

Usage of social networking sites and their effects on a person's self-esteem.

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Abstract

This study aims to find out whether age and gender have an effect on the use of social networking sites and also whether amount of time people spend using their social networking sites effect the individual with regard to their self-esteem and whether usage of social networking sites change with age.

This study surveyed 114 participants, 60 males (N=60) and 54 females (N=54). The participants ranged from eighteen to seventy-two years of age. The participants were all undergraduate students from Dublin Business School and other Irish colleges.



Introduction

According to Castells (2000) a technological revolution began to take place towards the end of the 1900's. This revolution, which was based around information technologies, began to change and speed up the material basis of society. Although now there are more ways for people to create social networks, human beings have been establishing social networks since at least the beginning of speech. A network can be described as a collection of links between elements of a unit (Dijk, 2006, p.24-25). Social Networking Sites are just one example of the new ways available to people allowing them to create networks. According to Meena, Mittal & Solanki (2013) social networking sites are virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends and meet other people based on shared interests. Some common examples of such sites are Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.



Method

Materials: The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used in order to measure the self-esteem of the participants. A second questionnaire was also established by the researcher to measure the amount of time spent on social networking sites

Apparatus: In carrying out this study, the researcher used a password protected USB key and a locked filing cabinet..

Participants: 114 participants took part in this study (N=114). They were made up of undergraduate students with a minimum age of 18 and a maximum age of 72 and the mean age was 29.27.

Design: This study was carried out using a quantitative research and a correlational design was used, as well as frequencies and descriptive statistics.

Procedure: Over a period of several weeks the researcher handed out questionnaires to students within Dublin Business School. This was a non-probability sample or convenience sample which was justified based on the convenience and availability of the participants.

Ethical considerations: One of ethical issues or risks that could have arose from this study is the possibility that some of the participants may have been victims of cyber/internet bullying.

Results

There was an insignificant positive correlation where $R = .066$ and $N = 114$, showing that in this study time spent on social networking sites has very little or no influence on an individual's self-esteem.

A bivariate Pearson correlation test was also carried out in order to distinguish whether or not there was a relationship between age and the amount of social networking sites used. The result of this test shows that there was a significant medium negative correlation where $R = -.432$ and $N = 114$, showing in this case that there is a relationship between the age of a person and the amount of social networking sites they use.

Discussion

The mean age of the participants that took part in this study was 29.27 years ($M = 29.27$) with a standard deviation of 12.320 and the ages ranged from eighteen to seventy-two. This study supports evidence that social networking sites are no longer only used by young people and teenagers.

The current study found results that supported the theory that the amount time a person spends on social networking sites does not have any effect on the individual's self-esteem. Similarly Gangadharbatla (2008) found that an individual's self-esteem, self-worth or need to belong did not have any effect on the ungraduated students' attitudes towards social networking sites, as well as on their willingness to join them.

References

Gangadharbatla, H. (2008). Facebook Me: Collective Self-Esteem, Need to Belong, and Internet Self-Efficacy as Predictors of the iGeneration's Attitudes toward Social Networking Sites. *Journal Of Interactive Advertising*, 8(2), 1-28. Retrieved from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=6&sid=ea436fd5-c15b-412e-83ef-89c7e757d316%40sessionmgr111&hid=106>