

Millennials prefer texting to talking

➤ Over-reliance on social media has affected social skills

■ BY **LEE SIN NEE** AND **TIVIYA LAKSHMANAN**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Are millennials losing out on valuable in-person interactions due to their over-reliance on social media to communicate?

Many of them prefer to interact with their friends or family via text messages instead of talking face to face.

The convenience of texting has affected social skills among millennials.

Three major social media platforms used by millennials to communicate with friends are Facebook (77.25%), followed by Twitter (6.06%) and Instagram (5.72%), according to Social Media Stats Malaysia until July released by GlobalStats.

Universiti Putra Malaysia student Jannatul Firdaus prefers to communicate via texts.

"I am way comfortable texting my friends



Matilda

Azrina

because I don't have to meet them all the time. I prefer my personal space."

"When we are talking with others, we are more mindful of the way we talk such as our tone of voice," Mentem Psychological Services' clinical psychologist Matilda Xavier said.

"People can tell whether we are polite or not, whereas on social media it's all shorthand.

"We are so caught up in social media where

we are looking for validation with the number of likes and the constant feeling of being not good enough.

"Mentally, it will affect the millennials' self-esteem if they are so concerned about external validation."

The over-reliance on social media to communicate and self-expression could lead to limited interpersonal relations.

"Social media by itself is not bad, but if you become so addictive that you rather spend more time on social media than your friends and family, something is very wrong and you need to do something about it," Matilda said.

It is important for social media users, especially millennials, to understand the nature of relationships built on the web, Universiti Sains Malaysia's Assoc Prof Dr Azrina Husin pointed out.

"Social media creates a sense of pseudo intimacy whereby the intimacy and social ties created is not strong and long lasting," the sociologist said.

She stressed on the importance of social ties in binding individuals together within society as without these ties, people do not have a sense of belonging.