

Chapter 89

The Relation of Gender, Behavior, and Intimacy Development on Level of Facebook Addiction in Emerging Adults

Melanie Kimpton

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Alexandria Orel

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Marilyn Campbell

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Kelly Wozencroft

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Eliza Leong Weigin

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Chrystal Whiteford

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

ABSTRACT

Social networking sites are changing the way in which young people develop and maintain friendships and relationships. This study investigated the relationship between level of Facebook addiction, Facebook behaviors, gender, and intimacy development in emerging adults. Participants were 273 university students aged 18 to 25. They completed an online questionnaire that measured their level of Facebook addiction, what they do on Facebook, and their ability to form intimate relationships. A gender difference was found with long distance, passive, active photo, and organizing behaviors relating to high levels of Facebook addiction in females, whereas gaming was related to high levels of Facebook addiction in males. Intimacy development was related to high Facebook use and long distance, active photo, and organizing behaviors, but not to the level of Facebook addiction. Implications regarding the identification of at-risk for addiction emerging adults are discussed.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-6912-1.ch089

INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites are changing the way in which young people develop and maintain friendships and relationships (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Arguably the most popular and influential of these sites is Facebook (Jenkins-Guarnieri, Wright, & Hudiburgh, 2012). Media and academic research alike has criticized Facebook for its addictive qualities and has raised concerns about its relationship to the development of young people (Anderson, Fagan, Woodnutt, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2012; Kuss, Griffiths, & Binder, 2013). While the key feature of Facebook is the ability to connect with other people and facilitate friendships (Sofiah, Omar, Bolong, & Osman, 2011; Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, & Walther, 2008), it may also serve a variety of different personal and social needs including online gaming, photo sharing, and monitoring of friend's behaviors. The concept of Facebook addiction is controversial; rather than being addicted *to* Facebook, it may be more likely that there are addictions *on* Facebook (Griffiths, 2012). The current study's aim was to examine the relationship between level of Facebook addiction, Facebook behaviors, and gender; and determine whether intimacy development was related to level of Facebook addiction.

Facebook was launched in 2004 and now has over 1.23 billion active users each month (Anderson et al., 2012; Facebook, 2014; Pempek, Yermolayever, & Calvert, 2009). Users create a "profile" that includes their basic information which allows communication with other users, uploading of photographs and videos, posting updates about what they are doing or thinking, and playing games (Pempek et al. 2009; Tong et al., 2008). Facebook's impact on changing the way in which people communicate has made it a centre of debate within the academic community with many considering it a useful, social way to connect with friends, while others suggest that it is an "isolating distraction" from creating deeper social interactions (Anderson et al., 2012; Carpenter, Green, & LaFlam, 2011).

Facebook Addiction

Despite the potential positive consequences that Facebook has for social connection, there has been recent concern that excessive Facebook use is unhealthy, particularly in adolescents and emerging adults who are at higher risk of developing a social networking addiction (Sofiah et al., 2011; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008) due to differences in developing cognitive control. Some of the areas of a person's life that excessive Facebook can affect include work, study, health, and personal relationships (Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013; Karaiskos, Tzavellas, Balta, & Paparrigonpoulous, 2010; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Pempek et al., 2009).

Research on Internet addiction could help to determine what Facebook behaviors are indicative of levels of addiction. It has been found that online gaming, shopping, use of social Internet applications, and behaviors that elicit "communication pleasure", increase the risk of developing an Internet addiction (Chou & Hsiao, 2000; Kuss, Griffiths, & Binder, 2013). Communication pleasure, based upon Stephenson's Play Theory of Mass Communication, posits that use of a communication medium generates a pleasurable communication experience reminiscent of an addiction high (Stephenson, 1988). These varied activities suggest that people may be more likely to become addicted to specific Internet behaviors, rather than the Internet as a whole.

Despite no known research looking at the levels of Facebook addiction in males, many studies have found differences in the way in which males and females use Facebook. Females have been found to

12 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-relation-of-gender-behavior-and-intimacy-development-on-level-of-facebook-addiction-in-emerging-adults/209059

Related Content

Diversity in the Workplace: How to Achieve Gender Diversity in the Workplace

Carola Hieker and Maia Rushby (2019). *Gender and Diversity: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 355-379).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/diversity-in-the-workplace/208985

The Evolution of Ethnic Preferential Policies in the 21st Century: The Redistribution of Cultural Capital

Yuqi Lin and Jiaqi Li (2022). *Handbook of Research on Policies and Practices for Assessing Inclusive Teaching and Learning* (pp. 74-95).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-evolution-of-ethnic-preferential-policies-in-the-21st-century/294225

Finnish Education: An Ambiguous Utopia?

Tuija Itkonen, Fred Dervin and Mirja-Tytti Talib (2017). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education* (pp. 13-28).

www.irma-international.org/article/finnish-education/182850

Different Experiences and Perceptions of Campus Climate Among Minority Students at a Predominantly White Institution

Lucila Telles Rudge (2017). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education* (pp. 40-56).

www.irma-international.org/article/different-experiences-and-perceptions-of-campus-climate-among-minority-students-at-a-predominantly-white-institution/169968

Students of the Imaginary: Interpreting the Life Experiences of Ethnic Minority Students From Xinjiang Classes

Xin Su, Neil Harrison and Robyn Moloney (2020). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education* (pp. 36-53).

www.irma-international.org/article/students-of-the-imaginary/270945