**Tutorial 3**

Social media is a term that has almost lost its meaning in this day. Social media was designed to keep us connected and provide an opportunity to be social with one another. Nowadays the meaning behind social media has changed, it is more than just a platform for people to be social and make new connections, income can be earned on social media, and for one to be able to do so they must be an influencer and post aesthetically pleasing content. This has led to a false reality on what life really is like for these influencers. Social media users might feel the need to live up to the expectations that these influencers portray to be living.

As a result, lately, there has been a great increase in the amount of people, disconnecting from social media, due to different reasons. This is noticeable amongst most social media users as most influencers are raising awareness on the fakeness of social media leading to the increased rate of people that are deactivating their accounts or trying to focus more on their real life. People are realising that you cannot leave a healthy life while living in the facade that social media has created whereby you may start to feel like everyone on social media is living a more fulfilled life than you do.

Hence why I agree that the ‘age of social media’ is ending’, “People are waking up and realizing how much social media has taken over their lives.” (Team TaxaJ), as most people are taking some time off the media due to an increased rate of awareness on how fake social media is. “One of the biggest worries about social media is how it promotes a never-ending comparison. Seeing carefully organized highlight reels of others’ lives can lead to feelings of insufficient and low self-esteem". (Wynter Nye, Reporter), ‘Comparison is the thief of joy’, most social media users compare their lives to others. This has also led to an increase in mental health and insecurity issues as one might feel like they are not doing enough compared to their age mates or followers. A lot of people are realizing that not everything you see on the internet is real and are either deciding to use social media less to prevent unnecessary peer pressure or deleting social media completely.

This is a good thing for society because although social media plays an important role in our day-to-day lives, benefiting us in different ways such as allowing us to get news about personal safety or friends during crises elsewhere in the world such as during the Covid-19 lockdown period where we all relied on social media to be aware of what was going on in the world and to know the wellbeing of our family and friends. Social media is, however, exclusively detrimental to our mental health. Social media discourages uniqueness, there are a lot of trends that go viral on different social media platforms (TikTok, Instagram, etc) and users of social media are peer pressured to conform to most, if not all of them. Trends now extend to what we desire and if we do not fit into a particular trend, we might feel like we do not belong or in some cases we might not be able to afford whatever the trending object might be such as how iPhones are trending nowadays, the peer pressure that comes with having one is intense and failure to afford one might lead us to feeling depressed and unhappy.

In addition, looking at the way women are classified on social media, there are so many stereotypes on what the desired women should look like and recently there has been trends like “clean girl aesthetic”, “that girl aesthetic", "skinny girl aesthetic". These classifications define more than just lifestyle, they define food consumption, how you dress, your appearance, the hairstyle you decide on having and if one has all the characteristics then are the type of women that is desired by the society. This discourages our individual growth as these stereotypes are enforced on us and we feel like we must abide by them, or else society will not accept us as we are.

In conclusion, social media provides enlightenment to other people’s lives, but this benefit is dominated by the self-obsession it promotes. It is not good for our mental health due to its subtle promotion of stereotypes, that us as users might feel we need to follow, or we will not be accepted by the society.