

Purpose of this research research proposal examples

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



Advancements in technology and growth of the internet have transformed the nature of relationships among human beings. John Bowlby developed the attachment theory after describing attachment from the perspective of a long-lasting psychological connection between humans. Researchers have attached the attachment theory to provide explanations to romantic relationships existing among adults. These attachment styles included the secure attachment, avoidant-insecure attachment, and ambivalent-insecure attachment. The three attachment styles put forward in the attachment theory are applicable to romantic relationships. The study presented in this paper is aimed at broadening the scope of the attachment theory by examining romantic relationships in social media networks, particularly on Facebook. The study will extend the context of the attachment theory to cover other romantic relationship concept other than the mother-infant relationships proposed by John Bowlby during the formulation of the attachment theory. Participants in this study will comprise of college students aged 18-24 years having Facebook accounts

There is no doubt that the evolutionary perspective of the attachment theory can be used to predict the behavior of individuals in their later stages in life. While Bowlby's attachment theory was intended at explaining the social relationships of children during their first stages of life, empirical research has shown that the quality of relationships formed in the early stages of life does play a vital role in determining the direction of future relationships. Developmental psychologists, anthropologists, and biologists have argued that individuals develop into more diverse and complex social groups as compared to the mother-infant dyad proposed by Bowlby. During the

formulation of the attachment theory, Bowlby argued that complex social groups surround infants and their mothers, and as such, most of relationships are developed from such situations. This situation can be explained by the development of relationships in the social media and social networking sites.

Advancements in technology and growth of the internet have transformed the nature of relationships among human beings (Ijzendoorn, 2005). Many a person is interacting on social media networks on a regular basis as compared to the level of interactions conducted on a face-to-face basis. With the increasing number of individual's using social media networks on a regular basis, it is critical to consider the impacts of such networks on the lives of the users. The increased number of users shows that there must be an attachment to the communication process on social media networks (Bateman, Pike, & Butler, 2011). To this purpose, this paper examines the use of Social Networking Sites (Facebook) in facilitating romantic relationships from the view of the attachment theory.

Literature Review

Xin, Kim, Li, and Hsu (2011) assert that the internet age has witnessed rapid growth of social networking sites over the past few years. These social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Orkut, LinkedIn, and Mocospace among others. With millions of Social network users visiting the internet on a daily basis, the potential of users to develop relationships and communicate with one another cannot be underestimate. Over the recent past, many researchers have focused their research on social networking

sites with the aim of establishing the underlying reasons that lead individuals to use social networking sites (Bateman, Pike, & Butler, 2011). It can be assumed that individuals visit social networking sites to fulfill particular needs. Loving & Ochoa (2011) argue that many college students visit Facebook for a myriad of reasons, be it connecting with friends, getting the latest information, or making new friends, Facebook is an ideal one-stop social networking site. They further argue that Facebook provides the right avenues for users to promote, organize, and improve the outcome or attendance of individuals to events. These reasons can be said to be concerned in maintaining relationships by connecting with new friends and reconnecting with old friends (Danielewics, & Cayemberg, 2012). Closely related is the idea that Facebook users are mainly involved with social grooming behaviors that involve monitoring the interactions of other individuals without their knowledge (Gershon, 2011). Such behaviors include viewing profiles of other individuals and following their recent activities such as news feeds.

On the other hand, the subject of romantic relationships on social networking sites has generated heated debates in many discussions in addition to being a topic of research in many scholarly discussions. Facebook can either strengthen or weaken romantic relationships depending on the manner in which individuals conduct themselves on the online platform. Strengthened relationships are achieved when more attention is given to their relationship on Facebook and such partners would openly declare their affection to the public (Gershon, 2011; Papp, Danielewics, & Cayemberg, 2012). However,

weakened relationships occur when partners are faced with the danger of losing their relationship.

Amidon (2008) argued cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects of a relationship could be evidenced from attachments in social media networks. Cognitive aspect involves a situation where partners use Facebook as a platform for investigating factors associated with their suspicions, distrust to partners, and uncertainties associated with relationships. Many a times, such a behavior is always associated with one party in the relationship. Similarly, emotional aspect involves the reaction from one partner to a rival or to the counterpart. The reactions might involve face-to-face confrontation with the case of the real partner or virtual communication with the rival. The cognitive and emotional aspect plays a huge impact in influencing the behavioral aspect of the relationship. For this reason, the level of satisfaction in romantic relationships will depend on the outcome of the above aspects.

Satisfaction from online depends on the levels of fulfilling the levels of uncertainties associated with romantic relationships. Uncertainty in romantic relationships explains the presence of jealousy in relationships and argues that uncertainties forces partners in romantic relationships to practice the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects suggested by Amidon (2008). To find answers to uncertain situations in the online realm, partners can decide to investigate each other's profiles and recent activities on Facebook or attempt to search for information they are interested in identifying (Darvell, Walsh, and White, 2011). Other investigative methods include lurking and surveillance. Posts, messages, and comments made by

individuals of the opposite sex will lead to a situation where the partners will confront each other to obtain clarity on the element of uncertainty. This explains the existence of uncertainty-related behaviors such as high levels of relational jealousies.

Speaking of the attachment theory, it entails the study of the emotional bond existing between child and the parent or caregiver (Talley, 2012, p. 249). John Bowlby developed the attachment theory after describing attachment from the perspective of a long-lasting psychological connection between humans. The attachment theory was refined by Mary Ainsworth, a developmental psychologist who worked in closely with John Bowlby. Bowlby's findings showed that bonds that develop between the caregiver and the infant have an incredible effect on the lifetime of the individual. According to the findings, attachments are responsible for increasing the chances of survival for the infant (Talley, 2012). The major theme of the attachment theory argues that a caregiver's presence and response mother provides a sense of security to their infants. Similarly, an infant recognizes the mother is responsible for its security thereby creating a stable base for the child to grow.

Researchers have attached the attachment theory to provide explanations to romantic relationships existing among adults. For instance, the three attachment styles put forward in the attachment theory are applicable to romantic relationships. Adults enter into romantic relationships to fulfill certain needs such as secure bases, finding a safe haven, and to seek for proximity with their loved ones. Equally, by comparing relationships mother-

infant relationships and romantic relationships, certain behaviors can be seen to overlap. Examples of such behaviors include gestures, affections, and eye contacts. Such explanations provide the logic for applying the attachment theory to explain behaviors in romantic relationships.

In applying the attachment theory to romantic relationships on social networking sites, it is possible to see how individuals relate to each other on the online platform (Lamb, 2005). For instance, individuals who are securely attached in their relationships have a tendency of exhibiting positive feelings on Facebook. An anxious-ambivalent partner will tend to monitor their partners closely and such partners are afraid of losing their partners. On the other hand, distrustful partners will also tend to exhibit avoidant personalities because they are often uncomfortable with the presence of other individuals. Therefore, attachment systems can be used to explain relationships on the Facebook platform. Times spent of Facebook searching on information pertaining to a relationship are directly related to the attachment theory. This phenomenon can be explained from the perspective of a partner being committed to the other partner. This commitment entails satisfying a plethora of factors aimed at bringing increased satisfaction in the relationship, attaining certainty in the relationship, and gaining trust from the other partner (Darvell, Walsh, and White, 2011).

The study presented in this paper is aimed at broadening the scope of the attachment theory by examining romantic relationships in social media networks, particularly on Facebook. The study will extend the context of the attachment theory to cover other romantic relationship concept other than

the mother-infant relationships proposed by John Bowlby during the formulation of the attachment theory. For this reason, the study will pay attention to relationships developed in social networking sites (particularly Facebook). By using the social media approach, this study intends to show that the attachment theory is a useful tool for investigating the use of Social Media Networks in facilitating romantic relationships.

Research Question

A research of the nature proposed in this study calls for the formulation of specific research questions in order to help in narrowing the topic under study to specific limits. Additionally, the research question helps in limiting the study to address specific variables. Based on these objectives and reasons, the following research questions have been proposed for this study is:

Does Social Media Networks such as Facebook play a major role in facilitating romantic relationships when viewed from the attachment theory perspective?

Do social network users get satisfied in their relationships?

Can emotions associated with romantic relationships such jealousy or affection be expressed through online forums?

Is there a connection between time spend on social networking sites and the length/strengthening of a relationship?

Are uncertainty-related behaviors exhibited in social network relationships?

Hypothesis

Based on the research questions formulated above, the following hypotheses are suggested to act as guidance for the research. The hypotheses include;

Social networks play major roles in influencing romantic relationships based on the perspective of the attachment theory

Social Media Networks such Facebook brings satisfaction in relationships because it enables users to declare their relationship statuses openly and find easier opportunities for conducting surveillance

As individuals become increasingly attached to their social network relationships, emotions such as affection, jealousy or hatred can easily be seen.

The more time individuals spent on Facebook, the more satisfied they become in their relationships. In situations where they discover abnormality in their relationships through stalking or “ facestalking”, less satisfaction is achieved as they spent more time on Facebook

Limitation of this study

This study will limit itself to the examination of the use of Social Networking Sites (Facebook) in facilitating romantic relationships from the view of the attachment theory. While there are many Social Media Networks, this study will primarily limit itself to Facebook. Additionally, university students developed the Facebook application and hence, this study will use college students as the basis for the study.

Definition of terms

Facebook- a social networking site founded in 2004 that allows users to connect with friends. Facebook users can declare their relationship status, invite friends, tag photos, make plans, chat, post content, play games, and send messages among other applications. This provides a fundamental platform for creating relationships and communication

Attachment theory- this refers to a psychological theory developed by John Bowlby and involved conducting a study to establish the level of closeness with preferred individuals (Talley, 2012, p. 246). This theory showed that infants become attached to each other through three different styles; for security bases, finding a safe haven, and to seek for proximity. Researchers have expanded this theory to explain romantic love in adult relationships.

Research Methodology

Participants

Participants in this study will comprise of college students having Facebook accounts. Another requirement that is essential to enable participants to qualify for this study is that they must be actively involved in a romantic relationship. The selected students must have logged into their Facebook account atleast 48 hours prior to the study. One hundred students will be selected to participate in this study. The age limit for the participants will be 18-24 years.

Design

The study is considered a 2 (Male/Female student) * 1 (attachment to their romantic relationship on Facebook) between the subjects. The 2 represents either being male/female forming the independent variables. The level of attachment to their romantic relationship is independent on the factors aimed at bringing increased satisfaction in the relationship, attaining certainty in the relationship, and gaining trust from the other partner.

Materials

Determining the level of attachment among participants will be realized by designing a descriptive measure that will require the participants to categorize their romantic relationship to fit a specific category. The categories will comprise of the three attachment styles proposed by Bowlby in the attachment theory. Investigating attachments in romantic relationships as it relates to Facebook will involve asking participants particular statements related to their Facebook investigation behaviors. Such statements include the likelihood of adding a rival of the relationship as your friend, the number of times spend viewing your partner's profile, questioning suspicious friends, and other elements that might amount to cheating.

Measurement Scale

Answers to such statements will be measured using the choices of the Likert scale. The choices of measurements on the Likert Scale range from " very likely," " Likely," " Sometimes" " unlikely" and " very unlikely."

Procedure

Individuals selected to participate in this study will be required to complete an online survey questionnaire at their schools computer lab. The participants will be categorized into four (4) groups of 25 students each. The study will be conducted within four days, each group filling the questionnaire on a distinct day. The questionnaire is designed in a manner that will require participants to answer to a sequence of questions relating to online relationships, their level of satisfactions, levels of commitment, causes of relationship certainties, and the ways they use to investigate their partners and other aspects relating to their relationship from the online platform. The participants will be instructed not to share any information relating to the study. Other general questions that will be included in the survey questionnaire will relate to the use of social networking sites.

Ethical considerations

This study is likely to generate some ethical considerations from the participants. For instance, it involves an infringement of the privacy of the participants in addition to exposing confidential and sensitive information (Bateman, Pike, & Butler, 2011; Special, & Li-Barber, 2012). However, such ethical considerations will be overcome seeking consent from the participants and providing them with instructions detailing the aims and objectives of the research.

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