

PP 29 - Usage of Facebook as a Communication Channel: Adolescents' Perspective

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Background: As a method of socializing, Facebook was opened to be used by the general public and now Facebook users are increasing all over the world including Sri Lanka. However, the danger of using Facebook may be an issue particularly for adolescents. Eventhough it has some negative effects, usage of Facebook has become one of the most common practices among young generation.

Objectives: The main objective of this study was to explore the adolescents' perspective on their Facebook usage. The specific objectives were to identify the supportive factors available in the environment for adolescents to use Facebook, to determine the adolescents' perceived advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook and to identify the barriers experienced by adolescents to use Facebook.

Methodology: A qualitative descriptive study design was used with purposive sampling technique to select 16 adolescents who are currently using Facebook from Theldeniya National School, Kandy, Sri Lanka. The data collection tool was semi-structured interview and data was analyzed by using content analysis method.

Results and conclusions: Peer involvement such as peer pressure, peer acceptance, seeking standards and sense of group membership and high availability of resources such as mobile phones, desktops and laptops were identified as supportive factors for adolescents to use Facebook. Adolscent's perceived advantages of using Facebook were keep in touch with friends, get to know each other, communication and sharing information, enhance the motivation in academic performances and self enhancement. Wasting time and negligence of compulsory works due to addictive behaviour for online games and sleeping disturbances such as awakening, tiredness, less sleep and irregular sleep were identified as main disadvantages of overusage of Facebook among adolescents. Parental displeasure towards patterns of habitual, compulsive and addictive usage of Facebook was identified as a barrier experienced by adolescents' to use Facebook. Although Facebook seemed to entertain adolscents, addictive usage was found to be problematic towards maintaing day to day life.

Keywords: Adolescents, communication channel, Facebook, perspective