

The effect of social media and compulsive behaviour on younger and older adults

Carmel O'Reilly

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts degree (Social Science Specialization) at DBS School of Arts, Dublin.

Supervisor: Dr Bernadette Quinn

Head of Department: Dr Bernadette Quinn

April 2016
Department of Social Science
DBS School of Arts

Acknowledgements

Firstly, a huge thanks to my supervisor Dr Bernadette Quinn for all the help and support for the past eight months and also for the help in the computer lab.

Thank you to my parents and my brother for all the support and guidance over the last three years. Also thank you to my friends at home and at college, for all the laughs and support I will always appreciate it.

Lastly, I would like to thank the participants of this study who took their time to take part in this study.

Contents	Page number
Abstract	page 4
Introduction	page 5
Literature Review	page 7
Methods	page 17
Results	page 19
Discussion	page 24
Limitations	page 28
Conclusion	page 29
References	page 31
Appendices	page 33

Abstract

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are still on the rise worldwide from 2006 onwards. Due to the popularity of these social networking sites, problematic internet addiction or behaviours regarding computer and internet use access is rising (De Cock, Vangeel, Klein, Minotte, Rosas & Meerkerk, 2013, p.166). The main aims and objectives of this research is to find out the amount of time younger and older adults use social media and if addictive tendencies that lead to compulsive behaviour are picked up. One critical aspect of this research topic will be to ask the question of whether the time spent on social media differs between age profiles and whether the time spent on social media leads to compulsive behaviour.

This study surveyed 127 participants; they were split into two groups; younger adults (18-30) and older adults (31-64). All participants were members of the general public and they freely participated in this research which was available on survey monkey for three weeks. The mean score for younger adults was 36.69(SD = 7.68) the mean score for older adults was 31.59(SD = 9.49). An independent t-test was conducted to compare compulsive behaviour scores for younger and older adults, and showed that there was a significant difference in mean scores for younger and older adults $t(125) = 3.159, p < .01$. These results show that social networking can cause compulsive behaviours and it is clear that it significantly affects younger adults. Other findings such as time spent on social media also shows that 3.3 percent of younger adults scored higher on the compulsive behaviour scale compared to 2.7 percent of older adults.

Introduction

The main aims and objectives of this research is to find out the amount of time younger and older adults use social media and if addictive tendencies that lead to compulsive behaviour are picked up. One critical aspect of this research topic will be to ask the question of whether the time spent on social media differs between age profiles and whether the time spent on social media leads to compulsive behaviour. The main reason for this research is to compare younger adults time spent on social media and their compulsive behaviour compared to those of older adults. Most research that is carried out is focused on young adults who are attending college and their internet addiction however; there is no current research about older adults and their social networking usage and compulsive behaviour.

Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) believe that internet addiction is caused by social networking. Although social networking is beneficial for example it is mainly used to cope with stress, expanding networks, starting new relationships and much more however frequent users are now considered lonely, having no social skills and damaged psychological well-being (Weinstein & Lejoeux, 2010, p.279). This research will attempt to find a difference in compulsive behaviour patterns between younger and older adults who use social media quite often compared to those who do not use it on a regular basis.

According to Malviya, Dixit, Shukla, Mishra, Jain and Tripathi (2014) defines internet addiction as ‘an addiction like any other; it is defined as a compulsive loss of impulse control resulting in damage to the user and his or her relationships, schoolwork, or employment’ (Malviya, Shukla, Mishra, Jain & Tripathi, 2014, p.93). Therefore in this research, questions will be asked to measure the participants’ compulsive behaviour in order to see which group scores higher in the Likert Scale.

Social networking sites are becoming the most popular way to stay in contact with people however they are also used for many different reasons such as to find information, to play games, to make new friends and much more. Some examples of social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. Social networking sites are now considered the main reason for internet addiction. The literature review is going to analyse previous studies about internet addiction and social networking sites to see the behaviours that caused it such as an individual's psychological well-being.

The Effect of Social Media on Compulsive Behaviour for Young and Older Adults

Introduction:

The popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are still on the rise worldwide (De Cock, Vangeel, Klein, Minotte, Rosas & Meerkerk, 2013, p.166) from 2006 onwards. Due to the popularity of these social networking sites, problematic internet addiction or behaviours regarding computer and internet use access is rising (Weinstein & Lejoyeux, 2010, p.277). This information leads to questions arising around time spent on social media.

It is clear from reading recent research such as Stevens, Humphrey, Wheatley & Galliher, 2011, that social media causes many different types of behaviours such as mental health issues; depression, anxiety, social interaction problems and much more. Research like De Cock et.al (2013), shows that there links between internet addiction and compulsive behaviour however there is no information on whether time spent on social media/networking is the cause of compulsive behaviour. Most of the research reviewed is conducted with young adults and adolescents therefore the rationale of this research will attempt to find out the effect of social media on compulsive behaviour between young and older adults. The search engine that was used for this literature review was an academic search complete.

Literature Review:

The readings that were used in this literature review were journal articles mainly dealing with internet addiction and behaviours such as stalking and mental health issues due to problematic internet use.

Internet Addiction

According to Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) they believe that internet addiction is caused by social networking. Although social networking is beneficial for example it is mainly used to cope with stress, expanding networks, starting new relationships and much more however frequent users are now considered lonely, having no social skills and damaged psychological well-being (Weinstein & Lejoeux, 2010, p.279). Weinstein and Lejoeux (2010) discovered that people with internet dependence use the internet as a coping mechanism against underlying psychological development issues such as identity and intimacy (Weinstein & Lejoyeux, 2010, p.3). This research has been conducted only recently and it is clear that problematic use of internet is causing many problems and is still rising.

Research carried out by Junghyun, LaRose and Peng (2009) showed that individuals who were lonely or did not have good social skills could develop strong compulsive internet use behaviours resulting instead of their original problem. Negative outcomes were expected to isolate individuals from healthy social activities and lead them more into the feeling of loneliness. This study showed that the former problems such as social networking like instant messaging could be more problematic than downloading music as it is considered less social (Junghyun et.al, p.452, 2009), this did not show stronger associations than the latter in the key paths leading to compulsive internet use (Junghyun et.al, 2009, p.451).

However Wang and Wang (2013) focused on the relationship between social support and social interaction and how they connect on internet addiction by integrating both online and offline social encounters. The findings show that social support is positively associated with social integration ties in both online and offline contexts. However, offline social support and social interaction ties on internet addiction are negatively associated. These findings show the importance of understanding the cause of internet addiction and understanding how to

diminish internet addiction due to social support and social interaction ties (Wang & Wang, 2013, p.843). Malviya, Dixit, Shukla, Mishra, Jain and Tripathi (2014) defines internet addiction as ‘an addiction like any other; it is defined as a compulsive loss of impulse control resulting in damage to the user and his or her relationships, schoolwork, or employment’ (Malviya, Shukla, Mishra, Jain & Tripathi, 2014, p.93). Malviya et.al, 2014 carried out a research on studying internet dependence among undergraduate students. It was discovered that 11.6 percent found themselves staying online longer than they intended to and 13.2 percent found to get complaints from their family members for constantly being on social media. This research shows that internet addiction is a common problem among young students.

A similar study was conducted in Belgium to find out how often a day do young students use social networking and the internet. DeCock, Klein, Minotte, Rosas and Meerkerk (2014) measured the student’s total time spent on social networking sites (SNS), the number of SNS profiles, gender, age, schooling level, income, job occupation and leisure activities. It was measured using several psychological scales such as Quick Big Five and The Mastery Scale (DeCock et.al, 2014, p.166). DeCock et.al (2014) explained that due to these results that addiction is not the appropriate term to refer to a phenomenon of which excessive use can also be fulfilling and rewarding (DeCock et.al, 2014, p.168).

Overall these studies mentioned show that Internet addiction is very common among young people and that internet use can also be positive as it builds social integration online and offline. Although there are benefits of using the internet there can also be negative effects such as damaging people’s physiological well-being and showing compulsive behaviour by constantly on the internet therefore leading to affecting social skills.

Behaviours caused by Internet Addiction

Stalking

One common type of compulsive behaviour that was found is 'stalking', Chaulk and Jones (2011) defined stalking as an issue and that it has received growing amount of attention. It has three components which are: A repeated pattern of intrusive behaviour exhibited by the perpetrator that is unwanted by the victim; a threat, implicit or explicit, made by the perpetrator and a resulting feeling of fear in the victim (Chaulk & Jones, 2011, p.246). However, Chaulk and Jones (2011) believe that Facebook is responsible for facilitating communication between friends and acquaintances, renewing old friendships, and providing information about the activities, interests and opinions of people's friends and acquaintances (Chaulk & Jones, 2011, p.245).

This study conducted by Chaulk and Jones (2011) focused on the obsessive relational intrusion, specifically online obsessive relational intrusion. It was suggested that it increased in technology, especially in the new social networking phenomenon, which has made it easier for potential stalkers to access their victims. The purpose of this research was to determine whether or not online social networks provided an environment in which relational intrusive behaviour could occur and, if so, it would examine the form in which this online obsessive relational intrusion occurs (Chaulk & Jones, 2011, p.246). The results showed that behaviours identified in the research on stalking and relational intrusion are facilitated by the Facebook application (Chaulk & Jones, 2011, p.250).

A similar research conducted by Lyndon, Bonds-Raacke and Cratty (2011) focused on college students and their Facebook stalking of ex-partners. Lyndon et al (2011) examined whether individuals obsessively monitored or harassed their ex-partners on Facebook and, if so, whether those individuals would also engage in cyber obsessional pursuit (COP) and

obsessive relational pursuit (ORP), which are categories of cyber-stalking and stalking (Lyndon et.al, 2011, p.711). Lyndon et.al (2011) discovered that participants were very familiar with Facebook and that their security levels were set so that friends could see the content on their Facebook pages, most participants did not reveal personal information such as phone number (Lyndon et.al, 2011, p.713). The results showed that there were three dimensions ranged in severity from merely communicating with ex-partners to monitoring and harassing ex-partners. The less severe behaviours were the most commonly reported behaviours, with 67% of participants reporting engaging in at least one of these behaviours and over half reporting at least two in this dimension (Lyndon et.al, 2011, p.174).

Chaulk and Jones (2011) discovered that nearly half of the behaviours occurred equally frequently between the ex-intimate group and the acquaintance group. The evidence that was founded by Chaulk and Jones (2011) was that the behaviours identified in the research on stalking and relational intrusion were due to Facebook (Chaulk & Jones, 2011, p.250). Some of the behaviours that were discovered were: sending person messages, commenting on the person's photo, sending virtual gifts on Facebook and checking the groups they have joined and much more (Chaulk & Jones, 2011, p.252).

Similar results were discovered by Lyndon et.al 2011, they conducted a survey online on Facebook to assess the frequency with which participants used Facebook to communicate with, monitor, or harass their ex-romantic partners. They focused on Facebook behaviour only because of its popularity (Lyndon et.al, 2011, p.712-713). They discovered that the participants were very familiar or extremely familiar with Facebook and most had a Facebook account. Participants who used Facebook to monitor or harass their ex-partners showed that they engaged in COP and ORI. Participants who engaged in at least one COP behaviour were almost twice as likely to vent about their ex-partner (example: write inappropriate things about an ex-partner and his/her new partner) (Lyndon et.al, 2011, p.714).

As adolescents age and begin dating, they may be more willing to use the same behaviours, which may cross over COP and cyber-stalking. Therefore, cyber-stalking laws should be written to cover stalking by any method, as it is improbable that these laws would keep up with technological advanced that could be used to stalk (Lyndon et.al, 2011, p.715).

This research shows that stalking is growing in attention and that it has three components which are: repeated pattern of intrusive behaviour exhibited by the perpetrator that is unwanted by the victim, a threat, implicit or explicit, made by the perpetrator and ending in the feeling of fear in the victim (Chaulk & Jones, 2011, p.246). Studies show that Facebook and social networking sites are responsible for stalking. Stalking is considered a compulsive behaviour and studies show that stalking of an ex-partner is very popular and that laws should be put in place to prevent stalking however with the growth of technology it is proven difficult.

Mental Health

As social networking sites are becoming more and more popular, it causes more problems in people's lives. Creating and maintain friendships, interacting with friends is what social networking was aimed for however problems like cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, stealing people's identity and much more are increasing. These problems are can cause problematic internet and social media use therefore leading to mental health issues.

Loneliness and no social skills are a major problem to do with excessive use on social media and the internet. A study conducted by Junghyun, LaRose and Peng (2009) assumed that one of the major motives that drives individuals' internet use is to relieve psychosocial problems for example, loneliness and depression. This study showed that individuals who were lonely or did not have good social skills could develop strong compulsive internet use behaviours resulting in negative life outcomes instead of relieving their original problems (Junghyun

et.al, 2009, p.451). This study conducted by Junghyum, LaRose and Peng (2009) showed that spending too much time on social media and the internet can harm a persons' psychological well-being therefore the person should monitor their time spent on social media and internet in order to fulfil their personal achievements.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD): Stevens, Humphrey, Wheatley and Galliher (2011) aimed to study if individuals with obsessive-compulsive personality characteristics use Facebook more than average and if these individuals use Facebook compulsively as a way to manage anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). In this study conducted by Stevens, Humphreym Wheatley and Galliher (2011) participants of 18 years and older had to have a Facebook account and were asked to complete a survey about Facebook use and personality characteristics (Stevens et.al, 2011, p.106). This study found no relationship among frequency or time spent on Facebook and obsessive-compulsive personality characteristics, but found significant relationship among reasons for accessing Facebook and obsessive-compulsive personality characteristics. These findings suggested that individuals with obsessive-compulsive personality characteristics may engage in Facebook as a way to ease stress (Stevens et.al, 2011, p.106).

ADHD: Similar to Stevens, Humphrey, Wheatley and Galliher (2011), Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) agreed that social networking can help to cope with stress however frequent users can become lonely and addictive like Junghyun, LaRose and Peng (2009) study. Frequent users of social media and internet can have major problems with their cognitive thinking such as: decision making, strategy learning, task contingences and performance (Weinstein et.al, 2010, p.280). This study conducted by Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) revealed that there is little known about the outcomes of excessive internet use and internet as there is little research done. However the research that has been done so far reveals that

internet addiction can cause depression and ADHD and that internet addiction and is mostly common among adolescents (Weinstein et.al, 2010, p.280).

A study carried out by Ahmadi, and Saghafi (2013) also discusses the relationship between internet overuse and psychological disorders such as hyperactivity, conduct problems, psychosocial maladjustment, dependency and attachment (Ahmadi et.al, 2013, p.543). This study focused on secondary school students aged 14-19, and showed that the average daily internet use was 7-14 hours per week. Ten percent reported using the internet more than 3 hours a day, a total of 15 hours per week. It was expected that most of the participants reported using the internet at weekends (62%), while the rest were equally likely to be online on weekdays (Ahmadi et.al, 2013, p.543-544). The results showed that 1,782 adolescents suffered from various types of health problems which prove that increasing levels of internet addiction can increase the chance of having some kind of health issues (Ahmadi et.al, 2013, p.546).

Similar research was carried out by Tsitsika, Janikian, Schoenmakers, Tzavela, Olafasson, Wojcik, Macarie, Tzavara and Richardsin (2014) which involved the study of prevalence of internet addictive behaviour (IAB) and related psychosocial characteristics among adolescents across seven European countries. In the study, there were two problematic groups: adolescents with IAB, characterised by a loss of control over their internet use, and adolescents 'at risk for IAB', showing fewer symptoms (Tsitsika et.al, 2014, p.528). The outcome of this research showed that about 1% of adolescents exhibited IAB and an additional 12.7% were at risk for IAB, therefore leading to the conclusion that in total, 13.9% displayed dysfunctional internet behaviour (DIB) (Tsitsika et.al, 2014, p.528) which is the two groups mentioned above, combined .

A further study conducted among adolescents in Belgium measured the time spent on social networking sites and measured their psychological well being using psychological scales used by DeCock, Vangeel, Klein, Minotte, Rosas and Meerker (2014). Results showed that compulsive use is not prevalent among non-heavy users of the internet. However among social networking users in Belgium aged 18 years and older showed a prevalence of 2.9% (DeCock et.al, 2014, p.168). In India, Malviya, Dixit, Shukla, Mishra, Jain and Tripathi (2014) conducted similar research among young students to find out the internet dependence among these students and to determine prevalence of internet addiction disorder among these students.

This study showed that 11.6% among 242 students find themselves spending more time than expected, 12.8% neglect chores to spend time online and 10.7% prefer to spend time online than to spend time with friends or loved ones. The most outrageous information is that 13.6% find themselves sleep deprived from staying up too late on social media and at least 8.3% found to always have depression and nervousness when they are offline (Malviya et.al, 2014, p.94).

Internet addiction can have a huge affect on mental health causing behaviours like: loneliness, OCD and ADHD which have been discussed. These behaviours can have a life changing affect for anyone who experiences these types of behaviours while internet addiction is growing. Research carried out shows that these types of behaviour are commonly recognised in younger adults and studies show that it has many effects on younger adults like sleep deprivation and psychological disorders such as hyperactivity.

Conclusion

Social Networking Sites (SNS) are increasingly popular in people's everyday lives and interest into mental health should also be further researched. Research of social networking

sites and mental health is growing however research that uses history on SNS and how that links to mental health is scarce. Moreover, due to the scarce of data collection, there are unanswered questions about its validity and what research using this method can add to theoretical constructs in the field (Umar et.al, 2015, p.3). More research needs to be conducted on adults and their daily use of social media and internet as most research is conducted on young adults and adolescents. This research will aim to find out if social media is the outcome of compulsive behaviour among all age groups (18 and over).

In this project it will aim to find out the amount of time young and older adults use social media and if addictive tendencies that lead to compulsive behaviour are picked up. The rationale of this project is to find out the difference between young and older adults and their time spent on social media and social networking. In previous research they mainly focus on younger adults and their time spent on social media however there is no recent research on social media and older adults.

The reasons why this research will be carried out is to find out if social media has an effect on young and older adults and if there is a difference between these effects on the age groups, causing them to depend on social media numerous times on a daily basis leading to compulsive behaviour. One critical aspect of this research will be to ask the question of whether the time spent of social media differs between age profiles and whether the time spent on social media leads to compulsive behaviour. The hypothesis of this present research is that there will be a difference in compulsive behaviour patterns between young and older adults who use social media quite often compared to those who do not use it on a regular basis.

Methods

Design: The design that was used in this research was an independent t-test design. There were two predictor variables which were: 1: The amount of time one uses social media and 2: Age comparison. The criterion variable was compulsive behaviour.

Materials: A short booklet of questionnaires was used in the present study. Two questionnaires were used, the first had 11 questions which asked the participants demographic information questions such as ‘What is your age?’, ‘What is your gender?’ and ‘Are you a member of a social networking site?’ The second questionnaire contained fifteen questions which (Compulsive Internet Use Scale: Meerkerk, Van Den Eijnden, Vermulst & Garretsen, 2009) measured the persons compulsive use of internet using a four point scale: 1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, agree and 4, strongly agree. Sample questions include: ‘Do you think about the internet, even when not online?’ and ‘Do you look forward to your next internet session?’ Scores ranged from 15 to 60 with higher scores indicating a higher level of compulsive use of internet. To see the questionnaires that were used in this research please see appendix one.

When all data was collected it was imported to SPSS and SPSSv22 was used to analyse the data. The variable, age was recoded into two groups, younger adults (18-30) and older adults (31-64). Total scores of how much time younger and older adults spend on social media and why participants use social media were computed to analyse the data.

Participants: The total amount of participants in this research was 127. There were 30 males and 97 females in this study. The participants were members of the general public and they freely participated in this research. This study compared different age groups and their use of social media to see if there was a difference in age and their use of social media between two

groups therefore the participants were separated into two different age groups: younger adults (18-30) and older adults (31-64).

Procedure: Participants took the survey on ‘Survey Monkey’ that was available online for three weeks which asked the participants a wide range questions varying from what social networking sites do they use to measuring their compulsive internet use by asking questions like ‘Do you look forward to your next internet session?’ Participants on average took approximately five minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Ethical considerations: To avoid ethical issues the questionnaire avoided sensitive questions and required people 18 years of age and older to complete. The questionnaire was also anonymous and this was assured on the questionnaire in a small introduction. There was also an opportunity for the participants to find out more information about the findings of the results by email that was provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Results

The aim of this research was to find out the amount of time younger and older adults spend on social media and if addictive tendencies that lead to compulsive behaviour are picked up. All statistics were analysed through SPSSv22. A series of descriptive statistics were computed in order to analyse the data and to test the hypothesis such as how much time is spent on social networking sites and why participants use social media. The hypothesis of this study predicted that there would be a difference in compulsive behaviour patterns between younger and older adults who use social media quite often compared to those who do not use it on a regular basis.

This study revealed that there were 97 females and 30 males that took part in this research. The main social networking sites that the participants use are Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Social networking sites that proved to be less popular were Tinder, Tumblr, Vine, Google+ and Pinterest. The most common way participants access their social networking sites is through their phone with 126 participants responding. Other common types of access are through laptop and iPad however iPod and Desktop are considered to be the least common ways of accessing social networking sites.

Descriptive statistics:

Table 1: On average, how much time do you spend daily on social networking sites?

new_age			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Younger Adults	Valid	Less than 1 hour	4	4.4	4.4	4.4
		1-6 hours per day	72	80.0	80.0	84.4
		7-12 hours per day	11	12.2	12.2	96.7
		13 hours and more	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
		Total	90	100.0	100.0	
Older Adults	Valid	Less than 1 hour	12	32.4	32.4	32.4
		1-6 hours per day	24	64.9	64.9	97.3
		13 hours and more	1	2.7	2.7	100.0
		Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows how much time the participants spent daily on social networking sites. These results support the hypothesis that younger adults spend more time on social media than older adults having 32.4 percent older adults spending less than one hour on social media compared to 4.4 percent younger adults spending less than one hour on social media. It also shows that 3.3 percent younger adults spend more time on social media by spending 13 hours or more on social media compared to 2.7 percent of older adults. The total of younger adults using social media is 90 which is a significant result compared to older adults with a total of 37. As younger adults spent more time on social networking sites than older adults it proved that their compulsive behaviour would be higher than older adults as younger adults scored higher.

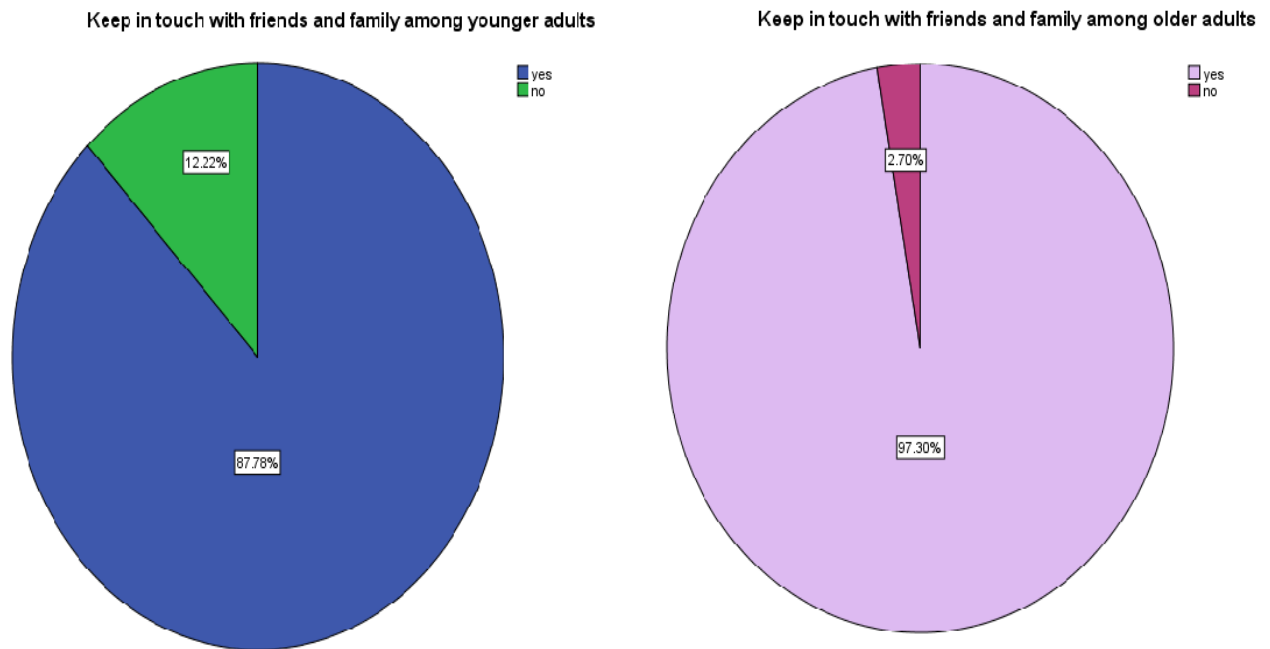
Therefore the amount time spent on social networking sites also support the results of the question 'Are you short of sleep because of the internet?' results show that 11.1 percent of younger adults strongly agree of being short of sleep compared to 2.7 percent of older adults strongly agreeing. These results show that the more time spent on social networking sites can be cause participants to be more addictive therefore causing compulsive behaviour among young adults in this research.

Table 2: Do you continue to use the internet despite your intention to stop?

New_age			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Younger Adults	Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	3.3	3.3	3.3
		Disagree	16	17.8	17.8	21.1
		Agree	51	56.7	56.7	77.8
		Strongly Agree	20	22.2	22.2	100.0
		Total	90	100.0	100.0	
Older Adults	Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	13.5	13.5	13.5
		Disagree	10	27.0	27.0	40.5
		Agree	17	45.9	45.9	86.5
		Strongly Agree	5	13.5	13.5	100.0
		Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows an example of one of the questions that was used to measure compulsive behaviour. This question and the results support the hypothesis that younger adults spend more time on social media than older adults and although they have intentions to stop they cannot, this shows addictive tendencies like compulsive behaviour. A significant 22.2 percent of younger adults strongly agree that they continue to use the internet despite their intention to stop compared to 13.5 percent of older adults strongly agreeing.

Figure 1:



The graph above shows pie charts among younger and older adults asking them why they use social networking sites, the most popular answer was to ‘keep in touch with family and friends’. The results show that 87.78 percent of younger adults use social networking sites to keep in touch with friends and family whereas a significant 97.30 percent of older adults mainly use social networking sites to keep in touch with family and friends. Although this does not show compulsive behaviour it is a factor towards it because it is a reason why people use social networking sites and therefore it can lead to compulsive behaviour.

Inferential statistics:

The mean score for younger adults was 36.69(SD = 7.68) the mean score for older adults was 31.59(SD = 9.49). An independent t-test was conducted to compare compulsive behaviour scores for younger and older adults, and showed that there was a significant difference in mean scores for younger and older adults $t(125) = 3.159, p < .01$. This shows that the higher

the participants score on the Likert Scale Questionnaire, the higher their compulsive behaviour is, in regards to social networking sites.

The aims of this research was to find out the amount of time younger adults use social networking sites compared to older adults and also to find out if it led to addictive tendencies like compulsive behaviour. The hypothesis of this study was that there would be a difference in compulsive behaviour patterns between younger and older adults who use social media quite often compared to those who do not use it on a regular basis.

The results supported this hypothesis by showing that younger adults do use social networking more than older adults and that younger adults had a higher level of compulsive behaviour compared to older adults.

Discussion

The aims of this research are to find out the amount of time younger and older adults use social media and if addictive tendencies that lead to compulsive behaviour are picked up. One critical aspect of this research is whether or not the time spent on social media differs between age profiles and whether the time spent on social media leads to compulsive behaviour. The results show the mean score for younger adults was 36.69(SD = 7.68) the mean score for older adults was 31.59(SD = 9.49) therefore showing that there is a significant difference between younger and older adults' compulsive behaviours. The results of this study supported the hypotheses of this study which was that there will be a difference in compulsive behaviour patterns between younger and older adults who use social media quite often compared to those who do not use it on a regular basis.

The results of this study were similar to those discussed in the literature. A question asked in this study was 'Does social networking have an effect on your face-to-face communication?' results show that 10 percent of younger adults strongly agreed in comparison to 5.4 percent of older adults which is a significant difference. Research carried out by Junghyun, LaRose and Peng (2009) stated that individuals who experience loneliness and rely on social networking sites to communicate can therefore cause major effects on their face-to-face communication.

Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) believed that internet addiction is caused by social networking and they also discussed how social networking can affect an individuals' well-being therefore creating difficulties with face-to-face communication. They discovered that people with internet dependence use the internet as a coping mechanism against underlying psychological development issues such as identity and intimacy (Weinstein & Lejoyeux, 2010, p.3). Although individuals with psychological development issues rely on social networking for their communication, it is causing great effect as seen in this current research

that 10 percent of younger adults struggle with face-to-face communication due to social networking.

Similar to Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010), DeCock, Klein, Minotte, Rosas and Meerkerk (2014) measured the student's total time spent on social networking sites (SNS) and results showed that internet addiction is very common among young people and that internet use can also be positive as it builds social integration online and offline. Although there are benefits of using the internet there can also be negative effects such as damaging people's physiological well-being and showing compulsive behaviour by constantly on the internet therefore leading to affecting social skills.

Therefore the question 'Does social networking have an effect on your face-to-face communication?' is supported in this study and shows that younger adults experience this compared to older adults.

Another surprising find in this research is the results from a question asking the participants 'Do others (partners, children parents) say you should use the internet less?' Results show that only 7.8 percent of younger adults experienced this however a surprising 13.5 percent of older adults said that they experience it. Current research that has been carried out about internet addiction covers this topic however the research is mostly conducted with younger adults. Malviya, Dixit, Shukla, Mishra, Jain and Tripathi (2014) asked a similar question to their sample study and they discovered that 13.2 percent found to get complaints from their family members for constantly being on social media. Although there was two different sample sizes the result conducted by Malviya et.al (2014) shows near enough the same figure as older adults in this research. There is no current research carried out on older adults and internet addiction however this study shows that it is a current problem for older adults.

The results to this question in this research was a surprise as older adults scored higher therefore having a higher compulsive behaviour than younger adults. This did not support the hypothesis of younger adults showing more addictive tendencies like compulsive behaviour than older adults. This result shows that further research should be conducted into older adults and internet addiction as there is no current research that focuses on older adults and social networking and compulsive behaviour.

Malviya et.al (2014) also discovered that 13.6 percent of young adults suffered from sleep deprivation due to excessive use of the internet. In this research it was discovered that 11.1 percent of younger adults strongly agree with being short of sleep however 2.7 percent of older adults agree. Therefore these results show that it is a current problem among younger adults. A strong figure shows that 48.6 percent of older adults strongly disagree with being short of sleep however 22.2 percent of younger adults strongly disagree. The higher the score shows the higher compulsive behaviour among the participants and it is evident that compulsive behaviour is among the younger adults.

Therefore the question ‘Are you short of sleep because of the internet?’ is supported in this research as results show that younger adults scored higher in this question showing their higher level of compulsive behaviour and therefore supports the hypothesis that younger adults spend more time on social media than older adults.

Figure 1 in the results show the most common reason why participants use social networking sites, results show that participants of this study use social networking sites in order to keep in touch with their friends and family. Most research done has discovered that social networking can be beneficial like Weinstein and Lejoeux (2010) as they discovered that social networking is beneficial for example it is mainly used to cope with stress, expanding networks, starting new relationships and much more however frequent users are now

considered lonely, having no social skills and damaged psychological well-being (Weinstein & Lejoeux, 2010, p.279). They discovered that people with internet dependence use the internet as a coping mechanism against underlying psychological development issues such as identity and intimacy (Weinstein & Lejoeux, 2010, p.3).

The Likert Scale questionnaire showed that the participants that spent more time on social networking sites scored higher on the compulsive behaviour level. The participants psychological well-being was not measured in his study however with other research done the more time spent on social media therefore leads to damaged psychological well-being.

‘Stalking’ was considered a very scary thing to participants in the study conducted by Lyndon, Bonds-Raacke and Cratty (2011), they discovered that their participants would be aware of stalking and ‘cyber-stalking’ therefore they would make sure that their security levels are high on Facebook for example. In this current research was discovered that participants would share many types of information to the public on Facebook but the most popular among younger adults was pictures compared to the older adults who share their real name to the public. For younger adults to share pictures to the public is quite alarming as cyber-stalking would be quite common and that people could steal pictures and their identity.

Therefore more awareness of cyber-stalking and stalking should be made public on social networking sites to prevent it from happening.

Limitations

Limitations are unavoidable within any piece of research. This research did come across some difficulties such as getting an even amount of participants for each group. The sample was split into two age groups younger adults (18-30) which contained 90 participants and older adults (31-64) which had 37 participants. The 37 participants of the older adults do not represent all of the older adults who do use social media daily. Therefore this could have had an effect on this research.

Another possible limitation is that the results could be slightly inaccurate due to human error which is extremely possible. Participants could have lied about 'How many friends do you have on social networking sites' in order to go along with what they thought was the normal amount of friends to have. Participants could have also been dishonest while completing the Likert Scale questionnaire. Any of these limitations could have had a great effect on the end results of this research.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results mentioned above supports and challenged previous studies, as well as contributing to further research in the area of compulsive behaviour and social media.

This study has shown that younger adults scored higher in the compulsive behaviour scale compared to the older adults therefore supporting the hypothesis that younger adults spend more time on social media and that there would be a difference in compulsive behaviour between the two groups. The findings in this study show the mean score for younger adults is 36.69(SD = 7.68) the mean score for older adults is 31.59(SD = 9.49). An independent t-test was conducted to compare compulsive behaviour scores for younger and older adults, and showed that there was a significant difference in mean scores for younger and older adults $t(125) = 3.159, p < .01$. This shows that the higher the participants score on the Likert Scale Questionnaire, the higher their compulsive behaviour is, in regards to social networking sites.

This study also showed that older adults spent less time on social media than younger adults as 32.4 percent of older adults said they spend less than one hour on social networking sites compared to 4.4 percent of younger adults. 64.9 percent of older adults said they spend 1-6 hours and only 2.7 percent said they spend 13 hours or more however none of the older adults said they spend 7-12 hours on social networking sites. 80 percent of younger adults said they spend 1-6 hours on social networking sites, 12.2 percent said they spend 7-12 hours and 3.3 percent said they spend 13 hours. These results show that younger adults spend more time on social networking sites and are scoring higher in compulsive behaviour questions compared to older adults.

The most surprising information found in this research was that 13.5 percent of older adults received more complaints from others like parents, partners and children about their use on

social media than 7.8 percent of younger adults. From the compulsive behaviour results younger adults scored higher than older adults therefore this result was surprising.

In relation to future research, this research provides ground work for more in-depth study. A quantitative or qualitative research is recommended as both could work in this situation. Further research on older adults and social media and compulsive behaviour should be analysed as research that has already been conducted has completely focused on younger adults and their internet addiction. Although the results did support the hypothesis, a larger scale study is recommended as the scale of this study was not large enough.

References

- Ahmadi, K., & Saghafi, A. (2013). Psychosocial profile of Iranian adolescents' internet addiction. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior & Social Networking, 16*(7), 543-548. doi:10.1089/cyber.2012.0237
- Chaulk, K., & Jones, T. (2011). Online obsessive relational intrusion: Further concerns about facebook. *Journal Of Family Violence, 26*(4), 245-254. doi:10.1007/s10896-011-9360-x
- De Cock, R., Vangeel, J., Klein, A., Minotte, P., Rosas, O., & Meerkerk, G. (2014). Compulsive Use of social networking sites in Belgium: Prevalence, profile, and the role of attitude toward work and school. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior & Social Networking, 17*(3), 166-171. doi:10.1089/cyber.2013.0029
- Junghyun, K., LaRose, R., & Wei, P. (2009). Loneliness as the cause and the effect of problematic internet use: The relationship between internet use and psychological well-being. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior, 12*(4), 451-455. doi:10.1089/cpb.2008.0327
- Lyndon, A., Bonds-Raacke, J., & Cratty, A. D. (2011). College students' facebook stalking of ex-partners. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior & Social Networking, 14*(12), 711-716. doi:10.1089/cyber.2010.0588
- Malviya, A., Dixit, S., Shukla, H., Mishra, A., Jain, A., & Tripathi, A. (2014). A study to evaluate internet addiction disorder among student of a medical college and associated hospital of central India. *National Journal Of Community Medicine, 5*(1), 93-95.
- Meerkerk, G., Van Den Eijnden, R. M., Vermulst, A. A., & Garretsen, H. L. (2009). The compulsive internet use scale (CIUS): Some Psychometric Properties. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior, 12*(1), 1-6. doi:10.1089/cpb.2008.0181

Stevens, S., Humphrey, K., Wheatley, T., & Galliher, R. V. (2011). Links among obsessive-compulsive personality characteristics and facebook usage. *Psi Chi Journal Of Undergraduate Research*, *16*(3), 106-112.

Toseeb, U., & Inkster, B. (2015). Online social networking sites and mental health research. *Frontiers In Psychiatry*, 61-4. doi:10.3389/fpsyt.2015.00036

Tsitsika, A., Janikian, M., Schoenmakers, T. M., Tzavela, E. C., Ólafsson, K., Wójcik, S., & ... Richardson, C. (2014). Internet addictive behavior in adolescence: A cross-sectional study in seven European countries. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior & Social Networking*, *17*(8), 528-535. doi:10.1089/cyber.2013.0382

Wang, E. S., & Wang, M. C. (2013). Social support and social interaction ties on internet addiction: Integrating online and offline contexts. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior & Social Networking*, *16*(11), 843-849. doi:10.1089/cyber.2012.0557

Weinstein, A., & Lejoyeux, M. (2010). Internet addiction or excessive internet use. *American Journal Of Drug & Alcohol Abuse*, *36*(5), 277-283. doi:10.3109/00952990.2010.491880

APENDENCIES

Appendix 1

This study is concerned about how often people use social media and social networking. Please answer each section as honestly as possible. There are no wrong or right answers so do not spend too long thinking about each question.

Any information that you give will remain anonymous, you are not required to write your name anywhere on this survey. I hope you find this questionnaire interesting, and I would like to thank you in advance for your time and co-operation.

If you would like to find out more information on this study you can contact me by email.

Carmel O'Reilly

10029290@mydbs.ie

Please complete the following demographic information:

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your Gender?

Male Female

3. Are you a member of a social networking site? (If no, end of survey)

Yes No

4. Name **all** of the social networking sites that you are a member of

Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Snapchat Instagram

Tinder Tumblr Vine Google+ Pinterest

Other _____

5. How do you access your social networking sites?

Phone Laptop iPad iPod Desktop

• Other _____

6. How long have you been using social networking sites?

Less than one year 1-5 Years

6-10 Years More than 11 Years

7. What information do you include on the social networking site that you use the most that is available to the public? (Can choose more than 1)

Email Real Name Hobbies Town

Mobile Pictures Videos Interests

Religion Date of Birth Relationship Status

Other (please specify) _____

8. How many friends do you have on social networking sites?

Fewer than 50 51-250 251-500

More than 501-999 1000+

9. On average, how much time do you spend daily on social networking sites?

Less than 1 hour 1-6 hours per day 7-12 hours per day

13 hours or more

10. Why do you use social networking sites? (Can chose more than one)

To find information To play games To make new friends

To make professional and business contacts To get opinions

To keep in touch with friends and family To share pictures/videos

To share your experience

• Other _____

11. Are others (parents or partners) aware of your social network activities?

Yes No Not applicable

Appendix 2

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with them by circling the appropriate number to the right of the statement as follows:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = agree

4 = strongly agree

1. Do you find it difficult to stop using the internet when you are online?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

2. Do you continue to use the internet despite your intention to stop?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

3. Do others (partners, children, parents) say you should use the internet less?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

4. Do you prefer to use the internet instead of spending time with others?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

5. Does online networking have an effect on your face-to-face communication?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

6. Are you short of sleep because of the internet?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

7. Do you think about the Internet, even when you are not online?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

8. Do you look forward to your next internet session?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

9. Do you think you should use the internet less often?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

10. Have you unsuccessfully tried to spend less time on the internet?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

11. Do you rush through your (home) work in order to go on the internet?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

12. Do you neglect your daily obligations because you prefer to go on the internet?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

13. Do you go on the internet when you are feeling down?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

14. Do you use the internet to escape from your sorrows or get relief from negative feelings?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

15. Do you feel restless, frustrated, or irritated when you cannot use the internet?

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

I would once again like to thank you for taking part in this study and would remind you that all information given here will remain anonymous. If you would like to know more about this study, please do not hesitate in contacting me at the email address printed on the front of this booklet.

Carmel O'Reilly