

Effects of social networking sites on the parent-child relationship



The wide use of the Internet especially on social networking sites (SNSs) amongst all individuals is now playing an essential role in their daily lives (Digital Life, n. d.). Nowadays, it is common to see that the majority of people owns desktop computers, laptops, mobile phones or tablets with Internet access allowing individuals to log onto the Internet at their convenience and connects to social networking sites, to play digital games and to carry out many other online activities (Zickuhr, 2010). They may carry out any of their activities or look for entertainment at anytime and anywhere since wireless network are to be found easily. It is proven by Digital Life, the largest study of online activities and behaviours released last October in 2010, that Malaysians reportedly spend an average of nine hours a week on social networking sites alone resulting in them having less time to be spent for other activities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2. 1 Technology and the Parent-Child Relationship

The increased presence of technology in the daily lives of modern children has caused the relationship of parents and their children to be affected. This is in terms of their closeness with their parents which is found in Khan's (2011) study. Khan did a study on the relationship between the duration of adolescents' (14 to 18 years old) technology usage on computer, mobile phone and video games and their relationship with their parents. This research was done in a New York high school on 63 students. These students represent a generation that has been exposed to technology the most throughout their lifetime (Digital Life, n. d.). The results however only showed a relationship between the time spent on computers and how close

children are to their parents. It was found that the longer the time spent on computers, the closeness towards parents diminished. On the other hand, there was no correlation to be found on the usage of mobile between the closeness with parents as mobile phone is still a way for both parent and child to communicate. In addition, this shows that the time-displacement hypothesis theory is applied on the computer usage here because this theory believed that one must reduce time in an activity in order to spend time on a new activity (Endestad, Heim, Kaare, Torgersen & Brandtzæg, 2011). One negative aspect of Khan's research is that it only measures the time spent on the usage of computers. His research had not included specifically what activities were being done on the computer during their usage.

Similarly, another research also has shown that relationships of children with their family members are affected by the amount of time they spend on the Internet. In Young's (2007) study, he investigated whether any decline and loss of desire for face-to-face communication with their family was related to Internet surfing. The age range (14 to 18 years old) of this study was controlled because he brought into consideration that there may be restrictions implied in their usages of Internet by parents and also because that generation are being exposed much to technology since birth. Young's research found that students in Illinois, Carbondale Community High School use the Internet more often, which in turn causes them to spend less time with their family. Plus, he also found that the desire for face-to-face communication with family members declined when more time was spent on the Internet. As it has been proven by the time-displacement hypothesis theory, the time children spend surfing the Internet and the time spent with

their family members is assumed to be zero-sum. Children who spend hours on the Internet will find that there is not much time left for any other types of interaction or bonding time with their family (Young, 2007; Kayany & Yelsma, 2000). Undoubtedly, due to the lack of communication, children and their parents as family members will have a poorer relationship instead of being able to maintain a stronger family relationship (Thames & Thomason, 1998).

On top of that, Lee's (2009) recent study supported the fact that the time-displacement hypothesis plays its role between the time spent in computer and the time spent interacting with parents as well. Lee's study reported that the use of computer for recreational (E. g., using social network sites, entertainment, and watch video) and communication (E. g., instant messaging, chat room and e-mail) purposes among 1, 312 adolescent from the United State (age 12 to 18), replaced their time with their parents and Lee's result had showed " an increase of 1 hour in computer-mediated communication results in a decrease of 24 minutes in time with parents" (p. 517). It was concluded that Lee' finding shows a negative correlation among the time spent on computer and on parent-child relationship, thus this is an issue where the public should be concern about because family time plays a major role in developing a healthy child (Lee, 2009). However, one drawback that was found in Lee's study was that she did not consider including the specific type of online activity and also the type of social networks sites, although, this issue will be dealt with in the current study.

Punamaki, Wallenius, Holtto, Nygard, and Rimpela's (2009) research had shown similarities in their findings. Their research was conducted on 478

Finnish children and adolescent from seven schools. In their study, they
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examine the association between the type of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage in term of playing digital games, internet surfing, information seeking, and communication (email and chat room) and also the intensity of the ICT usage on the quality of peer and parental relation using the parent-adolescent communication scale (PACS). The result found was that, using ICT for entertainment is related with poor peer and parental relations. In addition, engaging in intensive internet surfing however was found to associate with poor maternal relation which is seen most in daughter-mother communication. The time-displacement hypothesis is also seen in this research, where by time is view as zero-sum phenomenon. This means that as there is only 24 hours in a day, the time used on the computer will reduce the time spent on other activities (Nie and Hillygus, 2002). Thus, the relationship between parent and child are affected by the usage of ICT causing both parent and child to have poor communication with one another, when communication is essential in building a strong parent-child relationship (Punamaki et al., 2009; Peterson, 2009).

Most researches had only looked generally into the usage of computer and Internet (E. g., Young, 2007; Punamaki et al., 2009; Khan, 2011) but not specifically on social networking. As defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007), SNSs are known to be the web-based services that let individuals create either a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, and to also speak about a list of other users that they share a connection. Plus, it enables users also to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Moreover, the nature and classification of

these connections may be different from site to site. Another definition by Subramanyam and Greenfield (2008) on SNSs are defined as online sites that allow users to create profiles (public or private) and form a network of friends. SNSs allow users to interact with their friends via public and private means (such as messages, instant messaging) as well as allow the posting of user-generated content such as photos and videos (MySpace and Facebook).

It is reported that the use of SNSs have been increasing drastically till today.

It is reported in the Pew Internet and American Life Report that 95% of American teenagers whose ages range from 12 to 17 years old have the accessibility to go online and 80% of the teenagers are users of SNSs (Lenhart et al., 2011). In addition, the usage of SNSs was so drastic that the teenagers log on to it every day. 46% of teenagers reported that they log in several time a day, 24% say that they log in approximately only once a day and the rest either log in during the weekends or on alternate days (Lenhart et al., 2011). Hence, this has become a habit by which they spend excessive time going online (Das & Saboo, 2011). Besides that, the Pew Internet and American Life Report also reported that a majority of the teenagers (88%) who are 14 to 17 years old uses Facebook and MySpace while the minority (17%) uses Twitter. Given that this statistical analysis has caused parents to be more concern about these issues, 63% of American parents now are afraid that their children's Internet usage that include accessing SNSs, and their usage of cell phones as well will decrease their time for face- to-face interaction and communication with the family (Lenhart et al., 2011).

Besides that, nearly all researches focus on the usage of the Internet on computers. However, with more advanced technology, for example, the <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-social-networking-sites-on-the-parent-child-relationship/>

invention of netbooks, smartphones and tablets, it is shown that more time is spent on SNSs, for example Facebook had reported that mobile users are 50% more active on Facebook as compared to those who are non-mobile users (Facebook, n. d.). The usage of mobile phones was also a concern of parents in the Pew Internet and American Life Report (Lenhart, et al., 2011) because mobile phones, or as it is widely known today, smartphones, are now designed to have easy access to the Internet regardless of where one is as wireless internet are made available everywhere (Smith, 2011). This problem was a concern to Banjo, Hu, and Sundar (2008) as well, as they found out that people feel so obligated to their phones that they would not leave their phones. As a result, this has caused social interaction to reduce among one another. In addition, Lenhart (2012) revealed that American adolescents aged 14 to 17 years old, show the highest ownership of a smartphones with 31%. 49% of these young smartphone owners do use their phone to go online. These same statistics also show that a total of 88% young smartphone owners use desktops or computers to go online as well.

Technology and the Internet has indeed become an integral part of the daily lives of modern children. As mentioned in the various studies conducted by Khan, Young, Lee as well as Punamaki, Wallenius, Holtto, Nygard, and Rimpela, the relationship between parent and child diminishes as their children spend increasing amounts of time on computers and on the World Wide Web. There is a decline and loss of desire for face-to-face communication between children and their family members. With new technological advances coupled with rapid accessibility to the Internet, the popularity of SNSs is increasing in this modern era. Hence, this study intends

to investigate and find the link between the amount of time children spend accessing SNSs and their relationship with their parents.

2. 2 Technology and Self-Esteem

In spite of that, having to observe that a majority of children today who uses the internet to surf on social networking sites, would it be related to their self-esteem because Armstrong, Phillips and Saling (2000) research back in year 2000 had showed that heavier internet users have a poorer self-esteem among the adults aged between 25 to 30 years old. A recent research in 2007 by Yang and Tung (2007) had studied on the difference among internet addicts and non-internet addicts on 1608 Taiwanese high school student in grade 10 to 12 on their self-esteem. They determined that Internet addicts (spending averagely 21 hours in a week) have a lower self-esteem as compared to non-addicts (spending averagely 12 hours in a week). They then conclude that students with low self- esteem will have a higher tendency to become an internet addict because this is one method for them to escape from their problems (E. g., weak social skills and low self-confidence) (Yang & Tung, 2007; Armstrong, Phillips and Saling, 2000).

In another study, Zywica and Danowski (2008) had investigated on the “ relationship between popularity on Facebook and offline with personality and social variable including sociability and self-esteem” among undergraduates students in the Midwestern United States. The study had found that extrovert individual with higher self-esteem tend to be more well-known on Facebook and also when offline. Whereas, individual who are introvert (less sociable) have lower self-esteem and they tend to be less popular offline, but they are popular on Facebook instead. It was found that a higher percentage

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of low self-esteem individual discloses much more information about themselves online. It was also reported that low self-esteem individual do at times feel even better in expressing who they really are online as compared to offline (Zywica and Danowski, 2008). Although, this research did not look into younger students, this research do give an idea of how it may also affect on adolescents since they are another group of individual who uses social networking sites even more today (Zickuhr, 2010).

To define self-esteem, Linwood (2006) stated that “ self esteem is your own personal view of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally”. Every individual’s self-esteem differs accordingly since everyone view themselves differently. No doubt, having positive attitude for one would be beneficial as compared to negative attitudes because having one to develop their self-esteem would make them a more successful person in life, thus self-esteem plays a major role in one’s life (Linwood, 2006). As for Kleon & Wilson (2007), they had define self-esteem as “ the value we place on what we believe to be true about ourselves; how we feel about ourselves; and/or an emotion we hold true about ourselves”. Hence, the operational definition for self-esteem would be how the student views and perceived themselves as who they are now, whether negatively or positively.

As for the parent-child relationship definition, it is being defined as “ a combination of behaviours, feelings, and expectations that are unique to a particular parent and a particular child and the relationship involves the full extent of a child’s development” (Linwood, 2006, p. 1392). Whereas another definition by Crockett, Brown, Russell and Shen (2007), which they had derived the meaning of parent-child relationship in adolescent as having “
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open communication, instrumental and emotional support, indirect expressions of caring, parental control, and valued relationship qualities". Instead of looking into both parents in general like other past researchers (Young, 2007; Khan, 2011), the current research would like to just investigate on the mother because according to Crockett and colleagues (2007) mother do play a bigger role in the child upbringing, where the child feels their relationship with their mother are closer and more open and "mothers were seen as being more affectionate, lenient, and emotionally supportive" (p. 639). While, father's usually express their care in an indirect method which is by "providing instrumental and financial support and by just being there" (p. 639).

In that case, the current research aim to investigate whether spending more time on Social Networking Sites would affect the mother and child relationship. The current research operational definition for Social Network Sites is being defined as any online websites which enables an individual to interact online, share opinions and allow users to interact with their another individual through public and private channel, for example Facebook, Myspace, blogs, Twitter, YouTube, MSN, Skype and etc. As for the mother-child relationship, the operational definition would be the closeness of both mother and child and how they usually bond with one another in terms of having to share ideas or making decisions. The parent-child relationship is also their emotional-ties for example, warmth by which they express their care and love for one another. It is also the time both mother and child spends their time together for instance, having to go places together or carries out activities together. Besides that, this research also investigates

whether the level of secondary school student's self-esteem affects the amount of time spent on social networking sites. Thus the two hypotheses for this study will be:

H1: Longer hours spent on Social Networking Sites (SNS), reduces mother-child relationship.

H2: Student with low self-esteem tends to spend more time on social networking sites as compared high self-esteem student

Chapter 3: Methodology

3. 1 Study Design

The researcher had chosen to use the survey design as the study design for this research. The survey design is appropriate for any research pertaining to the relationship between two variables. There are two hypotheses for this study. The independent variable for the first hypothesis is the time spent on Social Network Sites (SNS) and the dependent variable is the parent (mother)-child relationship. As for the second hypothesis, the independent variable would be the level of child's self-esteem (high or low) and the dependent variable is the time spent on Social Network Sites (SNS).

Questionnaires were used to collect the data needed for the research.

3. 2 Participants

This study used purposive sampling because the participants were required to fulfil the inclusion criteria of this study, which was accessing to at least one social networking site (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, MSN, Skype). Another criterion would be that the student must currently live

with both parents because the purpose of this study was to investigate whether the relationship between children and their parents reduces when they spend more time on the social networking sites. Also because some students may be living with a single parent, this would then influence the result of the study. The variables of gender, race and ethnicity were not being controlled in this study. Students who do not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded and students with any form of disability were not allowed to take part in the research. Additionally, when the parent's consent form was not returned to the researcher, the corresponding student was excluded from the study as well. Another exclusion criterion was that any incomplete data from participants would be excluded.

The total amount of participants recruited was 161 secondary school students from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seafield, Selangor, a government secondary school. However, only 150 participants fulfilled the study's criteria, in which 11 data was discarded due to . The students that participated are all 13 years of age (Form 1). The gender variable was not controlled in this survey thus there is a total of 83 males and 67 female participants (refer to Table 1). Also, participants who do not live with both parents were excluded from this study; hence 100% of the participants live with both their parents. The reason for the exclusion was because the purpose of this study is to investigate whether the relationship between children and their mother reduces when they spend more time on the social networking sites. Also, because some students may be living with a single parent, this would then influence the results of the study. The results show that 100% of the participants use the Internet with a majority of the

participants accessing Facebook (97.3%), followed by YouTube (85.3%), Twitter (47.3%), BlogSpot (18%), other sites (14.7%) and MySpace (4.7%). Besides that, a majority of the participants (79.3%) reported that they use laptops to access social networking sites, followed by mobile phones (62.7%), desktop computers (62.7%), tablets (40.7%) and other devices (2.7%). Furthermore, it was found that most participants access these social networking sites at home (97.3%) and a few other places with a minority of 16.7% at restaurant, 12% at school, 9.3% at Internet cafes, and 4% at other places.

3.3 Measurement

In the current research, two tools were used to carry out the research, namely the Parent-child Relationship Questionnaire (PCRQ) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSE) along with a demographic form. The demographic form (refer to Appendix C) also serves the purpose of collecting information on the total hours that the participants spend averagely in a day. All of the tools used including the demographic form were made to be bilingual. The original language of the tools was all in English and the other language translated was Bahasa Melayu. One main reason for the requirement of a bilingual questionnaire was because the survey was being carried out in a Malaysian public school wherein the Malay language is the medium of instruction. The translation was done by a qualified full time secondary teacher, teaching Bahasa Malaysia and then, it was checked and back translated by a University Lecturer, teaching English course with a degree in Bachelor of Education (TESL) with honours from University Putra Malaysia and Master of Education from Deakin University, Australia, and also

speak Bahasa Melayu as her mother tongue. She is currently the Head of English for Specific Academic Purposes in a University.

3.3.1 Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire (PCRQ)

The Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire (PCRQ) by Furman and Giberson (1995) (refer to Appendix E) measures the parental feelings of warmth for their children, positive disciplinary strategies, parent-child relationship, parental power assertion and possessiveness. This questionnaire comes in two versions; the child's version and the parent's version. For this current research only the child's version will be used. There are the 57-items (long version) and the 40-items (brief version) in the PCRQ and they use a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (Hardly at all) to 5 (Extremely much). The brief version is used to determine the factor score whereas the full version is only used when scales score is being determined. The factors and scales names for the brief version of questionnaire are warmth (affection, admiration of parent and admiration by parent), disciplinary warmth (praise, shared decision-making and rationale), personal relationship (prosocial, similarity, intimacy, nurturance and companionship), power assertion (quarrelling, dominance, physical punishment, deprivation of privileges, verbal punishment and guilt induction), and possessiveness (possessiveness and protectiveness). In scoring, the factor scores are obtained by deriving the average score of pertinent scales. The psychometric properties that was shown is the alphas for the factors range from .68 to .88 ($M = .81$) (Furman & Gibson, 1995).

3.3.2 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSE) by Rosenberg (1989) (refer to

Appendix D) consists of the 10-item Guttman scale, which had established a <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-social-networking-sites-on-the-parent-child-relationship/>

one-dimensional continuum designed to measure the high school student's self-esteem. Since, the RSE is a Guttman scale; the scoring of low self-esteem responses are either "disagree" or "strongly disagree" on item 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10 along with "agree" or "strongly agree" on items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9. When there are two or three out of three correct responses for item 3, 7, and 9, it will be scored as one item. For item 4 and 5, none or two out of two correct responses are considered as a single item. Then, items 1, 8, and 10 are scored as individual items and combined correct responses either one or two out of two for items 2 and 6 are considered to be a single item. However, the scale could also be scored simply by totalling up all the individual 4-point items once the reverse-scoring on the negatively worded items. The RSE has shown a strong and good internal consistency as it has shown a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92 (Rosenberg, 1989). Besides, a correlation of .85 and .88 was shown in two studies of two week test-retest reliability meaning that there is an excellent stability (Rosenberg, 1989).

3.4 Procedure

Once approval was received from the secondary school, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seafield (refer to Appendix A), a total of five classes were allocated to the researcher during the assembly period. Parent's consent forms were distributed (refer to Appendix B) to the students. As the students are below the age of 18 years old, it was necessary for their parents to grant permission before the students were allowed to participate in this survey. At the same time, a slight introduction about the study was given to the participants and the students were instructed to hand the research information sheet along with the Parent's Consent Form to their parents to

grant the student's participation in this study. They were also informed in the research information sheet that there will be no reward for participating or consequence for not participating. The participants were informed to return the parent's consent forms to their respective class monitors. The class monitors were to hand it to the Afternoon Session Assistant Principal. Subsequently, the researcher would then collect the forms from the Afternoon Session Assistant Principal and sort out the classes' arrangement. This step was repeated until the researcher meets the targeted number of participants.

Then, the researcher proceeded with the survey distribution according to class schedules that were notified by the Assistant School Principal. By following the class schedules, the research was not a disturbance to the students' academic classes. A brief explanation was given to the participants; the purpose of the survey, the time taken to complete the survey (approximately 20 to 30 minutes) depending on their reading and answering speed, and that all details will be kept completely private and confidential, only to be used for the research purposes. After that, the participants were given the demographic form (refer to Appendix C). However, when the participants did not meet the requirement of the research criteria, they were shown appreciation for their interest in participation. As for students who met the requirements of the research, they were then given the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSE) (refer to Appendix D) and the Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire (PCRQ) (refer to Appendix E). The researcher was present the whole time during the questionnaire response session. Once the participants completed their

answers, the researcher then collected the questionnaire forms. All students that had participated were thanked.

Chapter: 4: Results

4. 1

To investigate the relationship between the hours spent on Social Networking Sites (SNS) and mother-child relationship, Pearson bivariate correlation was being used to analyse the data because both independent variable and dependent variable are continuous variable. The results in Table 2 shows that there are no significant relationship between the hours spent on social networking sites averagely per day and warmth (affection, admiration of parent and admiration by parent) $r = -.048$, $p = .560$, disciplinary warmth (Praise, shared decision-making and rationale) $r = -.043$, $p = .597$, personal relationship (prosocial, similarity, intimacy, nurturance and companionship) $r = -.061$, $p = .456$, power assertion (quarrelling, dominance, physical punishment, deprivation of privileges, verbal punishment and guilt induction) $r = .146$, $p = .076$, and possessiveness (possessiveness and protectiveness) $r = .023$, $p = .784$. Therefore, it is concluded that the first hypothesis is not supported.

As for the second hypotheses, independent sample t-test was conducted to analyse the data and compare whether the participants self-esteem (low/high) would affects the amount of time spent on social networking sites. The result was based on the equal variances not assumed because the sample size of the study was unequal with larger number of high self-esteem ($n = 119$) participants than low self-esteem ($n = 30$). However, the results

(refer to Table 3) showed a weak positive significant difference between low self-esteem group ($M = 154.26$, $SD = 109.41$) and high Self-Esteem group ($M = 205.86$, $SD 169.67$), $t(72.168) = -2.059$, $p = .043$. Since the result showed that high self-esteem spent more time on social networking sites than low self-esteem, the second hypotheses is said to be not supported.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Time Spent on Social Networking Sites and Mother-Child Relationship

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there was a link between the numbers of hours spent on social networking sites with mother and child relationship. The first hypothesis for this study predicted that the longer the time spent on Social Networking Sites (SNS), the lower the quality of mother-child relationship as a whole. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in this study, the mother-child relationship is categorised into five factors; warmth (affection, admiration of mother, and admiration by mother), disciplinary warmth (praise, shared decision-making and rationale) and personal relationship (prosocial, similarity, intimacy, nurturance and companionship), power assertion (quarrelling, dominance, physical punishment, deprivation of privileges, verbal punishment and guilt induction), and possessiveness (possessiveness and protectiveness).

To be more specific, the results in this study showed that there was a negative relationship between the amount of time spent on SNSs and the warmth, disciplinary warmth and personal relationship factor which implies that the more time spent on SNSs the lower the warmth, disciplinary

warmth, personal relationship factor. Whereas a positive relationship was
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found between the amounts of time spent on SNSs and the power assertion and possessiveness factor which shows that the more time spent on SNSs, the higher the power assertion and possessiveness factor. However, the results found were not significant for these five factors. In essence, the first hypothesis was not supported.

Although SNSs gives the perception that it may cause parent-child relationship to be affected (E. g., Young, 2007; Lee, 2009; Simonpietri, 2011) it was found to be otherwise by Chen, Goh, and Li (2010). Parents are showing their interest in SNSs and they are also picking up with the advance technology to stay connected with their children (Chen et al., 2010). Their studies had shown that parents are using SNSs like Facebook as a tool of communication to communicate with their children. It was found that with Facebook, both parents and child are able to interact with one another more openly which then helps them to enhance their mutual understanding with one another. It is due to the fact that parents feel appreciated that their child allows them into their social life and this transparency acts as a bridge to connect parents and child relationship with each other positively. Apart from that, it also closes the gap between the younger and older generation (Chen et al., 2010). The reason for this is because parents these days uses Facebook as a medium to learn about their youth culture, which also serves to form equality between the level of communication, thus promoting a better relationship of parents and child (Solomon, Warin, Lewis & Langford, 2002). Moreover, Facebook itself became a whole new topic to be added to the parents and child conversation.

SocialBakers (2012) on the statistics of Facebook users in the year 2012, there were a total number of approximately 14 million Facebook users in Malaysia. To be more specific the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2013) reported that the total amount of population in Malaysia as of in year 2012 was estimated to be 29 million. Out of that, an estimation of 8 million are 0 - 14 years, 19 million are 15 - 64 years and lastly one million are 65 years and above. Based on the figures, the higher involvement of parents these days in using SNSs (i. e Facebook) to stay connected and up-to-date about their children could indirectly promotes a closer parent-child relatio