

Literature review of psychological impact of snss



LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Connection technologies such as e-mail, text messages, social networking sites (SNSs) including Facebook and microblogs such as Twitter are widely embraced, and the accumulative impact of these social media on the lives of their users continues to mount exponentially (LaRose, Connolly, Lee, Li, & Hales, 2014; Punjazon-Zazik & Park, 2010; Ahn, 2011). However, growing attention is being placed on impacts associated with a continual barrage of e-mails, texts, notifications on social networking sites and the parallel demands of maintaining connections and responding to online followers and friends (LaRose, *et al* , 2014). The recent propagation of online social networking sites reflects a restructured online environment that serves to influence human development. In influencing human development, it can be further broken down and seen to influence adolescents, which are of significant interest in this review of literature.

Adolescent engagement with SNS

In order for an influence to be noted developmentally, particularly in adolescents, there has to be an active effort to utilise and engage in the use of SNSs. For example, the most popular SNS to date found, on average, adolescent users engage with Facebook 27.93 minutes on weekdays, with notable yet slight increases in use during the weekend (Ahn, 2011). These figures indicate that Facebook and social networking sites have not just grasped adolescent attention, but have become an active constituent of

adolescent daily lives, interactions, and social commitments (Reid & Boyer, 2013).

This engagement with social networking sites can impact on the identity formation, self-esteem which serves to impact on mental or psychological health. It is of paramount importance that adolescent development be operationalized in order to note the occurrences during this period (Bantra, 2013). Although identity formation is significant, the significance can be further amplified with adolescents.

Adolescent Identity Formation

Therefore, the ability to define one's identity is a fundamental task of adolescence (Bantra, 2013; Punjazon-Zazik & Park, 2010; Reid & Boyer, 2013). Erikson's crucial assertion is that one's ego identity status is attained through a conscious sense of self that is established through social interactions happening across eight distinct stages. Stage five which is "Identity versus Confusion," presents in the adolescent years and encompasses exploration of social exchanges and roles through which an adolescent either cultivates an identity or mars their sense of self and belonging by staying confused (Reid & Boyer, 2013).

Marcia (1966) cited in Reid and Boyer (2013) reexamined Erikson's views by focusing on cognitive-behavioral markers of the process of identity formation . A fundamental marker that Marcia observed was the exploration of various alternatives and the decision to commit to one of the available possibilities and this formed a significant component of founding one's identity.

Advantages of Social Networking Sites

Although the use of the term impact generally connotes catastrophic and negative effects, advantageous and positive impacts are also connoted. Engagement with social networking sites entails some advantages and it is noted that Facebook friendships offer an opportunity for online communication through chat or inbox messaging, all of which is updated live on Facebook's patented instantaneous news feed service. According Reid and Boyer (2013), Facebook promotes relationships that serve to enhance social capital and self-esteem while contributing to the upkeep of individuals offline identities. The promotion of self-esteem and social capital prove to be beneficial to mental health and well-being (Mares, de Leeuw, Scholte, & Engels, 2010).

Additionally, adolescents are able to participate in behaviors that contribute to identity development in means that were formerly unimaginable through social networking sites (Reid & Boyer, 2013). For instance, technologies like Facebook allow rapid and immediate interaction as certain types of identities or several unique identities through manipulations of self-presentation are brought to the fore. While identity as a construct is intricate and multifaceted, Facebook allows for the investigation of its influence on the formation of one's overall self-concept through possible selves and their exploration, and relationships and social capital. Self-concept is the entirety of one's contemplations and feelings in relation to oneself as an object. Identity, a constituent of self-concept, is crucial to one's recognition by others and in adolescent especially, this recognition by others is of paramount importance (Mares, *et al* , 2010).

Previously, anonymous online environments, such as chat rooms, facilitated the disclosure of true selves; however, these assertions were constrained to blind online communities and had minute transfer to authentic or offline situations. Contemporary social networking sites such as Facebook are different, as one can explore and communicate without an alias. The acceptance of individual's self-presentation leads to satisfaction on Facebook as the individual internalizes the social reception. This then has the potential to lead to the exaggeration of the accepted identity (Reid & Boyer, 2013; Punjazon-Zazik & Park, 2010). Contrarily, face-to-face criticism is avoided when the individuals self-presentation is rejected leading to the exploration of alternate identities. It is the instantaneous feedback and capacity to reform one's identity that permits social network site users to actively combine speaking, writing, acting, interacting, feeling, believing, valuing, dressing, illustrating, and expressing in a particular way (Reid & Boyer, 2013).

Self-esteem and identity formation

Some media also indicate that, due to the possibility of cyberbullying, SNS may contribute to lowered self-esteem (Devine & Lloyd, 2012). This has a negative bearing on the mental health and well-being of adolescents. The exploration of traditional and cyberbullying found that adolescents who were exposed to both traditional bullying and cyberbullying were inclined to have systematically poorer self-esteem at the beginning (Reid & Boyer, 2013).

Also, a study by Gonzales and Hancock (2011) cited in (Reid & Boyer, 2013) revealed that Facebook users report heightened self-esteem after receiving more positive feedback in regard to their attractiveness and personalities on <https://assignbuster.com/literature-review-of-psychological-impact-of-snss/>

Facebook than in person (Mares, de Leeuw, Scholte, & Engels, 2010). It was discovered that subsequent to exploring and editing of individuals personal profiles, undergraduates were observed to present with considerably higher self-esteem than those individuals that preferred looking at their image on the mirror

Converse to anonymous internet use, the palpable nature of SNS offers an experience that can be attributed to the conceptualization of “ hoped-for” possible selves. Facebook produces an opportunity that uplifts individuals so they can actualize hoped for identities that cannot be employed in face-to-face environments. This occurrence is the development of the “ hoped-for self” persona, which is reinforced by Facebook’s ability for character manipulation, group affiliation, preference exploration, and image selection. Facebook persuades users to renew their identities by presenting prospects for updating and constantly sharing trends with users via computers and mobile devices.

The development and preservation of friendships and relationships throughout adolescence impacts highly on identity formation and generates social capital (Ahn, 2011; Mares *et al* , 2010). Individuals displaying high levels of social capital are more prone to employ behaviors with more positive outcomes and they also display high self-esteem, sense of well-being, and academic success. The greater use and involvement with social networking sites has resulted in the growth of social capital and well-being by availing a forum for interaction and identity affirmation. It is noted that that SNS fortifies the link between an individual’s online and offline domains,

a process Boyd (2008) cited in Reid & Boyer (2013) describes as “ writ[ing] themselves into being” (p. 12).

Negative and mental health impacts of Social Networking Sites

As mentioned above, negative impacts can also be associated with the use of social networking sites (Punjazon-Zazik & Park, 2010). A study to note is the Internet Paradox research which LaRose *et al* (2014) initially found evidence that use of the internet impaired psychological well-being. An individual difference variable moderated the effects, with usage positively related to psychological well-being among extroverts and negatively related among introverts (LaRose *et al* , 2014). Facebook use has been shown to correlate positively with poor academic performance, and peoples’ perceptions that they are less happy than others. Facebook-induced stress is also noted as a mental or psychological health impact of SNS. The sources of social networking stress include negative feedback from other users, dissemination of personal information by others, and having a friend request denied or ignored (LaRose *et al* , 2014).

Negative effects have been reported for other connection media as well. Reported sleep disturbances caused by messages and notifications received during the night from various social networking sites. The expectation that incoming messages should be monitored and replied to immediately spurs compulsive notification checking that makes it difficult to disengage from SNS (Ahn, 2011; LaRose *et al* , 2014; Punjazon-Zazik & Park, 2010).

Adolescents who consider accessibility demands generated by the use of SNS to be stressful are prone to higher risks of stress, sleep disturbances, and symptoms of depression. The pressure on Facebook users to

consistently interact in order to avoid social exclusion is also a source of stress and this does not bear well for adolescent mental or psychological health.

The curved relationship that appears to exist between the number of social networking friends and psychological well-being has a perplexing finding. For example, indicators of well-being increase along with the number of friends only up to a certain point, after which additional friends are associated with decreasing well-being (LaRose *et al* , 2014). This phenomenon is interesting and warrants further research for its investigation as it has the potentiality to reveal correlations between mental health, self-esteem and identity formation.