

Adolescents and the 'Digital Era'

- 95% of adolescents in the U.S. aged 12–17 use the internet (Purcell, 2013)
- the percentage of adolescents who report being online almost constantly has increased from 25% to 45% between 2015 and 2018 (Anderson & Jiang, 2018)
- Average time spent online doubles between age 9-10 years, who report 58 minutes daily, to 15–16 years who report 118 minutes per day online (Livingstone et al., 2011)

The Internet and new technologies

- Benefits: enhances communication with peers, supports technical skill development, contribute to cognitive development via access to reading and information online
- Risks: online gaming, online gambling and problematic social media use... Internet Addiction
- SMU, and indeed Problematic Social Media Use (PSMU), may lead to or exacerbate poor physical, psychological and social wellbeing

Youth health and psychological wellbeing – PSMU and Family Support factors

- A recent analysis of adolescents' wellbeing across 37 countries found that low social support (from parents, peers and teachers) and PSMU were the strongest predictors of low life satisfaction (Walsh et al., 2020).
- Life satisfaction is a component of subjective wellbeing, an indicator of psychological wellbeing. PSMU is associated with a higher risk of reduced life satisfaction.
- Youth health and wellbeing is shaped by a broad range of socioecological factors including social support
- Social support is considered a buffer, or a protective factor, in adolescent wellbeing (Rigby, 2000). There is evidence to suggest that good communication with parents and support from family may serve as buffer from harmful effects of electronic media (Boniel-Nissim et al., 2015).
- In addition, existing evidence suggest that adolescents who perceive their family as supportive have increased life satisfaction compared to those who do not.

Research Questions

- Is there an association between problematic social media use and life satisfaction among 10-18 year old adolescents in Ireland?
- If so, does family support moderate this association i.e., does family support reduce the negative impact of PSMU on life satisfaction?
- H1: Family support is a moderator in the relationship between problematic social media use and life satisfaction.
- H2: Family support reduces the negative impact of problematic social media use on life satisfaction.

Analysis - Measures

- Life satisfaction (dependent variable) measured using an adapted version of the Cantril Ladder
- PSMU (independent variable) measured using a nine dichotomous (yes/no) items on the Social Media Disorder (SMD) scale.
- Family support was measured using the four-item Likert-type subscale of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS).

Analysis

- Descriptive analysis of gender, age, social class and family affluence was performed on the problematic and non-problematic user groups
- Moderation analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis.
- Correlation tests were conducted to determine the associations between the variables
- Four hierarchical multiple regression models were conducted with life satisfaction as the dependent variable
 - Model 1 – socio-demographic variables
 - Model 2 – PSMU
 - Model 3 – Family support
 - Model 3 – Interaction term (PSMUxFS)