The Impact of Social Media News Overload on Users' Avoidance and Discontinuance

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Abstract:

Social media have increasingly become an integral part of individuals' lives globally. They play significant roles in increasing social bonds, accentuating social inclusion and broadening one's social capital. Individuals have too become over reliant on social media platforms for information acquisition, dissemination and planned decision making. However, this has resulted in a sense of overload among individuals who develop a sense that the amounts of the encountered information exceeded the threshold of their processing capacities. This eventually leads to a behavior of avoidance and eventually social media discontinuance that was evident in the decline in the number of social media users globally. Applying to the current economic crisis in Egypt, this research examined the correlation between economic news overload and social media avoidance and discontinuance. Findings of the study provided support for the proposed assumption where overload was a significant predictor of discontinuance behavior among Egyptian users. Results were interpreted in the light of Stimulus Organism Response paradigm.

Key words: Social media, social media fatigue, information processing, economic news, news avoidance, social media discontinuance

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Introduction:

Since the outbreak of COVID19 virus, Egypt has witnessed a noticeable increase in the number of mobile internet users as a direct result of social distancing measures that were introduced to combat the spread of the virus. According to a report by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in October 2022, the number of mobile internet users in Egypt reached 69.4 million, up from 39 million in December of 2019, a 77.9 percent increase.

With the same token regarding social media consumption, there has been a steady increase in the number of users since 2014 where the number of users was equivalent to 16.6 million users; a number that reached 51.5 million users by 2022 (Statista, *the Statistics Portal*, n.d.). Facebook was the most used social media platform in Egypt, followed by Instagram and then Tiktok, according to a survey conducted by the Egyptian Cabinet's Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC) in January 2022.

The rapid increase in social media consumption has led to the dissemination of news not only at an accelerated speed but also at a wider range. Individuals are nowadays dependent on social media for news acquisition rather than traditional media. Recent years have witnessed a shift for news consumption toward social media particularly among younger generations who feel that social media news is more authentic when compared to traditional media. Social media information content is perceived to be less time consuming, more interesting and highly preferred. Individuals have too realized the potentials of social media to help them stay updated and capable of sharing information with others. The authenticity and redundancy of news due to social media has increased their need for news (Tian, 2022; Srifuengfung et.al, 2021).

Egyptian social media users have too expressed deep interest in online news consumption with a significant interest in news about their own country. Most Egyptians (92.0%) are somewhat or very interested in news about their own country according to a research published by Gallup and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, with

60% of Egyptians considered frequent news sharers, discussing and sharing news with family and friends at least once a week.

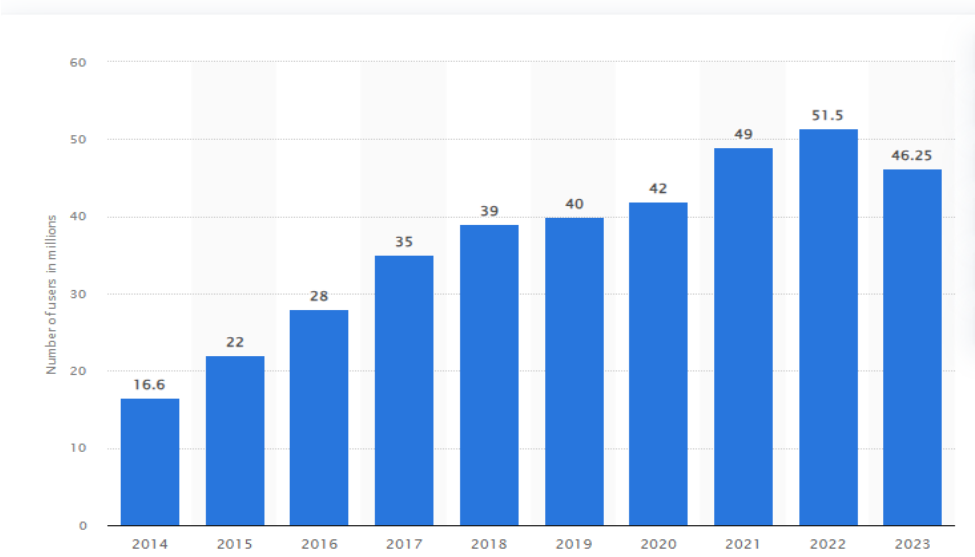
The most prominent and frequently researched topic by millions of Egyptians on Google throughout 2022 was the US dollar's exchange rate against the Egyptian pound according to the mega search engine's annual 'Year in Search' report that was released by December 2022. This was a direct response after the central bank of Egypt announced that it was adopting a more flexible exchange rate regime causing the Egyptian pound to drop progressively against the US dollar; an economic approach that was followed by a rise in inflation rates and an increase in prices.

Elevated exposure to news over social media has been associated with spread of anxiety. In the context of social media, news overload has forced individuals to consume their cognitive abilities to process the vast amounts of information contents dispersed across the social media. Since these amounts extend beyond users' cognitive capacities while processing these news, this results in a sense of overload. News overload might affect their news consumption patterns because too much information exceeds their cognitive capacity to process; as a response they tend to avoid too much information or filter it (Tian, 2022).

Thus and in line with the aforementioned postulation, while there has been a steady inclination in the number of social media users in Egypt since 2014, recent reports stated that the last year has witnessed a deterioration in the number of those users. The number of active social media users in Egypt dropped from 51.5 million users in 2022 to 46.25 million users in 2023 (Fig.1) (Statista, *the Statistics Portal*, n.d.).

Building on the Stimulus- Organism- Response framework, various aspects of the surrounding environment act as stimuli that influence internal cognitions and affections of individuals, eventually compelling response (Cao et.al, 2017; Luqman et.al, 2017). Consequently, it seems plausible to postulate that extensive exposure to economic related news would result in news overload (that would act as stimuli). This overload would drain users' cognitive resources

triggering a wide array of negative emotions as depression, anger and exhaustion (organism) and eventually motivating an avoidance or discontinuance behavioral response on behalf of users. In a nutshell, this research aims at examining whether extensive exposure to economic related news on social media is a causative of social media discontinuance behavior through the mediating role of negative emotions.



(Fig. 1) Number of active social media users in Egypt

Research problem:

In line with the aforementioned discussion, this research aims at examining the impact of economic news information overload on information avoidance and social media discontinuance among users. While various social media platforms serve as an interactive environment for information and opinion exchange, users' overreliance on these platforms bears a number of adverse impacts. Social media addiction poses a threat on users' mental well-being evident in information overload that hinders proper interpretation and processing of this information; this leads to the emergence of various negative emotional responses as exhaustion, anxiety and depression. These emotions in turn become the primary derivative of information

avoidance and social media discontinuance. With the vast amounts of economic related information circulating social media paired with the uncertainty surrounding the current economic situation in Egypt, information overload is more likely to occur and discontinuance behavior is more probable among users.

Research objectives:

1. To examine the impact of social media addiction on the emergence of information overload among users.
2. To assess the negative emotional responses that are associated to information overload among users.
3. To determine the relationship between information overload and social media discontinuance through the mediating effect negative emotional responses.
4. To verify the Stimulus Organism Response framework by applying on a new research issue which is the current economic situation in Egypt.

Research significance:

1. This research examines the impact of information avoidance on users' subsequent behavior extending the impact beyond a mere causal effect relationship thus shedding the light over the intervening role of negative emotional responses.
2. The importance and the novelty of the issue being assessed which is the current economic situation in Egypt; an issue of immensive significance to various members of the society.
3. The profound consequences of information overload ranging from the inability to differentiate between truthful and invalid information to the ultimate social media discontinuance paired with the curial necessity of following the progression of the economic situation in Egypt increases the importance of studying this phenomenon.

Review of literature:

Linking social media overload with negative emotional responses and discontinuance behavior:

While the global number of social media platforms consumers continues to grow steadily, some of these platforms (i.e. Facebook) have been facing the challenge of discontinuance among some users; a phenomenon that triggered researchers' attempts to uncover reasons for this deterioration in users' online activities (Fu et.al, 2020; Guo et.al, 2020).

One possible reason for discontinuance behavior among users is the proliferation of sense of exhaustion among them. Continuous advancement in mobile communication technology is associated with a massive increase in information production and propagation. While this increase immediately satisfies users' cognitive threshold on the one hand, yet it induces a sense of fatigue to process newly encountered information on the other. Social media exhaustion is known as users' un-interestedness of activities due to prolonged exposure or strain; a user's sense of weariness by social media usage. In the online context, users usually feel overwhelmed by the amount of information communicated across social media and the magnitude of social interaction. This concept comprises a number of negative emotional responses associated with social media usage including tension, anxiety, fatigue, weariness and disappointment. In other terms, social media exhaustion can be defined as users' inclination to fade out of the usage of social media when individuals become overwhelmed by the vast amount of information, plenty of contacts and large number of followers (Pang et.al, 2023; Tian, 2022; Soroya et.al, 2021).

To begin with, the term overload refers to individual's subjective evaluation that the available information, people or objects exceeds one's cognitive capacity eventually leading to negative outcomes. Existing research has demonstrated that social media comprise 3 distinct formats of cognitive loads namely system feature, social and information overload. System feature overload is contingent with individuals' perceptions of the features of the social

media that exceeds users' demands. It captures the device and application proliferation that induces user's cognitive burden owing to the excessive use of the diverse system features. Social overload has been primarily used to describe real world crowded populations when the demands to handle social connections exceeds interaction ability, eventually leading individuals to experience social overload. The term can be applied to social media too since users are expected to exert considerable efforts keeping in contact with other users and provide social support. It is thus the crowding in an online space, or the sense that there are too much social demands that users must invest plenty of time and attention to maintain the relationships with the increasing number of contacts on the online platforms; in other words, it is a result of extensive interactions that do not result in adequate benefits turning communication experience into a burden that results into an overall decrement wellbeing. Information overload arises when the information individual assesses exceeds the ability to handle. The term compares one's information processing cognitive capacity with the information processing demands that has vastly increased in the era of mobile internet. Information overload has been associated with psychological pressure. The rapid advancement in digital technology has resulted in diversified channels through which individuals can access huge datum material eventually resulting in information overload. (Fu et.al, 2020; Guo et.al, 2020; Pang et.al, 2023; Soroya et.al, 2021). It is thus the state in which individual's efficiency to select, use, process and make sense of information is hampered by the amount of relevant and potentially useful information (Link, 2021).

Hong et.al (2020) stated that two main variables predicted the occurrence of information overload namely individual's information ability and media use. That is individuals with greater ability to search and process information were less likely to conceive information overload. In other words, information overload occurred when the amount of incoming information exceeded individuals' cognitive processing capacity. As for media use, those who relied extensively on interpersonal communication channels and online sources were more likely to experience information overload. Online news channels provided frequent updates of news which contributed in the

occurrence of information overload. Regarding interpersonal communication channels, the redundancy of information being exchanged was a significant contributor of information overload.

In line with the aforementioned literature, social media overload is a predictive of social media exhaustion –a phenomenon that decreases users' inclination to use social media. Depending on the extent of exhaustion, individuals might either pause their utilization activities or perhaps disengage immediately. Research evidence states that individuals abandon their accounts on social media when their sense of exhaustion surpasses the limit of their endurance. Distress and fatigue which are tightly related to exhaustion also predict discontinuance behavior (Pang et.al, 2023). Discontinuance behavior is defined as users' active attempts to change their behavioral patterns by reducing the usage intensity or taking more radical steps by entirely suspending activities (Maier et al., 2015a; Fu et.al, 2020). It is the purposeful avoidance of relevant and important information sources because there is too much information to handle. Similarly, information avoidance is defined as any preventive behavior that involves delaying or rejecting consumption of potentially unwanted information from online resources (Li, 2023; Sultana et.al, 2023). It has been attributed to a number of reasons among which are emotional factors as fear and anxiety and information related factors as information overload (Sultana et.al, 2023). To sum up and as reported by Maslow, "we can reduce anxiety by seeking knowledge, and we can also reduce anxiety by avoiding knowing" (Ding et.al, 2022).

A wide array of negative emotions have been reported to be a direct outcome of social media overload eventually resulting in an avoidance or a discontinuance behavior. Effects included exhaustion, anxiety, fatigue, frustration and dissatisfaction. Wu and Pei (2022) reported that the different facets of social media overload proved to be antecedents of health anxiety and exhaustion. Dai et.al (2020) revalidated existing research evidence where users' perception of social media information overload was an antecedent to social media fatigue, frustration and dissatisfaction eventually leading to social media discontinuance intensions. Further, the relationship between social media fatigue and depression has been perceived as a reciprocal

relationship since depressive users are more prone to excessively consume social media to cope with their depression symptoms which might result in depletion in their psychological health making them suitable to stress and exhaustion in turn. Regarding anxiety, researchers reported that on experiencing fatigue users are more likely to sense a deterioration in cognitive abilities eventually becoming more anxious (Dhir et.al, 2018). Other adverse emotions included fear that also proved to be an antecedent of information avoidance. According to the researcher, people tend to avoid fear for their mental wellbeing and any sort of negative information that drives a sense of fear. (Sultana et.al, 2023).

Both the amount of information and the degree of relevance proved to be predictors of information overload eventually resulting in avoidance behavior. Rapid development in mobile communication infrastructure fostered the velocity of information production and dissemination drastically. It is worthwhile stating that if relevant information results in detrimental impact on users' psychological wellbeing, irrelevant information multiplies these adverse impact among social media users (Pang et.al, 2023). Applying the Stressor Strain Outcome (SSO) model, Guo et.al (2020) proved that information irrelevance directly influenced avoidance behavior. Further, information overload was directly related to information avoidance since the redundancy in the available information hinders users' ability to select important information. Pang et.al (2023) applied the same paradigm as theoretical framework to explain the mechanism underlying social media discontinuance behavior. Redundant amounts of information that spread across social media platforms indispensably resulted in users' exhaustion. The same finding held true regarding communication overload. While social media platforms constitute a fertile ground that facilitates interactive communication and social support among users, exerting massive amounts of time and energy to maintain these communication bonds will inevitably result in a sense of exhaustion. When users develop a sense of being overwhelmed by social media, they are likely to stop using this social media platform.

The same model was applied by Fu et.al (2020) who stated that information overload was positively associated with social media exhaustion which in turn was found to be associated with users' discontinuous usage behaviors. The research has confirmed that negative psychological strain can result in negative behavioral outcomes. Users will avoid psychological exhaustion through engaging in behavioral changes. Furthermore, based on the mediation analysis, social media exhaustion plays a mediating role in the negative effect of overload on users' discontinuous usage behaviors. This again reinforces the mediating role of strain between stressors and outcomes. Social media exhaustion can act as a mediator for the effects of overload on discontinuous usage behaviors. Similar findings can be extended when examining the impact of social media news overload on news avoidance and filtering. In addition to social media news avoidance, another technique adopted by users in response to social media news overload is news filtering. Online platforms are equipped with network filters or algorithm filters that enable users to sort out irrelevant or unimportant news. Users continuously feel that they need to reduce the burden of processing additional news by filtering out irrelevant ones since news disseminating across social media has various degrees of credibility. This provides support for the postulation that social media news overload is an indicator of social media news avoidance and filtering (Tian, 2022).

Linking compulsive social media news consumption at time of crises to negative emotional responses and discontinuance behavior:

Individuals consciously consult various media sources for planned decision making, staying informed and reducing the anxiety and stress created by uncertain situation induced by a disaster or a disease outbreak. Yet, on the other hand this behavior bears negative consequences among which is information overload; a situation that occurs when handling and processing wealth of information from various information sources become cumbersome (Soroya et.al, 2021). In other words, while individuals turn to news reduce uncertainty, yet increased exposure to stressful news may intensify distress and lead to deleterious consequences on mental health. For instance, research

evidence proved that increased exposure to distressful news was a significant predictor of worry among college students (Kellerman, 2021).

These adverse impacts were particularly evident regarding health news overload. Health information overload predicted the emergence of different traits of psychological ill being namely negative affect, trait depression, anger and anxiety. When information input exceeded the cognitive capacity, individuals are confronted with the problem of identifying relevant information, become overly selective and neglect important information. The situation is much more complicated when it comes to health information. Individuals may not perceive information as personally relevant and might not be able to infer the necessary behavioral information. Consequently, individuals develop negative attitudes toward health information and become unwilling to further seek or digest this information which results in decrements in health care knowledge and overall health literacy (Swar et.al, 2017).

Recently, the outbreak of COVID 19 and with the ongoing attempts to reduce the uncertainty associated by the pandemic in congruence with the drastic social distancing measures, individuals have been heavily reliant on social media for news acquisition. The overreliance on social media for information acquisition has been associated with adverse psychological outcomes with no such effects found within traditional media (Soroya et.al, 2021).

Numerous research has associated over consumption of social media at times of crisis with psychological and mental disorders including stress, depression, anxiety, despair, negative affect, trait anger fatigue and post-traumatic stress (Gao et.al, 2020; Fadhilah et.al, 2020; Dermani, 2021; Zhong et.al, 2021; Srifuengfung et.al, 2021 & Luo et.al, 2021). Further negative emotional responses included loss of control, stress, overwhelm and confusion (Link, 2021). For instance, research has confirmed that excessive consumption of social media for information about COVID 19 was associated with information overload that led in turn to detrimental effects on coping measures related to the pandemic. Information

overload has been associated with cyberchondria which refers to the excessive and chronically worrying state of being ill (Soroya et.al, 2021). These findings were justified by the fact that social media platforms constituted a very fertile environment for information exchange; some of which are falsified information eventually elevating negative emotional responses as anxiety and depression among users who are heavily bombarded with this information. That is, overabundance of infodemic (falsified information propagating over different platforms) posed a harm over mental health (Gao et.al, 2020 & Srifuengfung et.al, 2021). This overabundance of infodemic can only be encountered through the development of E health literacy skills. These skills enhance individuals' critical abilities enabling them to identify valid from falsified information. It also reduces information overload and in turn information avoidance probability. It is worth stating that information consumption is positively correlated with information overload for both credible and non-credible sources (Dermani, 2021). On examining the antecedents of information avoidance behavior in the context of COVID 19, information overload was found to be the strongest among all the tested antecedents of information avoidance. In fact, information related factors compared to other factors were most important in determining individual's heath information behavior avoidance (Li, 2023).

Negative emotional responses emerging as a result of health information overload were predictive of information avoidance (Fadhilah et.al, 2020; Buneviciene et.al, 2021; Link, 2021; Dermani, 2021; Gao et.al, 2022). Information avoidance behavior was more pronounced with greater levels of information overload (Link, 2021). Ding et.al, (2022) reported that the occurrence of health avoidance behavior cannot be attributed to a single factor but to the combination of multiple factors. Antecedents of health information avoidance particularly included negative emotions. Information about the development of COVID 19 over the internet has gone viral; yet the redundancy and ease of access to information was accompanied by negative emotions of worry and eventually avoidance behavior. According to research evidence, during a health crisis individuals shift from a seeking to an avoidance behavior resonating with low health

literacy. Knowledge deficit resonated with low health literacy and high information avoidance (Ding et.al, 2022). Similarly, Guo et.al (2022) reported that information overload was a significant predictor of information avoidance. The abundance of COVID related information resulted in a sense of overwhelm hampering the ability to distinguish facts from falsified information. Further, information avoidance was also associated with negative affect. Exposure to COVID related information triggered an array of negative emotions including fear, anxiety and sadness. One coping strategy adopted by the study sample to reduce health anxiety was to avoid COVID related information.

Soroya et.al (2021) further coined the term information anxiety which refers to the ever growing gap between what we understand and what we think we should understand; the black hole between data and knowledge. It is a sense of frustration that evolves as a result of the inability to keep up with the amount of data in our lives, and what makes the situation more complicated is that the data is not passive but actively involving itself into our attention. Information anxiety may be the result of many factors among which is information overload. Individuals who are more frequently exposed to social media will develop a sense of information anxiety. As predicted, social media exposure was positively correlated with information overload and information anxiety among users. A positive relationship existed between information overload and information anxiety among users eventually resulting in information avoidance.

Further adverse impact of information overload can be evident in the adoption of certain information processing style. Information overload poses an impact over the information processing style resulting in heuristic rather than systematic processing style. Heuristic processing relies primarily on heuristic cues or simple judgmental rules; whereas systematic processing involved “all attempts to thoroughly comprehend all and any available information through careful attention, deep thinking, and intensive reasoning”. In the light of COVID 19 heuristic information processing resulted in reduced preventive behaviors toward the disease compared to systematic approach that strengthened those preventive behaviors. This is a direct

outcome of the fact that judgments based on heuristic processing tend to be less stable and less tied to subsequent behaviors (Hong et.al, 2020).

Drawing on the aforementioned review, it seems plausible to extend these findings to the ongoing economic crisis in Egypt –given the congruency in the fact that both COVID and the current economic situation constitute critical emergencies that bore a wide array of negative consequences experienced by different members of the society. Egyptians have been thoroughly following news of the economic crisis as it unfolds; a situation that is presumed to be associated with information anxiety and sense of fatigue eventually leading to information avoidance. This is manifested by the fact that information overload in this case is not reflected in the amount of information that individuals receive per se, but in the novelty of this information (Dermani, 2021; Latoo et.al, 2020). Thus, given the uncertainty that surrounded the economic situation related information, this finding presumed to be intensified. It is thus reasonable to postulate that excessive consumption of economic related news on social media represents a stimulus that triggers negative emotional responses as exhaustion, frustration and anger and eventually results in an avoidance behavior or an ultimate discontinuance behavior.

Theoretical framework:

Drawn from environmental psychology, the Stimulus Organism Response paradigm was proposed by Mehrabian and Russel (1974). The basic premise is that individual behavioral responses or psychological changes are stimulated by the external environmental factors and the individual will inductively process these environmental stimuli and adjust an appropriate response (Zhang et.al, 2021). The model thus comprised three constructs (stimulus, organism and response). The notion stimulus is defined as any external force that influence the psychological state of the individual; it is any input or any external factor related to the environment. Organism refers to internal processes intervening between stimuli external to the individual and final actions, reactions and responses emitted; it is

anything that will respond to the stimulus. These processes include perceptual, psychological and cognitive activities. In other words and as defined by Fu et al. (2020) organism is, "internal processes and outcomes of the stimulus, usually mediating the relationship between stimulus and response". As for the response, it refers to the final behavioral outcome of an individual that is either positive or negative; it is the reaction to the organism (Pandita et.al, 2021; Zhang et.al, 2021). The SOR model clarifies the relationship between these three interrelated factors (Zhang et.al, 2021). It assumes that various aspects of the surrounding environment act as external stimuli affecting internal cognitions and affections of individuals, eventually compelling behavioral response on their behalf. The model has been applied repeatedly in the field of information system to examine the impact of environmental stimuli on users' behavioral tendencies (Lui et.al, 2021). Lately, the model has been used repeatedly to examine the impact of extensive consumption of social media on individuals' patterns of usage to these platforms (Cao et.al, 2017; Luqman et.al, 2017).

Numerous research has applied this framework to examine the antecedents and consequences of social media usage. A consensus exists stating that overconsumption of social media as an external stimulus was associated with various facets of social media overload that triggered negative emotional responses (organism) eventually causing discontinuance behavior.

Overload stems from the imbalance between environmental demands and individual's coping abilities. While social media have various positive outcomes as enhancing individuals' social capital and well-being, their usage pattern can have negative consequences as isolation and anxiety once this pattern exceeds the optimum threshold. Overload is thus a key element promoting such negative outcomes (Cao et.al, 2017).

Luqman et.al (2017) investigated the determinants of social media discontinuance behavior. Three facets of facebook usage represented the package of stimuli –hedonic, social and cognitive use. According to the SOR model, the impact of environmental stimuli on

individuals' behavioral responses is mediated by virtual experiences particularly technostress and SNS exhaustion both which constituted organism in the proposed framework. Technostress was defined as stress caused by using technology and the inability to cope with the new technologies in a healthy manner. SNS exhaustion was defined as "an individual's aversive, potentially harmful, and unconscious psychological reaction to stressful situations such as perceiving social overload when using SNS". Users' discontinuance intention surrogated the response in the research framework. The three facets of facebook usage -particularly cognitive use- were significantly associated with technostress and SNS exhaustion. Further, higher degree of SNSs usage among users predicted a higher tendency to discontinue or reduce usage in the future.

A similar finding was reported by Maier et.al (2015) who reported that exhaustion results in discontinuous usage intention that eventually translates in discontinuous usage. In other words, SNS stress creators result in exhaustion and cause behavioral response which leads individuals to stop using the technology. In addition to exhaustion, different facets of social media overload predicted regret and dissatisfaction among users similarly leading to discontinuance behavior (Nawaz et.al, 2018; Lo, 2019). Similarly, Cao et.al (2017) reported the same findings applying the SOR framework. Different aspects of social media overload were associated with exhaustion and regret. Information overload (as an environmental stimuli) had a significant impact on exhaustion (organism); communication overload (as an environmental stimuli) was significantly related to regret (organism) whereas social overload (as an environmental stimuli) predicted both exhaustion and regret (organism). Finally, both exhaustion and regret were correlated with discontinuance intensions (response). Similar findings were reported by Zhang et.al (2016) who reported that social media overload (as an environmental stimuli) were associated with social media fatigue and dissatisfaction (organism) eventually led to users' discontinuance intention.

A relevant line of thought reported that elevated exposure to news over social media was a significant predictor of self-isolation intention among individuals as a behavioral response in the aftermath

of COVID 19. Applying the SOR framework, Latoo et.al (2020) postulated that the increase in the amount of COVID related information circulating the various online platforms sometimes including conflicting and misleading information results in information overload –a situation immensified by the novelty of the pandemic. Researchers further hypothesized that information overload (stimulus) predicted both cyberchondria- a situation when an individual is overly stressed or anxious about their health, which leads to excessive, compulsive, and repeated health-related online searches that fuel anxiety, distress, and fear, and perceived severity of the disease –an increase in the perception of the seriousness of the threat (organism). Both cyberchondria and perceived severity were expected to increase the tendency to adopt more strict health measures evident in self-isolation (response). Findings of the study provided support for the proposed hypotheses and SOR framework. Vast amount of online information resulted in information overload that triggered cyberchondria and an increase in the perceived severity of the pandemic eventually leading to intention to self-isolate.

Other researchers reported that despite the novelty that surrounded COVID 19, perceived threats and information overload (stimulus) eventually resulted in information avoidance (response) through stimulating internal states of anxiety, and cognitive dissonance both of which predicted information avoidance intension. Sadness, on the other hand decreased information avoidance. This is interpreted by the different nature of both states. While both sadness and anxiety are negative affective states, the latter involves higher level of arousal. This in turn motivated individuals to alleviate the source of discomfort. While the inactive component of sadness slows down individuals cognition and triggers systematic information processing (Song et.al, 2021). It is worth noting that while social media overload resulted in negative emotional responses as exhaustion and reduction in sense of satisfaction that result in withdrawal from social media usage, receiving social support mitigated the sense of exhaustion and increased satisfaction and eventually decreasing the likelihood of the discontinuance usage intention (Lo, 2019).

Structural model and Study hypotheses:

Proposed structural model:

For the current paper, the study applied the SOR model for a better comprehension for the underlying relationship between economic information overload that results from the compulsive exposure to social media and information avoidance and discontinuance intension among the study sample. Building on the SOR model, greater exposure to economic related news social media (stimulus) that is a direct outcome of social media addiction is presumed to result in a number of negative emotional responses - including fatigue, anxiety, depression, anger and negative affect- (organism) eventually causing information avoidance and discontinuance intensions among those users (response) (Fig. 2). The following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There is a positive relationship between compulsive social media use and economic news overload.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between economic news overload and the emergence of negative emotional responses (social media fatigue, anxiety, depressive symptom, anger and negative affect).

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between the emergence of negative emotional responses (social media fatigue, anxiety, depressive symptoms, anger, and negative affect) and social media avoidance and discontinuance.

H4: There is a positive relationship between economic news overload and social media avoidance and discontinuance mediated by the emergence of negative emotional responses (social media fatigue, anxiety, depressive symptoms, anger and negative affect).

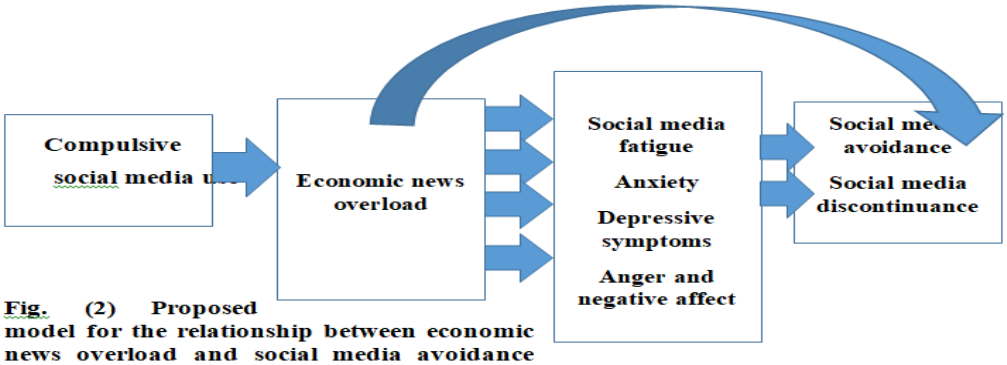


Fig. (2) Proposed model for the relationship between economic news overload and social media avoidance and discontinuance

Methodology:

Data collection and study participants:

The study applied an online survey technique to test for the validity of the proposed research model. With only limited exceptions, all measured applied in the current research are adaptations of well-established measures previously used in existing literature. Using a purposive sampling technique, the study was conducted on a sample of 146 participants that comprised both genders (47 males and 99 females). Participants were all capable of perceiving the adverse consequences of the economic crisis paired with the negative impacts associated with compulsive exposure to social media; a notion justifying the relatively limited sample size. All members of the study were university graduates with almost half of them earning a post graduate degree. The age range spanned from 21 to above 45 years. Around two thirds of the sample worked in private sector earning a monthly income ranging between 5000 to 15000 pounds. Data collection process started on mid-May and continued to mid-October 2023.

Measurement:

Compulsive social media usage:

Compulsive social media usage was gauged using Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale. The scale consists of 6 items namely salience, tolerance, mood modification, relapse, withdrawal, conflict.

Examples included "Spent a lot of time thinking about Facebook or planned use of Facebook?; Felt an urge to use Facebook more and more?; Tried to cut down on the use of Facebook without success?. These responses were based on a five point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Information overload:

Information overload was measured using a 9 item scale. The scale was adopted from Soroya et.al (2021), Zhang et.al (2016), Guo et.al (2020), Xie and Tsai (2021) and Swar et.al (2017) information overload scales. Sample items included I feel overwhelmed by the amount of economic related information that I process daily on social media; There is too much economic related information on social media so I find it a burden to handle; There is so much economic related information available to me on social media that I have trouble choosing what is important and what's not. A five point Likert scale was used to evaluate subjects' responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Social media fatigue:

One significant outcome of social media overload is the emergence of social media fatigue among users. Fatigue was assessed using an 8 point self-developed scale adopted from Fu et.al (2020) Social media exhaustion scale and Zhang et.al (2016) social network fatigue scale. Examples included I feel drained from activities that require me to use social media; I feel burned out from my social media activities. Fatigue was assessed according to a 5point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Anxiety:

Anxiety was assessed using a 6 item scale adopted from Soroya et.al (2021) information anxiety scale. Representative items included I feel apprehensive (anxious) due to too much economic information on social media; I get a sinking (unpleasant) feeling when I think of searching for information on social media. All questions are gauged on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree).

Depressive symptoms:

The study measured depressive symptoms using a scale adopted from Swar et.al (2017) depressive symptoms scale. Sample items included: After accessing economic information on social media I felt calm, relaxed and content; I still enjoyed the things I used to enjoy. Answers were evaluated based on a 5 point Likert scale where extremely agree was equivalent to1 and extremely disagree was equivalent to 5.

Trait anger:

Further negative emotional responses that were assessed in the current study included trait anger. Trait anger scale was adopted from Swar et.al (2017) anger scale and was rated according to a 5point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). Representative items included "I was becoming angry quickly (becoming angry in a short time); I found myself hard to control (because of anger)".

Negative affect:

The final adverse emotional response gauged in the current study was negative affect. The scale was developed using Swar et.al (2017) negative affect scale where subjects reported the extent to which they experienced emotions as being guilty, scared, irritable and nervous. Responses were evaluated according to a 5point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Information avoidance:

The final output to be assessed as a result of information overload was information avoidance intention. 7items scale was used to gauge information avoidance among respondents. The scale was developed using Soroya et.al (2021) information avoidance scale and Guo et.al (2020) information avoidance behavior scale. Sample items included "I intentionally avoid some economic related information on social media; I tune out of certain economic related information on social media and I use technical means to avoid some economic related posts on social media". A 5-point Likert scale was used to evaluate responses where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Social media discontinuance:

The second evaluated response was social media discontinuance among respondents. Discontinuance was evaluated using a 10 point self-developed scale. Items were adopted using Fu et.al (2020) Discontinuous usage behavior (DUB); Zhang et.al (2016) Discontinuous usage intention and Xie et.al discontinuance intension scales. Representative sample included "I sometimes discontinue my use of social media but that does not mean that I will completely abandon my use of it; If I could I would discontinue the use of social media; In the future I will use social media far less than today. All responses were gauged on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree).

Conceptual definitions:

Information overload: Information overload refers to the state in which individual's efficiency to select, use, process and make sense of information is hampered by the amount of relevant and potentially useful information (Link, 2021).

Social media exhaustion/ fatigue: Social media exhaustion is known as users' un-interestedness of activities due to prolonged exposure or strain; a user's sense of weariness by social media usage (Pang & Ruan, 2023).

Stimulus: Stimuli (S) represent a set of sensory variables in a particular environment, and information load which characterizes the spatial and temporal relationships among those stimulus components (Song et.al, 2021).

Organism: organism refers to "internal processes and outcomes of the stimulus, usually mediating the relationship between stimulus and response" (Fu et al., 2020).

Response: response refers to the final behavioral outcome of an individual that is either positive or negative; it is the reaction to the organism (Pandita et.al, 2021; Zhang et.al, 2021).

Testing reliability and internal consistency:

Cronbach's alpha measure was applied to assess the reliability and internal consistency of each single scale that was included within the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha score for the entire questionnaire was equivalent to 0.953 with an internal validity of 0.976. As per each individual construct within the questionnaire, findings show that vast majority of the values were equivalent to 0.7 or greater (except for the depressive symptoms scale) which signifies that these constructs exceeded the recommended threshold values of reliability and internal consistency as shown in Table (1).

Table (1) Cronbach's alpha measure of scales reliability and internal consistency

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	percentile	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal consistency
Entire questionnaire						0.953	0.976
Bergen social media addiction scale	60.73	15.12	23	95	63.9 %	0.921	0.959
Information overload scale	25.8	5.168	8	40	64.5 %	0.799	0.894
Anxiety scale	18.51	4.01	6	28	66.1 %	0.703	0.838
Depressive symptoms scale	8.84	2.29	3	14	63.2 %	0.646	0.803
Trait anger scale	11.08	3.82	4	20	55.4 %	0.899	0.948
Negative affect scale	19.29	6.58	7	33	58.4 %	0.936	0.967
Social media fatigue scale	26.66	6.27	8	40	66.6 %	0.899	0.948
Social media discontinuance	30.74	7.73	10	50	61.5 %	0.895	0.946
Information avoidance scale	22.79	6.05	7	35	65.1 %	0.926	0.962

Results:

Testing the structural model:

To begin with, Partial correlations were conducted to test for the validity of the proposed structural model. An initial step was to examine the degree of relationship between different variables within the model. As predicted, correlational analysis found significant substantial positive relationship between compulsive social media use

and information overload (r= 0.364). Thus H1 was supported (Table 2).

Table (2) Pearson correlation between social media addiction and information overload

		Bergen social media addiction scale
Information overload	Pearson Correlation	0.364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146

Further correlational analysis proved significant substantial positive relationships between information overload and negative emotional responses –fatigue, anxiety, trait anger and negative affect. Pearson correlation values were r=0.425, 0.483, 0.314 and 0.336 respectively (Tables 3, 4, 5).

Table (3) Pearson correlation between information overload and social media fatigue

		Information overload
Social media fatigue	Pearson Correlation	0.425**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146

Table (4) Pearson correlation between information overload and anxiety

		Information overload
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	0.483**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146

Table (5) Pearson correlation between information overload trait anger and negative affect

		Information overload
Trait anger	Pearson Correlation	0.314**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007
	N	146
Negative affect	Pearson Correlation	0.336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	146

Contrary to the proposed assumption, no relationship was found between information overload and the emergence of depressive symptoms among the study sample (r=-0.111). Thus, partial support was provided for H2 (Table 6).

Table (6) Pearson correlation between information overload and depressive symptoms

		Information overload
Depressive symptoms scale	Pearson Correlation	-0.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.184
	N	146

Pearson correlations were further conducted test for the relationship between the emergence of adverse affective states and the tendency to avoid exposure to economic news or even to discontinue social media consumption. Social media fatigue was a significant predictor of both information avoidance and social media discontinuance among the study sample (r =0.442 and 0.729) (Table 7).

Table (7) Pearson correlation between social media fatigue, information avoidance and social media discontinuance

		Social media fatigue
Information avoidance	Pearson Correlation	0.442**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146
Social media discontinuance	Pearson Correlation	0.729**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146

Pearson correlation values for the relationship between anxiety and social media avoidance and discontinuance were r =0.439 and 0.475 respectively (Table 8). This signifies that both fatigue and anxiety were a significant predictors of social media avoidance and discontinuance.

Table (8) Pearson correlation between anxiety, information avoidance and social media discontinuance

		Anxiety
Information avoidance	Pearson Correlation	0.439**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146
Social media discontinuance	Pearson Correlation	0.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146

Similar findings held true regarding both trait anger and negative affect. Both emotional reactions proved to be significant predictors of social media avoidance and discontinuance (values were r= 0.398 and 0.439 for trait anger and r= 0.375 and 0.4 for negative affect) (Tables 9, 10).

Table (9) Pearson correlation between trait anger, information avoidance and social media discontinuance

		Trait anger
Information avoidance	Pearson Correlation	0.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146
Social media discontinuance	Pearson Correlation	0.439**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146

Table (10) Pearson correlation between negative affect, information avoidance and social media discontinuance

		Negative affect
Information avoidance	Pearson Correlation	0.375**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146
Social media discontinuance	Pearson Correlation	0.400**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	146

Contrary to the proposed assumption, no relationship was found between depressive symptoms and information avoidance (r= -0.147); whereas negative relationship existed between depressive

symptoms and social media discontinuance (r= -0.249). Thus, partial support was provided for H3 (Table 11).

Table (11) Pearson correlation between depressive symptoms, information avoidance and social media discontinuance

		Depressive symptoms
Information avoidance	Pearson Correlation	**-0.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002
	N	146
Social media discontinuance	Pearson Correlation	-0.249
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.077
	N	146

Examining the relationship between information overload and social media avoidance and discontinuance, positive correlations were found between these variables where information overload was a predictor of information avoidance and discontinuance (r = 0.297; 0.355 respectively). Pearson correlations proved that the strength of the relationship was adversely impacted by isolating the intervening variables; that is the strength of the relationship was weakened in various degrees by isolating different negative emotional responses that emerged as a result of elevated social media exposure (except for depressive symptoms whose presence mitigated the correlation between both variables). Thus partial support was provided for H4. It is worth noting that the two most influential intervening emotional reactions were both fatigue and anxiety (their isolation has caused a decline in the values of Pearson correlation; r = 0.134 and 0.108 respectively after their isolation for information avoidance and 0.072 and 0.163 for social media discontinuance). In other terms, the presence of negative emotional responses as intervening variables have accentuated the relationship between economic news overload as an independent variable and social media avoidance and discontinuance as the dependent variables (Table 12).

Table (12) Pearson correlation between information overload, information avoidance and social media discontinuance

				Control Variables				
				Social media fatigue	Anxiety	Depressive symptoms	Trait anger	Negative affect
	Information overload scale							
Information avoidance	Pearson Correlation	0.297**	Correlation	0.134	0.108	0.285	0.197	0.196
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	Significance (2-tailed)	0.108	0.196	0.000	0.017	0.018
	N	146	Df	143	143	143	143	143
Social media discontinuance	Pearson Correlation	0.355**	Correlation	0.072	0.163	0.340	0.254	0.255
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	Significance (2-tailed)	0.389	0.05	0.000	0.002	0.002
	N	146	Df	143	143	143	143	143

Partial Correlation Coefficient:

To test for the contribution of each intervening variable independently (different emotional responses) in mediating the correlational relationship between economic news overload and social media avoidance and discontinuance, partial correlation coefficient was applied.

Using the partial correlation coefficient, it was shown that isolating the intervening variables had a negative impact on the relationship between the independent (economic news overload) and dependent variables (social media avoidance and discontinuance), that is, the presence of the mediating variables increased the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, except for one mediating variable, which is the depressive symptoms; which when was isolated, the value of the correlational coefficient increased. That is, its presence weakens the relationship between the independent (economic news overload) and the dependent (social media avoidance and discontinuance) variables. The utmost dominant intervening variables were social media exhaustion and anxiety.

- The percentage of contribution of social media fatigue on the relationship between information overload and information avoidance was = -79.6%
- The percentage of contribution of anxiety on the relationship between information overload and information was = -86.8%
- The percentage of contribution of depressive symptoms on the relationship between information overload and information avoidance was = -7.9%
- The percentage of contribution of trait anger on the relationship between information overload and information avoidance was = -56%
- The percentage of contribution of negative affect on the relationship between information overload and information avoidance was = -56.4%
- The percentage of contribution of social media fatigue on the relationship between information overload and social media discontinuance was = -95.9%
- The percentage of contribution of social anxiety on the relationship between information overload and social media discontinuance was = - 78.9%
- The percentage of contribution of social depressive symptoms on the relationship between information overload and social media discontinuance was = -8.3%
- The percentage of contribution of social trait anger on the relationship between information overload and social media discontinuance was =48.8%
- The percentage of contribution of negative affect on the relationship between information overload and social media discontinuance was = 48.4%

Path analysis:

The study applied Path analysis using the statistical program (AMOS 22). The results of the analysis showed that the value of chi^2 for the model (chi^2 = 289.257, df = 20, statistical significance = 0.000) (ratio of chi^2 /df = 14.463), so the non-significant paths were deleted, the following paths were deleted (Table 13)

Table (13) non-significant deleted paths

Depressive symptoms	<---	Information overload
Social media discontinuance	<---	Negative affect
Information avoidance	<---	Negative affect
Information avoidance	<---	Depressive symptoms
Social media discontinuance	<---	Anxiety

When the path analysis was re-applied, the results showed that the value of (chi^2) for the model became (chi^2 = 294.646, df = 25, statistical significance = 0.000) (chi^2 /df ratio = 11.786), but the goodness of fit index Index) (GFI = 0.508), the Normalized Fit Index (NFI = 0.495), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = 0.291), and the root mean square error of estimation index approaches The acceptable limit (RMSEA = 0.273), from the above the proposed model can be accepted, that is, the results reached by the model can be accepted, which will be explained in the figure below (Fig. 3):

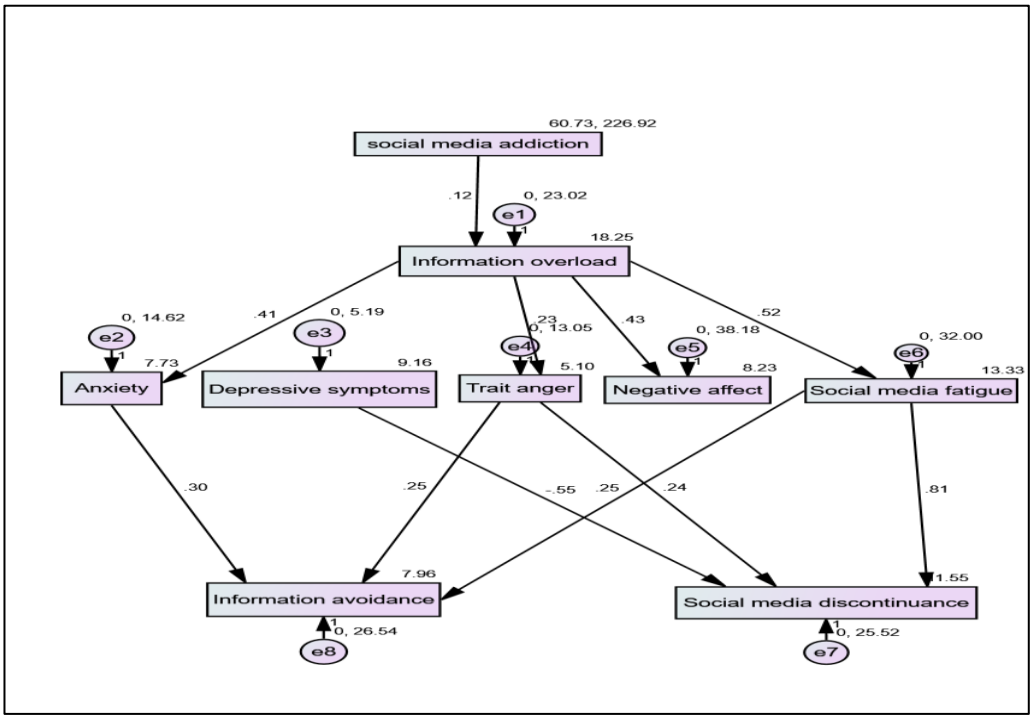


Fig. (3) Path analysis for the proposed structural model

As shown in the figure above (Fig. 3), information overload was a significant predictor of both anxiety and social media fatigue

(values = 0.41 and 0.52 for anxiety and fatigue respectively). Anxiety in turn was a predictor of information avoidance with a value of 0.30; whereas fatigue was a predictor of both avoidance and discontinuance (values = 0.25 and 0.81 respectively)

Discussion:

Building on the stimulus organism response framework, this current research probed the impact of economic news overload that is tightly contingent in social media addiction on social media news avoidance and discontinuance. It strived to unveil the mechanism through which the decline in social media consumption occurred. The study examined the mediating role of a number of negative emotional responses that emerge as a direct result of extensive exposure including exhaustion, anxiety, depressive symptoms, anger and negative affect on avoidance and discontinuance encompassing both intention and actual behavior. This current paper will help gain a more profound comprehension for the impact of cognitive and emotional factors on social media discontinuance.

Findings of the study provided support for the proposed assumptions. Compulsive social media consumption was a significant predictor economic news overload. This finding comes in congruence with the fact that the ongoing economic crisis in Egypt was associated with an increase in search for economic related information in addition to information exchange both which have been a catalyst for the emergence of information overload among users. As the economic crisis unfolded, people encountered massive amounts of economic related news eventually resulting in information overload (Pang, 2021).This finding too comes in line with existing research that has supported the association between heavy exposure to different social media platforms and information overload (Hong et.al, 2020; Pang, 2021; Soroya et.al, 2021).

As predicted and in line with the Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm, economic news information overload predicted a number of negative emotional responses. This emotional discomfort is attributed to amount of information that exceeded individuals' cognitive processing abilities causing a sense of discomfort (Pang, 2021).

Individuals are constantly bombarded with huge amounts of information that results in a depletion in their cognitive ability to process (Pang et.al, 2023). The abundance of economic news paired with its negative nature constituted external stimuli that triggered internal psychological changes. This finding comes in consistency with existing research evidence that has consistently associated information overload with adverse effects. Social media fatigue (also referred to as social media exhaustion) has been repeatedly reported as one of the most pervasive outcomes of information overload (Guo et.al, 2020; Wu & Pei, 2022; Dai et.al, 2020; Fu et.al, 2020; Cao et.al, 2018; Dhir, 2018; Bunevicience, 2021; Pang, 2023). Other negative emotions that were reported in the current research and were previously reported in prior empirical studies included anxiety (Dhir et.al, 2018; Swar et.al, 2017; Wu & Pei, 2000; Soroya et.al, 2021), anger (Swar et.al, 2017; Fadilah et.al, 2020) and various facets of negative affect as fear and worry (Sultana, 2023; Swar et.al, 2017; Fadilah et.al, 2020).

Contrary to the proposed hypothesis, no relationship existed between economic news overload and depressive symptoms among respondents. Depressive symptoms even weakened the relationship between overload and news avoidance and discontinuance. While this finding conflicts with existing line of literature, it might be attributed to the nature of the current research respondents whose predispositions varied from other research respondents. Another line of thought justifies this finding to the motives of exposure that are primarily hedonic motives rather than instrumental derivatives, making depression less likely to occur. This finding may be too attributed to the inactive nature of depression that slows down individual's cognition triggering systematic information processing (Song et.al, 2021) and mitigating any withdrawal tendencies from social media consumption among respondents. Consequently, this lends justification for the fact that depression was not related to news overload with its isolation rendering support for the correlation between overload and avoidance and discontinuance.

The resulting negative emotional responses triggered individuals to adjust an appropriate behavioral response to enhance

their psychological state evident in either information avoidance or social media discontinuance. Partial correlation analysis provided further support for the aforementioned findings. Social media fatigue and anxiety were the most prevalent emotional responses that mediated the relationship between economic news information overload and both social media avoidance and social media discontinuance. These findings come in line with existing literature that has associated decline or even avoidance of social media with negative emotions that result from these platforms consumption (Cao, 2018; Fadilah et.al, 2020; Pang, 2023; Tian, 2022; Soroya et.al, 2021; Li, 2023; Guo et.al, 2020; Dai, 2020; Gao, 2022; Zhang, 2016; Fu et.al, 2020) In an online communication setting, individuals are constantly evaluating the outputs of the communication process and the capacity of social media platforms to fulfill their social, psychological and information demands. Once the consumption is associated with the threshold of negative emotional responses, discontinuance is more likely to occur. The emerging negative emotional responses hinders the inner motivation of users, reduces loyalty and increases the probability that they will interrupt their intentions of further consumption. In other words, they are less likely to engage in further social media consumption if they experience greater exhaustion or any other facets of adverse psychological states rather than satisfaction (Pang et.al, 2023).

Conclusion:

While various social media platforms have become extremely pervasive in individuals' lives in modern societies expanding one's social capital and strengthening social bonds, yet these platforms bear a number of negative outcomes that pose a threat on individuals' well-being. The current research provided support for the aforementioned postulation. Extensive exposure to economic news on social media has resulted in a sense of information overload among users. This emerging bottlenecking hindered appropriate processing of the abundant information eventually leading to fatigue, anxiety, anger and negative affect. These adverse responses were predictors of social media avoidance and discontinuance behavior among users in attempts to overcome those negative emotions. These findings provide

an adequate justification for the perceived decline in the number of Egyptian social media users in 2023.

Study limitation and future recommendation:

The contributions of this study and opportunities for future research should be considered in the light of some limitations. One major shortcoming in the current research is evident in the total number of the sample size which is advised to be increased in future research. The current research also depended solely on survey as a data collection method. Future research may apply both quantitative research methods (as surveys) and qualitative research methods (as in depth interviews) to unveil the adverse emotional responses that emerge as a result of extensive exposure to stressful news.

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Attachments:

Table (14) Social media addiction scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Spent a lot of time thinking about Social media or planned use of Social media?	23	15.8 %	46	31.5 %	35	24.0 %	32	21.9%	10	6.8 %	3.27	1.17	65.5%
Thought about how you could free more time to spend on Social media?	13	8.9 %	37	25.3 %	41	28.1 %	34	23.3%	21	14.4%	2.91	1.19	58.2%
Thought a lot about what has happened on Social media recently?	19	13.0 %	52	35.6 %	42	28.8 %	19	13.0%	14	9.6 %	3.29	1.15	65.9%
Spent more time on Social media than initially intended?	47	32.2 %	55	37.7 %	26	17.8 %	12	8.2 %	6	4.1 %	3.86	1.09	77.1%
Felt an urge to use Social media more and more?	17	11.6 %	53	36.3 %	36	24.7 %	28	19.2%	12	8.2 %	3.24	1.14	64.8%
Felt that you had to use Social media more and more in order to get the same pleasure from it?	10	6.8 %	36	24.7 %	37	25.3 %	42	28.8%	21	14.4%	2.81	1.16	56.2%
Get interrupted in whatever you were doing when you feel the need to access social media	18	12.3 %	58	39.7 %	35	24.0 %	26	17.8%	9	6.2 %	3.34	1.10	66.8%

have lost or might have lost an important relationship or opportunity at school/work due to your social media use	12	8.2 %	19	13.0 %	25	17.1 %	46	31.5%	44	30.1%	2.38	1.27	47.5%
Used Social media in order to forget about personal problems?	23	15.8 %	52	35.6 %	22	15.1 %	30	20.5%	19	13.0%	3.21	1.30	64.1%
Used social media to reduce feelings of guilt, anxiety, helplessness, and depression?	20	13.7 %	49	33.6 %	28	19.2 %	23	15.8%	26	17.8%	3.10	1.33	61.9%
Used Social media in order to reduce restlessness?	18	12.3 %	50	34.2 %	37	25.3 %	22	15.1%	19	13.0%	3.18	1.22	63.6%
Feel connected to others when you use social media	31	21.2 %	60	41.1 %	30	20.5 %	17	11.6%	8	5.5 %	3.61	1.11	72.2%
Experienced that others have told you to reduce your use of Social media but not listened to them?	9	6.2 %	32	21.9 %	37	25.3 %	40	27.4%	28	19.2%	2.68	1.19	53.7%
Tried to cut down on the use of Social media without success?	14	9.6 %	44	30.1 %	38	26.0 %	33	22.6%	17	11.6%	3.03	1.18	60.7%
Decided to use Social media less frequently, but not managed to do so?	19	13.0 %	43	29.5 %	40	27.4 %	28	19.2%	16	11.0%	3.14	1.20	62.9%

Become restless or troubled if you have been prohibited from using Social media?	11	7.5 %	30	20.5 %	48	32.9 %	30	20. 5%	27	18. 5%	2. 7 8	1.19	55. 6%
Become irritable if you have been prohibited from using Social media?	11	7.5 %	30	20.5 %	41	28.1 %	31	21. 2%	33	22. 6%	2. 6 9	1.24	53. 8%
Felt bad if you, for different reasons, could not log on to Social media for some time?	14	9.6 %	43	29.5 %	33	22.6 %	34	23. 3%	22	15. 1%	2. 9 5	1.23	59. 0%
Used Social media so much that it has had a negative impact on your job/studies?	14	9.6 %	31	21.2 %	34	23.3 %	38	26. 0%	29	19. 9%	2. 7 5	1.26	54. 9%
Ignored your partner, family members, or friends because of Social media?	8	5.5 %	26	17.8 %	34	23.3 %	41	28. 1%	37	25. 3%	2. 5 0	1.20	50. 0%

Table (15) Information overload scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
I feel overwhelmed by the amount of economic related information that I process daily on social media	21	14.4 %	54	37.0 %	44	30.1 %	23	15.8 %	4	2.7%	3.45	1.01	68.9%
I am often distracted by the amount of economic related information on social media	10	6.8%	41	28.1 %	52	35.6 %	34	23.3 %	9	6.2%	3.06	1.02	61.2%
There is so much economic related information available to me on social media that I have trouble choosing what is important and what's not.	11	7.5%	51	34.9 %	40	27.4 %	37	25.3 %	7	4.8%	3.15	1.04	63.0%
When I search for economic related information on social media, I usually get too much rather than too little information.	14	9.6%	44	30.1 %	57	39.0 %	26	17.8 %	5	3.4%	3.25	0.97	64.9%
I receive too much economic related information on social media to form a coherent picture of the various events	12	8.2%	41	28.1 %	54	37.0 %	33	22.6 %	6	4.1%	3.14	0.99	62.7%
There is too much economic related information on social media so I find it a burden to handle	16	11.0 %	40	27.4 %	53	36.3 %	29	19.9 %	8	5.5%	3.18	1.05	63.7%

I find it hard to extract important economic related information from the excessive amount of information available on social media.	16	11.0 %	51	34.9 %	51	34.9 %	24	16.4 %	4	2.7%	3.35	0.97	67.0%
I find it hard to get economic related information that is relevant to my needs from the excessive amount of information available on social media	8	5.5%	55	37.7 %	52	35.6 %	24	16.4 %	7	4.8%	3.23	0.95	64.5%
I could effectively handle all the economic related information found on social media	10	6.8%	31	21.2 %	56	38.4 %	42	28.8 %	7	4.8%	2.97	0.99	59.4%

Table (16) Social media fatigue scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
I feel tired from my social media activities	18	12.3 %	53	36.3 %	50	34.2 %	21	14.4 %	4	2.7 %	3.41	0.97	68.2%
I feel drained from activities that require me to use social media	16	11.0 %	50	34.2 %	46	31.5 %	28	19.2 %	6	4.1 %	3.29	1.03	65.8%
Using social media is a strain for me	12	8.2 %	40	27.4 %	60	41.1 %	25	17.1 %	9	6.2 %	3.14	1.00	62.9%
I feel burned out from my social media activities	17	11.6 %	41	28.1 %	44	30.1 %	40	27.4 %	4	2.7 %	3.18	1.05	63.7%

I feel disinterested in whether there are new things happening on social media	12	8.2 %	44	30.1 %	45	30.8 %	39	26.7 %	6	4.1 %	3. 12	1.03	62. 3%
I feel indifferent about reminders or alerts about new things on social media	12	8.2 %	40	27.4 %	54	37.0 %	31	21.2 %	9	6.2 %	3. 10	1.03	62. 1%
Sometimes I feel uninterested from using social media	26	17.8 %	76	52.1 %	27	18.5 %	10	6.8 %	7	4.8 %	3. 71	1.00	74. 2%
Sometimes I get bored when using social media	30	20.5 %	72	49.3 %	23	15.8 %	12	8.2 %	9	6.2 %	3. 70	1.08	74. 0%

Table (17) Anxiety scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
I feel apprehensive (anxious) due to too much economic information on social media.	16	11.0 %	57	39.0 %	46	31.5 %	21	14.4 %	6	4.1 %	3. 38	1.00	67. 7%
Economic information overload on social media does not scare me at all	8	5.5 %	39	26.7 %	45	30.8 %	38	26%	16	11%	2. 9	1.09	58 %
Working with too much economic information on social media makes me very nervous	12	8.2 %	41	28.1 %	53	36.3 %	30	20.5 %	10	6.8 %	3. 10	1.04	62. 1%

I feel aggressive and hostile towards too much of available economic information on social media	11	7.5 %	35	24.0 %	41	28.1 %	50	34.2 %	9	6.2 %	2.92	1.06	58.5%
I get a sinking (unpleasant) feeling when I think of searching for information on social media	7	4.8 %	39	26.7 %	56	38.4 %	28	19.2 %	16	11.0 %	2.95	1.05	59.0%
I feel stressed about making decisions or choosing the right information on social media	9	6.2 %	48	32.9 %	43	29.5 %	32	21.9 %	14	9.6 %	3.04	1.09	60.8%

Table (18) Depressive symptoms scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
After accessing economic information on social media I felt calm, relaxed and content	5	3.4 %	17	11.6%	57	39.0%	47	32.2%	20	13.7%	2.59	0.98	51.8%
I still enjoyed the things I used to enjoy.	13	8.9 %	57	39.0%	46	31.5%	20	13.7%	10	6.8 %	3.29	1.04	65.9%
I felt cheerful	6	4.1 %	35	24.0%	64	43.8%	29	19.9%	12	8.2 %	2.96	0.97	59.2%

Table (19) Anger scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
I was becoming angry quickly. (becoming angry in a short time)	9	6.2%	35	24.0%	45	30.8%	42	28.8%	15	10.3%	2.87	1.08	57.4%
I found myself hard to control. (because of anger)	3	2.1%	29	19.9%	46	31.5%	44	30.1%	24	16.4%	2.61	1.05	52.2%
I felt frustrated	7	4.8%	47	32.2%	41	28.1%	32	21.9%	19	13.0%	2.94	1.12	58.8%
I felt like shouting out loud	5	3.4%	32	21.9%	43	29.5%	41	28.1%	25	17.1%	2.66	1.10	53.3%

Table (20) Negative affect scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
I felt Upset (unhappy, disappointed, or worried)	5	3.4%	56	38.4%	36	24.7%	32	21.9%	17	11.6%	3.00	1.10	60.0%
I felt guilty (conscious of or affected by feeling of guilt)	2	1.4%	29	19.9%	42	28.8%	48	32.9%	25	17.1%	2.55	1.04	51.1%
I felt scared (fearful, frightened)	11	7.5%	38	26.0%	40	27.4%	37	25.3%	20	13.7%	2.88	1.17	57.7%
I felt hostile (unfriendly, cold etc.)	4	2.7%	24	16.4%	40	27.4%	50	34.2%	28	19.2%	2.49	1.07	49.9%
I felt irritable (having or showing a tendency to be easily annoyed	6	4.1%	34	23.3%	35	24.0%	49	33.6%	22	15.1%	2.68	1.11	53.6%
I felt nervous (feeling worried) and Jittery(unable to relax for long)	5	3.4%	46	31.5%	35	24.0%	39	26.7%	21	14.4%	2.83	1.13	56.6%
I felt afraid (feeling fearful)	8	5.5%	39	26.7%	43	29.5%	35	24.0%	21	14.4%	2.85	1.13	57.0%

Table (21) Information avoidance scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
I intentionally avoid some economic related information on social media	22	15.1%	61	41.8%	33	22.6%	22	15.1%	8	5.5%	3.46	1.09	69.2%
I scroll down web pages to avoid some economic related information on social media	16	11.0%	52	35.6%	42	28.8%	31	21.2%	5	3.4%	3.29	1.03	65.9%
I tune out of certain economic related information on social media	13	8.9%	55	37.7%	52	35.6%	22	15.1%	4	2.7%	3.35	0.94	67.0%
I use different means to avoid economic related information on social media	11	7.5%	41	28.1%	51	34.9%	36	24.7%	7	4.8%	3.09	1.01	61.8%
I intentionally ignore some economic related posts on social media	18	12.3%	52	35.6%	46	31.5%	22	15.1%	8	5.5%	3.34	1.05	66.8%
I intentionally do not pay attention to some economic related posts on social media	22	15.1%	56	38.4%	39	26.7%	21	14.4%	8	5.5%	3.43	1.08	68.6%
I use technical means to avoid some economic related posts on social media	11	7.5%	26	17.8%	48	32.9%	49	33.6%	12	8.2%	2.83	1.06	56.6%

Table (22) Social media discontinuance scale:

	Extremely agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Extremely disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentile
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
I sometimes discontinue my use of social media but that does not mean that I will completely abandon my use of it.	36	24.7%	64	43.8%	29	19.9%	11	7.5%	6	4.1%	3.77	1.04	75.5%
I have suspended my use of social media	10	6.8%	32	21.9%	43	29.5%	46	31.5%	15	10.3%	2.84	1.10	56.7%
I have stopped using social media	5	3.4%	22	15.1%	32	21.9%	56	38.4%	31	21.2%	2.41	1.09	48.2%
I have discontinued using social media	3	2.1%	29	19.9%	34	23.3%	51	34.9%	29	19.9%	2.49	1.08	49.9%
I have quit using social media	6	4.1%	15	10.3%	39	26.7%	56	38.4%	30	20.5%	2.39	1.05	47.8%
If I could I would discontinue the use of social media	22	15.1%	34	23.3%	36	24.7%	41	28.1%	13	8.9%	3.08	1.22	61.5%
I will sometimes take a break from social media and return later	24	16.4%	52	35.6%	42	28.8%	20	13.7%	8	5.5%	3.44	1.09	68.8%
In the future I will use social media far less than today	22	15.1%	52	35.6%	44	30.1%	21	14.4%	7	4.8%	3.42	1.06	68.4%
I plan to use the internet for information in a short period	16	11.0%	65	44.5%	38	26.0%	18	12.3%	9	6.2%	3.42	1.04	68.4%
I intend to use social media for information in a short period	17	11.6%	67	45.9%	40	27.4%	14	9.6%	8	5.5%	3.49	1.01	69.7%