SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS, AND SELF-

AWARENESS AMONG GEN Z

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ABSTRACT

Media has published various information on the impact of technology in communication especially among the Gen Z, the generation that has been digitally connected since school age. This generation has even been branded as a lonely and dislocated generation due to gadget and social media use, which is feared to predispose these group to poor developmental outcomes. This study investigates this phenomenon among Filipino Gen Z, through employing a cross-sectional, predictive, non-experimental quantitative approach that compares these variables between sexes and across educational levels, and correlates these variables with social media use. Three hundred seventy (370) Filipino students from 11-24 years of age participated in the study. The analysis showed that: most of the participants perceived themselves more to possess social connectedness and self-awareness, but these levels could be improved; the males were heavier users of social media compared with females; college students are at risk most across educational levels to a deficiency in the outcomes of self-awareness and social connectedness; and there is a positive but negligible relationship between social media use and social connectedness $r(368)=.088$, $p>.05$, as well as social media use and situational self-awareness, $r(368)=.054$, $p>.05$, and outcomes, $r(368)$, $p>.05$. Future researches should delve into creating and testing a program to enhance self-awareness and social connectedness for college students.

Keywords: Social Media Use, Social Connectedness, Self-Awareness, Generation Z, Gen Z

The sampling technique employed was non-probability convenience sampling, specifically, snowball sampling method. Students and teachers whom were sent the link to the survey were given an option to have it shared with others who fell on the categories set.

G power 3.1.9.2 was used to determine number of samples for this study. Based on an alpha of .05, power of .80 and three number of groups for ANOVA, a total sample size of 159 was met in this study. Moreover, with the same alpha of .05, power of .80, and effect size of 0.5, this present sample met the requirement for t-test for independent samples which was 114.

Research Instruments

The instruments that were used in the study are the Situational Self-Awareness Scale (Govern & Marsch, 2011), Social Networking Time Use Scale (Olufadi, 2015), Social Connectedness Scale-Revised (Lee, Draper, Lee, 2001), and Self-Awareness Outcomes Questionnaire (Sutton, 2016).

Situational Self-Awareness Scale (SSAS)

The Situational Self-Awareness Scale (SSAS) was developed by Govern & Marsch in 2011. It possesses a Cronbach's alpha of .82 for public self-awareness subscale, .70 for its private self-awareness subscale, and .72 for its immediate surroundings subscale (Govern & Marsch, 2001). Public Self-Awareness means one's attentiveness to features of a person that are subject to others' perception, such as physical characteristics and idiosyncrasies (Govern & Marsch, 2001). Private Self-

Awareness refers to one's attentiveness to personal and reflective aspects of oneself, such as memories and feelings of pleasure or of pain (Govern & Marsch, 2001). Finally, Self-Awareness on Surroundings means one's attentiveness to one's current surroundings (Govern & Marsch, 2001). The instrument has been shown to actually measure what it is intended to measure as it was used to measure self-awareness induced by a large mirror and video camera when these were expected to produce a higher level of public self-awareness when compared with the other methods that were expected to produce changes in private self-awareness. The scale also showed sensitivity to fluctuations in self-awareness in individuals over time and across situations (Govern & Marsch, 2001). The scale consists of three (3) items per scale and the scales include Public Self-Awareness, Private Self-Awareness, and Self-Awareness in terms of Immediate Surroundings, with a total of nine (9) items over-all. Some items from the questionnaire included: "Right now, I am aware of my innermost thoughts" and "Right now, I am concerned about what other people think of me." The data obtained was also assessed for the questionnaire's Cronbach's alpha. Situational self-awareness in surroundings, private self-awareness, and public self-awareness, obtained .636, .691, and .785 Cronbach's alpha, respectively.

Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS)

The scale consists of twenty-nine (29) items having five components, namely: relaxation and free periods, academic-related periods, public-places-related use, stress-related periods, and motives for use. The items refer to instances in each setting

or component, example of which is: "When you are at home sitting idly" which is a question pertaining to relaxation and free periods.

A global score was measured from the sum of the five component scores which determined whether a person is a low, average, high, or extremely high user of social networking sites. Cronbach alpha ranges from .83 up to .91 for the subscales, while as a whole it has a reliability of .92. It employs an 11-point Likert scale. The scale was pilot tested with students who were 18 years old and above and possessed at least one social media account (Olufadi, 2015). In the actual data obtained, the Cronbach's alpha was .797 for relaxation and free period, .758 for academic-related period, .758 for public-places-related use, .843 for stress-related periods, and .694 for motive component.

Social Connectedness Scale-Revised

The Social Connectedness Scale-Revised by Lee, Draper, and Lee (2001) measures "social connectedness as a psychological sense of belonging, or more specifically, as a cognition of enduring interpersonal closeness with the social world" (p. 316). Social connectedness as conceptualized by Lee, Draper, and Lee (2001) deals with belongingness, and goes beyond loneliness although it is associated with it, albeit negatively. It was tested on students 14-18 years of age. It possesses high reliability of .92 and is highly correlated with loneliness (r=-.80) since it is an affective consequence of a lack of connectedness (Lee & Robbins, 2000, as cited in Lee, et. al., 2001). The scale consists of twenty questions, with 10 of them being positively stated, and another 10 negatively stated. The choices were from 1-6 with 1

being strongly disagree and 6 being highly disagree. Some item examples are: "I am able to connect with other people" for a positively stated item, and "I don't feel I participate with anyone or any group" for a negatively stated item. In the study, the Cronbach's alpha obtained for the social connectedness scale was .847.

Self-Awareness Outcomes Questionnaire (SAOQ)

The Self-Awareness Outcomes Questionnaire (SAOQ) was developed by Anne Sutton (2016) to measure practical impact of self-awareness intervention and can be used to show short and long term utility of enhanced self-awareness. However, this was tested for validity and reliability measures among employees. The questionnaire consists of four (4) scales namely: Reflective self-development (RSD), Acceptance (Acc), Proactive at work (Pro) and Emotional costs. The RSD scale measures attention toward the self, with a focus on reflective and balanced learning for personal development (Sutton, 2016). The Acc scale would include statements that measure positive self-image and confidence as well as an understanding of others (Sutton, 2016). Both the RSD and Acc scales have eleven (11) items. The Pro scale contains statements that show the product of self-awareness and proactivity at one's occupational tasks, however, in this study it was changed to mean self-awareness and proactivity with academic work since the participants were students. This had nine (9) items. Finally, the Emotional Costs scale included items that would measure the potential negative impact of self-awareness such as guilt, fear, and vulnerability (Sutton, 2016). The Emotional Costs scale has seven (7) items. Over-all, the

questionnaire consists of thirty-eight (38) items. Item examples are: "I learn about myself and how I see the world" and "I am aware of my abilities and limitations."

The Cronbach alpha for the RSD scale is at .87, the Acc scale is at .83, the Pro scale is at .81, and the emotional costs scale is at .77 (Sutton, 2016). Some of the items were adapted to suit the academic context, as it was normed among employees. The questionnaire was also pilot tested to students in order to improve the questionnaire's appropriateness for the target participants. As a result, in the actual study, the RSD scale obtained .814 Cronbach's alpha, .803 for the Acc scale, .701 for the Pro scale, and .657 for the emotional costs scale.

Data Gathering and Pilot Testing Procedures

The questionnaires that were used were subjected to a pilot study manually done with a pen and paper on March 4, 2020, with twenty (20) students from Grade 7. This allowed the researcher to adjust the vocabulary to suit the context of the intended participants. The original statements and actual statements used can be found in Appendix B. An online pilot testing was done as well with three participants from college that tested for the accuracy of the tools and user-friendliness of the online tools. After this has been ensured, the online data gathering took place from March 13-27, 2020.

The informed consent and informed assent were included in the final online questionnaires. For the informed consent, only the participants' voluntary participation was required. For the informed assent, however, the parents'

understanding of the study, and their permission were also required aside from the participants' voluntary participation.

At the end of the data gathering, the total number of participants were three hundred seventy (370).

Ethical Considerations

The research followed the guidelines in the Section X: General Ethical Standards and Procedures of Code of Ethics for Philippine Psychologists in order to protect the welfare of the research participants. The Informed Consent was incorporated in the online questionnaire which contained the details of the study. An informed assent, on the other hand, was also included for participants who were 17 years old or below upon answering the questionnaire. Both Informed Consent and Informed Assent form included a question and two predetermined answer as to whether they voluntarily participated (as for those 18 years old or above) and those who had informed their parent/s or guardian about the study, were allowed and voluntarily participated.

The informed consent included information regarding the purpose, expected duration, procedures of the study, and the protection and limits of confidentiality and anonymity. The responsibilities of both parties were also explained, as well as the right of the participants to decline or withdraw participation. The contact details of the researcher and the University Research Office were provided with questions about the research and their rights as participants.

The results were used for academic purposes and the findings were reported in a way that ensured that they will not be misinterpreted or misused in the development of policies and practices.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The t-test for independent samples was used to compare the variables of the study in terms of sex. Levene's test of equality of variance showed significance levels ranging from .243 to .930, indicating homogeneity of variances between the sexes. Skewness and kurtosis values of the male and female samples did not exceed 2.0. The values for asymmetry and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable in order to prove normal univariate distribution (George & Mallery, 2010).

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the variables across educational levels (Junior High School, Senior High School, and College). Levene's test showed significance level ranging from .256 to .363 in all dependent variable indicating homogeneity of variances. Skewness and kurtosis also showed values lower than 2.0 indicating normal distribution of comparison groups. For results that were significant, Scheffé post hoc test was done to assess which educational level obtained scores that were statistically different from the others.

Pearson correlation coefficient or Pearson's r was used to analyze the relationship between Social Media Usage and Self-Awareness (situational and outcomes), as well as Social Media Usage and Social Connectedness.

The data analysis was performed through the Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS) application.