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Influences of narcissism and parental mediation on adolescents' textual and visual personal information disclosure in Facebook

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how adolescents' textual and visual personal information disclosure is influenced by their narcissistic personality and parental mediation. The moderation effect of parental mediation on narcissism was also explored. A total of 780 secondary school students aged between 13 and 18 participated in the study. Multiple regression analysis was conducted and results showed that narcissism increases the disclosure of both textual information and visual information while parental mediation decreases the disclosure of both textual information and visual information. Parental mediation moderates the link between narcissism and visual information disclosure, but not the link between narcissism and textual information disclosure. Implications of the findings for parents, school teachers, and educators were discussed.

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1. Introduction

Facebook is one of the most influential social networking sites internationally. According to Facebook's official statistics, there are over 1.39 billion monthly active Facebook users, and 1.9 billion mobile active users as of January 2015. Every single day, 4.75 billion pieces of content were shared as of May 2013. Facebook is also the most popular and frequently used SNS among adolescents. According to the Pew Research Center's survey in 2015, 71% of adolescent social media users had a Facebook profile, and 41% said that of the various social networking platforms, they maintain their Facebook profile the most often.

Young users may not have enough safeguards about protecting their information online. This is a crucial issue especially in the light of Facebook's popularity among the young. Many user-generated content revealed on Facebook can be defined as Personally Identifiable Information (McCallister, Grance, & Scarfone, 2010). Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information about an individual maintained by an agency, including (i) any

information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth; and (ii) any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational and employment information. Facebook profile pages and photograph albums of the users are the two sections that contain the most PII. Disclosure of PII can entail many negative or unwanted effects that may be socially, physically, or financially damaging, and examples include blackmail, identity theft, physical harm, discrimination, or emotional distress. About 9% of adolescents in the European countries said that they have experienced one of the three forms of personal data misuse, including either identity theft, personal information abuse or financial cheating (Livingstone, Haddon, & Görzig, 2011). Among adolescents in the U.S., over 70% reported receiving messages online from strangers; among those aged between 10 and 17, one in five has received unwanted sexual solicitations online, and 1 in 17 has been threatened or harassed online (Goddard, 2006). PII disclosure online does not just enable stalking or bullying in the cyber world, it also facilitates criminal acts in the real world. As adolescents do not have sufficient and/or mature coping strategies, these bad experiences may result in a greater negative impact on adolescents as compared to negative impact on adults. It was found that compared to adult users, adolescent users suffer from more

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negative outcomes contributed by bad experiences on SNSs, such as getting into trouble in school or at work, physical fights, problems with family members, face-to-face arguments, and conflicts in relationships (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012).

2. Literature review

2.1. Self-disclosure of personal information on Facebook

It is very common for young users to share their personal information on Facebook profile pages. According to a study among undergraduate students in Canada (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009), a majority of them have disclosed PII on their Facebook profile pages, such as birth date (96%), email address (85%), hometown (85%), school and program (72%); while a small number of them have even posted their phone numbers (24%) and home address (4%). Surveys on adolescent users also showed that about half of them have posted information online including the city where they live (58%) and the name of their school (49%), and one in ten have posted their cell phone numbers (Surratt, 2007). Sharing photographs is also one of the most popular activities on Facebook. In the U.S., more than half of the users have shared personal photographs (Rainie, 2012), and among the adolescents, two thirds have posted photographs or videos about themselves (Surratt, 2007). Reputation damaging activities or even illegal activities such as binge drinking, smoking, and drug use were also found in the photographs shared by the users (Bugeja, 2006; Kolek & Saunders, 2008).

The perceived benefits of self-disclosure may be a critical motive for sharing personal information on Facebook, especially for adolescents. Adolescents may have a greater reliance on social networking sites for their affiliation needs. Through the passage of adolescence, individuals have an increasing need for connections with peers as well as greater awareness of the importance of the impressions they make on others (Dolgin, 2011; Leary & Kowalski, 1995). Some researchers argue that disclosing information to online friends increases the feeling of connectedness and relational intimacy with others and reduces loneliness (Detert & Mehl, 2013). Self-disclosure was also found to be associated with higher satisfaction of Facebook use for passing time and entertainment (Special & Li-Barber, 2012). Therefore, adolescents may choose to satisfy their increased social needs through self-disclosure with friends on Facebook.

2.2. Narcissism and self-disclosure on Facebook

Narcissism is one of the most studied personality traits with respect to its relationship to online information disclosure and other social activities. Narcissism is characterized by a highly inflated, positive but unrealistic self-concept, a lack of interest in forming strong interpersonal relationships, and an engagement in self-regulatory strategies to affirm the positive self-views (Campbell & Foster, 2007). Narcissists keep seeking attention, admiration, or affirmation of their positive view of self by showcasing themselves (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006; Bibby, 2008; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Ryan & Xenos, 2011). The sharing platform of Facebook perfectly meets the needs of the narcissists (Bibby, 2008). Generally, narcissists tend to disclose more self-promotional information across categories, including profile information and personal photographs (Christofides et al., 2009; Liu, Ang, & Lwin, 2013; Marshall, Lefringhausen, & Ferenczi, 2015; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Ong et al., 2011; Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Winter et al., 2014). Kapidzic (2013) found that personal information, especially photographs, are important for narcissists to emphasize their attractiveness on Facebook. Hence we propose that.

H1a. Narcissism increases textual information disclosure.

H1b. Narcissism increases visual information disclosure.

2.3. Parental mediation and self-disclosure on Facebook

Over the past two decades, media technology has experienced exponential revolution evolving from more traditional forms to new and novel ones. In both the traditional and new media era, parents have been consistently recognized as the major source of social influence on children's media consumption attitudes and behaviors (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Meyer, 2000; Moore & Moschis, 1981; Moscardelli & Divine, 2007). Warren (2001) defined parental mediation as the strategies parents use to supervise children's media use or help children interpret media content. Researchers have classified parental mediation into three types: active mediation, restrictive mediation, and co-viewing (Nathanson, 1999; Valkenburg, Krmar, Peeters, & Marseille, 1999). Parents may discuss with children the positive and negative media content, set rules to limit children's media use, or use the media together with children. Generally, parental mediation has been described as one of the most effective methods that protect children from negative media influence (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2005; Livingstone et al., 2011). Researchers found that parental mediation make children think twice before giving out information, and reduces the risk of their personal information disclosure (Kalmus, Blinka, & Ólafsson, 2015; Lwin, Stanaland, & Miyazaki, 2008; Shin, Schriener, & Cho, 2009; Spears, Seydegart, & Zulinov, 2005; Youn, 2008). Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

H2a. Parental mediation decreases textual information disclosure.

H2b. Parental mediation decreases visual information disclosure.

2.4. Interaction between narcissism and parental mediation

So far, scant research has examined the interaction between parental mediation and narcissism on adolescents' Internet behaviors. However, it is known that parental mediation was generally found to be a protective factor for adolescents' risky Internet behaviors, while narcissism was found to be a risk factor (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2005; Christofides et al., 2009; Livingstone et al., 2011). Regarding PII disclosure in particular, narcissistic adolescents may have a general tendency to reveal more, and this includes basic textual information as well as personal photographs on Facebook, while parental mediation may counterbalance the adverse influence of narcissism. Therefore, we predict that there may be an interaction between parental mediation and narcissism in relation to adolescents' PII disclosure on Facebook:

H3. Parental mediation moderates the link between narcissism and information disclosure (textual and visual).

Specifically, under low parental mediation, the information disclosure of the narcissistic adolescents will be significantly higher than that of the non-narcissists; but under high parental mediation, the information disclosure of the narcissistic adolescents will not be significantly higher than that of the non-narcissists.

3. Current study

Although there are numerous studies examining the influence of personality variables such as narcissism and parent variables such as parental mediation on SNSs use, few of them specifically

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