

Self esteem as a predictor for facebook addiction



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The increased use of the Internet as a new tool in communication has changed the way people interact within society; this is even more evident in the recent technological developments and use of friend-networking sites or Social networking websites (SNWs), such as Facebook and MySpace.

According to MyBroadband (2010) website, 74% of South Africans active internet users are accessing Facebook at least once a day. Additionally, 62% of those Facebook users update their status, 61% are uploading videos or photographs, and 36% have used the site to find out what a past partner is doing.

People in the 21st century have begun to use SNWs as a new form of community meeting place. In a paper by Joinson (2008) the researcher established six basic motivations why people use SNW such as Facebook to (1) connect with old or distant friends, (2) see what old friends are up to, but without talking to them (social surveillance), (3) look up people met offline, (4) people watch people virtually, (5) to update ones status, and (6) to view or update content. Furthermore, other research studies found, that people use SNW to perform social searches (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006; Bumgarner, 2006), engage in online identity creation, maintain and develop relationships (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2006, Bumgarner, 2006), and allow individuals to express their “idealized” selves which they cannot otherwise pursue (Min, Yoo & Lee, 2010).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The creation and presentation of online identity in a social network site is a cyclical routine, in which individuals tune and “tweak” their online profiles over time (Boyd, 2006; Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn, & Hughes, 2009). Activities

that help shape and represent the individual's identity i. e. addition of friends, the posting of messages, or the publishing of photos, are methods of identity transactions, In essence, identity transactions are dependent on the ultimate outcomes from using the website (Stutzman, 2007).

As the user create and maintain their profiles on these SNW, they are able to choose to include as much or as little personal information as they want. Additionally, individuals are able to manipulate their profile information to create an " online identity" different from their " actual self" (Vitak, 2008). The information presented by the online identity may be slightly or completely fabricated; with the intention of enhancing one's identity for outside observers (Vitak, 2008). In a differing study Facebook owner profiles was found to be generally a similar reflection of their actual selves rather than their idealized selves (Back, Stopfer, Vazire, Gaddis, Schmukle, Egloff, & Gosling, 2010); thus, there was no evidence of Self-idealization and ideal-self ratings did not predict observer impressions beyond actual personality.

The act of presenting one's self to others is a routine and essential aspect of social interactions (Rafaeli and Harness, 2002). When individuals feel that they lack a positive self-image, they will misrepresent themselves; it is often because they are attempting to express an idealized version of themselves.

The above mentioned could be further explained by Sanders and Baron (1977), who found that individuals have a strong desire for others to perceive them positively, and the desire to achieve a positive self-image is a universal human motivation. Through the utilisation of impression management or self-presentation, individuals try to manage the impressions

others form of them to produce favourable impressions on others. From existing literature, there are three distinct reasons for engaging in self-presentation: Identity development, enhancing self-esteem, and gaining social rewards (Baumeister, 1982b; Leary, 1996). In addition, Sanders and Baron (1977) asserts that the self-image is in part the consequence of comparing oneself to others as an effort to maintaining a positive self-image and known as social comparison in social psychology.

Although ample research has focused on self-presentation in face-to-face situations, literature on self-presentation through SNSs is still limited.

Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, and Tong (2008) research findings found that surrounding yourself with attractive friends on your Facebook profile affects the way people perceive you. The findings from the study showed profile owners are more attractive due to the postings by friends considered attractive than profile owners who receive postings from unattractive friends. On the other hand, Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, and Walther (2008) found a relationship between the number of friends and the attractiveness of the profile owner; the results suggest that an excessive amount of friend raises doubts about the Facebook users' popularity and desirability by other users.

Valkenburg, Peter, and Shouten (2006) investigated the impact of Social Networking Websites on adolescent's self-esteem and well-being. The study found that the frequency of site usage had an indirect effect on the respective adolescent's social self-esteem and well-being. The results further suggested that positive feedback on adolescent profiles' enhanced their

social self-esteem and well-being, whereas negative feedback had the adverse effect.

Such negative effects as mentioned by studies above found may have an impact on the addition to the internet and/or online websites. A study on internet addiction by Yang and Tung (2004), revealed that both non-internet and internet addicts perceived that internet usage enhances social peer relations. Furthermore, individuals characterised with certain negative psychological characteristics i. e. depression, dependence and low self-esteem; these individuals were more inclined to become addicted to the internet than their counterparts did. A further study on Taiwan's college students, found that Internet addicts spent almost triple the number of hours connected to the Internet as compare to non-addicts, and the addict group rated the use of the Internet as impacting on their studies and daily life routines significantly more negatively than the non-addict group. The study also found that the most powerful predictor of Internet addiction is the communication pleasure score, followed by BBS use hours, sex, satisfaction score, and e-mail-use hours (Chou & Hsiao, 2000). A further study, attempted to examine the potential influences of personality variables, such as shyness and locus of control, online experiences, and demographics on Internet addiction. Results indicated that the higher the addiction to the Internet, the shyer the person is, the less faith the person has, the firmer belief the person holds in the irresistible power of others, and the higher trust the person places on chance in determining his or her own course of life (Chak & Leung, 2004). In contrast, Facebook users say " after creating a profile, they found themselves spending hours a day updating their pages,

looking for people with shared interests, and reading others' profiles and looking at photos-exactly the kinds of activities Facebook facilitates" (EDUCAUSE, 2006). However, some users consider the amount of hours spent on Facebook could be an addiction to some extent, while others believe that it is only a distraction.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Social comparison theory was proposed initially by social psychologist Leon Festinger in 1954 to explain how individuals gain information about themselves (opinions, abilities, characteristics and desires), and make inferences that are relevant to self-esteem, by comparison to relevant others (Festinger, 1954). There are two ways of social comparison, namely downward comparison and upward comparison. When people compare downward comparisons, they compare themselves with people that are perceivably worse off than they are. Making downward comparisons increase their self-esteem and therefore how they feel about themselves. When people who make upward comparisons compare themselves to people that are perceivably better off than they are; these comparisons thus lower their self-esteem and in certain cases could motivate the individual to do better (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006).

Self-Enhancement theory refers to the notion that all individuals are motivated to maintain a positive self-image, as the need for self-enhancement increases the more the desire to think favourably of the self is unfulfilled. It is thus presumed that people with low self-esteem distort personal information in a self-enhancing direction and therefore engage in different forms of self-enhancement than those with high self-esteem (Jones, <https://assignbuster.com/self-esteem-as-a-predictor-for-facebook-addiction/>

1973). The different forms of self-enhancement strategies involve the efforts of individuals to portray positive information about them, for instance, how they overcame a daunting obstacle or through style of dress (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006).

Self-consistency theory stipulates that individuals are motivated to maintain a consistent self-image because stable self-views enable them to predict and control their world (Epstein, 1973). From this theory, people with high self-esteem will exhibit more self-enhancing biases than those with low self-esteem; which allows individuals with positive self-views to reinforce their own self-image but threatens the self-image of individuals with negative self-views. Hence, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to take more responsibility for positive feedback.

Pleasure Principle refers to a concept of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality, this principle rules the Id that seeks immediate gratification of all needs and urges. When needs are not met, the result is a state of anxiety or tension (Coon, 2005).

4. RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social Networking Sites encourage socialisation between individuals using novel methods of communication and identity creation. With drastic increases in social networking site usage, it is critical to examine the various implications of such usage i. e. updating of one's site profile, as a means of self-presentation to others (Boyd, 2006); and to investigate the effects from using specific website features. Facebook will be the main Social networking

site focused on during the research study, due to its popularity as a social interaction arena and self-presentational tool.

It is necessary to obtain an understanding of the characteristics of SNW users and their motivations for use within a South African context. The current study will build on the existing literature by exploring the relationships between self-esteem, Facebook usage, and motives thereof. The main factors of this study will focus on the following three practices social comparison, self-presentation, and self-gratification as the possible contributing factors in the creation of an addiction.

Hence, this study will provide clarification into the practices of visiting social networking sites and its uses for self-presentation, social comparison, and self-gratification purposes. The study further aims to discover if there are significant differences between those with high self-esteem verses those with low self-esteem within the context of having an addiction to Facebook, and linking the potential addiction to the three compounding factors mentioned above.

Lastly, the research will create a profile for South Africa, in the identification of potential candidates susceptible to this form of addiction, by incorporating the following criteria, gender, race, age, and high or low self-esteem.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objects of the study are as follows: To investigate...

if there are significant differences between the age, race, gender, and high or low self-esteem of South African facebook users.

the potential differences between level of self-esteem with regard to, self-presentation, social comparison, and self-gratification.

the relationship of self-presentation, social comparison, and self-gratification as a contributing factor or factors in the creation of the addiction to Facebook.

whether or not having an addition to Facebook will contribute to the level of self-esteem experienced by the Facebook user.

6. HYPOTHESIS

H1: Individuals with high self-esteem will correlate with a greater amount of Facebook activity.

H2: Individuals with low self-esteem will correlate with a greater amount of Facebook activity.

H3: Individuals with high self-esteem scores will use less self-presentation content on Facebook.

H4: Individuals with low self-esteem scores will use more self-presentation content on Facebook.

H5: Individuals with high self-esteem scores will use less social comparison on Facebook.

H6: Individuals with low self-esteem scores will use more social comparison on Facebook.

H7: Individuals with high self-esteem scores will use more self-gratification on Facebook.

H8: Individuals with low self-esteem scores will use less self-gratification on Facebook.

H9: High score on Self-presentation will correlate to an addition

H10: High score on Social comparison will correlate to an addition

H11: High score on Self-gratification will correlate to an addition

H12: Individuals with low self-esteem scores will use more self-gratification on Facebook.

H13: Individuals with higher addition will not correlate to high self-esteem

H14: Individuals with higher addition will correlate to low self-esteem

7. THEORETICAL DEFINITIONS

Social networking sites (SNS) refers to online spaces where individuals are allowed to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections to others (Ellison, et. al., 2006).

Self-esteem refers to the self-evaluation made by each individual, one's attitude toward one's attitude toward oneself along a positive-negative dimension (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006).

Social comparison refers to the process through which we compare ourselves to others in order to determine whether our view of social reality is or is not correct (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006).

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Self-presentation refers to the efforts by individuals to produce favourable first impressions on others (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006)

Self-gratification refers to the act of satisfying one's own desires and giving yourself pleasure (Inc Icon Group International, 2008)

Addiction refers to in this study is a mental illness centred around a dependency of online friends or online interaction on social networks. These addicts are unable to control their tendency to be "logged in" and participating on social networking websites to the detriment of other relationships and responsibilities (AddictionInfo, 2010).

8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to accomplish the aims of the research study, there must be a theoretical framework from which to work that underpins the research. Hence, the philosophical paradigm applicable to this study is positivism; the aim is to generate rich description of the phenomenon from the subjects

8. 1. Research design

According to Fouche and De Vos (2002), there are two broad categories of quantitative research designs, namely experiments and surveys. The research study will use a survey design. Survey research, examines populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelation of psychological and sociological variables (Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005).

8. 2. Research Approach

The research study will employ an exploratory, non-experimental, cross-sectional research survey design. Advantages of Cross-sectional surveys are time-efficient; but limited to observations made at one point in time therefore changes over time cannot be examined (Babbie, 2008). However, cross-sectional surveys are a suitable method for data collection for exploratory or descriptive studies, such as the exploratory study proposed here. The main reason for using this approach is to obtain a larger sample size in order to diversify the population and thus substantiate the hypotheses.

9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

9. 1. Sampling Method and Sample size

For this study, a non-probability sampling technique will be utilised to ensure that all the specific elements are incorporated in the sample; this is a suitable sampling method as the odds of selecting a particular individual is unknown due to the population size or members of the population being unknown (Forzano, 2008). The uses of convenience sampling will be utilised to sample participants; on bases of the participants' readiness, availability and willingness to respond (Fink, 2003). De Vos (1998) advises the use of convenience sampling as a rational choice for cases where it is impossible to identify all the members of the population.

The decision is up to the researcher to decide on how large a non-probability sample size should be, to provide a reasonably accurate depiction of the population (Takona, 2002). Extra care needs consideration when generalizing

the results of the study to a larger population when convenience sampling is applied (Takona, 2002).

9. 2. Population

For the proposed study, the population will consist of South African individuals over the age of 18 years who own a Facebook account and maintain a Facebook profile.

9. 3. Questionnaire development

The following measures are possible standardised measures, which can test the variables:

Demographics: In order to assess demographic information through single-item questions; the aim of this is to track differences in self-image perception and practice according to age, race, and gender.

Facebook Usage: Facebook Intensity Scale designed by Ellison, Steinfeld, and Lampe (2007), to measure the extent to which participants actively engage in Facebook activities, the extent to which participants are emotionally connected to Facebook, and the extent to which Facebook is integrated into their daily lives. The measure maintains a high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of . 83.

Self-esteem: The Rosenberg self-esteem 10-item Scale designed by Rosenberg (1989), to measure the participants' self-worth and self-acceptance. The items use a four-point rating scale that extends from strongly agreeing to strongly disagreeing. A low score indicates an individual

with a low self-esteem, whereas a high score indicates an individual with a high self-esteem. The alpha coefficients are between 0.77 and 0.88 for the total score of this measuring instrument.

I will design questions to measure self-gratification and addiction that is more suitable to Facebook users.

9. 4. Data collection method

The research study will use questionnaires to obtain data relevant to the study's objectives and research hypotheses. Data collection from the research subjects will occur through paper-pencil questionnaires and an online survey. Data collection will occur over a 2-month period, these questionnaires are to be administered to potential participants, and an online survey will be made accessible via internet hyperlink /email/invitation on Facebook or SurveyMonkey.

10. DATA ANALYSIS

The first step of data analysis is to check the questionnaires for completion and exclude all incomplete questionnaires from the data analysis. The second step requires the assignment of numerical values to questionnaire items that will facilitate data capturing and subsequent statistical analyses. The third step requires the data capturing of all item responses onto Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and be cleaned of incorrect/missing values. Once the data cleaning is complete, we export the spreadsheet into SPSS analytic computer software for statistical analysis.

First, perform descriptive statistics on the data set and present results by means of frequencies and percentages. The second phase of statistical analysis is to perform inferential statistics. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be carried out to test for statistically significant mean differences among groups i. e. self-esteem (Graziano & Raulin, 2000), determined by biographical variables i. e. gender, age, and race. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients will calculate the correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variable; it is an index of the linear relationship between two variables; it provides a measure of the degree and direction of association between them (Graziano & Raulin, 2000). Finally conduct a multiple regression analysis to determine which combination of independent variables best predicts the value of the dependent variable, or which combination of independent variables best accounts for the variance (Field, 2000).

To ensure the results and interpretation thereof is accurate; I will use a statistics consultant from questionnaire development, though to data analysis and interpretation.

11. SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

The study will contribute to the limited knowledge and literature concerning social networking sites within the South African psychological context, with specific interest in Facebook. Results of the study will help social psychologist to understand the underlying psychological behaviour of addition to online Social networking sites. The findings of such a study will increase our understanding of self-presentation in general and identity

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construction in the online environment in particular, with reference to self-esteem as the main psychological personality traits. Further, the study will contribute to in the creation of profiling candidates susceptible to online social networking site addition.

12. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

12. 1. Right to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity:

A verbal debriefing and consent letter will safeguard respondents' right to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity before and/or after questionnaire administration to make the research ethical. Any information given during the research study will be regarded as confidential and will be conveyed in such a way that data cannot be linked to a specific participant i. e. use of pseudonyms or reference number.

12. 2. Right to informed consent and voluntary participation

Participation in the research study is voluntary; should respondents experience any discomfort and at any moment can refuse to participate in the research, it will be accepted and respected by those involved in the study. Those involved in the research study will convey this to the respondents during debriefing and in the information letter. In order to avoid misunderstanding and mistrust, an information letter administered to the respective participants. According to the APA ethical guidelines, certain research studies do not require the informed consent of participants; these studies entail the use of anonymous questionnaires or simple naturalistic observations where the participants cannot be personally identified (APA

2002). The research questionnaire that will be used during the will be anonymous.

13. TIMELINE AND BUDGET

Activity

Timeline

Budget

Amount

Research proposal

01 march 2010 - 22 December 2010

Registration and tuition fees (2 years)

R12 640

Questionnaire development

01 January 2011 - 31 January 2011

Printing @ R0. 50/page x 3000

R1500

Data Collection

01 February 2011 - 31 March 2011

Data analysis and interpretation

01 April 2011 - 31 May 2011

Statistician

R 4000

Writing thesis

01 June 2011 - 31 July 2010

Editing

01 August 2011 - 31 August 2011

R20/page

R3 000

Printing and binding

01 September 2011 - 10 September 2011

Printing @ R0. 50/page x 1 200 paper binding

R600 R240

R1000

Submission

15 September 2011

Total:

R23 980

14. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Outlines the problem and research questions, followed by goals and significance of the study, theoretical framework, and terminology for the study.

Chapter 2: Provides a review of the relevant literature.

Chapter 3: Detailed description of the research design and methodology relevant to the study.

Chapter 4: Provides research results

Chapter 5: Detailed discussion of the findings.

Chapter 6: Provides a conclusion of the main research results, limitations of the study and recommendations.