Other Resources

2022-01-28

An investigation of the personality traits that could identify vulnerable young people who will be susceptible to undue influence by social media influencers (SMIs) - EDI Research and Practice Showcase 2022 Presentation

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EDI Research and Practice Showcase 2022

Thursday 27 January 2022

14.15-14.20: Introduction

14.20-15.30: Gender and STEM.

Moderated by: Sara Clavero

- **How to Recruit and Retain Women in Computer Science.** Alina Berry (Poster – 10 mins)
- **CLICK: A mentoring approach to increasing female participation in Computer Science.** Amanda O'Farrell (Paper – 15 mins)
- **Gender (or sex?) differences in spatial abilities: why representation matters.** Mariana Velho (Paper – 15 mins)
- **DIAMOND: Revealing actionable knowledge from data for more inclusive and efficient transport systems.** Ajeni Thimnu et al. (Paper – 15 mins)

15.30-15.45: Break

15.45-17.00: Gender, leadership, and institutional experiences

Moderated by Sara Clavero

- **Gender diversity in the Irish Judiciary.** Caoimhe Kiernan (Paper – 15 mins)
- **Trust Me I'm Your Leader: Investigating the Impact of Leader's Gender on Trust Perceptions towards Leader.** Akanksha Lohmore et al. (Paper – 15 mins)
- **A Conceptual Framework for Contextualizing Women's Subjective Career Success.** Dan Zhang (Paper – 15 mins)
- **Addressing Sexual Violence and Harassment at TU Dublin.** Catherine Bolger (Paper – 15 mins)

Friday 28 January 2022

9.30-10.30: Race and higher education

Moderated by: Seán Henry

- **Abstract on experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students in higher education in Ireland.** Margaret Fingleton (Paper – 15 mins)
- **Building MultiStories: Presenting a Framework to Diversify the Curriculum.** Fionnuala Darby and Lindsay Dowling (Paper – 15 mins)
- **Building Multi-stories, practical application of theoretical framework in Applied Social care.** Zuzana Teserova and Melody Chinenyanga (Paper – 15 mins)

10.30-10.45: Break

10.45-12.00: Pedagogy and Practice

Moderated by: Seán Henry

- **Future Makers Collective: Experiments in Collaborative Intradisciplinary Creative Practice.** Deirdre Kennedy and Sinead McDonald (Paper – 15 mins)
- **Educator handbook for designing inclusive entrepreneurship courses in higher education.** Deirdre McQuillan (Paper – 15 mins)
- **Development of a new TU Dublin programme for people with intellectual disabilities.** Sylvia Healy (Paper – 15 mins)
- **An investigation of the personality traits that could identify vulnerable young people who will be susceptible to undue influence by social media influencers (SMIs).** Charles Alves de Castro et al. (Paper – 15 mins)

12.00-12.15: Closing thoughts.

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An investigation of the personality traits that could identify vulnerable young people who will be susceptible to undue influence by social media influencers (SMIs)

By © Charles Alves de Castro

Supervisors: Dr Isobel O'Reilly & Dr Aiden Carthy

Duration: 15 min

Technological University Dublin

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Agenda

- Overall Context
- Objectives & Aims
- Research Questions
- Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in Context
- The Impact of SMIs on Adolescents (1)
- The Impact of SMIs on Adolescents (2)
- Consumer Behaviour in a Digital Era – Generation Z in Perspective
- Who is responsible to ethically protect minors in the digital environment?
- Gaps
- Findings
- Conclusion
- Q&A

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Overall Context

SMIs may influence adolescents in both positive and negative ways, for example, motivating them to behave pro-socially or adopt healthier lifestyle choices as opposed to encouraging smoking, drinking, or even criminal and violent behaviour.

Should we be concerned about the influence of SMIs on young people? Should this be a concern for the government? Should SMIs be regulated, registered, and policed? Should brands responsible for any perceived undue content be sanctioned in any way, and should such findings be made public?

If we can predict who will be susceptible to undue influence by SMIs, then we can work towards to inform and sensitise young people on how to recognise potentially harmful content posted by SMIs.

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Research Questions

1. What personality traits or profiles are associated with susceptibility to undue influence by social media influencers?

2. Are there gender differences with respect to the susceptibility to undue influence by social media influencers?

3. What are the five preferred influencers that this young sample follows and their motives to follow these SMIs?

4. Who is responsible for ethically protecting minors in the digital environment?

5. If there is evidence of susceptibility to undue influence by SMIs, how effectively does the provision of a specifically designed workshop enable young people to recognise potentially harmful content posted by SMIs?

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Objectives & Aims

❑ Determine whether there is a specific personality profile that predisposes young people to undue influence by social media influencers.

❑ Analyse the effectiveness of a specifically designed workshop enabling young people to recognise potentially harmful content posted by SMIs (If there is evidence of susceptibility to undue influence by SMIs).

Assess the susceptibility of young people to influence by social media influencers (SMIs)

Raise awareness among young people about the impact of social media influencers' content on their lives

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Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in Context

Who are they and how to recognise them?

❑ Ryan (2014), states that SMIs are the online opinion leaders. They harness the power of the web to extol the virtues of products and brands that they like, and equally to denigrate those they find unsatisfactory. It can happen through blogs, podcasts, forums, and social media channels. Therefore, they have the virtual ear of the online masses' (Ryan, 2014).

❑ They consider themselves expert in certain areas (such as their work, hobbies, or interests).

❑ People often ask their advice about purchases in areas where they are knowledgeable.

❑ When they encounter a new product they like, they tend to recommend it to friends and followers.

❑ They have a large social network circle and often refer people to one another based on their interests.

❑ They are active online, using social networking channels, websites, etc, to connect with their peers.

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The Impact of SMIs on Adolescents (1)

❑ In 2020, the influencer "industry" is deemed to be worth <u>5-10 billion USD ($)</u> (Brooks, 2019).

❑ Gartner (2019) found that an estimated <u>84% of millennials</u> are likely to be impacted by social media influencers content leading them to make a <u>purchase or be more susceptible to doing so.</u>

❑ The most impacted and susceptible to be <u>influenced by SMIs is Generation Z</u>, made up of those born from 1995 to 2010 (Francis and Hoefel, 2018).

Most popular social networks worldwide as of July 2021, ranked by number of active users (in millions)
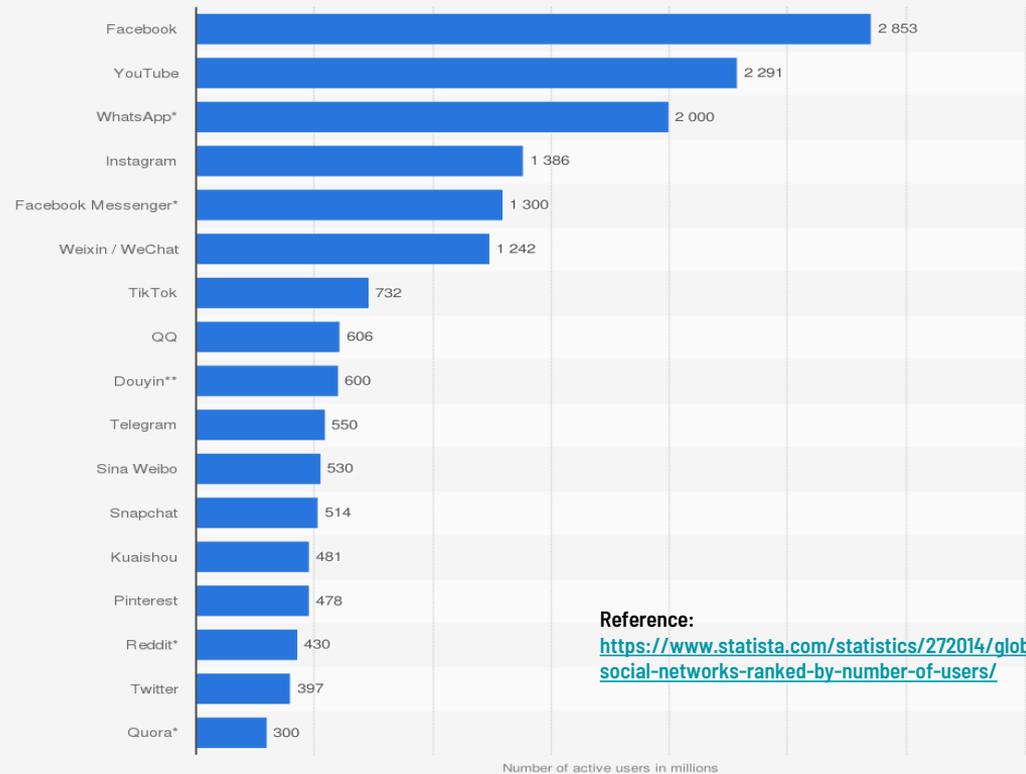
Social Network	Number of active users in millions
Facebook	2 853
YouTube	2 291
WhatsApp*	2 000
Instagram	1 386
Facebook Messenger*	1 300
Weixin / WeChat	1 242
TikTok	732
QQ	606
Douyin**	600
Telegram	550
Sina Weibo	530
Snapchat	514
Kuaishou	481
Pinterest	478
Reddit*	430
Twitter	397
Quora*	300

Number of active users in millions

Reference:
<u>https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/</u>

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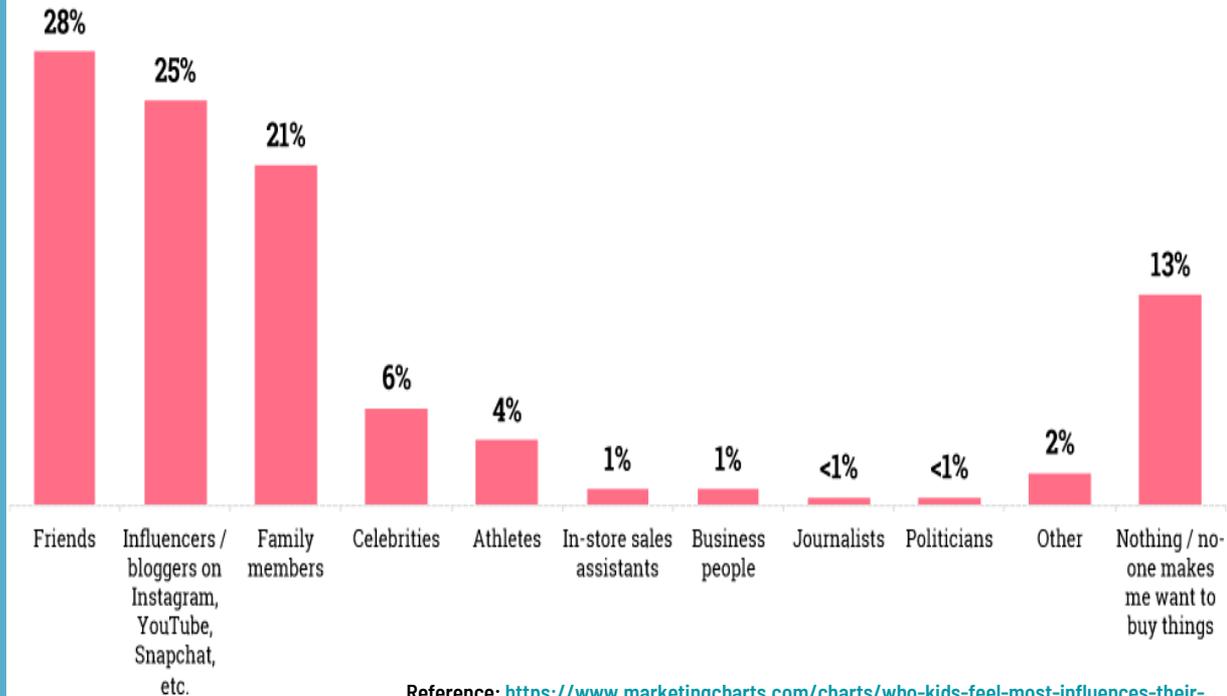TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

The Impact of SMIs on Adolescents (2)

❏ A study using 256 (*N=256*) adults and adolescents <u>found that adolescents are more susceptible to be negative influenced on the internet than adults</u> (Kraut et al., 1998). Also, it shows large rises of <u>depression and loneliness</u> amongst the adolescent group (Kraut et al., 1998).

❏ Curtis et al., research shows "a statistically significant relationship and moderate effect sizes between <u>alcohol-related social media engagement and both alcohol consumption</u>" as well as "a greater alcohol-related social media engagement was correlated with both <u>greater self-reported drinking and alcohol-related problems</u>" (Curtis et al., 2018).

❏ Released in November 2018, a research carried out by scientists from the Department of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania (USA), with 143 students (N=143), found <u>that decreasing the time</u> spent using social networks leads to considerable <u>reductions in depression and loneliness</u> (Hunt, Marx and Lipson, 2018).

❏ A study investigating the effect on children's ad libitum <u>snack intake</u> of social media marketing of snack foods via influencer Instagram profiles, found that <u>influencer marketing of unhealthy foods led to the immediate food consumption of these foods by adolescents and children</u>, while there was no such effect on influencers promoting <u>healthy foods</u> (E. Coates et al., 2019).

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Consumer Behaviour in a Digital Era – Generation Z in Perspective

❑ **Although there are both positive and negative influences that SMIs can spread, perhaps one of the issues that can skew towards negative influences is that <u>being an influencer is a new job</u>, within a consumption market and society that expects influencers to work for their sponsor brands.**

Who Kids Feel Most Influences Their Purchase Decisions

marketing charts

- Friends: 28%
- Influencers / bloggers on Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, etc.: 25%
- Family members: 21%
- Celebrities: 6%
- Athletes: 4%
- In-store sales assistants: 1%
- Business people: 1%
- Journalists: <1%
- Politicians: <1%
- Other: 2%
- Nothing / no-one makes me want to buy things: 13%

Published on MarketingCharts.com in October 2019 | Data Source: Wunderman Thompson Commerce

Based on a survey of more than 4,000 kids ages 6-16, half in the UK and half in the US

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Who is responsible to ethically protect minors in the digital environment?

❑ According to the <u>International Save the Children Alliance</u> (2010) and the <u>alliance to better protect minors online</u> (2017).

❑ The responsibility to protect minors in the digital environment relies on us all and all institutions in our society, as the internet and social media are present in our daily lives.

❑ Although parents, government and the private sector have been acting directly to ensure the protection of young people, further research is recommended to evaluate the current programmes, to understand the parents' control, how to empower and effectively train parents for better results as well as it is expected that companies and the government constantly update and review their programmes, policies and legislation in order to have outstanding results.

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Gaps:

❑ Little research has focused on personality traits or profiles that predispose young people to be susceptible to undue influence this regard.

❑ There is also no previous research in an Irish context that has attempted to analyse the impact of the provision of a workshop aimed at preventing young people from being susceptible to undue influence by SMIs.

Literature Review

Sources	Number	Extracted	Total of Sources
Reports Cited	45		
Journal Articles Analysed	420	(57)	
Journal Articles Selected	363		408

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Findings

- Depression and anxiety correlated to instant fame, and the reduction in depression and loneliness is linked to the decreasing amount of time spent in social media networks, however, the contrary does not have the same effect.
- Social media influencers can cause a dissatisfied feeling related to body image from women perspective.
- Research have shown a statistically meaningful association between alcohol consumption related social media interaction within the younger population.
- Also, shows a greater presence with social media related to alcohol was associated with both greater self-reported consumption and alcohol-related issues.
- Kids and adolescents exposed to an esteemed media figure such as an influencer promoting unhealthy food could foster unhealthy habits leading to obesity.

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CONCLUSION

- Due to many elements causing a negative influence on adolescents by SMIs, researchers find that more should be done to protect the rights of kids and adolescents. The government should regulate and create policies to supervise how those undue influences have been generated and how would be possible to avoid them.

- A gap in the literature shows that research is needed to unravel the impact of SMIs on adolescents that may have both desirable and undesirable consequences. While some previous studies have investigated the tendency of some people, especially students, to become SMIs, none to date have focused on the susceptibility of young people to undue influence by SMIs.

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QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU!

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