

ABSTRACT

A CORRELATIONAL STUDY: THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL ONLINE COMMUNICATION ON ADOLESCENTS' SELF-DISCLOSURE

The focus of this investigation examined the influence of the Internet and social media on the level of self-disclosure and developmental tasks of adolescents while interacting with peers online. The research study question was: Does the use of personal online communication influence the level of self-disclosure in adolescents? Adolescent subjects were randomly selected at a local middle school to respond to an online survey, *The Self-Disclosure on Social Network Site Questionnaire*. Self-disclosure was examined within the identified five dimensions of the survey and the results showed that a correlation existed between social media usage and increased levels of self-disclosure. Implications of this research study were discussed. Relevant professionals serving adolescents including school social workers were encouraged to understand how social media usage may impact adolescent development, create needed relevant interventions, and to pursue further research in this area.

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A CORRELATIONAL STUDY: THE INFLUENCE OF
PERSONAL ONLINE COMMUNICATION ON
ADOLESCENTS' SELF-DISCLOSURE

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The advent of the Internet has transformed our cultural lexicon, changing the way we work, the way we connect, and the way we communicate. The cultural impact of the Internet is still not entirely known or fully understood, in particular, its impact on frequent users, the adolescent youth. How relationships are formed, built, and sustained, compared to how people connected during the pre-Internet era, comes into view as a potentially important issue when examining the role of the Internet in shaping human relationships. With the expansion of the Internet, social media has introduced a new element called virtual space, where the adolescent's skills in relating with others have been significantly altered. Social Networking Sites (SNS) "are online services, platforms, or websites that enable the construction and reflection of social networks or social relations among individuals" (Huang, 2016, p. 122).

Various social media sites such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Tumblr have become the language youth are using to create their identity. The combination of the Internet and social media has ushered in an era of global perpetual connectivity as never experienced before in the history of humankind. Youth's self-disclosure of personal information within the virtual space of social media appears to be markedly different from self-disclosure made in person, thus such behaviors may have implications for relationship building.

The influence on adolescent relationship formation through Internet usage is also relevant due to the sheer volume of usage of social media on a daily basis. Pew Research Center conducted an Internet study of adolescent youth showing that 95% of teenagers between the ages of 12-17 are now online using various forms of technology and 93% of youth either own or have access to a computer.

Seventy-eight percent of male and female adolescents own a cell phone and 47% own a smartphone. The increased usage of smartphones has allowed for 24% of youth to be connected online constantly. That averages to one-quarter of adolescents connected in virtual space at any one time. In addition, smartphones have the capacity to be constantly connected to the Internet with built-in applications that allow youth to connect to social media in various forms such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Tumblr. Social media are defined as virtual communities that allow interaction and connection with other users by creating profiles and uploading personal photos, which take place on SNS (Waheed, Anjum, Rehman, & Khawaja, 2017).

In today's world, adolescent norms are being formed in the virtual space. Ninety-six percent of youth go online daily (Duggan, & Brenner, 2013). Seventy-one percent of youth aged 12-17 use Facebook daily while the same percentage of youth use multiple social media sites. After Facebook, at the time of this research the next most frequently used social media sites are Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Google+, Vine, and Tumblr. Psychological, emotional, and social connections are continuously being made that impact and form individual identity.

Adolescent usage of social media may directly influence their growing sense of themselves as well as their overall wellbeing during this vulnerable developmental period. The influence of this extensive use of social media on the developing self of the adolescent is largely unknown given the recent phenomenon of the Internet and social media. Pew Research affirms that the usage of social media is experiencing a global surge as one out of every 6 minutes spent online is dedicated to social media usage (comScore, 2011). It has only been in the past decade that the technological impact on humans is being studied. Self-disclosure plays a vital role in context of the heavy amount of technological use of social

media. Of interest to this study is the effect of social media on self-disclosure, which is a key component to building relationships.

Significance and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of the Internet and social media on the development of adolescents as they interact, build relationships and communities within the virtual space. Specifically, this research will look at the role of self-disclosure as adolescents shape their personal identity while occupying virtual space. A key component in forming and maintaining relationships, self-disclosure will be defined as personal verbal communication about oneself to another (Forgas & Simpson, 2011). In chapter 2, self-disclosure will be more fully examined through the identified five components: (a) amount, (b) depth, (c) honesty, (d) intent, and (e) valence (Huang, 2016).

The hypothesis of this study is that the perceived low-risk nature of self-disclosure on social media will correlate with a higher than expected level of self-disclosure by adolescents during their social media usage. The independent variable will be self-disclosure and the dependent variable will be personal online communication. The guiding research question will be: Does the use of personal online communication influence the level of self-disclosure in adolescents?

Relevance to Social Work

For social workers, understanding the role that social media plays in the lives of adolescents is relevant, as this knowledge can inform social workers of the challenges adolescents face in social media utilization and assist social workers and other helping professionals in developing effective interventions. Understanding the influence of social media in relationships can potentially assist the field of social work to better understand adolescent relationship forming

behaviors in this age of the Internet. With the study's results, the social worker may become more relevant in responding to adolescents. Without such knowledge, social workers neither are aware of nor specifically trained in the impact of social media on adolescent well-being.

Summary

Adolescents are forming their identity in nontraditional ways through the use of personal online communications. As this new phenomena has not been fully investigated, understanding this identity forming behavior within a unique space can be highly relevant to the field of social work as social workers often work with this population. The research question will be: Does the use of personal online communication influence the level of self-disclosure in adolescents? The next chapter will examine existing research in this area, delineate important tasks associated with adolescent development, introduce theoretical frameworks guiding this research, discuss the development of self-efficacy in adolescents, identify current research gaps, define adolescent well-being, and describe the five components of self-disclosure examined in this research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Humans seek to form connections and attachments through groups as groups provide identity, connections, aid to accomplish tasks, and other resources important for development (Schein, 1980). As such, people cannot live without the connections created in group settings as this serves as a basic survival function for humans (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). As a virtual group setting, the use of SNS has become more than just a passing fad; it has become a prime component of daily life for the adolescent (Waheed et al., 2017). As a result of their constant connectivity, youth express themselves virtually. Today's adolescents do not know a time without Internet access and the technology designed to improve and deepen connections to people virtually, much like baby boomers do not know a time without television or radio. Social media exist to promote communication and connection and as such, as Barth (2015) stated, "communication technology is...a central fixture within our society and has radically changed individuals' social interactions, learning strategies, and choice of entertainment" (p. 201). As humans have done for centuries, the adolescent longs for emotional, mental, and social connections, albeit in the digital space. The extent of this usage makes a compelling case for further research and investigation of the technology's impact on today's adolescents.

This chapter will first examine the stage of adolescence and its developmental tasks. Next, the theoretical frameworks for the study, social learning and social penetration, will be described and concepts defined. Current research around the topic of adolescents and social media usage will then be explored. Lastly, literature regarding the relationship between self-disclosure and social media will be examined. The study's research question is: Does the use of

personal online communication influence the level of self-disclosure in adolescents? Examining youth's use of Internet and social media and its impact on self-disclosure is both exciting and challenging as research in this area is innovative and dynamic.

Adolescence

Each period of human development is characterized by its own unique challenges throughout the lifespan, bringing personal maturity and growth. Adolescents navigate biological, educational, emerging sexuality, and changes in social roles (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Adolescents and their central developmental tasks will be examined given their involvement with the Internet and SNS. A valuable developmental technique is the use of self-efficacy to assist in attaining valuable developmental tasks throughout the lifespan. Three environmental factors are needed for self-efficacy: parents, schooling, and peers (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Prior to this stage of adolescence, parents serve as the primary influence on child development. As children enter school, this then becomes the first opportunity for adolescents to begin building their social environment outside of the context of their family. Upon entering adolescence, the influence of their peers becomes more valued than the influence of their parents (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). In the Internet age, adolescents rely on reactions from their peers, not only at school or clubs, but also through personal online communications of social media. This research will look at the intersectionality of personal online communications taking place on social media and its influence on the five components of self-disclosure.

Adolescent Group Formation

A group is formed when two or more recognize themselves as members of a unit (Brown, 1988). Children typically begin to participate in the group formation process during school where they experience regular contact with peers. During early middle childhood, groups are informal with little structure. In middle school years, group formation takes on a new level of significance and importance while during adolescence groups take on more structure and rules; roles are clearer as are the social rules that govern those groups (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010).

Social Development

Transition into adolescence typically means more stress as experienced by both the adolescent and the parent (Steinberg, 2007) due to the rapid development that adolescents experience during puberty (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010).

Establishing parent-adolescent attachment, autonomy development and resolution of parent conflict are three key developmental tasks involved with the social development of an adolescent (Steinberg, 2007).

When looking at parent-adolescent attachment, research has shown that maintaining healthy attachment is critical to successfully navigating adolescent development (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Adolescents with secure attachments to their parents tend to be more successful than peers without secure attachments, when looking at the factors of self-reliance, psychosocial well-being, independence, and behavioral competence (Liu, 2008; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986; Vivona, 2000). Steinberg (2007) encouraged parents to take an authoritative approach to parenting, in that parents are firm, consistent, and actively encourage adolescents to develop their own values and beliefs. This research also found that adolescents with authoritative parents perform better in

school, report less anxiety and depression, and are less likely to participate in antisocial behavior.

During adolescent development a major source of conflict stems from the control versus autonomy concept (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Adolescents are seeking to acquire more independence and parents are attempting to grant more freedom to their children. Up until this point of their development, parents have retained more control than given independence. Parents who navigate this transition from control to freedom tend to influence a healthy sense of autonomy in their children. Mullis, Graf, & Mullis (2009) found that as adolescents begin to perceive their parents as people they experience increased sense of autonomy and successfully navigate the *Identity Moratorium*, which Erickson speaks of at this stage of development.

Resolution of parent-adolescent conflict may actually serve as a healthy developmental process. Parental conflict, at this stage, may encourage young adults to spend time away from their parents and assist in the individuation process (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). This conflict also assists in developing social reasoning, where adolescents start to recognize their decisions as choices separate from parental rules and regulations (Smetana, 2000).

Identity Formation

Adolescence is marked by a prime focus on developing one's identity (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). In developing their identity, adolescents begin to ask and search for answers to important questions such as *Who am I?* and *What's important to me?* (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Characterized by his *Identity* versus *Identity Confusion* stage of development, Erickson described a chasm between the securities of childhood and the freedom and autonomy of adulthood. Meeus (2011)

conducted a longitudinal research study to examine adolescent identity formation and found that identity forms progressively during adolescence. The research also revealed that adolescents with mature identity showed higher levels of adjustment, performed better in school, and lived with supportive families.

Each period of human development brings its own unique challenges, personal maturity, and growth throughout the lifespan. Adolescents begin to navigate biological, educational, sexual, and social changes (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Recent research confirmed that supporting emotional separation from the family of origin was key to the adolescent's journey of self-differentiation (Abrams, 2015). The use of personal online communication can be a deciding factor in adolescent individuation and identity formation. Psychological, emotional, and social connections are occurring that impact and inform individual identity while adolescent norms are being developed in the virtual space. SNS provide a platform for adolescents to cultivate thoughts, feelings, and identity where they can create digital versions for their peers to see in online spaces. Self-identity formation happens simultaneously offline and online (Chandra, 2016), adding to the current understanding of adolescent development. Group formation takes on a whole new level of significance and importance during adolescence where peers become more important to their identity formation. As such, groups take on more structure and rules and roles and social rules are clearer amongst both face-to-face and online groups.

Physical Development

The beginning of the puberty process marks adolescence in young adults (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Puberty is defined as the time at which changes in growth, maturing physiological characteristics, and secondary sexual development

transpire simultaneously (Graber, Petersen, & Brooks-Gunn, 1996; Kaplan, 2004). Endocrine glands produce hormones that generate the body changes of an adolescent (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Hormones regulate various organs in the body in a powerful way. These sudden changes in the body trigger psychological implications in adolescence.

Psychological and Emotional Development

The multiple changes in the minds and bodies of adolescents can initiate both positive and negative emotions during puberty (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Research found that boys experience higher levels of confidence and self-esteem when they begin puberty earlier compared to late-maturing boys (Simmons & Blyth, 1987; Spencer, Dupree, Swanson, & Cunningham, 1998). The opposite seems to be true for young girls where studies showed that girls who began early maturation struggled academically and experienced behavior problems (Spencer et al., 1998). These studies showed variable reactions to the impact of puberty on boys and girls. Students who were not prepared for these changes often experienced negative reactions to the puberty process (LeCroy & Daley, 2001). Though puberty has a strong impact on adolescents as they develop, research showed other factors such as emotional development should be considered when studying adolescents (Kaplan, 2004).

During adolescence, boys and girls typically are given greater freedom in decision-making, increased chances for acceptance and rejection as they form peer groups, and a heightened awareness of their sexuality (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Adolescence is a time for risk-taking as teens seek to form individual identity and make decisions that affect their transition into adulthood. Early developmental psychologists such as G. Stanley Hall and Anna Freud have described this time for

adolescents as stormy and chaotic (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Other researchers in adolescent psychology have found this to be an oversimplification of the adolescent experience. One such researcher, Bandura, was concerned that this prevalent belief of adolescence as being solely characterized by turmoil mischaracterizes millions of healthy adolescents. Contrary empirical research showed that a majority of adolescents are well adjusted, cope well with external environments, and transition successfully into adulthood (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010).

Adler referred to the concept of self-esteem as the global evaluation of self (Adler & Stewart, 2004). Levels of self-esteem vary through the adolescent cycle. In early adolescence (ages 11 to 14 years), self-esteem appeared to be at its lowest level (Kaplan, 2004; Simmons, Rosenberg, & Rosenberg, 1973). During these years young boys and girls are greatly self-conscious and easily influenced by others (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Girls transitioning into middle school are at greater risk (Quatman & Watson, 2001). During this stage of development adolescent self-esteem is tied to the ability to form and complete short-term goals (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Some adolescents negatively assess their self-worth based on goal attainment and may interpret their inability to reach their goals as evidence of the total failure of their personal selfhood. Social workers can guide struggling adolescents to understand that all fall short of goals and every struggle is embedded with learning and growth, which are opportunities to press forward. One important goal for adolescents is to seek out attachments to their peers and acceptance as they develop socially.

Theoretical Frameworks

The two theoretical frameworks guiding this research will be Erickson's stages of psychosocial development and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The secondary theory will be the Social Penetration Theory. Erickson is widely recognized for his extensive research in the lifespan development of humans. The strength of Erickson's framework is the ability to tie psychosocial development to each lifespan stage (McAdams, 1997). This research will closely examine the impact of social media on adolescent development while considering Erickson's psychosocial life stage model. The social cognitive theory looks at the role of thought processes of the individual that determines whether or not a behavior will be imitated. Bandura's conceptualization is appropriate for looking at repetitious behaviors adolescents participate in while they create and disseminate personal online communications. Social penetration theory helps understand the use of self-disclosure in the relationship building process. Self-disclosure and its interaction with social media was the key variable studied, making the social penetration theory framework crucial to this study.

Erickson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Erickson believed that through the lifespan, people move through eight developmental stages, during which developmental tasks are evident and overcoming challenges unique to each stage takes place (Rogers, 2013). This study looks at early adolescence, which, according to Erickson, occurs around stage four and stage five. Stage four is known as *Industry vs. Inferiority*, which is marked by a child's need to be productive and have successful experiences. Stage five is known as *Identity vs. Identity Confusion*, where adolescents are exploring who they are as they develop a sense of identity (Rogers, 2013). When people

successfully navigate the challenges of every developmental stage, they acquire new skills that help them with their emotions and environments (Rogers, 2013).

Marcia (1966) explored the *Identity vs. Identity Confusion* stage. *Identity diffusion* is the least mature adolescent status. Teens at this stage have made no meaningful commitments to values, attitudes, or future plans. During *Identity foreclosure*, adolescents have made commitments to goals, values, and beliefs, but have not faced a crisis. Parents tend to push their beliefs and expectations upon their children; especially those involving goals parents believe children should attend to. At this stage adolescents have not been given enough freedom to explore their own perceptions on these matters. *Identity moratorium* describes those who are currently facing a crisis and are actively exploring core values and perceptions. At the final stage, *Identity achievement*, adolescents have resolved their crisis by fully committing to things such as sexual orientation, career, or religious beliefs (Marcia, 1966).

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1986) recognized that people learn by observing others, while simultaneously looking at how people form and learn new behaviors, values, and attitudes. This is commonly known as Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). Bandura agrees with the behaviorist theories of operant conditioning and classical conditioning, but he builds upon those theories in two key areas. Bandura believed that behavior is learned through models found in the environment; this process is called observational learning. Key models in an adolescent's life can be their parents, peers, and television. Another key theory Bandura added was the mediational process. Bandura believed that humans take an active role in the learning process: stimulus in the environment is observed;

then cognitive processes occur to determine if the behavior should or should not be imitated.

This study examines peer modeling that occurs through personal online communications of SNS. Social networking usage has become so prevalent that its influence over the formation of behaviors and values needs to be evaluated and understood. The prevalence of SNS usage reinforces multiple ways in which self-efficacy is measured: repetition, mastery, and vicarious learning from other peers. Thus, adolescents develop their sense of self-efficacy by observing online personal communications and other behaviors observed in social networking.

Self-efficacy of adolescents.

As adolescents move in to young adulthood, they begin to assume more personal responsibility in their own social communities (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). School experiences help shape adolescent self-efficacy. Adolescents with cognitive maturity are better equipped to incorporate multiple information sources regarding individual competency and have a more differentiated view of their abilities (Eccles, Midgley, & Schiefele, 1998). Given that this research will be conducted on a middle school campus, it is important to note the school environment of this population.

Transitional periods of schooling can cause changes in self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Research has been conducted examining at the transition between elementary and middle school where during this transition adolescents experience declines in their efficacy beliefs and competence (Anderman, Maehr, & Midgely, 1999; Anderman & Midgely, 1997; Eccles et al., 1983; Harter, Whitesall, & Lowalski, 1992; Urdan & Midgely, 2003; (Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reuman, & Midgely, 1991).. Negative effects are not inevitable

and can be corrected with changes in goals of classroom structures (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). Classroom environments that focus on the importance of effort, self-improvement, collaboration, and meaningful learning help adolescents maintain positive levels of self-efficacy (Anderman & Midgely, 1997; Anderman & Young, 1994; Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004; Meece, 1991, 1994; Meece, Herman, & McCombs, 2003; Roeser, Midgely, & Urdan, 1996; Urdan & Midgely, 2003).

The current prevalence of SNS usage by this age group may lead to the natural development of self-efficacy. Empirical research was conducted looking at the role of self-efficacy as a predictor to SNS usage. Multiple variables were found to direct social function and entertainment uses of SNS. Factors such as self-efficacy and sociability predicted the usage of SNS as a function of social support. Alternately, factors such as shyness and relaxing entertainment motivation were predictors of the entertainment usage of SNS (Wang, Jackson, Wang, & Gaskin, 2015). Further research examined the role of self-efficacy as a determinant of life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was found to be positively correlated to metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy. Regression analysis showed that metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy accounted for 15% of life satisfaction (Cikrikci & Odaci, 2016). This research concluded that metacognitive awareness and self-efficacy were significant predictors of life satisfaction amongst adolescents.

Social Penetration Theory

Altman and Taylor (1973) examined how relationships develop and deepen over time. They believed that relationships follow a set trajectory in which self-disclosure was the key component that promoted greater levels of intimacy during

the relationship forming process. Four specific stages were identified that characterize typical relationships while moving from a shallow level of intimacy to a deeper one: (a) orientation, (b) exploratory effective exchange, (c) affective change, and (d) stable exchange. The first stage of self-disclosure, orientation, occurs where communication is restrained and exploratory. The second stage, exploratory affective exchange, and parallels the same level of closeness displayed in casual relationships such as neighbors. Affective change, the third stage, is characterized by a close relationship where two individuals know each other well enough to speak freely and comfortably. The final stage of self-disclosure development is the stable exchange. Few relationships attain this final level of intimacy. At this fourth stage, communication tends to be rich and spontaneous and characterized by an ability to forecast and interpret the other's feelings and behaviors. Altman and Taylor compared self-disclosure to an onion where layers are shed, disclosing the inner self as people draw closer to each other. The importance of self-disclosure in building and maintaining relationships was the foundational component of building relationships.

Playing an important role in relationships, self-disclosure was defined by Huang (2016) as thoughts and feelings shared purposively and intentionally with other people. Wheelless and Grotz (1976) described self-disclosure as any personal communication shared from one person to another. Others explained self-disclosure as a type of communication that nurtures caring and trust, leading to deepened relationships (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Self-disclosure refers to the voluntary and deliberate expression of thoughts and feelings to another person (Derlega, Metts, Sandra, & Marguilis, 1993). For this study, self-disclosure will be defined as thoughts and feelings shared purposively and intentionally with other people (Huang, 2016).

Research conducted by Pornsakulvanich, Haridakis, and Rubin (2008) further reinforced the role of self-disclosure as a key building block for relationship development and maintenance, finding that people who perceive their face-to-face disclosures as satisfying tended to self-disclose in their online relationships and felt close to their online peers. Self-disclosure will be more fully examined through the identified five components (Huang, 2016) where the five components allow researchers to empirically study the way self-disclosure is identified, shaped, and maintained. These dimensions of self-disclosure were created based on the work of Wheelless (1976) when looking at self-disclosure through the dimensions of breadth, depth, and duration.

Self-Disclosure

According to the Social Penetration Theory, self-disclosure is the foundational component of building relationships. Not only is it key to building relationships, it is vital to maintaining them. According to Huang (2016), self-disclosure is constructed along these five dimensions: (a) amount, (b) depth, (c) honesty, (d) intent, and (e) valence. *Amount* measures the frequency and duration of disclosed messages through personal online communication. The degree of intimacy of a topic is referred to as *depth*. The truthfulness of a revealed message is indicated as *honesty*. *Intent* is conceptualized as earnestness when revealing personal information. Positive and negative information revealed in the communication is referred to as *valence*. These components are a way to understand the multiple dimensions of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure connects to online well-being, in that self-disclosure can increase one's physical and mental health from the approach of positive-psychology (Niederhoffer & Pennebaker,

2002). Self-disclosure is how people build and maintain relationships while fulfilling relationships increases people's sense of well-being.

Well-Being

A person's emotional and psychological competence for dealing with demands throughout the lifespan, defines the concept of well-being (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Factors that encompass well-being can include health concerns, worry about the future, and levels of stress (Hunter, Sundel, & Sundel, 2002). Subjective well-being points to the individual's intellectual and emotional evaluation of their lives (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2009). Empirical research studying well-being focused on the connections between subjective well-being and self-disclosure. The research examined self-disclosure of the personal online communications used by bloggers. Findings showed that self-disclosure of bloggers directly impacted a sense of social integration, increased social capital, and in turn, created high levels of well-being (Ko & Kuo, 2009). Self-disclosure online is a relatively new phenomenon. As such, this research is purposed to examine the benefits of self-disclosure which include social support and satisfaction with online social life (Huang, 2016).

Research examined satisfaction with college life and romantic relationships, but little research has been conducted looking at well-being as it connects to SNS usage (Huang, 2016). The following section looks at social support as it relates to self-disclosure.

Self-Disclosure on the Internet

The importance of self-disclosure to build healthy relationships, increase individuation, and promote a greater sense of well-being has been discussed. Social networking sites provides opportunities for such opportunities by providing

space for communication, connection, and self-disclosure. Due to the low risk nature of self-disclosure on social media, such virtual environments may be advantageous for those with low self-esteem and tend to shy away from building intimacy in face-to-face relationships (Forest & Wood, 2012).

Other research examined the self-disclosure of bloggers in three different domains of friends, parents, and online audiences. A survey of 1,029 Taiwanese bloggers analyzed self-disclosure in nine topic areas, including attitude, body, money, work, feelings, personal, interests, experiences, and unclassified (Tang & Wang, 2012). It was found that bloggers disclosed the most to their friends, followed by parents and online audiences. Further research was conducted exploring the impact of public self-consciousness and online self-disclosure. It was found that if there was a greater benefit as a member of a SNS, greater risks in self-disclosure were likely to occur (Varnali & Toker, 2015). Oh, Ozkaya, and LaRose (2014) studied the immediate effect of supportive online self-disclosures and found that they led to a greater sense of community and life satisfaction. The opposite also proved to be true: negative self-disclosure led to a decreased sense of satisfaction while interacting with others online (Forest & Wood, 2012).

Role of Affect on Self-Disclosure

Empirical research examined the role of affect on self-disclosure with a comparison made between two models of direct and indirect effect. The research found that factors like self-presentation and social acceptance had a positive impact on self-disclosure online (Yu, Hu, & Cheng, 2015), showing a correlation between the risk and reward nature of self-disclosure online. To receive the benefits of self-disclosure, participants recognized that they must share personal information online (2015). People in a good mood tended to share more intimate

and abstract information (Forgas & Simpson, 2011). Though research has not compared a multi-variate study of face-to-face disclosure with online disclosure to date, it is critical for future studies to conduct such analyses due to the high rate at which adolescents communicate face-to-face and through personal online communications.

Self-Disclosure and Personality

Varnali, & Toker (2015) found that self-disclosure was mediated by personality characteristics on SNS. One large study correlated online interactions with four personality types, which were categorized as: overcontrollers, resilient, undercontrollers, and the average (Chen, Xie, Ping, & Wang, 2017). These personality types originated from two studies: Block's (2014) theory of ego resiliency and ego control and Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt, and Stouthamer-Loeber's (1996) work to separate the Big Five traits into three categories: resilient, overcontrollers, and undercontrollers. Resilient were described as showing low neuroticism and openness to new experiences with moderate to high extroversion. Overcontrollers tend to demonstrate high neuroticism, conscientiousness, and high extroversion. Undercontrollers tend to display low agreeableness and high extroversion. Respondents that self-disclose offline were shown to have a high probability to be in the resilient category. Those who tended to self-disclose online were likely to be overcontrollers and undercontrollers (Chen et al., 2017). Earlier research shows that overcontrollers and undercontrollers were maladjusted. Overcontrollers most likely internalize symptoms and undercontrollers are likely to externalize symptoms (Van den Akker, Dekovic, Asscher, Shiner, & Prinzie, 2013).

Social Support

In the research tool (Appendix A) used to collect data for this study, the concept of social support is one of five components examined. Social support relates to one's perceived amount of social resources received from recognized support groups and less formal helping relationships (Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000). Social support plays a healthy role in the areas of social attachment and health (Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983). People feel a sense of gratification and satisfaction when they experience positive experiences with those who support their personal interactions (Liang, Ho, Li, & Turban, 2011). These observations are relevant to this study's research design and lead to the definition of social media usage.

Social Media Usage

Social media usage of social network sites and weblogs has become a prevalent phenomenon that brings significant impact to our lives (Huang, 2016). Little research has been conducted examining the SNS usage from a relational perspective (Park, Jinn, & Jin, 2011), although some research has looked at general usage. In prior studies, an examination of individual self-disclosure as it relates to SNS has been conducted, looking primarily at relational outcomes (Park et al., 2011). This study will examine the connection that may exist between relationships and personally disclosed information.

Summary

This chapter explored the foundational literature around key areas of adolescent development such as emotional and psychological development. The principal theoretical frameworks, Erickson's theory of psychosocial development, Social Cognitive Theory, and Social Penetration Theory guiding this research

were examined. As it pertained to personal online communications found through SNS, the five components of self-disclosure and different areas of self-disclosure, well-being, social support, and social media usage were described. In Chapter 3, the research design, methodology, and data analysis used in this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on describing the study's methodology. This includes the sampling criteria of subjects, the study's tool used for data collection, the data collection method, data analysis and outcome measures. The research tool, employing a Likert scale, was obtained from a journal article during the literature review stage of the research. The survey tool was revised and updated to reflect current social media sites relevant to the subjects of this study.

Research Subjects and Sampling

The inclusion criteria of subjects for this study focused on students ages 11-14 enrolled in a local public school since the beginning of the school year. To participate in the research study, the subjects must have a membership on one or more of the following social networking sites: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tumblr. This research aimed to sample a minimum of 30 students. The subject sample was first generated through groups of students randomly assigned to a specific class. To expand the sample size, two randomly selected advisory classes were used to identify potential subjects. Advisory classrooms were composed of a cross-section of students by each grade, which provided a sample size representative of the campus population.

Research Instrument

The Self-Disclosure on Social Network Site Questionnaire (SDSNSQ) developed by Huang (2016) was used for this study. Credit to the author, who developed the SDNSQ, has been cited on the tool. The SDSNSQ was developed to examine the five components of self-disclosure in the online space: (a) amount, (b) depth, (c) honesty, (d) intent, and (e) valence (Huang, 2016). To establish

validity, the SDSNSQ underwent a pre-test and pilot test. The pre-test measured logical consistency and ease of wording while the pilot test confirmed measurement properties of the five components. The results of these tests showed that this tool met criteria for reliability and validity (Huang, 2016). As stated earlier, newer social networking sites such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Tumblr were added to bring the tool up to date in addition to Facebook already present in the original SDSNSQ.

Research Procedures

After adding current social networking sites to the SDSNSQ, the tool was employed as an online survey using the Qualtrics data collection platform available to Fresno State students for the purpose of research. For confidentiality purposes, the school administration kept the student contact information in the attendance office at the school site. Parents or guardians were mailed consent letters, accompanied by an assent form for students to sign. The consent/assent letters emphasized that participation in the online survey was voluntary and that no investigational or experimental procedures would be applied to the participants.

Once consent/assent letters had been received, the researcher secured time during the students' elective class time to conduct the research. The online survey was initiated at the school over a 2-week period where students participated during a single advisory period. The frequency of the participation was a single usage of the online self-disclosure survey and the duration of completing the survey ranged between 15-30 minutes.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualtrics randomly assigned number identifications to students participating in the research study, which allowed their participation to remain

anonymous. The secure software required an access password from the researcher, increasing the level of confidentiality. The data collected from Qualtrics was then submitted into a Microsoft Excel document. The data were kept on a secure and encrypted hard drive that could only be accessed by the researcher. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was then used to analyze the data collected from the subjects to determine possible correlations between social media usage and self-disclosure of adolescents.

Summary

This chapter described how subjects were recruited and explained the research instrument. Research procedures and data analysis were discussed in this chapter. Students brought back signed consent/assent forms in order to participate in this research. Qualtrics served as the method in which the data was gathered and SPSS was used to determine potential correlations directed towards the hypothesis of this research. The next chapter will present the study's results and a discussion of the analysis of the data gathered from the subject sample.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter examines the results that seek to address the research question: Does the use of personal online communication influence the self-disclosure of adolescents? Forty-one students from the initial prospective sample of 60 students responded to the survey. A brief demographic table shows the makeup of the respondents involved in the online survey. Next, the results found between correlational analyses of the nine factors of self-disclosure measured in the SDDNSQ used in gathering the study's data will be presented. Finally, the results of the research question will be discussed and analyzed.

Demographics

From the total of 41 subjects, there were 30 respondents who were 12 years of age, 16 respondents who were 13 years of age and two respondents who were 11 eleven years of age (see Table 1). Forty-six percent of the students identified as Hispanic or Latino, which was almost half of the respondents. Thirty-five percent of the students identified as Other. The majority of the study's subjects were comprised of seventh graders (95%), while the remaining (2%) of respondents were eighth graders. All correlations can be found in Appendix B.

Supporting Research

Correlational Analyses of the Nine Components of Self-Disclosure

Relationships of multiple self-disclosure components were analyzed for significance with each other. Five components of self-disclosure were (a) amount, (b) depth, (c) honesty, (d) intent, and (e) valence (Huang, 2016). When examining the nine variables of self-disclosure with each other, a positive relationship was

found between multiple components. A positive relationship was found between *depth* and *amount* of self-disclosure (see Figure 1), indicating that as depth of self-disclosure increased so did the amount.

Table 1

| <i>Demographics</i> | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
| Age | | |
| 11 | 2 | 4.20 |
| 12 | 30 | 62.50 |
| 13 | 16 | 33.30 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Hispanic or Latino | 22 | 45.80 |
| Black or African American | 1 | 2.10 |
| Native American or Am Indian | 2 | 4.20 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 6 | 12.50 |
| Other | 17 | 35.40 |
| Current Grade | | |
| 7 th | 46 | 95.80 |
| 8 th | 2 | 2.10 |
| Total | 48 | 100 |

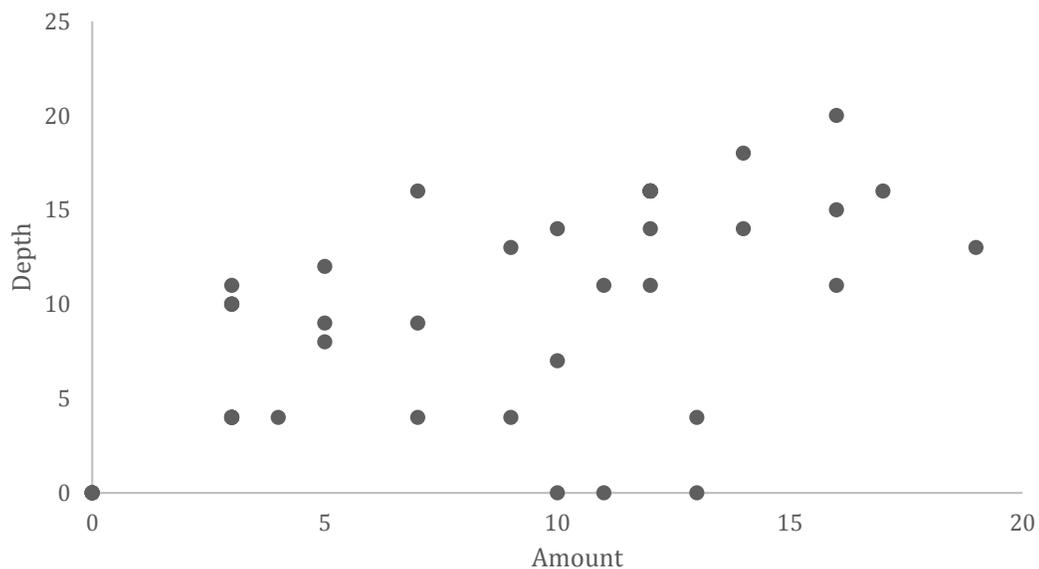


Figure 1. Correlation between depth and amount
Correlation was significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

When examining the two components, *amount* and *honesty* (see Figure 2) as the amount of self-disclosure increased, it correlated with the honesty of self-disclosure.

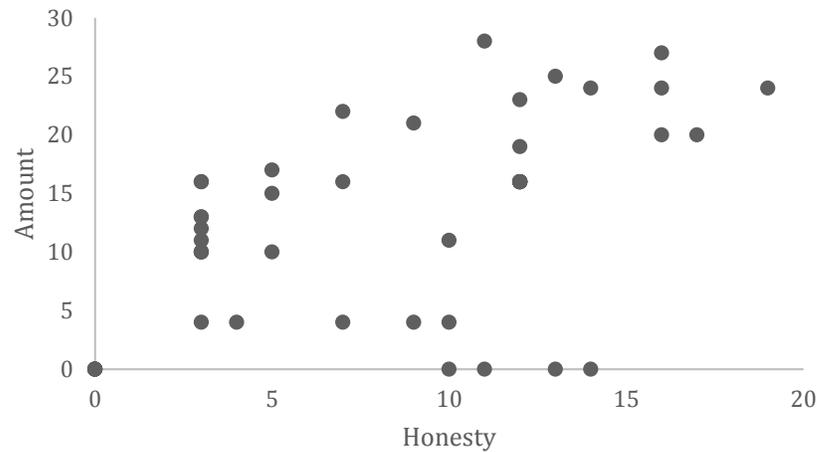


Figure 2. Correlation between amount and honesty
Correlation was significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Positive relationships were again found with *intention* when correlated to *honesty* (see Figure 3). As the intention to self-disclose increased, likewise did the honesty of self-disclosure increase.

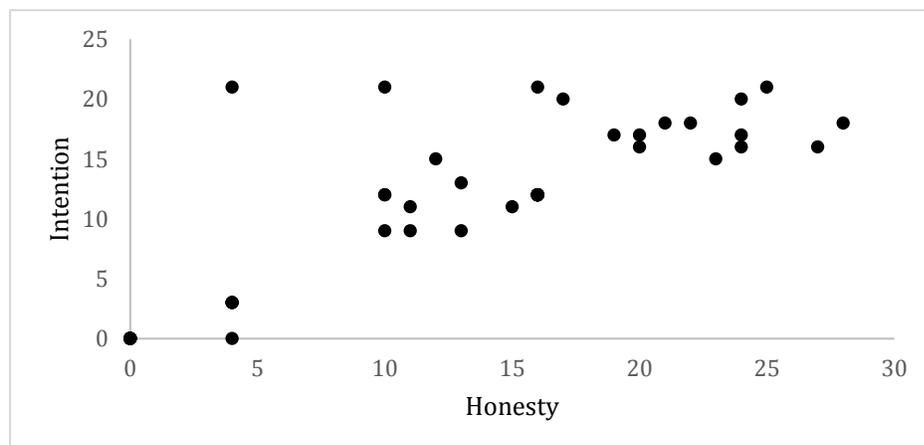


Figure 3. Correlation between intention and honesty
Correlation was significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

The most positive relationship was found when correlating *emotional support* with *informational support* (see Figure 4), which denoted that as emotional feelings of support increased, so did the level of trust in the disclosed information.

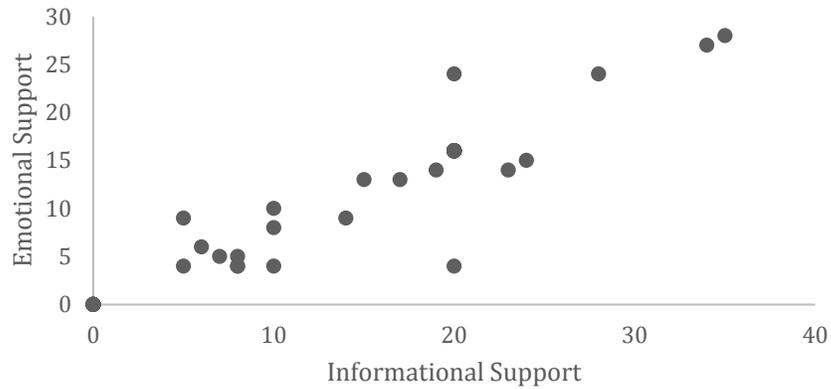


Figure 4. Correlation between emotional support and informational support
Correlation was significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Conversely, a negative relationship was found when examining the self-disclosure components of *continuance intention* and *honesty* (see Figure 5) as continuance intention—referring to the willingness to continue usage of SNS—increased, so did honesty of self-disclosure.

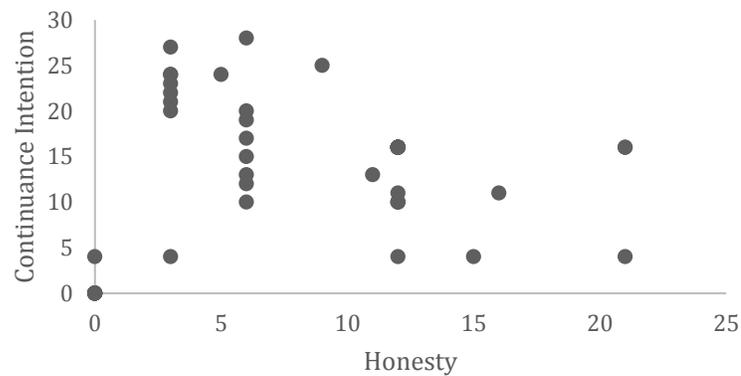


Figure 5. Correlation between continuance intention and honesty
Correlation was significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Prime Research Question

A Correlational of Amount of Use and Self-Disclosure

All five factors of self-disclosure (amount, depth, honesty, intention, and valence) were correlated with overall *amount* of self-disclosure to defend the prime research question. This research showed a statistically significant relationship between amount of social media usage and amount of self-disclosure $r(36) = .69, p < .01$ (see Figure 6).

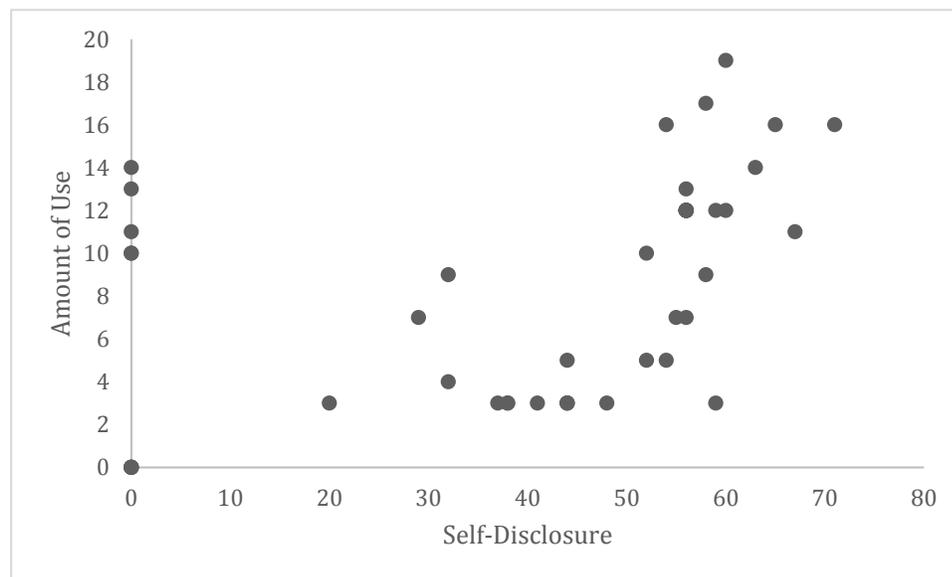


Figure 6. Correlation between self-disclosure and social support
Correlation was significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

The research findings proved the original hypothesis to be correct: the low-risk nature of self-disclosure found through social media found a higher than expected level of self-disclosure by the study's subjects. Moreover, increased usage of social media corresponded to the increased level of self-disclosure.

Summary

In this chapter, the subjects' demographics were presented. Supporting analyses examined the five components of self-disclosure: (a) amount, (b) depth, (c) honesty, (d) intent, and (e) valence (Huang, 2016). Finally, the defense of the initial research was demonstrated which revealed that as the amount of use of social media increases so does the level of self-disclosure. In the next chapter, conclusions, limitations of this research and future implications for social work will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The focus of this research examined the influence of social media usage on the levels of self-disclosure in adolescents. Findings showed an increased social media usage leading to an increased level of self-disclosure.

Correlations of the five factors components of self-disclosure were measured. As the depth of personal online communications increased, so did the level of self-disclosure. This points to the self-disclosure trajectory proposed by the Social Penetration Theory that people become closer as communication becomes more intimate. Of further interest is the finding that the more respondents self-disclosed, the higher the levels of perceived social support. A high positive relationship was discovered between *emotional support* and *informational support*, which can be interpreted as the respondents having an increased feeling of emotional support when the content of their sharing is supported.

This research study's findings supports the original research conducted by Huang (2016). After respondents' revealed intimate information through personal online communications, they experienced feelings of care and support from other friends on SNS (Huang 2016). Previous research presenting benefits of self-disclosure as leading to greater life satisfaction (Oh et al., 2014) was also supported by this research study's findings. Liang and colleagues (2011) showed that people feel a greater sense of satisfaction when they perceive support through online self-disclosure. As SNS users experience greater benefits such as emotional support, they tend to increase self-disclosure (Cheung, Lee, & Chan, 2015). Such findings of the positive relationship between self-disclosure and emotional support are confirmed through the results of the present study. Other

research studies that examined attitudes about perceived closeness of online relationships and relational closeness were predictors of low to moderate levels of self-disclosure (Ledbetter et al., 2011) supporting the correlation of social support and self-disclosure found in this research. Overall, research points to the benefits of self-disclosure and perceived benefits of social and emotional support as experienced through SNS.

Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Implications

The findings of this study offer insight into the developmental process of adolescents and how they seek to build their identity in the online and offline spaces. Consistent with the findings of Chandra (2016), the intersectionality of adolescent social media usage and identity formation corresponded with the high prevalence of usage. These results indicated that adolescent identity formation is unfolding offline and online simultaneously. These discoveries point to the need for social workers to become aware of the adolescent's identity development that occurs with peers both via face-to-face and online communications. Not only does a social work practitioner need to understand the growing phenomenon of online communication and social media usage in today's technological age, but also the need to become familiar with the unique language and online trends currently shaping adolescent youth.

At the micro level, research continues in this area of SNS and adolescent development. At the time of this paper being written, Dr. Jean M. Twenge, author of the popular book, *Generation Me*, was featured in *Time* magazine, discussing her soon to be published book, *iGen: The 10 Trends Shaping Today's Young People-and the Nation*. Dr. Twenge argues, "Parents, educators, and employers have an urgent need to understand today's rising generation of teens and young

adults. iGen is the first generation to spend their entire adolescence in the age of the smartphone.” (Twenge, 2017, p. 1). This emerging field of study suggests that social work practitioners keep their fingers on the pulse of this developing trend and potential benefits and pitfalls of SNS usage to better understand the implications for human interactions for their clients and their families

At the mezzo level, school districts need to support further research on the impact and implications of SNS usage for their students. As teachers use SNS to build classroom communities and learning management, they need to consider the emerging role SNS can play in their students’ learning framework. This understanding can then translate to teachers of all grade levels in implementing new learning tools that incorporate the emerging language found on SNS. Because the Internet is a wide-open virtual space for any level of interaction, parents, teachers, and social workers can provide models of healthy usage and interactions on SNS. Social work educational programs at the university level may consider expanding their current curriculum to include relevant impacts of SNS in the human lifespan development.

At the macro level, Nielsen, which rates television usage, recognizes the usage prevalence of SNS and reports that weekly usage of Snapchat in the 18 through 34 years old demographic is seven times higher than any TV network (Stein, 2017). This compelling evidence at a macro level may encourage national discussions and further understanding of the impact of SNS on our youth. In addition, the National Association of Social Work (NASW) may also consider leveraging their influence to encourage deeper understanding of SNS as it pertains to the field of social work through hosting relevant workshops at national conferences and other information avenues.

Intersectionality of Research and Social Work Values

The field of social work focuses on the well-being of the individual in the social context while understanding the various environmental factors that positively and negatively impact an individual. This focus on human behavior in the social environment is appropriate and highly relevant for examining the well-being of adolescents and furthering understanding of the impact of SNS usage may have on human behavior.

Social work is guided by the values of service, social justice, dignity, empowerment, worth of a person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (National Association of Social Workers, 2017). Research conducted in this study supports these core values and would enhance the ability of helping professionals to provide relevant service to adolescents. By raising awareness of today's adolescents' experience while using SNS, this research would increase the visibility of this population, thus potentially increasing social justice for them as well. In addition, giving participants the opportunity to contribute in this area of research may empower an otherwise silent population while gaining information for further research and best practices. Central to this research are adolescent relationships as such interactions and connections can point to identity formation and development. This research provides helping professionals with information that may lead to greater understanding of current adolescent development, thus improving service opportunities and providing greater applicability to social work.

Relevance to Social Work

Currently, few studies exist that examine the implications of Internet and social media on youth. For social workers, understanding the role that social media plays in the lives of adolescents is highly relevant as this knowledge can

inform social workers of the challenges adolescents face in social media use as well as assist in developing effective interventions. With the study's results, the social worker may become more relevant in creating effective interventions with adolescents that considers today's invisible but ever present technological environment. To assist in developing the therapeutic foundation of rapport building and maintain relevance, social workers would need to first better understand the dynamics of relationships operating within cyberspace and to learn to speak the language of today's adolescents. Understanding the influence of social media in relationships can also potentially assist the field of social work to better understand adolescent relationship forming behaviors in this age of the Internet. With new knowledge, social workers can be specifically trained in the impact of social media on wellbeing. Because of the potential impact on the field of social work, it is important that research is conducted to determine a relationship between well-being and social media usage, if any, which was the aim of this study. Future studies may further explore how the different dimensions of self-disclosure interact through SNS usage and the impact on adolescent development.

Limitation and Future Research

This study contributes to the current body of research and further research needs to be conducted to assist in developing themes that will help inform social work practitioners and other helping professionals. The research results serve to deepen the understanding of adolescent development and interactions on SNS.

As social beings, people depend upon relationships as a source of learning, emotional, and social support. The culmination of these tasks can result in a greater sense of life satisfaction and overall well-being. However, these tasks are

executed through self-disclosure. Developmentally, adolescents are entering the *Identity Moratorium* (Marcia, 1966) and the role of parents as caregiver, protector, and prime social influence is beginning to make way for adolescents' healthy desire for freedom, independent expression, and peer-dominated social expression. The Internet is shaping the way adolescents reach beyond their family units to create new attachments simultaneously in face-to-face interactions and personal online communications. The social communities found through the Internet have become a new realm where self-efficacy is taking place. The concept of Social Media Self-Efficacy (SMSE) which is a person's ability to reach desired goals through the use of SNS, has recently been introduced and studied. Users with higher SMSE have found greater trustworthiness of online information. This group was also more likely to rely on the opinions of others to verify information found online (Hocevar, Flanagin, & Metzger, 2014). Hocevar and colleagues showed that SNS is shaping the role of self-efficacy and reinforced Bandura's mastery experience concept in that the more a person attempts a task, the stronger their belief that they can be successful in completing a task (Bandura, 1986). Additionally, this research supports another prime component of self-efficacy, vicarious experience, in which people rely on the demonstration of tasks by others to build upon their own learning. Continual use of SNS enhances the self-efficacious experience of those engaging in various online activities, yet limitations existed within this study.

As the study was conducted in a school setting, the sampling process was one potential limitation in which there was difficulty in attaining parent consent for minors. Coordinating the study in the context of the student's already busy schedule posed another yet another challenge. Both limitations potentially impacted the sample size as it was considered not significant for the overall

population of the school. An identified gap in the research design was the absence of a question in the demographic section regarding the subject's membership with SNS. This information may have been useful in categorizing the SNS most frequently used by the students. The unique atmosphere of this school setting may have impacted generalizability in that students in public schools may differ in their access to SNS compared to students in private schools. In addition, the ages of the students as well as this sampling of students who are learning at an advanced academic level in a tech magnet school may affect the generalizability of this study.

This research did not consider the role of affect as it relates to perceived benefits of SNS usage. Forgas and Simpson (2011) found that a perceived elevated mood directly impacted the perceived benefits of online communications. Though this research found that mood affects levels of self-disclosure and reciprocity, it was not designed to measure the effects of personality on self-disclosure as discussed in other research (Van den Akker et al., 2013). Future research could incorporate the influences of mood and personality to the dimensions of self-disclosure as it pertains to the perceived benefits of SNS and personal online communication. Moreover, the research could be expanded to analyze the contents of the information shared to match the different levels of self-disclosure as outlined in the Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

Conclusion of the Study

This research aimed to promote understanding of the benefits and barriers students experience when creating and maintaining online relationships. A potential benefit of this study may help direct the school and school social workers in customizing interventions and support groups conducted on campus. In

addressing the research question regarding the use of personal online communication potentially influencing the level of self-disclosure in adolescents, this research's contribution to the body of growing knowledge focused on the interactions and development of adolescents through social networking usage. It remains vital for social worker practitioners to understand the role that self-disclosure in the online space may have on the development and behaviors of young adolescents. This emerging field of study examining SNS usage and its influence on adolescent development is an important area of focus for parents, helping professionals, schools, and society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH TOOL

Amount: *The frequency and duration of the disclosive messages on the SNS*

AM1 I do not often talk about myself on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.*

AM2 I often talk about myself on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

AM3 I often discuss my feelings about myself on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

Depth: *The intimate degree of the message topic revealed on the SNS.*

DE1 I intimately disclose who I really am, openly and fully in my conversations on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

DE2 On Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr, once I get started, my self-disclosures last a long time.

DE3 On Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr, I typically reveal information about myself without intending to.

DE4 Once I get started, I intimately and fully reveal myself in my self-disclosures on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

Honesty: *The accuracy of the message revealed on SNS*

HO1 I always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings and experiences on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

HO2 My self-disclosures on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr are completely accurate reflections of who I really am.

HO3 On Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr, my statements about my feelings, emotions, and experiences are always accurate self-perceptions..

HO4 I am always honest in my self-disclosures on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

Intent: *The individual's revealed messages on the SNS are self-revealing*

IN1 When I express my personal feelings on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr, I am always aware of what I am doing and saying.

IN2 When I reveal my feelings about myself on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr, I consciously intend to do so.

IN3 When I am self-disclosing on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr, I am consciously aware of what I am revealing

Valence: *The positive and negative nature of the revealed messages on SNS.*

VA1 I usually disclose positive things about myself on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

VA2 I normally express my "good" feelings about myself on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

VA3 On the whole, my disclosures about myself on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr are more positive than negative

Informational Support: *The messages received from friends on the SNS provide the needed assistance.*

IS1 Some "Friends" on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr would offer suggestions when I needed help.

IS2 When I encountered a problem, some "Friends" on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr would give me information to help me overcome my problem.

IS3 When faced with difficulties, some "Friends" on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr would help me discover the cause and provide me with suggestions.

IS4 Over the last month, I obtained sufficient assistance from my "Friends" on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

Emotional Support: *The messages received from friends on the SNS include emotional concerns.*

ES1 When faced with difficulties, some “Friends” on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr are on my side.

ES2 When faced with difficulties, some “Friends” on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr comforted and encouraged me.

ES3 When faced with difficulties, some “Friends” on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr listened to me talk about my private feelings.

ES4 When faced with difficulties, some people on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr expressed interest in and concern for my well-being.

ES5 Over the last month, I received adequate emotional support from my “Friends” on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

Online social well-being: *An individual’s own assessment of his/her happiness and satisfaction with his/her social life on the SNS.*

SW1 In most respects, my online social life on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr is close to my ideal.

SW2 The conditions of my online social life on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr are excellent.

SW3 I am satisfied with my online social life on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

SW4 So far, I have obtained the important things I want from my online social life on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

Continuance Intention: *The individual’s willingness to revisit the SNS.*

CI1 If I could, I would like to continue using Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr in the future.

CI2 It is likely that I will continue using Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr in the future.

CI3 I plan to continue using Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Tumblr.

Adapted from: Huang, Hsin-Yi. (2016). Examining the beneficial effects of individual’s self-disclosure on the social network site.

APPENDIX B: CORRELATIONS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE
VARIABLES

Correlations of the Factors of Self-Disclosure

| Variables | Amount | Depth | Honesty | Intention | Valence | InfoSupport | Emotional Support | OnlineSW |
|----------------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|---------|-------------|-------------------|----------|
| Amount | | | | | | | | |
| Depth | .650** | | | | | | | |
| Honesty | .623** | .501** | | | | | | |
| Intention | .234 | .146 | .606** | | | | | |
| Valence | -.165 | - | -.400* | -.579** | | | | |
| InfoSupport | -.335* | .152 | -.289 | -.302 | .592** | | | |
| EmotionalSupport | -.278 | -.194 | -.271 | -.263 | .629** | .888** | | |
| OnlineSW | -.126 | .159 | -.218 | -.395* | .730** | .790** | .839** | |
| ContinuanceIntention | -.372* | .209 | -.512** | -.555** | .658** | .484** | .517** | .707** |
| | | .282 | | | | | | |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).