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Social Media and Relationship Satisfaction

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Introduction

- The investigation sought to find out the affect that social media usage has on relationship satisfaction.
- Previous research has shown that relationships can be torn apart if people have different opinions on certain topics and their conversations can become uncivil (Kruse et al., 2008).
- Age differences and the use of social media have suggested that adolescent use of social media can lead to body dissatisfaction and poor display of parental authority (Vries et al., 2018) (Lewis et al., 2015).
- Another study found that a major problem with social media is the prevailed direct unconscious impacts it has on the person or persons utilizing the social networks (Paravati, 2019).
- These studies give interesting insight into what our research aims to examine.

Hypotheses:

- 1) The increased utilization of social media within a relationship will lead to a decreased satisfaction within that said relationship.
- 2) We also expect to find an interaction with opposing viewpoints on social media with decreased relationship satisfaction.
- 3) Based on the findings by Kruse et al., (2018), we expect that if members of a relationship have similar beliefs on social media, they will have an increased satisfaction with each other, with the opposite findings for people who have opposing beliefs.

Method

- Participants were college students who were enrolled in psychology courses.
- We had a total of 148 participants.
- We had 25 male participants and 120 female participants.
- 3 others: 1 Genderfluid, 1 Genderqueer, 1 non-binary.
- The data was collected via a Qualtrics Survey, administered to participants through email, in exchange for extra credit.
- The survey was expected to take 15 to 20 minutes.
- We measured our independent variable by utilizing the Social Anxiety and Technology Scale (SATs).
- The dependent variable was overall relationship satisfaction. (Smilkstein's Family System APGAR Items).
- The two variables were SATs (alpha = .79) and APGAR (alpha = .80).
- We ran an independent samples *t*-test and a Pearson's *r* correlation.

Results

- After running an independent samples *t*-test, our data does not statistically support our hypothesis.
- Daily average of time spent on social media, ranging from never to 9 plus hours, was split into two groups using a median split. Group 1 spent between 0-4 hours on social media daily ($M = 3.74, SD = 1.03$) compared to group 2, who spent 5-9+ hours daily ($M = 3.74, SD = 1.03$), $t(143) = .021, p = .98$.
- After running a Pearson's *r* correlation, the hours spent on Social Networking Site and the perceived satisfaction deriving from the APGAR scale were also not statistically significant $r(145) = .11, p = .201$.

Discussion

- The findings did not support our hypothesis, that high utilization of social media will lead to lower relationship satisfaction
- Other researchers suggest that a major problem with studying social media use is the prevailed direct unconscious impacts it has on the person or persons utilizing the social networks (Paravati, 2019). This means that people may be unaware of issues social media may create within themselves, but also within their relationships. This type of negligence may be the cause tied to self-perceived measurements in social media studies.

Discussion Continued

- *Limitations and Future Directions:* As far as limitations go, we found our research pool to be limiting. All participants were psychology students at the university, which makes it hard to extend our findings outside of campus to ratify external validity. In terms of future research, we believe it would be beneficial if researchers find more age-appropriate relationship scales to include in their surveys. Moreover, we believe that one could get more reliable data if the survey was offer to students other than psychology students at a university, allowing findings to be broader and more valid.
- *Implications:* Social media use has been linked to elements such as cyberbullying and self-consciousness surrounding issues such as negative body image or self-hate. Due to these issues, parents feel a lack of authority surrounding their children's cyber use and adolescents can internalize negative feelings towards parental figures because they feel as though they are not providing emotional support or guidance, which impacts the overall cohesion of the family unit. Although our findings were not significant, we still suggest people use caution surrounding the amount of time and efforts they put into social media while being in any relationship, whether intimate or parent-adolescent. We suggest users proceed with caution for the fact that there are little findings surrounding this matter to deem this research implausible.

All references available upon request.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Social Media and Relationship Satisfaction

Variable	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	1
1. Apgar Scale	147	3.75	1.03	--
2. How much time spent on social media	145	3.55	1.07	.11

Table 2

Results of Independent Samples Test of Social Media and Relationship Satisfaction

	Less time on social media		More time on social media		<i>t</i> (143)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Apgar Scale	3.74	1.03	3.74	1.03	0.21	0.98	0.004