Online Social Networking and Academic Achievement in Adolescents

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Purpose
This exploratory study examined the relationship between online social networking (OSN), grade point average, and standardized test scores in high school students.

Background: Online Social Networking in Adolescents
• Approximately 80% of adolescents who use the Internet use OSN sites (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2011).
• Adolescent users of OSN spend about an hour online per day (Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts, 2010).
• A government-agency sponsored study was conducted with 4,257 teens at 20 schools in Ohio (Frank et al., 2010).
• “Hypernetworkers” used OSN 3 or more hours per day.
• They were more likely to receive poor grades.
• Espinoza and Juvonen (2011) found OSN usage disrupted school functioning in 39% of middle school students.
• Windham (2008) reported a negative relationship between daily time spent using OSN and GPA in 9th and 10th grade students.
• Junco (2012) and Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) found a negative correlation between OSN time and GPA in college students.

Strengths of the current study
• In previous studies, students reported OSN usage using Junco (2012) and Espinoza and Juvonen (2011).
• Approximately 80% of adolescents who use the Internet use OSN sites.
• Methods: Participants:
9th and 10th grade students: Western Montana high school
N = 66, with 40 females and 26 males
Age 14 to 15 (M = 15.2, SD = 0.58)

Measures:
• Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) (School administered)
Percentiles for Reading and Math
• Current cumulative GPA, collected directly from the school
• Researcher-created survey on OSN usage

Exploratory Research Questions:
Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between time spent using OSN and GPA?
Hypothesis 1: As OSN usage increases, GPA will decrease.
Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between OSN usage and academic performance as measured by yearly standardized test scores in reading and math?
Hypothesis 2: As OSN usage increases, standardized test scores will decrease.

Descriptive Statistics:
Survey Question
Do you participate in any online social networking sites (such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Tumblr)?
If yes, which ones? They can be in addition to the ones listed above.
Which network do you use the most?
Estimate how many friends or followers you have on the network you use the most. (Includes Facebook only)

Result
Yes: 90.9% (n = 60)
No: 9.1% (n = 6)
Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, MSN Messenger, Skype, Google, Tumblr
Facebook: 91.1% of OSN users (n = 55)
M = 325.66
Range = 5 to 783

Methods:
More time using Online Social Networking
Lower Reading Standardized Test Scores
Lower Grades

Analyses and Results:
Hypothesis 1: There was a significant negative correlation between weekly OSN time and GPA (r = -.33, p < .05).
Hypothesis 2: There was a negative correlation between the MAP Reading percentile score and weekly OSN time (r = -.26, p < .05).
There was not a significant correlation between the MAP Math percentile and weekly OSN time.

Implications:
• It is possible time spent using OSN cuts into time normally spent on other activities (Junco, 2012), including studying.
• School psychologists should consider OSN usage when conducting comprehensive assessments of adolescents.
• Lower standardized test scores and GPA could have far-reaching impact on future college and career choices.
• Other factors: Mental health
• Frank et al. (2010) and the current study also found a correlation between OSN time and depressive symptoms.
• School psychologists should consider screening for mental health issues if a student appears to be using OSN excessively.

References