that stood out to me the most as I was going through the survey answers and will use the previously mentioned theories to explain the responses in the different categories. In addition, since the response are anonymous, I have signed the quotes as “Survey participant n.”. I have used italics writing style for the quotations to make them stand out better from the rest of the text.

Before going into detail about the results and explaining them through the different theories I mentioned in the theoretical framework, I would like to point out a few of the most important findings that I came across while going through the survey responses. The results of the online social media survey showed that 1) young adults have the need to constantly check their phone for notifications, 2) a lot of young adults’ media usage leads to online social comparison and 3) many feel that they are expected to be online even though they don’t have the energy to do so. 4) From the participants of the online survey, 36.7% had taken a social media break more than once, 5) social media usage takes young adults away from such normal everyday activities as spending more time with friends or family, exercising, or resting or doing other things that were important to them, to name a few and 6) young adults seem to get easily bored without social media. Finally, 7) those who had taken a social media break, could not stay away from online completely during their break. In addition, I noticed that there is a significant connection between social media fatigue, fear of missing out, and social media addiction that almost constantly feed each other.

Table 2. Connections between survey questions and findings of the survey.

The table below showing the connections between survey questions and findings of the survey. For this table and the tables below whenever mentioning the word social media, I have chosen at times to shorten it to sm. I have marked this the following way: * sm = social media

Survey questions	Most important findings of the survey	Categories for the survey questions
Q5)	2) a lot of young adults’ *sm usage leads to online social comparison 3) many feel that they are expected to be online with the others even though they don’t have the energy to do so	Social media fatigue symptoms/ how *sm fatigue is experienced by the Finnish young adults.

Q6, 7and 8)	4) 36.7% had taken *sm break more than once	Experience on *sm break and what caused it
Q 9,10 and 11	5) social media usage takes young adults away from normal everyday activities such as spending time with family and friends, exercising or hobbies	How have young adults replaced their time away from *sm in the physical world? Did they notice any changes? Were there any benefits to the break?
Q 12 and 13	1) young adults have the constant need to check their phones for notifications 5) social media usage takes young adults away from normal everyday activities such as spending time with family and friends, exercising or hobbies 6) young adults get easily bored without social media 7) the ones who took a break from social media, couldn't stay away from there completely.	Signs of social media addiction and fear of missing out.

3.3.3 The most important findings of *Pause* presented through categories

To better understand the findings made from the TV show *Pause*, and to understand how they compare with the findings of the online survey, I decided to take the research questions and put them side to side with the findings I made from the show *Pause*. From the TV show *Pause*, I made the following findings⁷⁰ when analyzing the show through the research questions; 1) Even though the show *Pause* challenged the six Finnish influencers to take a two-week-long break from social media, they noticed that the break was beneficial for them, and they plan to inhabit the routines from their social media break to their everyday lives. 2) These influencers are addicted to social media because it is where their community is. They want to share everything with their followers, and they do not want to miss out on any trends or what their idols are doing online⁷¹. 3) The six social media influencers suffered from poor quality of sleep, comparison online, interrupted thoughts and conversations due to their social

⁷⁰ Yle, *Pause* 2022.

⁷¹ Yle, *Pause* 2022.

media usage⁷². 4) During their two-week-long social media break the six social media influencers replaced the time spent online with things like getting proper sleep, being present in the moment with their friends, cleaning and having better face-to-face conversations with their friends⁷³. Finally, 5) social media for these six influencers is their work platform and therefore for them social media is where their followers/community is and during their social media break the *Pause* participants realized that they missed the positivity of their community online⁷⁴.

Table 3. Most important findings between the show *Pause* and the research questions.

The table below presenting the findings of the show *Pause* in relation to the research questions of this master thesis as well as the online survey questions. *sm: social media

Online survey questions	Most important findings from the show <i>Pause</i>	Categories for the survey questions
Q5)	3) The six young adults suffered from poor quality of sleep, comparison online, interrupted thoughts and conversations due to their excessive social media usage.	Social media fatigue symptoms/ how *sm fatigue is experienced by the Finnish young adults.
Q6, 7 and 8)	1) For <i>Pause</i> , the six young adults were challenged to take a two-week-long break from social media but noticed it to be so beneficial for them that they wish to inhabit those routines to use even after the break is over.	Experience on *sm break and what caused it
Q 9,10 and 11	4) The six participants replaced the time spent online with things like getting proper sleep, being present in the moment with their friends, cleaning and having better face-to-face conversations with their friends.	How have young adults replaced their time away from *sm in the physical world? Did they notice any changes? Were there any benefits to the break?
Q 12 and 13	2) These influencers are addicted to social media because it is where their community is. They want	Signs of social media addiction and fear of missing out.

⁷² Yle, *Pause* 2022.

⁷³ Yle, *Pause* 2022.

⁷⁴ Yle, *Pause* 2022.

	<p>to share everything with their followers and the do not want to miss out on any trends or what their idols are doing online.</p> <p>5) during their break, the influencers missed is their work platform and the positivity of their community online.</p>	
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3.3.4 The findings from the TV show *Pause* compared to the online survey

After I had gathered both, the findings of the TV show *Pause*, and the online survey, I was able to find both similarities and differences from them. The table below shows these findings.

Table 4. Similarities and differences between the findings of the TV show *Pause* and the findings of the online survey.

Table below showing the findings between the online survey responses and the TV show *Pause*. * sm: social media

	Tv show <i>Pause</i>	Online survey
Similarities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - feeling of being overwhelmed, difficulties in thinking process, sleeping and being present in the moment, as well as interfere with face-to-face conversations. - comparing themselves to other users, whether it is their looks, success, or status in life. - during the social media break, sleep hygiene became better, and users had more time to do normal things such as spend time with friends in the physical world, clean and they over all felt better. - wish to inhabit the routines they picked up during their *sm breaks into their normal everyday lives so that once they are back in social media, they can control more of how social media affects them. 	
Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they were challenged to take two weeks off of social media. - most managed to stay offline during the break (whatsapp was allowed to be used) - social media is a place to connect with their followers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the participants had taken a *sm break or deleted an app temporary or permanently due to suffering from *sm fatigue. - over 50% of the 30 participants could not stay away completely from *sm during their break.

	<p>which has become their community and a positive place for them to be in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social media is their working platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - often experience *sm to be a toxic place to be in. - use *sm for communicating with their friends and entertainment
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Next, I will discuss the 5 different categories I mentioned earlier and in each of the categories, I will also share data from the social media survey to show support of my findings.

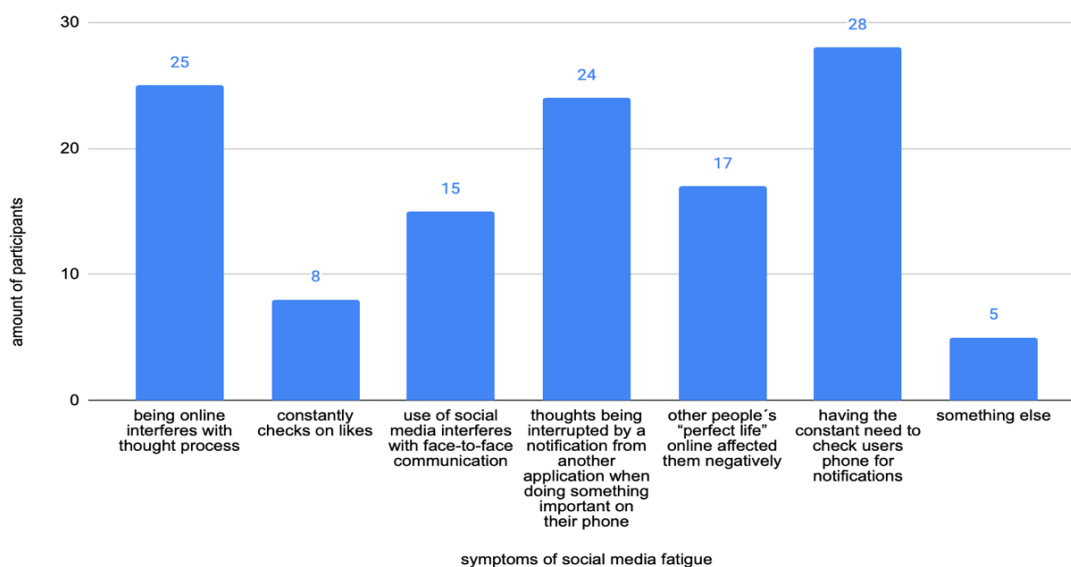
1) Experiences regarding social media fatigue

The purpose of my research for this paper was to find out about the experience that young adults in Finland have regarding social media fatigue. To gather data about this, it was important to ask the participants questions about their experiences regarding social media fatigue. This section will therefore answer survey question 5, as well as the research question “What are the symptoms of social media fatigue?”. I will explain how the participants of the online survey have experienced social media fatigue and the theories that help understand why the Finnish young adults experience these symptoms while using social media. In addition to the analysis, a direct quote from the survey has been added to the end show findings.

As I was going through the results of the survey, one of the most significant findings of the survey was how social media usage affects young adults, and specifically how they have experienced social media fatigue. The question 5 of the social media survey asked the participants whether they have experienced any of the symptoms of social media fatigue. The chart below shows the responses to this question.

Chart 3. Symptoms of social media fatigue experienced by the online survey participants.

Chart below showing the responses and data of the online survey question 5, which asked participants whether they have experienced any of the symptoms of social media fatigue.



Based on the question 5 results the most significant findings were the following; the participants have experienced the symptoms of social media fatigue, which include 1) 28 (93.3%) participants having the constant need to check their phone for notifications, 2) 25 (83.3%) participants having experienced that being online interferes with their thought process, and 3) 24 (80%) participants having experienced their thoughts being interrupted by a notification from another application when doing something important on their phone. 4) 17 (56.7%) of participants had experienced that other people's "perfect life" online affected them negatively and 5) 15 (50%) participants had experienced that the usage of social media interferes with face-to-face communications. In addition, the participants who added in their own experiences wrote the following answers: "the need of opening social media apps and closing them", "losing focus a lot easier" and "feeling miserable while using social media due to increasing content regarding unrealistic body image goals and body hatred over the years." These social media fatigue symptoms can be explained through the following theories as mentioned in the theoretical framework: social comparison theory and the fear of missing out.

Next, I will explain the results to question 5 of the survey through the theoretical framework, as well as add in any of the similar findings that I came across while watching the TV show *Pause*.

From the 30 responses to this question, 93.3% of participants having the constant need to check their phone for notifications shows that young adults want to make sure they do not miss out on anything happening online while they are not there. This is caused by the fear of missing out, as well as self-determination, which as mentioned earlier according to Luukela-Tandon⁷⁵, motivate social media users to stay online because they want to make sure they are connected to their friends and do not miss out on things happening online. However, when young adults keep going back online due to having the need to stay connected to others, as well as not wanting to miss out on things, it increases their chance of experiencing social media fatigue.

In addition, while watching the TV show *Pause*, many of the six influencers had also come across the symptoms of social media fatigue. In episode 1 of *Pause*⁷⁶, Katri Norrlin talked about spending a lot of time on social media throughout the day, mentioning especially that she checks the likes and comments from Instagram:

“I use social media quite a lot throughout the day...Who doesn't enjoy receiving likes and comments to their posts? You receive validation through your own content.”

- Katri Norrlin, Episode 1⁷⁷, *Pause*

This quote from Katri shows that she checks on the likes and comments on her posts regularly, and that she has often experienced the need of checking notifications from her phone. However, as mentioned above when referring to Luukela-Tandon⁷⁸ and the self-determination theory, when young adults keep on checking their notifications, not wanting to miss out on anything, they increase the chances of the user suffering from social media fatigue.

⁷⁵ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

⁷⁶ Grönlund, Kullas, & Vierikko, *Pause*, 2022.

⁷⁷ Yle, *Pause*, 10:46-10:50, 2022.

⁷⁸ Luukela-Tandon 2023.



Picture 1. Screenshot from Yle Arena⁷⁹ showing the six Finnish influencers discussing their social media usage during Pause together with the host Miisa Grekov. Time stamp 22:49.

The 83.3% of the online survey participants having experienced that being online interferes with their thought process, shows that the young adults' social media usage has weakened their ability to focus on tasks, which can be explained through the cognitive load theory by John Sweller, which was also mentioned earlier in the theoretical frameworks. As stated earlier, according to John Sweller⁸⁰, we only have a certain amount of capacity in our brain to work with, and if that capacity is overdriven, we get overloaded with information. When a young adult spends time online, they are exposed to endless amounts of information, this often goes over the capacity which we can work through and therefore our ability to concentrate on tasks weakens and we are easily distracted by social media.

In addition, the young adult's online usage interfering with their thought process can also be explained through FoMO, because they have the constant need of being online and therefore, they easily focus on what is happening online rather than other things. This leads to young adults not knowing how to control their time spent online and therefore their social media

⁷⁹ Grönlund, Kullas, & Vierikko, *Pause*, 2022.

⁸⁰ Sweller 2011.

usage wears them out and they experience social media fatigue. When analyzing this survey finding, I realized that many of the people I have been surrounded by within the recent years have also had trouble with their thought process, because while they are completing tasks in the physical world, they are trying to keep up with everything happening online as well. Ulla Heinonen, Ph.D., stated⁸¹ in her doctoral dissertation for the University of Turku, “*Sähköinen Yhteisöllisyys – Kokemuksia vapaa-ajan, työn ja koulutuksen yhteisöistä verkossa*” (“Electronic Communities and Sense of Community – Experiences of Social, Professional, and Educational Communities on the Internet”) that; ”Our time has made it typical for many things to be happening simultaneously... This has become possible partly through the new technological solutions.”, (“Ajallemme on tyypillistä monien asioiden yhtäaikaisuus... Tähän antavat osaltaan mahdollisuuksia uudet tekniset ratkaisut”)⁸². To add, even though as one of its benefits, social media has brought with it ways for us to do multiple things at ones online, it seems that we have started to forget how important it is to slow down and complete one task from start to finish with concentration. We should remind ourselves that on the side of technology making our multitasking easier, we can only process so much information at once and therefore at some point we lose focus to other things.

In addition, in episode 2, Maiju Voutilainen talked about her thoughts being constantly interrupted while using social media, and during her social media break her thoughts were a lot clearer:

“I have a lot of thoughts in my mind and now (during the break) they are a lot clearer. I feel like I don’t really think when I’m using social media. I just scroll through it.”

- Maiju Voutilainen, Episode 2⁸³, *Pause*

Maiju’s experience is a perfect example of how the increased use of social media can affect young adults’ thought process and make it difficult for us to concentrate on different things. This can be explained through the cognitive load theory⁸⁴, because it clearly shows that while young adults scroll through social media, and once they are met with a certain amount of

⁸¹ Heinonen PhD 2008.

⁸² Heinonen PhD 2008.

⁸³ Yle, *Pause*, 14:40-14:50, 2022.

⁸⁴ Sweller 2011.

information, the capacity of them being able to process through information decreases and therefore there is a chance of ignoring their thoughts all together.

To continue analyzing the online survey responses to question 5, 80% having experienced their thoughts being interrupted by a notification from another application when doing something important on their phone, can also be explained through FoMO and cognitive load theory; users do not want to miss out on anything happening online so they pay attention to the notification⁸⁵. Moreover, cognitive load interrupts their thoughts, because there is only so much information we can process at once⁸⁶. When looking at this result, I realized that it is good to note that many of us social media users have notifications turned on the different apps we use so that we would be notified whenever something new happens online and we want to be informed about it. Whether it is a new like, comment, or a message from someone that follows us, we do not want to miss it. This easily overtime causes cognitive overload, meaning our thoughts brain cannot process information properly, which is one of the symptoms of social media fatigue caused by social media overuse.

In addition, the reason for why the 56.7% of the participants had experienced that other people's "perfect life" online affected them negatively can be explained through the social comparison theory. As stated earlier through the dissertation of Anushree Luukela-Tandon, I found out that social comparison theory means that a person has the tendency to compare themselves to others, and in this context especially online⁸⁷. When young adults use social media and they scroll through the endless amounts of content while viewing other social media users' profiles, they compare themselves, sometimes without even knowing it, to other users of social media. They do this because they try to find their worth among their community. However, since many users post on social media only the best parts of their life, the content can easily give other users the impression that others have accomplished or are doing better in life than the viewer. This affects young adults negatively while being online and can lead to social media fatigue and eventually stepping away from social media.

From the responses to the question 14 of the online survey, the following quote related to social comparison; one of the survey participants had added their thoughts on social media

⁸⁵ Greenwood 2017.

⁸⁶ Sweller 2011.

⁸⁷ Greenwood 2017.

comparison, that there is also other side to this since the user can also feel better about themselves when they put themselves on a scale with others online:

“In my experience, comparison online is a big reason to why scrolling through social media becomes overwhelming...it doesn't only add unnecessary pressure (to users) both physically and mentally, but also can decrease your self-worth. However, it is also possible to think that you are better than the other social media users, but that's not idea either.”

- Survey Participant 2

It's alarming to think that the technology tools that have been created to make our communication easier regardless of time or place, can have such a negative effect on its users. With social media content we have different filters and editing tools, which can be used to create very unrealistic content, but I will come back to this problem later in the text. When looking at the analysis above and the work in the theoretical framework, I can agree with Luukela-Tandon's findings in her dissertation that when social media users, in this case young adults, do social comparison online, it can be linked to FoMO and social media fatigue⁸⁸.

Lastly, the 15 (50%) of the online survey participants responding to social media usage coming in between their face-to-face conversation is alarming, because it shows how addicted young adults can be to the online world. They fear that they miss something happening in their social medias so they get distracted by the notifications on their phone and therefore this action might interrupt their face-to-face communication with others. During the show *Pause*, in episode 4 Joona Hellman discussed⁸⁹ the fact of being more present than before without being online all the time, and even his friend had noticed that his communication skills had changed during the challenge:

“Yesterday while spending time during the evening with my best friend, they said that I am able to create much longer conversations and the conversations do not get interrupted.”⁹⁰

- Joona Hellman, Episode 4, *Pause*

⁸⁸ Tandon et al., 2021.

⁸⁹ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 4, timestamp 18:33-18:47, 2022.

⁹⁰ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 4, timestamp 18:33-18:47, 2022.

In addition, in a documentary⁹¹ called “*Kids Vs Screens*” published in the Yle streaming platform, produced by *Screen Kids Productions Inc./CBC* in Canada in 2020, science journalist Dan Risk studies how increased usage of technology affects both well-being and learning. In the documentary a Canadian researcher Sheri Madigan was interviewed about her research on children’s development when it gets affected by technology⁹². A Canadian newspaper *Calgary Herald* published an article⁹³ on Sheri and her research titled “Nature of Things Documentary Looks At How Excessive Screen Time Is Impacting Child Development” it was written by Eric Volmers in 2020. According to the article⁹⁴ Madigan, together with other researchers conducted an excessive study in Alberta on how screen time affects early childhood development between 2011 and 2016. The study found⁹⁵ that when children within the age range of two to three are exposed to an excessive amount of screen time they lack development milestones before turning five years old. Madigan had stated in the article⁹⁶ that the kids are less likely to practice some important development milestones such as walking, talking, and running when being exposed to a lot of screen time at an early age. When reading about Madigan’s findings, as well as hearing Joonas Hellman’s thoughts on his conversation skills in the show *Pause*, it got me thinking about our society’s communication skills and how they are being affected by technology, especially the use of social media. If kids have already showed signs regarding lack of development, what does it mean for our future generations? This is something I will discuss more in Chapter 4 of my thesis, which focuses on propositions regarding future research. Next, I will continue with the discussion of the analysis of the survey responses by moving onto category 2.

2) Experiences on taking a break from social media and what led to it?

To gain a better understanding of what leads young adults into taking a break from social media, it was important to include questions in the survey that would ask the participants

⁹¹ Eisen, *Kids Vs Screens*, 2020.

⁹² Eisen, *Kids Vs Screens*, 2020.

⁹³ Volmers, 2020.

⁹⁴ Volmers, 2020.

⁹⁵ Volmers, 2020.

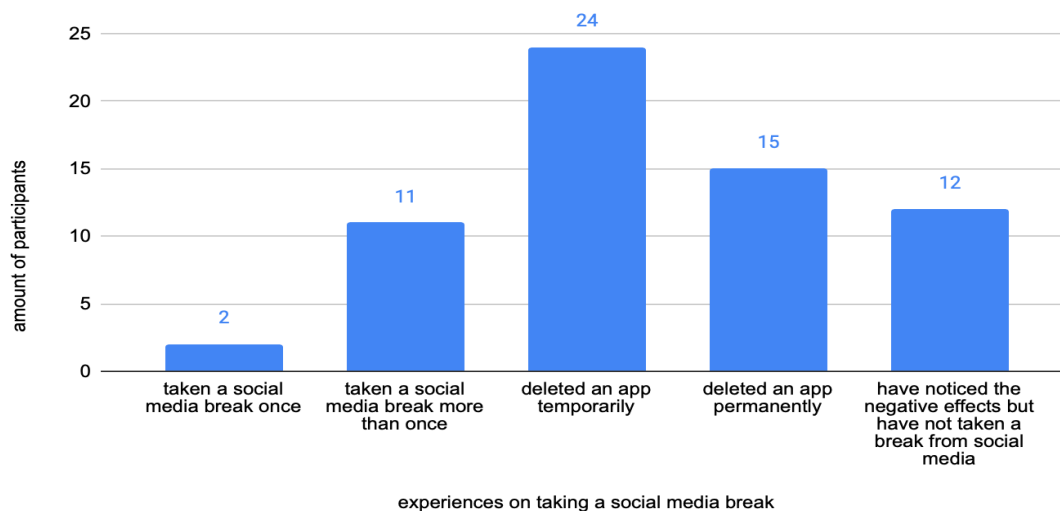
⁹⁶ Volmers, 2020.

about their experiences regarding their possible social media breaks. In this section I will discuss the next biggest findings of the social media survey, which were the young adults' experiences on taking a break from social media. This category consists of the most significant findings of the survey questions 6,7 and 8. I will explain the results and analysis to these questions together because they are all connected with one another. This section will answer the research question of "What causes 18-29 years old Finnish social media users to take either temporary or permanent break from social media". In addition, I will discuss the findings I made from the show *Pause* regarding this category that are connected to this section's survey findings and explain them through the theoretical framework as well.

The question 6 six of the online survey asked the participants about their experiences with taking a break from social media. All 30 participants responded to this question and the chart below shows the data of the responses.

Chart 4. Experiences of online survey participants regarding taking a social media break.

Chart below showing the responses and data of the online survey question 6.



Based on the question's 6 results out of 30 responses, 1) 24 (80%) had deleted an app temporarily, while 2) 15 (50%) participants had deleted an app permanently, 3) 12 (40%) participants had noticed negative effects, but did not take a social media break, and lastly, 4) 11 (36.7%) participants had taken a social media break more than once.

What's alarming to me about these results is that 11 (36.7%) participants have taken a break from social media more than once. This shows that there lies a problem in young adults'

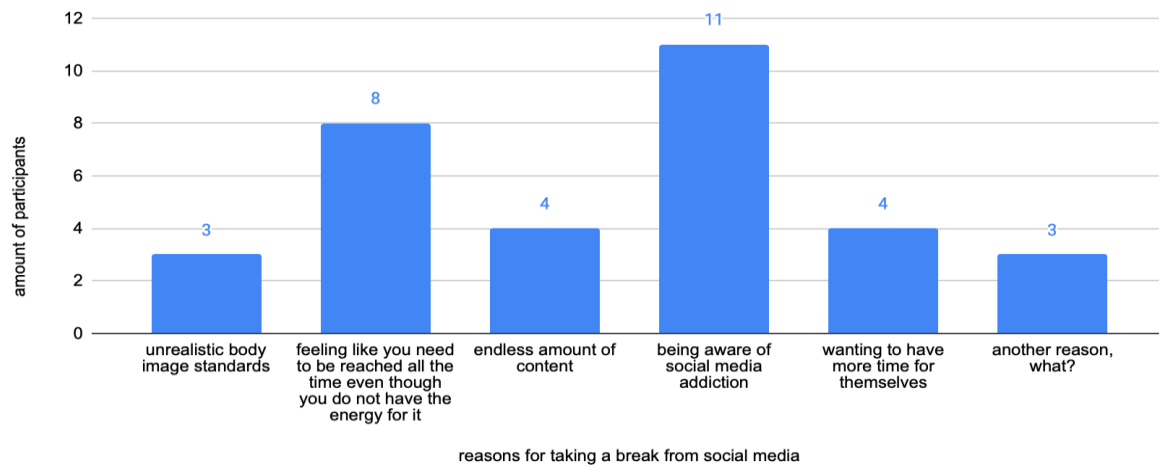
social media usage, because even though it has worn them out once already, they have gone back to it and experienced social media fatigue again to the point of having to step away from it again. Since this survey was done by only 30 young adults and within the region of Finland, it makes me wonder how many other social media users there are out there who have experienced social media fatigue more than once and therefore had taken a break from it. It is alarming that even though, as previously mentioned, previous research has been done on social media fatigue and steps have been taken to minimize the causes of it, there are still users out there who continue to be worn out by their social media usage. This just shows that not enough has been done regarding social media fatigue and how it affects us.

In addition to the analysis above, the question 6 of the online survey's results show that social media usage by Finnish young adults has led them to experience social media fatigue and while others have decided to delete an app completely or for a while, others have realized the negative effects but have decided to stay online. This makes me wonder whether they have decided to continue their social media usage despite the experience of social media fatigue, because they have not wanted to miss anything happening online, or that they haven't simply thought about needing a break from social media. While creating the social media survey, my focus was heavily on social media fatigue and the experiences on taking a social media break. Due to this, when creating the social media survey, it did not come to my mind that a participant would be aware of experiencing negative effects of social media usage but would continue their normal social media usage. To add, even though the results of the survey show that 12 participants had not taken a social media break even though they had experienced negative effects, the results do not answer the question why those 12 participants decided to stay online. This is a limitation of the survey but based on the theoretical framework and other results of the survey, one could argue that the reasons for a young adult to stay online could be either, due to the fear of missing out on information or that their social media fatigue has not been experienced due to a length that a break has been necessary. However, to answer the question what led to these young adults to take a break from social media, we can look at results to question 7.

The question 7 of the social media survey asked the participants their reasons for taking a break from social media. The results are presented in the chart below:

Chart 5. Reasons for online survey participants to take a break from social media.

Chart below showing the responses and data of the online survey question 7.



The findings of question 7 of the online survey showed that out of 19 responses to this question, the biggest reasons for the Finnish young adults to take a break from social media was caused either due to 1) 11 (57.9%) participants saying that they are aware of being addicted to social media, 2) 8 (42.1%) participants said that they feel that they need to be available to others all the time even though they don't want to or have the energy to do so, 3) 4 (21.1%) endless amount of content and 4) 3 (15.8%) unrealistic body image standards. This question had a bonus choice in it, to which participants could write out their own additional reasons for taking a social media break. From those 3 (15.8%) responses, the following responses stood out to me the most: 1) (mentioned more than once) did not want to be always available online, 2) social media distracted user's focus from other things. The quotes are shown later in the text as I go through the analysis.

The 19 responses to the question 7 show that while young adults do want to stay connected to their community online, most are aware that their constant online presence is not beneficial for them in the long-term. Reasons for their decision to take a break from social media are being aware of social media addiction, feeling like they need to be available all the time, endless amount of content, as well as unrealistic body image standards. These are all dark sides of social media usage, which, as mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework when

referring to Luukela-Tandon's doctoral dissertation⁹⁷ can be caused by the excessive use of social media. When analyzing results to this question of the online survey, it should be noted that over half of the responders to this question, 11 participants out of 19, said that they are aware of their social media addiction. At the same time this can be viewed as a pleasant and unpleasant finding. The results show that while young adults are aware of the symptoms of social media addiction and know when to take a break from social media, they still use it to the point of social media addiction and other negative side effects.

The rest of the responses to the question 7 can be analyzed through these theories from theoretical framework: social comparison theory, self-determination theory, cognitive load theory and FoMO. The second biggest finding from the responses to this question was that some young adults using social media may feel like they need to be reachable by others even though they do not want to. Below are shown two direct quotes to support this finding:

"I stopped keeping up with Snapchat streaks and sending unnecessary daily messages, because I wanted to decrease so called `pointless` messaging that takes, time creates additional stress and pressure to be constantly reachable by others."

- Survey participant 3

"The reasons for my social media break were partly being addicted to it, but mainly I have not always wanted to be reachable by other."

- Survey participant 4

While reading these quotes, I immediately thought about peer pressure, which according to an article⁹⁸ published in a Journal called *Computers in Human Behavior* in 2018 called "Peer Contagion Processes For Problematic Internet Use Among Chinese College Students: A

⁹⁷ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

⁹⁸ Nan Zhou et al., 2019.

Process Model Involving Peer Pressure And Maladaptive Cognition.” written by Nan Zhou et. al., is something that can encourage or increase the urge of social media usage⁹⁹. Moreover, these quotes from the participants show that these young adults are aware that everyone else might be online, and while they themselves would like to put their phones away, they feel pressure to be online as well. The pressure of having to be online comes from self-determination theory, which in this case keeps young adults online so that they can continue being connected to their friends¹⁰⁰.

A good example of this and self-determination that I came across in *Pause*, is a direct quote from Mona Bling in episode 1¹⁰¹, where she discusses with the other influencers how she feels the pressure to be online all the time:

*“It’s important to remind yourself that less is enough. You do not need to reply to your followers’ messages around midnight. You do not need to be a 24/7 open supermarket.”*¹⁰²

- Mona Bling, Episode 1, *Pause*

This quote from Mona shows that there lies a pressure of being online and being reachable all the time, since others are online as well¹⁰³. However, Mona makes a good point stating that less should be enough and that young adults should not need to be always available online. These quotes and the 4 (21.1%) participants stating that endless amount of content made them take a social media break, takes the analysis once again back to the cognitive load theory¹⁰⁴. Here the young adults have become aware that their time spent online trying to keep up with information and their community, has come to its limit and they have decided to take a break from social media to give themselves a rest. When looking at these findings, it could be argued that social media as a system challenges its users to stay online to be connected to others even when they do not want to.

⁹⁹ Simons-Morton 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁰¹ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 1, timestamp 22:02-22:15, 2022.

¹⁰² Yle, *Pause*, Episode 1, timestamp 22:02-22:15, 2022.

¹⁰³ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Sweller 2011.

When analyzing this part of the results an article about a Finnish young adult taking a social media break came to my mind. The article by Sara Hussein was published in the Finnish online newspaper *Iltasanomat*¹⁰⁵ with the title “Not Everyone Wants To Be Online” (“Kaikki eivät jaksa vouhottaa”). In the article a 22-years old Aurora Linna from Finland is being interviewed for her decision to delete her social media accounts completely due to feeling like social media expects a lot more from its users than just posting and following content. Aurora’s case and the results of the online survey show that instead of staying online like many young adults choose to do, there are also those who decide to step away from social media for good.

To continue, from the 19 responses to the question 7 of the online survey, three participants (15.8%) responded that unrealistic body image goals were a reason for them to step away from social media. Relating to unrealistic body image goals as well as online comparison, one of the participants had even added to the responses their own reason for stepping out of social media:

“I deleted Instagram due to the pressure I felt and constant comparison online.”

- Survey Participant 5

This quote from a participant and the three others resonating with similar issues faced online can be explained through the social comparison theory. Users start to compare themselves to the picture-perfect bodies and faces they see online¹⁰⁶, which often leads to decrease their self-esteem.

Discussion of comparison being done online came up also during *Pause*, when the six influencers together with the host of the show Miisa Grekov discussed in the episode 3 whether they compare themselves to other users¹⁰⁷. Joonas Hellman and Alexandra Illman pointed out that they do it all the time and too often¹⁰⁸. Joonas Hellman stated:

¹⁰⁵ Hussein 2023.

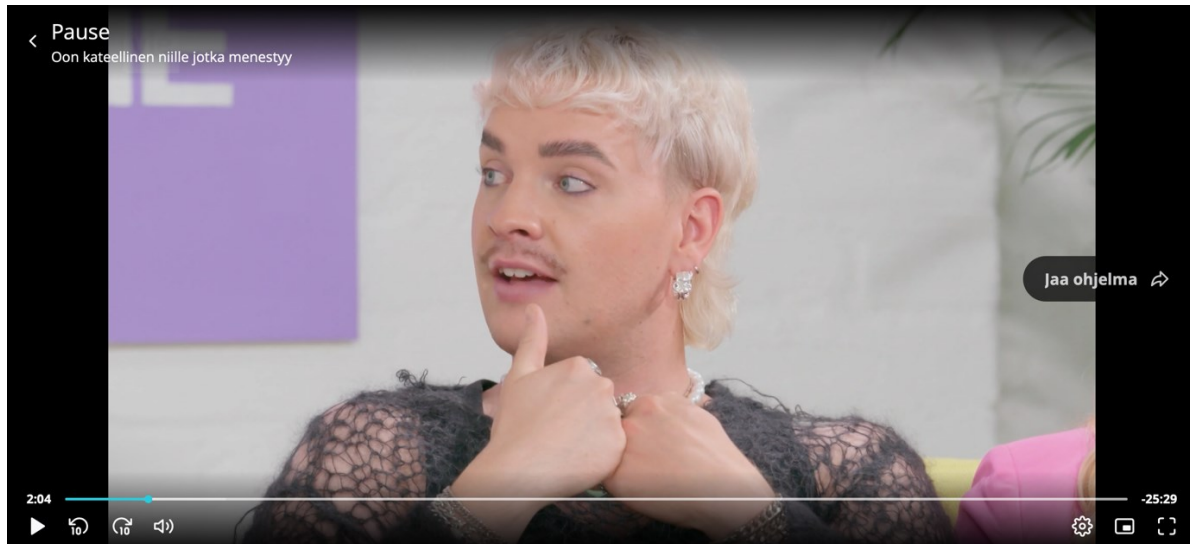
¹⁰⁶ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁰⁷ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 3, 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 3, 2022.

“I think it’s important to make clear for our viewers as well that we too struggle with comparison being done online, that we also do it all the time.”¹⁰⁹”

- Joonna Hellman, Episode 3, *Pause*



Picture 2. Screenshot¹¹⁰: Joonna Hellman talking about the experiences of social media comparison that influencers go through, Episode 3, timestamp 2:04, *Pause*.

In addition, Katri Norrlin added in episode 5 of *Pause* that it is difficult to avoid comparing your appearance to others while being online:

“Who hasn’t experienced appearance pressure due to social media?”¹¹¹”

- Katri Norrlin, Episode 5, *Pause*

I saw it important to include these quotes as part of this thesis, because it shows that these influencers want it to be known that social comparison done online is something that young adults aren’t struggling alone with. In addition, *Pause* as a show brings such an important message to young adults within Finnish society telling the viewers that they do not struggle with social media addiction and social media fatigue alone. Psychologist Emilia Kujala

¹⁰⁹ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 3 timestamp 02:00-02:06, 2022.

¹¹⁰ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 3, timestamp 2:04, 2022.

¹¹¹ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 5, timestamp 9:55-9:58, 2022.

stated¹¹² in *Pause* after Joonas' comment that when doing comparison online, we receive information from others regarding what we are like next to them and what our status in society is. This is what social comparison theory is all about: while comparing ourselves to others, we receive information about ourselves from what we see¹¹³.

In addition, earlier I mentioned the tools that allow users to edit content. Software and apps such as Adobe Photoshop and FaceTune have made it possible for social media users to fix and edit such things as the texture of skin, the shape of bodies and even the surroundings within a photo or a video they are thinking of uploading. In addition, due to the development of these editing tools, as stated in an article published by Florida Atlantic University¹¹⁴, written by Kristen Cifelli in 2021 called "Social Media And How It Affects Our Self-image", often photo editing turns out to be so believable that it's easy for the viewer to "...assume that is how that person looks all the time¹¹⁵". This of course has increased the chances of around body image issues provoked by social media use, because it is difficult to know whether the pictures seen online are completely realistic or not. This often leads users to compare their lives, bodies, and imperfections to the perfect appearing content online. Moreover, this, as presented through the social media survey results, can become one of the reasons why young adults step away from social media temporarily or permanently.

To support this, I decided to share a direct quote that one of the survey participants had left under question 7 when they had the chance to add other reasons for their social media break:

"I deleted Instagram due to the constant pressure and comparison I felt while using the app".

- Survey Participant 6

After asking the participants how many of them had taken a social media break, to further research the reasons for the break, the question 8 of the survey question asked the participants to determine the length of their social media break. The responses to the question 8 are presented in the chart below:

¹¹² Yle, *Pause*, Episode 3, 2022

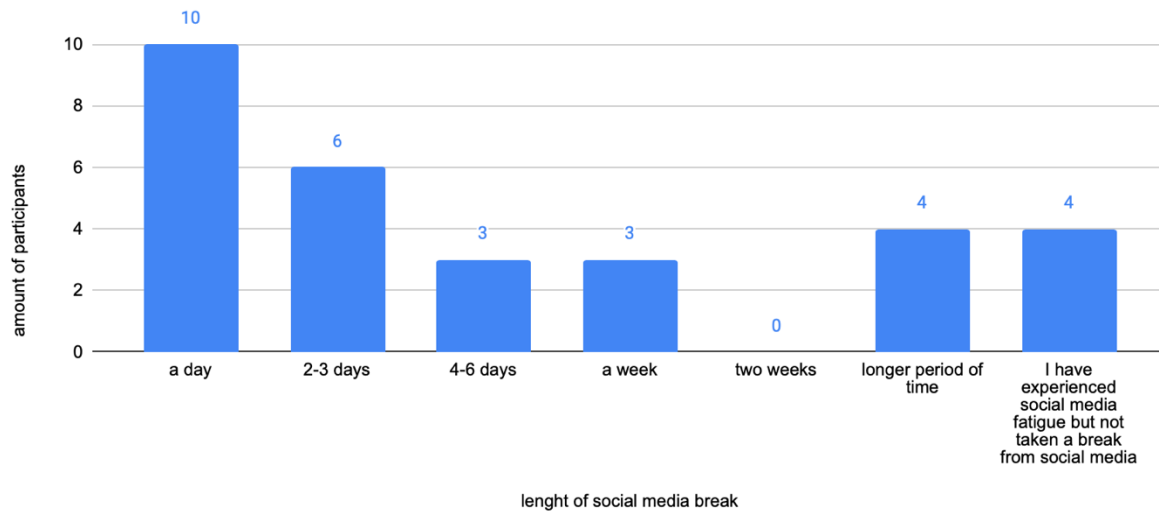
¹¹³ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹¹⁴ Cifelli 2021.

¹¹⁵ Cifelli 2021.

Chart 6. Length of online survey participants' social media breaks.

Chart below showing the responses and data of the online survey question 8.



The responses to question 8 of the online survey revealed that the Finnish young adults have taken a significant number of breaks from social media. I decided to analyze all the responses to this question whether bigger or smaller in percentage, because I found all of them to be important in regards of the purpose of this research. When asked about the length of the social media breaks taken by the young adult participants, the responses revealed the following: out of 30 responses 1) 10 (33.3%) participants had taken a day long break, 2) 6 (20%) participants had taken a 2–3-day long break, 3) 4 (13.3%) had experienced social media fatigue but had not taken a break from their social media usage. 4) 4 (13.3%) participants had taken a longer social media break, 5) 3 (10%) participants who had taken a 4–6-day long break, another 6) 3 (10%) participants had taken a weeklong break from social media and finally, 7) none responded that they had taken a 2 week-long social media break. Even though there is a significant drop in percentages in between some of these responses, I saw it important to share them here since my research focus has been on the causes of social media fatigue and whether it leads to the Finnish young adults taking a break from social media.

These responses to the question 8 show that these 30 participants have experienced social media fatigue and to decrease the symptoms of it, they have decided to leave social media behind either for a short or longer periods of time. Moreover, these young adults have felt the need to step away from social media due to feeling overwhelmed by it. Even though the

biggest percentages are around taking a) a day-long break from social media and b) having experienced social media fatigue but haven't taken a break from it, it is important to note that while none responded that they have taken a 2-week long break from social media, 4 (13.3%) of the participants responded that they had taken a longer break from being online. This shows that 4 online survey participants out of 30 had at some point taken a social media break lasting longer than two weeks. Moreover, these results show us that social media usage affects the lives of Finnish young adults to the point that they either become aware of being overwhelmed by their own social media usage or they get so overwhelmed by their social media usage that they need to take a break from it completely.

After asking the participants whether they have taken a break from social media or not, it was important to include in the survey a question to which the participants would respond with what they have done instead of being online. In the next section I will discuss the responses to this topic.

While analyzing the show *Pause*, it became clear that many of the six influencers enjoyed their time away from social media and wanted to inhabit their routines from their social media break to their everyday lives¹¹⁶. In addition, when asked whether they would take a break from social media again, many of them said that they seriously considered of taking regular breaks from social media to make sure they feel better while continuing working through social media platforms¹¹⁷.

3) Benefits of social media break and activities in the physical world.

To gain a better understanding of the effects that social media break has on young adults, it was important to include questions in the survey that would ask the participants about their experience regarding their social media break. The next findings of the social media survey were related to the benefits that the participants had experienced while taking a break from social media. This section covers survey results to questions 9, 10 and 11 of the online survey. In this section I will also answer the research question "How does the youth replace the time

¹¹⁶Yle, *Pause*, Episode 6, 2022.

¹¹⁷Yle, *Pause*, Episode 6, 2022.

they have spent on social media, when they take a break from it?”. It is also important to note that some of the responses from the question 10 were related to also the next section of the analysis and therefore I will also be discussing those in the section 4 of the analysis. In addition, just like to the previous categories, I will also add findings from *Pause* to this category as well.

The question 9 of the online survey was qualitative descriptive question, in which the participants were asked to tell how they have replaced the time they spent online in the physical world during their social media break. According to the responses to this question the participants had replaced the time they’ve spent online in the physical world by doing normal everyday activities; 1) exercising, 2) spent time with friends and family, 4) spent time reading, 5) they were able to be more present, 6) they slept better, and lastly, 7) they used the time away from social media focusing on doing things they are passionate about.

These results show that when young adults spend more time away from social media, they are less likely to face issues with cognitive overload which affects their thinking process¹¹⁸. This is because they are not constantly focused on what is happening online, they have more time to focus on being present in the physical world which does not overload their thinking process and leaves them with a clearer headspace.

In addition, the ability to sleep better without the excessive use of a smart phone can be explained through the users’ decreased exposure to the blue light. To support this finding, I found an article that talks about the effect of blue light affecting social media users’ sleep. This article¹¹⁹ “The Influence Of Blue Light On Sleep, Performance And Wellbeing In Young Adults: A Systematic Review” written by Marcia Silvani, Robert Werder and Claudio Perret in 2022 published by the Journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, states that blue light coming from electronics, in this case mobile phone usage, and exposure to it may decrease both the quality and length of sleep. Therefore, when young adults decrease their social media usage it decreases their alertness in the evening and helps ensuring that they get better quality of rest.

¹¹⁸ Sweller 2011.

¹¹⁹ Silvani, Werder & Perret 2022.

One of the participants of *Pause*, Alexandra Illman stated in both episodes 2 and 3 of *Pause* about her sleeping problems and that during the first week of her social media break due to the decreasing amount of time she had spent on her phone, her sleeping hygiene had improved tremendously¹²⁰:

“I admit I have trouble with sleeping, and I am sure one of the main reasons for it is that when I go to sleep, I scroll through my phone. I cannot fall asleep if I do not scroll through my phone first...During this past week, I have learned to just fall asleep.”¹²¹

- Alexandra Illman, Episode 2 and 3, *Pause*

To continue discussing the survey results of this section, I was a little shocked by the fact that social media would take its users away from doing these normal everyday activities.

However, due to the fear of missing out¹²², many decide to continue using social media instead of taking a break from it and therefore it is understandable that we would only have more time for these everyday activities once we do decrease the time we spend online. It is worrying that young adults would rather spend time online and not miss out on anything and keep themselves connected and entertained online than focus on their surroundings in the physical world. Moreover, spending time online and social media seems to have taken us apart from our family and friends.

As I was going over these results, I began to ask myself what it is that keeps young adults from being away from online. Is it easier for them to find entertainment and be always connected online, than find things to do in the physical world? This is something I will discuss more in the next category on the findings of the survey “4. Reasons for not being able to stay away from social media”.

To continue with the analysis of the survey responses, when looking at the answers to the question 10 of the survey, which being a descriptive survey question asked the participants “What kind of things did you notice changing during your social media break, for example routines and use of time”, these were the most significant responses from the participants: 1)

¹²⁰Yle, *Pause*, Episode 2 and 3, timestamps 17:02-17:14, 20:08-20:14, 2022.

¹²¹Yle, *Pause*, Episode 2 and 3, timestamps 17:02-17:14, 20:08-20:14, 2022.

¹²² Luukela-Tandon 2023.

Significantly more time when it wasn't spent on using the phone & user's thoughts were clearer, 2) finished doing tasks much quicker when there weren't constant distractions, 3) better energy throughout the day, 4) better sleep hygiene, 5) thought first that they would be bored, but realized they had time to do other necessary things while not being online all the time and 6) the symptoms of depression and feeling unwell decreased when there weren't constant triggers to be seen from online.

In addition, in the show *Pause*, the six influencers noticed similar changes during their social media break such as their thought process was clearer, and they felt over all a lot better. Katri Norrlin even stated in the episode 6 of *Pause* that she did not miss social media, because it makes her feel so overwhelmed:

“In a way I wouldn't mind staying away from social media, because I feel like I have reached this point during social media break where I feel calmer while I'm not constantly surrounded by the fuss of social media.”¹²³

- Katri Norrlin, Episode 3, *Pause*

In addition, another one of the six influencers, Phuc Luu explained¹²⁴ in episode 5 of *Pause* how his sleeping schedule has changed for the better:

“The social media break has improved my sleeping a lot. I have had a lot better discipline with it. I haven't played video games before going to sleep or been on my phone. Before this I would spend time on my phone before going to sleep and it would be 3 or 4 am before I was able to sleep.”¹²⁵

- Phuc Luu, Episode 5, *Pause*

Influencer Joona Hellman also added in episode 4 of *Pause* that he enjoyed being able to stay present in the moment during the social media break and while attending a festival. Moreover,

¹²³ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 3, timestamp 12:03-12:19, 2022.

¹²⁴ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 5, timestamp 6:31-6:51, 2022.

¹²⁵ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 5, timestamp 6:31-6:51, 2022.

he noted that in the future he would rather stay in the moment than go online to share something immediately:

“All of my focus is on this festival, in my friends and what is happening around me and I’m enjoying that a lot. I have also noticed that my focus is a lot better, and I am much more present in this moment.”¹²⁶

he later added,

“I know that even if I saw something interesting, I don’t necessarily have to post about it but I can just enjoy this moment and be present. If I want, I can capture the moment and save it for later, but right now this moment feels enough, and I love that.”¹²⁷

- Joona Hellman, Episode 4, *Pause*

When looking at these responses, it is obvious that when young adults spend less time on their phones, the negative effects of social media usage decrease. These young adults have been less distracted, their thought process has been clearer, they have gotten better sleep and have had more time to complete other tasks throughout the day when they have not been on their phones all the time.

According to an article¹²⁸ called “The Effect of Self-Monitoring Limited Social Media Use on Psychological Well-Being”, written by Manuela Ellen Faulhaber, Jeong Eun Lee, and Douglas A. Gentile, published in the journal of *Technology, Mind and Behaviour* in May of 2023, a study was conducted in a Midwestern university in USA to find out whether limiting social media usage would have benefits on well-being. The results showed that after 2 weeks of limiting undergraduate students’ social media usage, the negative effects such as anxiety, depression, and fear of missing out decreased¹²⁹. Furthermore, based on the results of the survey conducted for this thesis and the research done in the USA, limiting young adults’ time spent on social media can be used to solve some of the issues of social media fatigue.

¹²⁶ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 4, timestamp 18:17-18:32, 2022.

¹²⁷ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 4, timestamp 20:05-20:33, 2022.

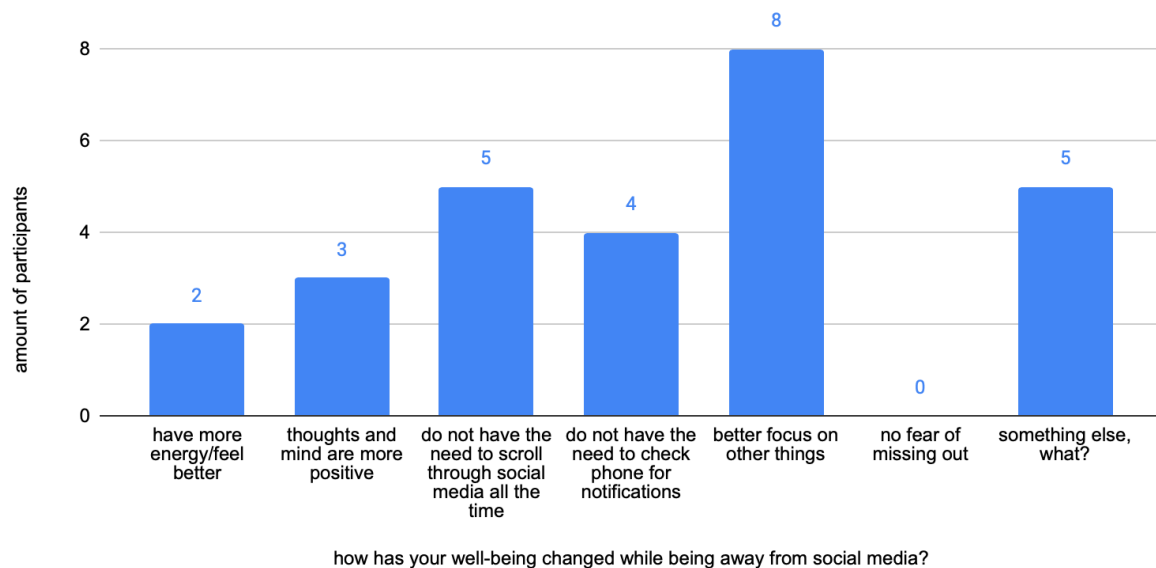
¹²⁸ Faulhaber, Lee, & Gentile 2023.

¹²⁹ Faulhaber, Lee, & Gentile 2023.

The question 11 of the social media survey asked the participants to determine the things they noticed changing during their social media break. The chart below shows the responses to this question:

Chart 7. Online survey participants' well-being after taking a social media break.

Chart below showing the responses and data of the online survey question 11.



When looking at the chart above, out of the 27 respondents of the online survey, 8 (29.6%) participants had a better focus on things, while 5 (18.5%) participants did not have the need to scroll through social media all the time. Another 5 (18.5%) had noticed other kind of changes during their social media break, while 4 (14.8%) had noticed they didn't have the need to check their phone for notifications. Lastly, 3 (11.1%) participants had their thoughts and mindset be more positive during their social media break, while 2 (7.4%) participants had experienced to have more energy or feeling better during their social media break. To the option "something else", participants delivered mostly the following responses: all the above, when going away from social media for a longer period they do not experience FoMO, more time to do other things and more energy throughout the day. The numbers on the graph show that when young adults decrease the amount they spend online, their symptoms of social media fatigue and addiction decrease.

The 8 (29.6%) participants having a better focus on things without the constant use of social media, shows that when a young adult is away from social media, their mind isn't constantly

over working and therefore their cognitive memory won't overload, which would lead to interrupted thoughts¹³⁰. Therefore, when young adults take a social media break, it has a beneficial effect on their brain work and how they can process information. The 5 (18.5%) participants of the online survey, who did not have the need to scroll through social media all the time during their social media break are an example of how social media addiction decreases while being away from online. Moreover, it is an example of how the process of FoMO decreases when young adults do not constantly scroll through their phone and feel as if they are missing out on what other people are doing online.

When analyzing *Pause*, some of the influencers also noticed that their level of FoMO decreased during their social media breaks. For example, Katri Norrlin had the following thoughts in episode 3 of *Pause* regarding being away from online:

“It is mind easing not having to be reachable all the time. I’ve probably only missed like some trends happening right now, like a TikTok trend, because things become memes instantly.”¹³¹

- Katri Norrlin, Episode 3, *Pause*

Also, Mona Bling shared the following thoughts in episode 3 of *Pause*, regarding her social media usage:

“Out of all the social media apps, I miss mostly Instagram. However, this social media break has made me think a lot about the way I use time in my life. Seems like it is necessary to be always scrolling through your phone.”¹³²

- Mona Bling, Episode 3, *Pause*

These two quotes from *Pause* show how being away from social media decreases the need of being online and therefore decreases the fear of missing out. It also makes young adults process their social media usage and what they gain from it. This is because young adults

¹³⁰ Sweller, 2011.

¹³¹ Yle, *Pause*, timestamp: 7:13-7:29, 2022.

¹³² Yle, *Pause*, Episode 3, timestamp: 9:31- 9:52, 2022.

aren't constantly scrolling through online and seeing content from others, which gives them a chance to wonder whether they are missing out on anything.

To continue with the analysis of the responses to the question 11 of the online survey, the chart above, the 5 (18.5%) participants of the survey had noticed other kind of changes during their social media break, including "all the above", when going away from social media for a longer period of time they do not experience FoMO and last but not least, more time to do other things and more energy throughout the day. This proves that being away from social media is beneficial for young adults and it decreases the symptoms of social media fatigue. In addition, it is important to note that the response of "all of the above" means all the response options of question 11. This means that some of the survey participants had experienced all the following during their social media break: no fear of missing out, better energy and focus on things, had no need to scroll through their phones all the time and had no need to check on their notifications all the time. These are due to FoMO and social media addiction decreasing while spending time away from social media for a longer period of time and once again proves that time taken away from social media can be beneficial for young adults' well-being. In addition, the 4 (14.8%) participants who had noticed they didn't have the need to check their phone for notifications also points into the decrease of social media addiction as well as decrease of FoMO.

Lastly, 3 (11.1%) participants had responded that their thoughts and mindset were more positive during their social media break, while 2 (7.4%) participants had experienced to have more energy or feeling better during their social media break. These last two responses show that when young adults take time away from social media, they do not compare themselves to others online which can lead to decrease in self-esteem and negative thoughts. In addition, when they take time away from social media, their thought process is much clearer, which leaves them more time to focus on things and saves them more energy throughout the day. Next, I will discuss the findings of category four, which answers the question of why young adults find it hard to stay away from social media.

4) Reasons for not being able to stay away from social media

When creating the social media survey, some of the questions covered social media addiction and FoMO¹³³-related questions since those make it difficult for social media users to stay out of online. Due to this, it was important to include questions in the survey that covered reasons for not being able to stay away from social media during taking a break from it. In this section I will go over the answers to the question 12 and 13 of the questionnaire, which answer the survey questions of “Have you noticed signs of social media addiction?” and “Have you been able to stay away from social media completely during your social media break?”. Just like with the previous answers, I will analyze them through the theories mentioned in the theoretical framework. In this section, the responses to the question 12 and some to the question 10 have guided me to answer the research question of “Why do social networking sites, which have been developed to make our communication easier, create so many well-being issues in young adults?” In addition, because some of the responses on question 10 were related to the users getting bored without social media, I decided to include and analyze these responses in this section as well. Moreover, one of the participants of *Pause* was also concerned about not having anything to do during the social media break, and I will share this quote later as well. This will help to understand why the young adults and possible other social media users cannot stay away from social media even though they have experienced social media fatigue. I will start with analyzing the responses delivered to question 10 and the quote from *Pause* and will then continue with the responses to questions 12 and 13 so that the analysis is easier to follow.

Above I mentioned earlier, there were two responses to the question 10 that got my attention regarding the users getting bored during their social media break. Here are the direct quotes from the participants:

“(During the social media break) I felt bored and anxious not knowing what is happening in the world.”

- Survey participant 7

¹³³ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

“At first, I thought there would be nothing to do, however as the social media break went on, I noticed that I had much more time for other necessary tasks, and I was able to manage my time a lot better. By the time my social media break had gone on longer, I noticed I didn’t even miss social media anymore.”

- Survey Participant 8

In addition, here is the direct quote from *Pause*, from Phuc Luu from episode 2:

“Now that I don’t have any social media apps in use, what do I do? Do I just sit on the sofa without doing anything rational?”

- Phuc Luu, Episode 2¹³⁴, *Pause*

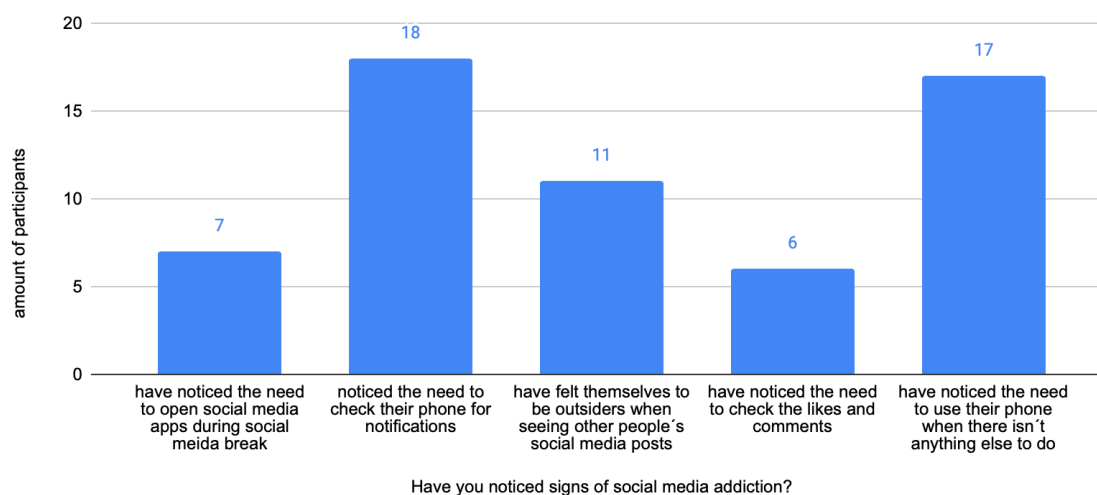
When looking at these responses above, I realized that both point towards young adults getting bored without social media. This is something that I did not expect to find out through the survey results.

The question 12 of the survey asked the participants whether they have noticed any of the following signs of social media addiction. The responses are shown in the chart below:

Chart 8. Signs of social media addiction experienced by the online survey participants.

Chart below showing the responses and data of the online survey question 12.

¹³⁴ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 2, timestamp 8:30-8:40, 2022.



When looking at the responses to question 12 of the online survey, the responses show that out of the 30 participants 1) 18 (60%) participants had noticed the need to check their phone for notifications, 2) 17 (56.7%) participants had noticed the need to use their phones when they didn't have anything else to do, 3) 11 (36.7%) had felt themselves to be outsiders when seeing other people's social media posts, 4) 7 (23.3%) had noticed the need to open social media apps during their social media break, and last but not least, 5) 6 (20%) participants had noticed the need to check the comments and likes in their posts. These results show that with or without taking a social media break, FoMO¹³⁵, compensatory internet use¹³⁶, social comparison¹³⁷ and self-determination¹³⁸ are present as young adults struggle to stay out of social media.

The response of 18 participants who had noticed the need to check their phone for notifications, points to fear of missing out and wanting to make sure these young adults didn't miss out on anything happening online. Secondly, the response of 17 (56.7%) participants who had noticed the need to use their phones when they didn't have anything else to do points to these young adults getting bored without the company of their online community. Thirdly, the 11 (36.7%) participants who had felt themselves to be outsiders when seeing other people's social media posts, points again to fear of missing out on what other people are doing. The finding of 7 (23.3%) participants who had noticed the need to open social media

¹³⁵ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹³⁶ Kardefelt-Winther 2014.

¹³⁷ Greenwood 2017.

¹³⁸ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

apps during their social media break points to both, fear of missing out, as well as self-determination theory, because these young adults want to be online with their friends, find content they can relate to and feel closer to their community through online¹³⁹. Lastly, the finding of 6 (20%) participants who had noticed the need to check the comments and likes in their posts points to social comparison, because these young adults want to keep an eye on how they are viewed online by their friends¹⁴⁰. These of course, FoMO, social comparison and self-determination are all negative effects that come with social media usage and can lead to, as stated before, to users experiencing social media fatigue.

When watching the show *Pause*, I came across to similar findings shown in these responses to question 12. For example, many of the influencers in *Pause* felt the need to check their phones even though they had to delete their apps for the duration of their two-week long social media break. In episodes 2 and 6 some of the influencers had noticed themselves trying to find something to do on their phones despite not having social media apps in use. Here are a couple of quotes from *Pause* to show my findings:

“I’ve already taken my phone out like a million times to go to Instagram, although the app is not there.”¹⁴¹”

- Mona Bling, Episode 2, *Pause*

“Lately I’ve had a bit of withdrawal symptoms (of social media addiction). I’ve pressed some random apps and suddenly, I realize I’m for some reason checking Mobile bank, the calendar or some random email without a reason.”¹⁴²”

- Phuc Luu, Episode 6, *Pause*

These direct quotes from the *Pause* participants also show that young adults have trouble staying away from social media if they’ve spent an excessive amount of time there before

¹³⁹ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁴⁰ Greenwood 2017.

¹⁴¹ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 2, timestamp: 13:30-13:38, 2022.

¹⁴² Yle, *Pause*, Episode 6, timestamp: 05:48-05:55, 2022.

taking a social media break. This could be due to FoMo and social media addiction and young adults being used to checking notifications from their phones all the time in order not to miss out on anything¹⁴³.

Lastly, one of the participants of *Pause*, Katri Norrlin, during her social media break while a festival was going on in episode 4, noticed that she was happy not having to be experiencing FoMO due to other people posting content online:

“I’m not attending the Summer Peace-festival like many other people are and it feels great not seeing that other people are there enjoying the good weather. At least I am not experiencing the slightest amount of FoMO.”¹⁴⁴

- Katri Norrlin, Episode 4, *Pause*

This quote shows that FoMO can increase a low self-esteem or negatively affect young adults as they scroll through social media and compare their situation to other users.

In addition, Katri Norrlin stated during the last episode of *Pause* the following, which is an example of compensatory internet use, where a social media user escapes their feelings or present moment into the world of social media to distract themselves from their reality¹⁴⁵. Norrlin said: “If there’s a difficult moment, anxiety or something else, social media is something that lets me escape my thoughts.”¹⁴⁶

To continue with the responses to the online survey question 13, since one of the main things to be asked from the participants of the survey was about whether they have taken a social media break or not, question 13 asked the participants “Have you been able to stay away from social media completely during your social media break?” The responses to this question can be seen in the chart below:

¹⁴³ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

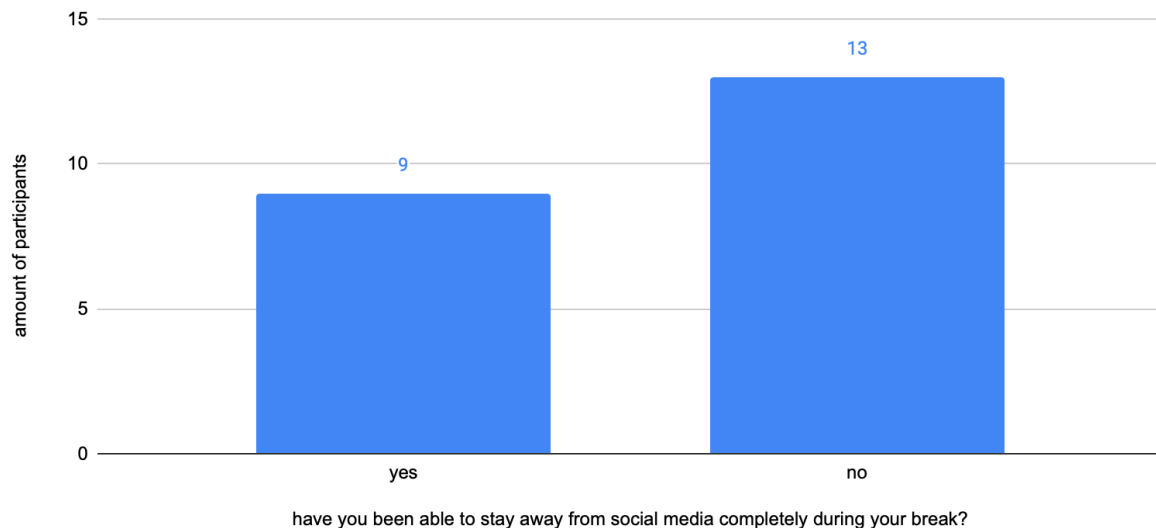
¹⁴⁴ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 4, timestamp: 05:53-06:05, 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁴⁶ Yle, *Pause*, Episode 6, timestamp: 24:48-24:54, 2022.

Chart 9. Ability of online survey participants to stay away from social media completely during their social media break.

Chart below showing the responses and data of the online survey question 13.



According to the online survey results, 22 out of 30 participants had responded to this question and that is shown as the following data: 1) 13 (59.1%) participants answered no to this question and 2) 9 (40.9%) participants had answered yes. This shows that majority of the participants who responded to this question who have taken a social media break have not been able to stay away from completely. When looking at these results, I realized how alarming it is that while young adults using social media may suffer from the symptoms of social media fatigue to the point that they wish to take a break from it, over half of them will not be able to do so.

In addition, when analyzing *Pause* in episode 3 during the Finnish Creator Awards, Alexandra Illman broke the social media break challenge because she said she had to be able to film a TikTok video of her gala outfit¹⁴⁷.

When analyzing these responses to the question 12 and 13 of the survey, I couldn't help but think of the following: even though long-term use of social media causes negative effects in young adults, many users cannot stay away because the online platforms and communities have become their primary source for communication and entertainment. To add, is it harder for young adults to stay away from social media despite going through the symptoms of social

¹⁴⁷ Yle, *Pause*, episode 3, timestamp 5:57-6:02, 2022.

media fatigue, because they find themselves to be bored without the world of social media? In an article¹⁴⁸ published in *The Guardian* called “The One Change That Didn’t Work: I Deleted All My Social Media Apps – And Found Myself Bored” in January of 2023, a journalist Ammar Kalia wrote about his experience of social media usage being a source of entertainment for him, then taking a break from it, finding himself to be bored and when returning online, he did so in his own terms: “...I really did have more time in my hands... But I was getting bored...I missed friendships that...had come to exist online...”¹⁴⁹. In addition, a research article done at Kent State University¹⁵⁰, written by Jacob Barkely, Ph.D. and Andrew Lepp, Ph.D., in 2021 shared findings on how social media usage among college students increased their levels of boredom¹⁵¹.

The responses to the online survey questions 10 and 12, as well as the research findings done at Kent State University and Ammar Kalia’s article on being bored without the use of social media, prove that at least the current generation of young adults use social media as their main source of communication and entertainment. Moreover, even though these young adults participating in the survey conducted for this have felt the need to leave social media behind for a little while, most return online because that’s where most of their communication with their friends take place. Moreover, one of the participants of *Pause*, Alexandra Illman stated the following in the episode 2 of the show:

“Being in touch with your friends, it has become normal for our generation to be in contact with each other through social media”¹⁵².

- Alexandra Illman, Episode 2, *Pause*

Alexandra’s quote supports the idea that for today’s young adults, social media is the main source for communication and that is why it can be difficult for them to stay away from social media completely.

¹⁴⁸ Kalia 2023.

¹⁴⁹ Kalia 2023.

¹⁵⁰ Lepp 2020.

¹⁵¹ Barkley & Lepp 2021.

¹⁵² Yle, *Pause*, Episode 2, timestamp 7:35-7:45, 2022.

5) Additional thoughts from the participants regarding social media fatigue

At the end of the online survey, in bonus question 14, I gave the participants the free choice of adding any extra thoughts or comments that they would have in mind regarding social media fatigue or social media overload. Even though earlier in this paper I have already mentioned some of these direct quotes from participants, in this section I will present the rest of them that stood out to me the most and regarding this research paper. Each of them represents experiences and thoughts of participants regarding the effects social media usage has had on them, and they are important to keep in mind for reasons I will discuss after each quote. Here are the direct quotes from part 14 of the survey:

“I have stopped following the so-called ‘perfect’ social media accounts, after which I have experienced less need for following everything happening online and therefore, I have experienced both, less jealousy towards other people’s lives and had less body image issues.

- Survey Participant 9

This quote by a participant shows that if a young adult social media user has experienced the negative effects of social comparison online, which leads them to weight their self-worth against other users through social media content¹⁵³, it is possible for these young adults to decrease those effects by taking control of who they follow online. This will allow them to continue using social media without the possibility of increasing negative side effects.

“I use social media a lot in order to complete organizational tasks and during the times when the workload is big, my phone turns into my enemy, because ‘work’ tasks keep appearing on the phone’s screen, when I wish to take a little break from it all.”

- Survey participant 10

¹⁵³ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

“Sometimes when I get back home from a long day at work, I struggle with the idea of going online and checking my messages, because I want to reply to my friends after not talking to them for a day, but I feel exhausted about the idea of having to be reached all the time”.

- Survey Participant 1

These quotes can be analyzed through both, cognitive load theory and self-determination theory. Both participants talk about their experiences of feeling overwhelmed by the constant amount of information¹⁵⁴ they need to keep up with that is on their phone. These experiences of the survey participants are a good example of what can happen when young adults are constantly being pulled back online to keep up with information or different communication channels they use. In addition, self-determination theory plays a part here since both participants have felt the need to go online in order to not miss out on communication, but also because their community happens to be online¹⁵⁵.

“A lot of (today’s) communications happens through social media and especially at a younger age there is a risk of being left out of friend groups if you barely use social media. The pressure of becoming an outsider might lead to some people not wanting to take a break from social media at all even though they might need to...From time to time I delete some apps or turn off notifications, but other times social media is a place where I go to relax after a long day of work and/or studying.

- Survey participant 12

This next quote above shows both, possible experience of FoMO, as well as self-determination. This quote by a participant stood out to me specifically because it talks about the pressure that young people face when they start to form friend groups; being actively present online with others in order not to be left behind. Moreover, a lot of their communication takes place online and therefore that is where stronger friendship bonds build

¹⁵⁴ Sweller 2011.

¹⁵⁵ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

when they are not face-to-face in the physical world. Despite wanting to stay away from social media usage, whatever the personal reasons for this may be, self-determination drives them to go online with the others so that they can feel more connected to their friends¹⁵⁶ instead of being left behind and struggling with the fear of missing out on things¹⁵⁷. In addition, the quote shows how this participant has taken control of their social media usage by deleting some apps and even turning off notifications, when necessary, to decrease the effects social media fatigue has on them. In addition, the end of the quote shows the side of entertainment social media offers young adults as mentioned earlier in this paper. Overall, these thoughts and experiences by this participant show that while young adults face pressure to be online with other young adults, they themselves can control how social media affects us if they do want to use it as their main source of entertainment.

“I am a 22-year-old and slowly getting over the biggest of my social media fatigue symptoms. I am more and more convinced that no one else defines who I am as a person. I am however worried about the underage social media users. The mental health issues of the youth and young adults are a big problem today and I claim that social media is of the biggest causes for them. Even though social media offers a lot of good to its users, we need to make sure that it wouldn't cause so much harm.”

- Survey participant 13

When I read this last direct quote by one of the survey participants it got me thinking of how powerful social media can be towards its users and how much social media fatigue can affect a person. Here the participant shares how they are starting to get over their symptoms of social media fatigue and how they have come to understand that no one defines who they are as a person. However, the participant also shares their concern regards other, especially younger social media users because of the negative side effects users can experience. The participant also makes a very good and important point regarding the future: if we want to continue using social media as an everyday tool of communication in the years and generations to come, it is important to make sure we know how social media affects us so that we can have more control over it than it currently has over us.

¹⁵⁶ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

¹⁵⁷ Luukela-Tandon 2023.

4 Conclusion and discussions

4.1 Conclusion

In this section I will conclude the findings of this research paper, however the more detailed results can be found from within each category of the analysis section. The purpose of this Master thesis was to answer the following research questions: “What causes 18-29-years old Finnish young adults social media users to take either a temporary or permanent break from social media?”, “Why do social networking sites, which have been developed to make our communication easier, create so many well-being issues for their users, especially young adults?”, “What are the symptoms of social media fatigue?”, and lastly, “How do young adults replace the time they have spent on social media, then they take a break from it?”. Two different research materials were used in order to answer these research question; A voluntary social media survey was conducted, as well as a Finnish TV show *Pause* and its six episodes were analyzed in order to gather the needed data for this paper. The research methods used for this paper were qualitative and quantitative research methods.

For the social media survey that was conducted for this master thesis, 30 young adults from Finland participated in it during the time of one month. The data gathered is both qualitative and quantitative data. The TV show *Pause* was viewed a couple times through a Finnish streaming platform form Yle Areena to gather needed screenshots and direct quotes as material. When analyzing the results of both, the online survey and the TV show *Pause*, the results showed that Finnish young adults who use social media, have either taken a break from social media mainly because, 1) they are aware that they are addicted to it, 2) they do not have the energy to be online and available to others all the time, or 3) an endless amount of content that gets overwhelming. Other reasons were wanting to have more time for themselves, as well as unrealistic body image goals.

The reason why social media creates so many well-being issues for young adults seems to lie in FoMO, social comparison, self-determination, cognitive load, compensatory internet use is when young adults avoid their current situation in life or thoughts by distracting themselves with the content online. It can be addicting since social media offers endless amount of content to its users. These are all reasons for why social media creates so many well-being issues for young adults.

When conducting the research, it became clear that young adults experience the following symptoms of social media fatigue: 1) their social media usage interferes with their thought process, 2) having the constant need of checking likes and comments on posts, 3) usage of social media interferes with face-to-face conversations, 4) thoughts are interrupted by a notification from another application while doing something important, 5) other people's "perfect life" online affects users negatively and lastly, 6) the need of opening social media apps and closing them when bored, as well as unrealistic body image goals.

The research also showed that while taking a social media break, these young adults have replaced their social media time by doing normal everyday things in the physical world. They have exercised, cleaned their apartments, spent time with their friends, gotten proper rest and/or focused on their passions and hobbies. While analyzing the responses of the survey and the show *Pause* it was alarming to see that excessive social media usage takes young adults away from doing these normal everyday things, because they are so attached to their online communities. However, these results also show that in today's society, social media plays a remarkably active role in how young adults communicate with each other. It has become their primary tool of communication and that is why so many of them feel pressured to be constantly available to others, the fear of missing out is present in their lives when they are not online and that is why it is so important for them to keep up with what others are posting online. Since social media is unlikely to disappear in the future, it is important to find ways to minimize the negative effects social media has on young adults so that they can continue using it for communication in the future.

4.2 Reflection regarding future research

Even though as according to previous research mentioned earlier in this paper, studies have been done in order to find ways to decrease social media fatigue, it is still crucial that we continue researching and teaching our society about the negative effects of excessive social media usage. Moreover, because technology is changing over time, so will the ways in which social media affects its users and by keeping up with the changing technology and by doing research we can find new better ways to control how social media affects both, individuals as well as our societies. While doing this research paper, I couldn't help but think about the differences of social media usage between today's and future generations. If young adults already today face the negative effects of social media so strongly that they need to take longer breaks from being connected to their community, what will the situation be for the next

generations as social media develops even further? If screen time and social media usage is already coming in between our face-to-face communication and has already showed a decrease in the development skills of children, how will the future generations keep up with basic communication skills? As earlier mentioned in this paper, younger generations have already shown signs of rather playing on tablets and smart phones than learning to walk or having the ability of holding on a face-to-face conversation. If we are already having trouble sleeping due to the overuse of electronics, will that continue to develop more health problems for us? Social media will continue to exist within our world, so it is our responsibility to find out ways to control the number of negative effects it has on us and educate future generations on these findings as well so that social media won't come in between our physical contact. Even though social media offers a great deal of ways for us to communicate with each other regardless of time and place, we shouldn't forget how important everything around us is in the physical world. More importantly we cannot forget the skills and connections that our communication skills allow us to make every day when we are communicating with each other face-to-face. Therefore, as for future research, it would be important to continue researching how social media and technology affects not only young adults, but children and how it will affect their developing skills later in life. If we can continue researching these topics, there may be a chance that we can learn how to prevent these harms from happening in the future. Moreover, we can educate the future generations on the side effects technology is having not only on young adults, but on those who are most vulnerable on learning new things. This way we might just be able to decrease the number of negative effects social media has on its users and make sure these negative effects do not continue spreading and growing through generations to come.

4.3 Self-analysis of this research process

Writing this research paper on the topic of social media fatigue and how it affects young adults within Finland has been interesting and educational. I have learned how social media affects its users, especially young adults within Finland and how social media fatigue is experienced by 18-29 years old social media users in Finland. I have learned to conduct research while considering ethics and important survey questions for a target group of participants. I have learned how social media can affect myself and others around me and I am more aware of my own as well as their social media usage. Since this was my first research paper, there are improvements that I should make if I ever decide to do more research. For example, I noticed that I could have gotten a little bit more out of the survey if I

had added in questions regarding young adults experiencing social media fatigue but deciding not to take a break from it. This would have helped me gather data that shows why these young adults have chosen to stay online instead of taking a break from social media. Overall, the whole process took the time of one year and even though I struggled with the timeline I originally wrote to be part of my research process, to keep in mind this is my first research paper, I managed to finish it within a given timeline.

Overall, I enjoyed the process of analyzing the survey results, connecting theories to findings, and reading about the experiences and thoughts of the participants regarding their social media usage. Although they show that there is a problem within social media usage, the previously done and future research and educating each other will increase the chances of minimizing the negative effects of social media in the future.

5 Summary of this thesis in Finnish

5.1 Suomenkielinen yhteenveto

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää suomalaisten nuorten aikuisten, 18–29-vuotiaiden kokemuksia liittyen mahdolliseen sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuvaan ylikuormitukseen. Lisäksi tavoitteena oli kartoittaa syitä, miksi nuori aikuinen vetäytyy hetkellisesti tai kokonaan pois sosiaalisen median ääreltä. Yleisimmin ylikuormitus saattaa näkyä seuraavasti; 1) somessa oleskelu häiritsee ajatusten kulkua tai muuta tekeillä olevaa, 2) käyttäjä seuraa jatkuvasti tykkäysten määrä ja miettii miten oma poustausta pärjää muiden seassa, 3) käyttäjä ei pysty keskittymään täysin vuorovaikutukseen joka tapahtuu kasvokkain ilman, että selaa samanaikaisesti kännykkää, 4) käyttäjän tehdessä jotain tärkeää, toisesta sovelluksesta tulee ilmoitus ja se keskeyttää ajatukset hetkellisesti, 5) jonkun toisen elämä somessa näyttää paremmalta verrattuna käyttäjän omaan elämään ja hän kokee sen vaikuttavan omaan mielialaansa negatiivisesti. Lisäksi tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli tarkoitus selvittää, onko sosiaalisen median käyttäjä kokenut sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuvaa ylikuormitusta useammin kuin kerran, sekä miten sosiaalisesta mediasta poissa oleminen on vaikuttanut hänen ajankäyttönsä fyysisessä maailmassa.

Tässä tutkimuksessa viittasin sosiaalisen median liikakäytöstä johtuvaan uupumukseen termillä *sosiaalisen median aiheuttama ylikuormitus* ("social media fatigue") sillä termi *burnout* viittaa sairauteen¹⁵⁸ ja minusta se on siksi hyvä pitää erillään termistä *sosiaalisen median aiheuttama ylikuormitus*.

Tutkimusmetodiksi valikoitui sekä kvalitatiivinen, että kvantitatiivinen tutkimusmenetelmä. Tämä johtuu siitä, että nämä tutkimusmenetelmät mahdollistavat tutkijalle aineiston keräämisen sekä numeraalisina, että kuvailevana datana, eli datana, joka näyttää osallistujan kokemuksia ja ajatuksia tekstin muodossa. Näiden avulla mahdollistin itselleni, että pystyn tutkimuksen aikana keräämään tarvittavan datan osallistujilta niin numeroina kuin tekstinäkin. Tutkimusta varten kokosin yhteen online-kyselyn, joka koostui 14 eri kysymyksestä, sisältäen sekä pakollisia, että ei-pakollisia vastauksia. 14 kysymyksestä, 12 oli erilaisia kvantitatiivisia kysymyksiä, jotka keskittyivät aiheisiin sosiaalisen median uupumus, sosiaalisen median käyttö, sukupuoli ja ikä. 9 kysymyksistä olivat valinta- ja monivalintakysymyksiä ja 12

¹⁵⁸ Maslach 1981.

kysymyksen joukossa oli 3 kysymystä, joihin osallistujat saivat lisätä omia ajatuksiaan ja kokemuksiaan liittyen edellä mainittuun kysymykseen. Näin mahdollistin itselleni sen, että sain koottua osallistujilta heidän kokemuksensa sekä ajatukset omasta sosiaalisen median käytöstään. Bonus kysymyksenä kysymys 14 antoi osallistujille vapauden lisätä vielä omia ajatuksiaan ja kokemuksiaan liittyen sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuvaan uupumukseen ja ylikuormitukseen. Lisäksi aineistoksi valikoitui Yle Areenassa julkaistu TV ohjelma *Pause*, jossa kuusi suomalaista sosiaalisen median vaikuttajaa ottaa osaa haasteessa, joka pitää heidät poissa sosiaalisesta mediasta kahden viikon ajan. Vaikuttajat kuvaavat videopäiväkirjaa kahden viikon ajan, sekä keskustelevat yhdessä muiden osallistujien kanssa sosiaalisen median vaikutuksista heidän jokapäiväiseen elämäänsä. Analysoin vaikuttajien kokemuksia teoreettisen viitekehyksen avulla, ja lopuksi vertasin *Pausen* ja some-kyselyn vastauksia toisiinsa.

Ennen kyselyn julkaisua tein Google Formsin kautta kyselyn, jonka liitteeksi lisäsin linkin Tietosuojalomakkeeseen, jonka avulla mahdollistin, että mahdolliset vapaaehtoiset osallistujat olisivat tietoisia siitä, että heidän henkilötietojaan ei julkaista missään koko tutkimusprosessin aikana. Tämä avulla varmistin, että kyselyyn osallistujat olisivat tietoisia siitä, että kunnioitan heidän yksityisyyttään koko tutkimusprosessin ajan ja, että heidän vastauksiaan käytettäisiin vain ja ainoastaan akateemisen tutkimuksen tekemiseen. Lisäksi vastauksia läpi käydessäni tulkitsin ja analysoisin niitä vastaus kerrallaan eikä esimerkiksi vastaaja kerrallaan. Vastauksia analysoidessa käytin analyysimenetelmänä sekä laadullista, että määrällistä analyysiä. Analysoin vastauksia eri teorioiden avulla, jotka auttoivat minua selvittämään mistä osallistujien someriippuvuus, ylikuormituksen oireet sekä sosiaalisen median tauko johtuivat. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu sekä aikaisemmista tutkimuksista liittyen sosiaalisen median aiheuttamaan ylikuormitukseen, sekä teorioista, joiden avulla pystyin analysoimaan nuorten sosiaalisen median käyttöä sekä heidän kokemuksiaan sosiaalisen median ylikuormitukseen liittyen. Teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä käyn läpi seuraavia töitä ja teorioita: Anushree Luukela-Tandonin väitöskirja “Fear of Missing Out on Social Media – Implications for private and professional life”, jossa Luukela-Tandon tutkii FoMO-ilmiötä, cognitive load theory (“kognitiivisen ylikuormituksen teoria”) John Swelleriltä, 2) social comparison theory (“sosiaalisen vertailun teoria”), 3) self-determination theory (“itsemääräämisteoriat”), sekä 4) Compensatory internet use (“korvaavan internetin käytön teoria”). Näiden neljän edellä mainitun teorian avulla pystyin selvittämään miksi

nuoret aikuiset ovat niin kiinni sosiaalisessa mediassa, sekä näiden teorioiden avulla pystyin analysoimaan sosiaalisen median kyselyn vastauksia.

FoMO-ilmiö tarkoittaa suomennettuna Leeni Peltosen Anna-lehteen kirjoittaman kolumnin¹⁵⁹ ”FOMO-ilmiö pyörittää meitä ehkä enemmän kuin tajuamme”, mukaan pelkoa siitä, että käyttäjä jää paitsi jostain tärkeästä. Kognitiivinen ylikuormitus tarkoittaa sitä, että aivoillamme on tietty määrä informaatio mitä ne pystyvät kerralla suodattamaan. Jos informaation määrä yhdellä kerralla ylittää tietyn rajan, meille ilmenee vaikeuksia prosessoida asioita ja alamme välttää niiden parissa olemista¹⁶⁰. Social comparison (”sosiaalinen vertailu”) teoriolla tarkoitetaan sitä, yritämme löytää hyväksyntää omalle itsellemme muiden joukossa¹⁶¹. Self-determination (”itsensä määrääminen”) teoriolla tarkoitetaan sitä, kun henkilö muuttaa käyttäytymistään niin, että kokee olevansa osa omaa yhteisöään¹⁶². Tässä kontekstissa se voi tarkoittaa sitä, että nuori päättää liittyä sosiaalisen median verkostoihin koska muutkin hänen kaverinsa ovat siellä. Näin hän ei jää muista ulkopuoliseksi. Compensatory internet use (”korvaavan internetin käyttö) teoriolla tarkoitetaan sitä, että ihminen pakenee esimerkiksi omaa realiteettiaan tai tuntemuksia internetin eri kanavia käyttäen¹⁶³. Mainitsen teoreettisessä viitekehityksessä myös Netflix-dokumentin *Social Dilemma* sillä dokumentti tuo esille tärkeitä sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuvia vaikutuksia etenkin nuorten keskuudessa.

Kun kysely oli valmis jaettavaksi, jaoin sen Porin yliopistokeskuksen kahdelle eri sähköpostilistalle, jotka saavuttavat kyselyn kohde ikäluokan. Lisäksi jaoin linkin kyselyyn omissa sosiaalisen median profiileissani, Facebookissa ja Instagramissa, sekä ohjaajani kautta oman tutkinto-ohjelmani blogin Instagram sivuilla. Näiden lisäksi lähetin linkin läheisilleni, jotta he voisivat lähettää kyselyn kaikille niille, jotka olisivat sopivia henkilöitä vastaamaan kyselyyn. Kysely oli avoinna noin kuukauden ajan, 9. kesäkuuta – 4. heinäkuuta, 2023, ja sain kerättyä kasaan yhteensä 30 vastausta 18–29-vuotiailta nuorilta suomalaisilta. Tämä tutkimus sisältää sekä numeraalisia tuloksia, mutta myös antaa äänen 30. nuorelle aikuiselle, kun he

¹⁵⁹ Peltonen 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Sweller 2011.

¹⁶¹ Suls & Wheeler 2012.

¹⁶² Deci & Ryan 1985.

¹⁶³ Tandon et al, 2021.

vastausten kautta jakavat kokemuksiaan ja ajatuksiaan oman sosiaalisen median käyttöön sekä ylikuormitukseen liittyen.

TV ohjelma *Pausen* ja tutkimuskyselyn vastauksia analysoidessani seuraavat löydökset nousivat esiin tärkeimpinä: 1) nuoret aikuiset kokevat jatkuvaa tarvetta tarkistaa puhelimestaan mahdolliset ilmoitukset, 2) moni nuorista aikuisista kokee, että heidän sosiaalisen median käyttönsä johtaa siihen, että he vertaavat itseään muihin muiden sisältöä katsoessaan. Tämä johtuu itsemääräämisoikeudesta ja siitä, että nuorilla aikuisilla on sosiaaliset ryhmänsä verkossa, eivätkä he halua tulla ulkopuoliseksi tai kokea jäävänsä paitsi verkossa tapahtuvasta, mikä johtuu FoMO-ilmioistä. 3) Moni nuorista aikuisista kokee, että vaikka heillä ei itse välttämättä olisi siihen energiaa heidän tulisi olla jatkuvasti tavoitettavissa sosiaalisessa mediassa koska myös muut ovat siellä. 4) Tutkimuskyselyn osallistujista 36.7% nuorista aikuisista oli pitänyt sosiaalisen median tauon enemmän kuin kerran, 5) sosiaalisen median käyttö pidättelee nuoria aikuisia poissa normaaleista joka päiväisistä aktiviteeteista kuten harrastukset, siivoaminen, lukeminen, ulkoilu, kavereiden ja perheen kanssa yhdessä oleminen. 6) Nuoret aikuiset tylsistyvät helposti ilman sosiaalisen median käyttöä ja 7) ne nuoret aikuiset, jotka pitivät tauon sosiaalisen median käytöstään, eivät pystyneet pysymään sieltä poissa kokonaan. Lisäksi kyselyn tulokset osoittivat, että sosiaalisen median käyttö nuorten aikuisten keskuudessa vaikeuttaa heidän keskittymistään eri asioihin sekä häiritsee heidän vuorovaikutustaan muiden kanssa, joka tapahtuu kasvokkain. Vastauksista kävi myös ilmi, että osa nuorista on nukkunut paremmin pitäessään taukoa sosiaalisen median käytöstä. Osa tutkimukseen osallistujista kertoivat pystyneensä pidättäytymään sosiaalisesta mediasta taukonsa aikana ja hyötäneensä siitä esimerkiksi sillä, että olivat nukkuneet paremmin, ajatuksen kulku ja tehokkuus paranivat, he jaksoivat paremmin, ja heillä oli aikaa enemmän muille ihmisille. Yli 59.1 % osallistujista ei kuitenkaan ollut pystynyt pysymään erossa sosiaalisesta mediasta taukonsa aikana. Lisäksi muutamat osallistujat sanoivat tuntevansa olonsa tylsiksi ilman sosiaalisen median käyttöä.

Näiden tulosten, sekä *Pausen* jaksojen analysoinnin aikana kävi selväksi, että koska nuoret aikuiset kommunikoivat pääasiassa sosiaalisen median kautta ja moni heistä käyttää puhelinta myös viihteen selaamiseen, he kokevat olevansa erillään sosiaalisesta yhteisöstään, ollessaan poissa verkosta. Osa osallistujista jakoi kokemuksiaan siitä, miten olivat ottaneet oman sosiaalisen median liikakäytön hallintaan: he olivat tietoisesti poistaneet joitain sovelluksia, sekä laittaneet ilmoitukset pois päältä. Näin he mahdollistivat sen, että pystyivät jatkamaan

omaa sosiaalisen median käyttöön ja olemaan yhteydessä muihin verkoston kautta ilman, että sosiaalisen median käyttö ylikuormitti heitä. Yksi osallistujista jakoi kokemuksiaan sosiaalisen median ylikuormituksesta ja miten on oppinut, että ketään muu määrittä häntä ihmisenä. Osallistuja kuitenkin osoitti huolensa nuorempia sosiaalisen median käyttäjiä sekä tulevaisuuden nuoria kohtaan, ja pohti avoimesti sitä, että meidän tulisi pitää huoli siitä, ettei sosiaalisen median käyttö aiheuttaisi niin paljon harmia.

Tuloksia läpikäydessä voisi vetää seuraavan johtopäätöksen: nuoret aikuiset käyttävät ja tulevat käyttämään sosiaalisen median kanavia keskinäiseen vuorovaikutukseensa. Jotta heidän sosiaalisen median käyttönsä ei kuormittaisi heitä niin paljoa, tulisi heidän osata hallita sen käyttö paremmin. Vaikka aiheesta on tehty paljon tutkimuksia ja jo aiemmin on keksitty tapoja vähentää sosiaalisen median liikakäytöstä johtuvia negatiivisia vaikutuksia, on tärkeää, että jatkamme tutkimusten tekoa ja aiheesta puhumista yhteiskunnassamme, etenkin nuorten keskuudessa. Tulevaisuutta varten on tärkeää ottaa huomioon miten sosiaalinen media ja teknologia kehittyvät, sekä miten ne tulevat vaikuttamaan yhteiskunnassamme etenkin nuoriin ja lapsiin. Ajan kuluessa he tulevat opettamaan tavat tuleville sukupolville. On selvää, että teknologia tulee kehittymään vuosien varrella ja sen mukana myös sosiaalinen media. Sen vuoksi on tärkeää, että pysymme tämän kehityksen perässä, jotta tiedostamme ja voimme alkaa ennalta ehkäisemään sen suurimpia haittoja yhteiskunnassamme. Lisäksi tutkimuksia tekemällä ja seuraamalla sosiaalisen median ja teknologian kehitystä, pystymme löytämään uusia menetelmiä hallitaksemme sen miten sosiaalinen media vaikuttaa yksilöihin ja yhteiskuntaamme.

Tehdessäni tätä tutkimusta, en voinut olla miettimättä jo nyt näkyviä eroja sosiaalisen median käytössä iäkkäiden ja nuorten ikäluokkien välillä. Jos kohtaamme jo nyt pieniä ja suurempia haittoja sosiaalisen median ylikäytöstä ja addiktiosta johtuen, mikä on tulevaisuuden kanta? Jos sosiaalisen median käyttö haittaa kasvokkain tapahtuvaa vuorovaikutusta jo nyt, olen huolissani siitä, miten tulevat sukupolvet ylläpitävät kommunikaatiotaitojaan? Nuoremmissa sukupolvissa näkyy jo nyt merkkejä siitä, että he viettävät aikaa mieluummin tableteillaan kuin keskustelevat tai puuhaavat eri askareita keskenään. Jos meillä jo nyt on vaikeuksia nukkua liiallisen elektroniikan käytön vuoksi, aiheuttaako se tulevaisuudessa entistä enemmän terveysongelmia? Vaikka sosiaalinen media tarjoaa ja antaa meille loistavat työkalut kommunikoida toistemme kanssa ajasta ja paikasta riippumatta, emme saa unohtaa ympärillämme olevaa fyysistä maailma. Vaikka sosiaalisen median maailma on kiehtova ja se

antaa meille paljon, on tärkeää varmistaa, ettemme unohda niitä taitoja, jotka mahdollistavat kasvokkain käydyn vuorovaikutuksen fyysisessä maailmassa. Meidän ei tule unohtaa niitä mahdollisuuksia, ainutlaatuisia hetkiä ja kohtaamisia, jotka tapahtuvat kasvotusten ympärillämme joka päivä.

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Social Media Survey

Tämä kysely koostuu kahdestatoista kysymyksestä ja kestää noin 15 minuuttia.

Tämän kyselyn tarkoituksena on selvittää osallistujan mahdollinen sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuva ylikuormitus. Tavoitteena on kartoittaa syitä, miksi nuori vetäytyy hetkellisesti tai kokonaan pois sosiaalisen median ääreltä.

Kyselyn laatija on Anna-Rosa Eerikäinen (areeri@utu.fi) ja aineistoa kerätään Pro Gradu-työtä varten, Turun yliopiston digitaalisen kulttuurin tutkinto-ohjelmassa.

Yleisimmin ylikuormitus saattaa näkyä seuraavasti;

- 1) somessa oleskelu häiritsee ajatustesi kulkua tai muuta tekeillä olevaa asiaasi
- 2) seuraat tykkäystesi määriä ja mietit miten oma poustauksesi pärjää muiden keskellä
- 3) et pysty keskittymään täysin vuorovaikutukseen, joka tapahtuu kasvokkain ilman, että selaat kännykkää
- 4) tehdessäsi jotain tärkeää, toisesta sovelluksesta tulee ilmoitus ja se keskeyttää ajatuksesi
- 5) jonkun toisen elämä somessa näyttää paremmalta verrattuna omaan elämääsi ja koet sen vaikuttavan omaan mielialaasi negatiivisesti.

On myös tarkoitus selvittää, oletko kokenut sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuvaa ylikuormitusta useammin kuin kerran, sekä miten sosiaalisesta mediasta poissa oleminen on vaikuttanut sinun ajankäyttöösi.

Linkki tietosuojailmoitukseen:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IA3_Nu57nI4NsdJ11HrAptI0bZFss1R_oY_14ibp1jY/edit?usp=sharing

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Privacy form in order to collect data for the survey

Tietosuojalomake

Tietosuojailmoitus

1. Rekisterin nimi:

Sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuva kuormitus 18-29-vuotiaiden ikäryhmässä.

2. Rekisterin ylläpitäjä:

Anna-Rosa Eerikäinen, areeri@utu.fi, Turun yliopisto, Humanistinen tiedekunta, Digitaalisen kulttuurin, maiseman ja kulttuuriperinnön tutkinto-ohjelma.

3. Vastuuhenkilön yhteystiedot:

Anna-Rosa Eerikäinen, areeri@utu.fi

4. Pro gradun ohjaaja:

Yliopistonlehtori Petri Saarikoski // [petsaari\(at\)utu.fi](mailto:petsaari(at)utu.fi)

5. Henkilötietojen käsittelyn tarkoitukset ja käsittelyn oikeusperuste:

Aineisto kerätään Turun yliopistoon tehtävää pro gradu -tutkielmaa varten. Tämän jälkeen arkistoidun aineiston luvanvarainen ja perusteltu jatkokäyttö on mahdollista Turun yliopiston Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen arkiston käytösääntöjen mukaisesti.

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuvaa kuormitusta 18-29-vuotiaiden ikäryhmässä. Tavoitteena on selvittää miksi nuori pitää taukoa sosiaalisen median käytöstä. Kyselyn tavoitteena on selvittää osallistujan mahdollinen sosiaalisen median käytöstä aiheutuva ylikuormitus. Lisäksi tavoitteena on kartoittaa syitä, miksi nuori vetäytyy hetkellisesti tai kokonaan pois sosiaalisen median ääreltä. Edelleen tavoitteena on selvittää, kokeeko nuori sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuvaa ylikuormitusta useammin kuin kerran, sekä miten sosiaalisesta mediasta poissa olominen on vaikuttanut nuoren ajankäyttöön.

Henkilötietojen EU:n yleisen tietosuoja-asetuksen 6 artiklan mukaisena käsittelyperusteena on

käsittely on tarpeen tieteellistä tutkimusta varten (yleinen etu 6 art. 1 a- kohta)

rekisteröity on antanut suostumuksensa henkilötietojen käsittelyyn (suostumus 6 art. 1 e-kohta)

muu mikä _____

6. Käsiteltävät henkilötietoryhmät

Sähköpostiosoite, sukupuoli ja syntymävuosi/ikä

7. Henkilötietojen vastaanottajat ja vastaanottajaryhmät.

Tietoja ei siirretä eikä luovuteta tutkimusryhmän ulkopuolelle.

8. Tiedot tietojen siirrosta kolmansiin maihin

Henkilötietoja ei luovuteta EU:n tai Euroopan talousalueen ulkopuolelle.

9. Henkilötietojen säilyttämisaika tai sen määrittämisen kriteerit

Pro Gradu tutkielmani valmistuu viimeistään joulukuussa 2023, jonka jälkeen henkilötiedot poistetaan.

10. Rekisteröidyn oikeudet

Rekisteröidyllä on oikeus pyytää pääsy häntä itseään koskeviin henkilötietoihin sekä oikeus pyytää tietojensa oikaisemista tai poistamista taikka käsittelyn rajoittamista tai vastustaa niiden käsittelyä. Oikeutta henkilötietojen poistamiseen ei sovelleta tieteellisessä tai historiallisessa tutkimustarkoituksessa silloin, kun poisto-oikeus todennäköisesti estää käsittelyn tai vaikeuttaa sitä suuresti. Poisto-oikeuden toteuttamista arvioidaan tapauskohtaisesti. Rekisteröidyllä on oikeus tehdä valitus valvontaviranomaiselle.

12. Tiedot automaattisen päätöksenteon ml. profiloinnin olemassaolosta

Tietoja ei käytetä automaattiseen päätöksentekoon tai profiloinnin tekemiseen.

Osallistuessasi tutkimukseen annat suostumuksesi tietojesi käsittelyyn, tallentamiseen ja hyödyntämiseen tutkimuskäytössä.

Appendix 2. Invitation to participate in the online survey

Haastattelukutsu

Hei sä 18-29-vuotias, taas sä olet täällä! Siis somessa. Kerro siitä mulle!

Pro Gradu-kysely, aiheena sosiaalisen median käyttö 18-29-vuotiaiden ikäluokassa:

1. Oletko 18-29-vuotias sosiaalisen median käyttäjä?

2. Tunnistatko itsessäsi tai kaverissasi seuraavia väittämiä?

1) somessa oleskelu häiritsee ajatustesi kulkua tai muuta tekeillä olevaa asiaasi

2) seuraat tykkäystesi määriä ja mietit miten oma poustauksesi pärjää muiden keskellä

3) et pysty keskittymään täysin vuorovaikutukseen joka tapahtuu kasvokkain ilman, että selaat kännykkää

4) tehdessäsi jotain tärkeää, toisesta sovelluksesta tulee ilmoitus ja se keskeyttää ajatuksesi

5) jonkun toisen elämä somessa näyttää paremmalta verrattuna omaan elämääsi ja koet sen vaikuttavan omaan mielialaasi negatiivisesti.

Jos vastasit yläpuolella oleviin kysymyksiin ”kyllä” haluaisin kutsua sinut osallistumaan tekemääni Pro Gradu-tutkimuskyselyyn.

Kyselyn avulla on tarkoitus selvittää osallistujan mahdollinen sosiaalisen median käytöstä johtuva ylikuormitus. Lisäksi tavoitteena on kartoittaa syitä miksi nuori vetäytyy hetkellisesti tai kokonaan pois sosiaalisen median ääreltä.

Aineistoa kerätään Pro Gradu-työtä varten, Turun yliopiston digitaalisen kulttuurin tutkinto-ohjelmassa.

Huom! Vastauksia ja henkilötietojasi ei julkaista missään vaiheessa ulkopuolisille! Voit siis vastata kyselyyn turvallisesti mielin.

Tuleva Maisteri kiittää avusta!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

- Anna-Rosa Eerikäinen

Linkki kyselyyn: <https://forms.gle/MzqP13VfyseTEb4H8>

Appendix 3. Social media survey

Sukupuoli *

- Nainen
- Mies
- En halua ilmoittaa

Ikä/Syntymävuosi *

Short answer text

Mitä sosiaalisen median kanavia/sovelluksia käytät? *

(rastita kaikki joita käytät)

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Youtube
- Whatsapp
- TikTok
- LinkedIn
- BeReal
- Twitter
-

- Pinterest
- Jodel
- Jokin muu
- online-yhteisö
- Tumblr

Jokin muu:

Tässä voit mainita käytössäsi olevan sosiaalisen median kanavan jota ei mainita yläpuolella.

Short answer text

Kuinka monta tuntia päivässä käytät somea? (laita tähän oma arviosi sekä kännykästä saatu arvio jos kännykkä sen sinulle ilmoittaa)

Short answer text

Oletko kokenut jotain seuraavista: *

Valitse ne jotka tunnistat/samaistut.

- oma somessa oleskelu häiritsee ajatusteni kulkua
- seuran jatkuvasti tykkäysten määrää tai mietin miten oma poustaukseni pärjää muiden keskellä
- somen käyttö häiritsee vuorovaikutusta joka tapahtuu kasvokkain
- jotain tärkeää tehdessä, toisesta sovelluksesta tulee ilmoitus ja keskeyttää ajatukseni
- toisten "täydellinen" elämä somessa vaikuttaa omaan mielialaani negatiivisesti
- koen usein tarvetta tarkistaa puhelimestani viestit ja ilmoitukset
- Jokin muu ja mikä?

Jokin muu, mikä?

Voit kertoa tässä vapaasti jos sinulla on lisättävää yläpuolella mainittujen lisäksi:

Long answer text

**Valitse kaikki joihin samaistut**

- Pitänyt sometauon kerran
- Pitänyt sometauon enemmän kuin kerran
- Poistanut jonkun sovelluksen hetkellisesti
- Poistanut jonkun sovelluksen kokonaan
- Olen havainnut negatiivisia vaikutuksia, mutta en ole pitänyt sometaukoa

Syy sometaukoosi?

- Epärealistiset ulkonäköpaineet
- tunne siitä että on oltava koko ajan tavoitettavissa, vaikka ei jaksakaan eikä ehdi
- loputon sisällön määrä
- tiedostat riippuvuuden
- enemmän aikaa itselle
- joku muu syy, mikä?

Jokin muu syy:

Tähän voit kirjoittaa syyn sometaukoosi

Short answer text



Oletko pitänyt taukoja (kuinka pitkiä) sosiaalisen median käytöstä ylikuormituksen tunteen vuoksi ? *

- päivän
- 2-3 päivää
- 4-6 päivää
- viikko
- kaksi viikkoa
- pidempi aika väli
- olen kokenut ylikuormitusta, mutta en ole pitänyt taukoa somesta

Miten olet korvannut somessa viettämäsi ajan fyysisessä maailmassa tauon aikana?

Tässä voit vapaasti kertoa mitä olet tehnyt sometaun aikana somettamisen sijaan.

Long answer text



Millaisia asioita huomasit muuttuneen sometaukosi aikana?

Esim. rutiinisi tai ajankäyttösi?

Long answer text

**Miten hyvinvointisi on muuttunut, kun olet ollut poissa somesta?**

- jaksan paremmin
- ajatusmaailmani on muuttunut positiivisemmaksi
- en koe tarvetta selata somea koko ajan
- ei ole tarvetta tarkistaa puhelimesta ilmoituksia
- parempi keskittyminen muihin asioihin
- ei ulkopuoliseksi jäämisen pelkoa (fear of missing out)
- Joku muu, mikä?

Joku muu, mikä?:

Long answer text

**Oletko huomannut sosiaalisen median riippuvuuden suhdetta? ***

- olen huomannut tarvetta avata sosiaalisen median sovelluksia someauon aikana
- olen huomannut tarvetta tarkistaa puhelimesta mahdolliset ilmoitukset
- olen kokenut itseni ulkopuoliseksi nähdessäni muiden somepäivityksiä
- olen huomannut tarvetta tarkistaa tykkäykset ja kommentit
- olen huomannut tarvetta käyttää kännykkää kun ei ole muuta tekemistä

Oletko someauon aikana pystynyt olemaan kokonaan poissa sosiaalisesta mediasta?

Olen

En

⋮

Vapaa kenttä:

Voit halutessasi lisätä tähän muita asioita mitä sinulle tulee mieleen someuupumuksen tai ylikuormitukseen liittyen.

Long answer text

Abbreviations

*sm: social media

FoMO: fear of missing out