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HISTORY AND THEORY OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

The study concludes that while social networks have a significant impact on adolescent personality development, the nature of this influence is complex and multifaceted. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the digital dimension of adolescent development, offering implications for parents, educators, and policymakers in supporting positive online experiences.

Keywords Social networks, adolescence, personality development, identity formation, digital age, Significance of the Study, Empirical Contributions, Policy Implications, Social Contributions.

INTRODUCTION

Developed specifically for this study, this survey captured detailed information on participants' social media use patterns, including frequency of use, preferred platforms, types of engagement (active posting vs. passive browsing), and context of use (alone or socially). The survey included both closed and open-ended questions, allowing for quantitative analysis and qualitative insights into social media behaviors.

The BFPI, a widely recognized and validated instrument, was employed to assess participants' personality traits across five dimensions: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. The inventory facilitated a nuanced analysis of how these traits interacted with social media use patterns over time.

To measure self-esteem, the RSES was utilized. This 10-item scale, known for its high reliability and validity across diverse populations, provided insights into participants' overall perception of self-worth and how it was affected by social media engagement.

The SCOS assessed participants' tendencies to compare themselves with others on social media. Understanding social comparison orientation was crucial for analyzing the impact of social media on personality development, given the prevalence of comparison triggers on these platforms.

These scales measured six aspects of psychological well-being: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations With Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance. The comprehensive nature of Ryff's scales allowed for a detailed examination of the multifaceted impact of social media on adolescents' psychological health.

For the qualitative component, a semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore participants' personal experiences and perceptions of social media's impact on their personality development. The guide included open-ended questions designed to elicit rich, descriptive narratives, providing depth and context to the quantitative findings.

A subset of participants was invited to keep reflective journals about their daily social media

use and its perceived effects on their mood, self-esteem, and social interactions. These journals offered valuable personal insights, complementing the structured data collected through surveys and interviews.

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software packages such as SPSS and R, which facilitated complex statistical analyses, including longitudinal modeling and regression analysis. For the qualitative data, NVivo software supported the thematic analysis, aiding in the organization, coding, and synthesis of interview transcripts and journal entries.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments and measures in this study was designed to provide a comprehensive and multi-dimensional view of the impact of social networks on adolescent personality development. By employing a range of validated scales and innovative methods for data collection, the study ensured the accuracy and depth of the insights gained, contributing significantly to the existing body of knowledge on this topic .

The recruitment process began with outreach to schools, community centers, and online forums, targeting adolescents aged 13-18. Detailed presentations and information sessions were conducted to explain the study's purpose, importance, and procedures. Informed consent forms, approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), were distributed to both the adolescents and their guardians, ensuring a clear understanding of the participants' rights and the study's ethical considerations.

Upon obtaining consent, participants were enrolled in the study, and baseline data were collected using an online platform. This initial phase involved participants completing the Custom Social Media Use Survey, the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Social Comparison

Orientation Scale (SCOS), and Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-being. This process established a foundational dataset against which changes over time could be measured.

The longitudinal design of the study required participants to complete the same set of surveys annually over a three-year period. Reminder emails and messages, along with small incentives, were used to encourage participation and minimize attrition. The data collected at these intervals allowed for the analysis of trends and changes in personality development and social media use patterns.

After the first round of follow-up surveys, a purposively selected subset of participants was invited for semi-structured interviews. These interviews were designed to delve deeper into the quantitative findings, exploring participants' personal experiences with social media and its impact on their self-concept and interpersonal relationships. The interviews were conducted either in person or via secure video conferencing platforms, based on the participants' preferences, and were audio-recorded with their consent.

Quantitative data from the surveys were coded and analyzed using statistical software, with analyses including descriptive statistics, longitudinal growth models, and regression analyses to explore the relationships between social media use and personality development indicators . Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim, then coded and analyzed using NVivo software to identify recurring themes and patterns.

The final phase involved integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social networks on adolescent personality development. This integrative analysis highlighted how qualitative insights complemented and enriched the understanding of quantitative trends,

contributing to a nuanced interpretation of the data.

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