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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Social Networking Sites (SNS) such as Facebook, RenRen, YouTube and WeChat are some of the most popular Internet applications across the world.Social Networking Sites (SNS) provide a powerful means of sharing, organizing, and finding content and contacts. Because much of the content is publicly available, it is possible to collect data from these sites and analyze their characteristics and privacy-related issues.The study of social networking sites (SNS) within the field of psychology is fairly new. It was hypothesized that Individuals who possess low self-esteem will utilize Social Networking Sites (SNS) to compensate for that deficiency. Their interactions on their Social Networking Sites (SNS) of choice will be held in greater importance than an individual with a higher self-esteem rating. This relationship was expected to be greater among girls than boys. The participants in the study were given a survey that contains questions about the types of social media they use, how often they use it, how they feel they are viewed by their peers, etc. All of the participants in the study are between seventh and eighth grade and attend a summer camp in Samsun, Turkey. These results suggest that individuals with low self-esteem hold their Social Networking Sites (SNS) interaction higher than those with high self-esteem.

Key word: *Social Networking Sites, Low self-esteem, Psychosocial Effect, Middle school students.*

Сайты социальных сетей (SNS), такие как Facebook, RenRen, YouTube и WeChat, являются одними из самых популярных интернет-приложений по всему миру. Сайты социальных сетей (SNS) предоставляют мощные средства для совместного использования, организации и поиска контента и контактов. Поскольку большая часть контента является общедоступной, можно собирать данные с этих сайтов и анализировать их характеристики и проблемы, связанные с конфиденциальностью. Изучение сайтов социальных сетей (SNS) в области психологии является довольно новым. Было выдвинуто предположение, что лица, обладающие низкой самооценкой, будут использовать сайты социальных сетей (SNS) для компенсации этого недостатка. Их взаимодействие на сайтах социальных сетей (SNS) по выбору будет иметь большее значение, чем у лиц с более высоким рейтингом самооценки. Участникам исследования было дано задание, в котором содержались вопросы о типах используемых социальных сетей, о том, как часто они их используют, о том, что они чувствуют, когда их рассматривают их сверстники и т. п. Все участники исследования учатся в седьмых и восьмых классах и посещают летний лагерь в Самсуне, Турция. Результаты показывают, что люди с низкой самооценкой поддерживают взаимодействие с социальными сетевыми сайтами (SNS) чаще, чем люди с высокой самооценкой.

Ключевые слова: *сайты социальных сетей, низкая самооценка, психосоциальный эффект, учащиеся средней школы.*

Туркмен Абдулла. ПСИХОЛОГІЧНИЙ ЕФЕКТ ВПЛИВУ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖ НА ШКОЛЯРІВ СЕРЕДНІХ КЛАСІВ

Сайти соціальних мереж (SNS), такі як Facebook, RenRen, YouTube і WeChat, є одними з найбільш популярних інтернет-додатків по всьому світу. Сайти соціальних мереж (SNS) надають потужні засо-

би для спільного використання, організації та пошуку контенту і контактів. Оскільки більша частина контенту є загальнодоступною, можна збирати дані з цих сайтів і аналізувати їх характеристики і проблеми, пов'язані з конфіденційністю. Вивчення сайтів соціальних мереж (SNS) в області психології є досить новим. Було висунуто припущення, що особи, що володіють низькою самооцінкою, використовують сайти соціальних мереж (SNS) для компенсації цього недоліку. Їх взаємодія на сайтах соціальних мереж (SNS) за вибором має більше значення, ніж у осіб із вищим рейтингом самооцінки. Учасникам дослідження було дано завдання, в якому містилися питання про типи використовуваних соціальних мереж, про те, як часто вони їх використовують, про те, як вони почуваються, коли їх розглядають однолітки і т. д. Всі учасники дослідження навчаютьсяу сьомих і восьмих класах і відвідують літній табір в Самсуні, Туреччина. Результати показують, що люди з низькою самооцінкою підтримують взаємодію з соціальними мережевими сайтами (SNS) частіше, ніж люди з високою самооцінкою.

Ключові слова: *сайти соціальних мереж, низька самооцінка, психосоціальний ефект, учні середньої школи.*

Introduction. Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become integrated into almost every aspect of our life. Areas in which Social Networking Sites(SNS) are a part of include watching the news, using our cell phones,and while traveling.Social Networking Sites(SNS) provide their users with a wealth of social interactions without having to leave the comfort of their homes. Social Networking Sites (SNS) are a powerful tool that provides great benefits but may also have a negative side.

In recent years we have witnessed the creation of cyber bullying and the tremendous impact it has made in just a few years. A recent case led a young girl, Megan Meier, to commit suicide [1]. It turns out that she had been a victim of cyber bullying and that may have been what contributed to her committing suicide. Megan also suffered from low self-esteem and her interaction on Social Networking Sites (SNS) may have had an effect on her psychological, mental and emotional state (Collins, 2008). Because Social Networking Sites (SNS) emulate person to person interaction they have the potential to emulate the effects that person to person interactions have. The current study seeks to investigate how Social Networking Sites (SNS)) affect those with low self-esteem. This may provide us with a better understanding of how closely related Social Networking Sites (SNS) interactions are to face-to-face interactions [1].

Why Social NetworkingIs Used? Baker (2009) explored how and why college students use Social Networking web sites.She administered a survey to 803-college freshman about their Social Networking Sites (SNS) usage and their intent. Unfortunately sixty-nine of the respondents was dropped due to their answers, and seven hundred thirty four students completed the questionnaire. The participants were mostly 18 years old (68%) and 59% were females. The race of the participants included, Anglo (57%) and the other 43% ranged from Latino, Pacific Islander, Asian, and African American. The first question the study asked, what is the relationship between college students' self-esteem and communication on Social Networking Sites (SNS)? [1].

Baker (2009) hypothesized that a high positive self-esteem would lead to a high positive correlation in communication with peers and the opposite for a negative relationship between self-esteem and communication. This hypothesis was supported in her findings. There was a strong correlation between the two groups of those with a positive and negative self-esteem. Other findings that were interesting were that females are much more likely to talk about more personal issues on Social Networking Sites (SNS)than malesSocial Networking Sites (SNS) could help be a safer mode of communication than for those who are less secure about "face-to-face" interactions.Overall the article was very informative and in my opinion it is definitely a reliable and trustworthy resource. The sample size that the information comes from is large enough to draw some conclusions and is certainly valuable information to understand use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) [2].

One concern I had about the research is that it is from 2009. It would still be consider current but Social Networking Sites (SNS) have developed much more since. I would be curious to see how this has changed through the years as more middle school students are using Social Networking Sites (SNS) outlets. As previously mentioned, this article covers college aged students, eighteen and older and my study is geared towards middle school students ages twelve to fifteen.In another research study, Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) investigated how long college students were spending on Facebook and why they were using it so often. In their study 92 undergraduate college students self reported Facebook use every day for a week in their journals [6].

The journal was paired with a checklist so that students could accurately and consistently fill it out. Participants in this study ranged from 18 to 20 years old, there were 62 girls

and 30 boys involved. College students use Facebook from 2 minutes to 117 minutes on a week day and as high as 165 minutes on a weekend, on average the usage was about 28 minutes. The results from Pempek et al. (2009) are extremely helpful and can absolutely contribute to my research. Pempek (2009) reported that 41% of 12–13 year olds use Social Networking Sites (SNS) [6].

Another question of their research addresses why teenagers are so attracted to Social Networking Sites (SNS)? Their results indicated that "50% of Dutch adolescents who experimented with instant messaging have three reasons:explore themselves through feedback from others, to compensate for social limitations of shyness and to facilitate social relationships".Their results were also on college students. Students in middle school have other reasons for using Social Networking Sites (SNS), aside from staying in touch with friends like college students do.Pempek et al. (2009) have extensive different studies all including some sort of media and adolescents. They are very knowledgeable and have tremendousexperience researching adolescent use of Social Networking Sites (SNS). However, the lack of research on middle school adolescence may demonstrate vast differences between college students and middle school student's use of Social Networking Sites (SNS). This lends tremendous importance that middle school student's use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) be investigated [6].

Self Esteem and Social Networking Sites. The creation of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has influenced the focus of some research within Psychology. The topic of self-worth and self-esteem is very prevalent in psychological research. Due to the nature of Social Networking Sites (SNS), connecting with others for social purposes, they have a direct impact on self-esteem for those who use them. Social Networking Sites (SNS), such as Facebook, play a crucial role in the maintenance of relationships. This is especially true in college age students (Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008). Kraut et al. (2002) conducted a revision on his own earlier research, conducted in 1998 (Kraut et al., 1998) [4; 5; 7].

Their research stated that extensive internet usage plays a part in measures of stress and depression. High levels of Social Networking Sites (SNS) use was not linked to higher levels of depression as previously stated. What was found was that individuals who were extroverted benefited greatly from Social Networking Sites (SNS) but the opposite was found in introverted individuals (Kraut et al., 2002). Other researchers found positive results in the support of Social Networking Sites (SNS) and their beneficial effects. (Turkmen et al. 2017) Our results indicate that self-esteem and friendship were positive related to used facebook but loneliness did not have any association with used Facebook. There was a significantly positive correlation within the High School population between Facebook use and self- esteem; the higher students' self-esteem, the more intensely they use Facebook [9].

There was a positive correlation between the relationships of Facebook intensity and the strategic way students used Facebook and students' emotional adjustment in school. Students that were emotionally well adjusted in school used Facebook more intensely, and were strategic in how they used it. As a result, high school students had higher self-esteem than college students as well as a higher attachment score than college students in their adjustment to school. A study by Valkenburg and Peter (2006) found that participants who used Social Networking Sites (SNS) more frequently actually had better self-esteem because they were connecting with friends more often [8].

Contradictory findings were found by Ellison et al (2008). The researchers conducted a study that contradicted the findings of the "rich get richer" study conducted by Kraut et al. (2002). "Social capitol, self-esteem, and use of online social network sites: A longitudinal analysis" by Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe further explains the findings (2008). What they found was that the use of Facebook by individuals with low self-esteem gives them a greater benefit to their social capitol than it would for an individual with high self-esteem [3; 4].

Study Design. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between Social Networking Sites(SNS) usage and low self-esteem in middle school students, grades 7–8 in Samsun,Turkey. Each subject filled out a 66-question survey that took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The quantitative survey asks questions about the Social Networking websites/applications they use, how often they use the Internet, and how popular they believe they are viewed. The data analysis includes quantitative description of the subjects, chi square analysis on the use of social media and the correlation analysis between Social Networking Sites (SNS), effect on them psychological and low self-esteem [9].

Adolescence is a transitional period in life involving physical, emotional, social and educational changes. During this time, many adolescents, especially those who are emotionally

disturbed,experience problems with frustration, anxiety,behavior and depression.In the present study, a formative evaluation of the programs and activities at the school that can Improve self-esteem in selected areas,promotion of relationships, promotion of help and support, school related experiences and development of career awareness,was done, along with pre- and post-tests on self-esteem, to determine if the School's goal of improving self-esteem was being met. The findings indicate, that being exposed to the programs and activities at the School for four- week, did improve most of the students'self-esteem; however, some did not Improve.

Furthermore, the influence of demographic characteristics of the students (age, sex, grade, I.Q.,etc.) and their impact on over-time changes in self-esteem, was not significant.It was concluded that the self-esteem of emotionally disturbed adolescents was improved through the interventions of the programs and activities at a special needs school. The results of the formative evaluation provided data to determine correlations between the programs and activities at the school with self-esteem changes [9].

Study Subjects. The study included 84 total students that were in 7th and 8th grade between the ages of 12 to 14 years of age. Sixty-six of the participants were in 7th grade, with a break down of twenty-nine boys and thirty-seven girls. The eighth grade participants consisted of six boys and twelve girls and overall the study was split with thirty-five boys and forty-nine girls. Adolescence is a developmental period from puberty to adulthood In which the individual strives to attain the physical, emotional, and social maturity of adulthood. It Is a time of turmoil, identification and independence. Most psychologists view adolescence as a stressful period because teenagers have to adjust to many changes (Mazen, 1981). During this transitional stage of adolescence, many teenagers have severe difficulties and become emotionally disturbed [7].

Data Analysis Procedures. The statistical tests used are traditional and classical statistical tests, such as: ChiSquare test, Logistical regression and odds ratio test to determine the strength of association between Social Networking Sites (SNS) use, effect on them psychological and low self-esteem. The Chi-Square test is a nonparametric statistical method commonly used with categorical data. It is based on comparison between expected frequencies and actual, obtained frequencies. For example, middle school students expected use of social media is high, and their self-esteem is expected to be low. The results in the statistical analyses will show if what is expected versus what middle school students' actual use in Social Networking Sites (SNS) is the same and if their low self-esteem is affected [4].

Results. The surveyed data collected were analyzed to find if there is a connection between Social Networking Sites (SNS) use, effect on them psychological and self-esteem in middle school students. This data were collected during the summer of 2017, to address the following research questions:

1. Do middle school students use Social Networking Sites?

2. What is the relationship between their use and type of Social Networking Sites and their self-esteem?

3. What is the relationship between their use and type of Social Networking Sites and their low self-esteem?

Descriptive Statistics. The participants in the study were made up of 84 total students in 7th and 8th grade students, between the ages of 12 and 14 years old. Sixty-six students (80%) were in 7th grade and the remaining 18 (20%) were in 8th grade.

Do middle school students use Social Networking Sites?

Of the 84 participants, 82 students use at least one kind of Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and others), and only 2 student never uses Social Networking Sites.

2. What type and how frequently do middle school students use Social Networking Sites?

2.1. What type? Facebook and YouTube are most popular, 80% of the students surveyed use both websites. Instagram and Twitter were the least used with only 24 and 26 students using it respectively.

2.2. How frequently? More than 92% of students use Social Networking Sites daily. Only 2 (2%) students identify as using Social Networking Sites weekly, 4 (5%) monthly, and just 1 (1%) student has never used any Social Networking Sites.

3. What is the relationship between their use and type of Social Networking Sites and their low self-esteem?

The categorical variable low self-esteem is calculated based on the feedback from the survey self-esteem 1 to self-esteem 49 using the threshold 19, which indicates whether a student has severely low self-esteem. Which indicates that there is a strong association between Social Networking Sites (SNS) usage and low self-esteem. We compute the odds ratio score, and the result is 6.0, which is bigger than 1, demonstrating the association is positive.

Discussion. The present study supported the hypothesis that individuals' who possess low self-esteem will value their interactions on Social Networking Sites (SNS) more that individuals' with high self-esteem.Some of the limitations of the study reside in the amount of participants. The expansion of the population by including, not only more, but different types of people in relation to culture, religious affiliation could provide much more information on the impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) interactions.

According to the literature, positive interactions on Social Networking Sites (SNS) often lead to a high self-esteem and negative interactions lead to lower self-esteem (Valkenburg et al. 2006). Those findings are different from the findings using the survey that I administered. I was able to find that using Social Networking Sites (SNS) frequently may cause students low self-esteem. Lastly, a difference I found in most literature on Social Networking Sites (SNS) was on college students. In the early 2000's they were the primary users of Social Networking andSocial Networking was not as easy to use. As stated above 92% of the 7th and 8th graders in the study are using Social Networking Sites on a daily basis [8].

The mental health of our middle school students is at risk, and there is not enough literature readily available to help draw conclusions about this vulnerable age group. To conclude, 92% of the population that was surveyed uses Social Networking Sites (SNS) daily and 96% of the population uses Social Networking Sites(SNS) at least weekly. Which indicates that there is a strong association between Social Networking Sites (SNS) usage and low self-esteem. We compute the odds ratio score, and the result is 6.0, which is bigger than 1, demonstrate the associa-tion is positive. We conclude that using Social Networking Sites (SNS) frequently may result in student's low self-esteem.

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