California State University, Monterey Bay

Digital Commons @ CSUMB

12-2021

Increasing College Students' Awareness of the Influence Social Media has on Romantic Relationships

Jazmin Chaidez-Rocha
California State University, Monterey Bay

Increasing College Students' Awareness of the Influence Social Media has on Romantic

Relationships

Jazmin Chaidez

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

Increasing College Students' Awareness of the Influence Social Media has on Romantic

Relationships

Introduction

Many young adults are unaware of the influence social media has on romantic

relationships. Social media can have an effect on individuals' communication skills,

being a victim of cyberstalking, and cause jealousy characteristics such as distrust. To

address the lack of awareness, I created an interactive presentation for college students

in the greek community at California State University, Monterey Bay.

Needs Statement

Some young adults might be unaware that social media may influence risky

behaviors that might threaten their romantic relationship. The use of social media has

been adapted by young adults with 68% being women and 62% being men who are

using social media (Higgins et al., 2016). Some of the risks that threaten romantic

relationships are cyberstalking and act as a distraction in a relationship.

Cyberstalking is a form of stalking applied through technology and electronic

devices. It is an impulsive behavior followed by short-term benefits: satisfying curiosity

(Higgins, Markum, and Nicholson, 2016). Higgins, Markum and Nicholson (2016) say

that cyberstalking is now starting to become taken into consideration in the field of cyber

crime. Van Baak and Hayes (2018) say that cyberstalking is composed of three major

components: the behaviors must involve repeated threats, the behaviors must occur via

electronic or computer based communication, and the behaviors must make a

reasonable person afraid of their safety. In Marcum et al.'s (2016) study, university

students with low self-control were more likely to harass their romantic partner by

logging into their social media. Self control is a personal characteristic that is characterized by impulsivity, insensitivity, and risk taking (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990 as cited in van Baak and Hayes, 2018). College students with lower levels of self control may influence risk of cyberstalking victimization since individuals with lower levels of self control may engage in more impulsive or risk taking behaviors (van Baak and Hayes, 2018). Young adults may be participating in cyberstalking excepting to calm their curiosity, find answers to their questions, or attempt to keep their romantic relationships under control.

Social media can negatively affect a romantic relationship by decreasing attention and quality time spent together. The overuse of social media can be linked to the low commitment in the relationship due to the amount of time spent on the media (Abbasi, 2018). Abassi (2018) study found that partners who spend a lot of time on social media may begin to compare their relationship with the images and videos portrayed in social media which decreases their relationship satisfaction and commitment. Checking social media or not interacting with a romantic partner while with them, sends a message that interacting with one's romantic partner is less important than what is displayed on his or her cell phone (Roberts and David, 2015). How individuals use social media while in the presence of a romantic partner can negatively impact their relationship or well being (Roberts and David, 1015).

Given that young adults use social media as a form of communication during a romantic relationship, it is likely that they are not fully aware of the behaviors that can threaten a relationship. In order to increase their awareness, I intend to provide a one

day lesson on how social media affects romantic relationships for young adults at California State University, Monterey Bay.

Theory

Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory consists of eight stages. Young adults, ages 19-40 are in what Erikson called the Intimacy versus Isolation stage. Once young adults have answered the question "Who am I?" from stage 5, Identity versus Role they proceed to answer the question "Will I be loved or will I be alone?" from stage 6, Intimacy versus Isolation. The sixth stage, Intimacy versus Isolation focuses on forming intimate and loving relationships with others. Mcleod (2018), explains that each stage must be fully completed before continuing to the next one or an unhealthy personality will form in an individual. Avoiding intimacy or fearing commitment can lead to isolation (Mcleod, 2018). Considering young adults have just learned who they are, I think it may be helpful to provide awareness of negative aspects in relationships. Therefore, I created a lesson to help them understand what are some negative behaviors they can avoid when trying to build a relationship. The lesson is focused on social media considering that most young adults use it to create relationships.

Consideration of Diversity

My project will be conducted via Zoom to young adults in the Greek Community from California State University Monterey Bay in Seaside, California. According to the university's Enrollment Fast Facts (Headcounts) for Spring 2021, California State University Monterey Bay is 4% African American, 9% Asian American, 45% Latino, 29% White, 1% Pacific Islander, 1% Native American, and 9% two or more races. Additionally, 32% are low income, 51% are underrepresented minorities, 54% are first

generation, 64% are women, and 36% are men. The lesson conducted will be in English, the participants who attend are expected to be proficient in English. Considering that the lesson is intended for young adults, participants are expected to be in their adulthood stage approximately ages 19 to 26. The presentation I will be conducting is created for young adults in college so individuals younger or not in college wouldn't be able to attend.

Learning Outcomes

I intend to provide a 1 hour long interactive presentation via Zoom for college students in the greek community at California State University Monterey Bay.

By the end of this project participants will be able to:

1. Identify two ways the use of social media can cause negative impacts on romantic relationships.

2. Identify at least one form of cyberstalking.

3. Identify at least one form of poor communication.

Method

To begin the presentation, I introduced myself and proceeded by explaining the purpose of the presentation. See Appendix A for the presentation. I then spent 10 minutes to have everyone introduce themselves and answer if they were currently in a romantic relationship. As we proceeded with the presentation, I asked the participants to identify ways that social media can affect a romantic relationship. After 10 minutes of sharing ideas through a jamboard we have a 5 minute discussion on how these effects are usually seen in a relationship. See Figure 1 for jamboard results. After I finished presenting some poor communication skills seen in relationships and provided

examples. I shared a worksheet with three examples of poor communication being used in which they had to identify which and then had to fill in the blank with a good form of communication that they thought could help in the situation. See Appendix B.

As we proceeded to the last slides of the presentation, I asked the participants what they knew about cyberstalking. After we had all come to the same understanding of what cyberstalking is, they spent 10 minutes sharing examples of cyberstalking. After completing the presentation I then emailed each of them a select one worksheet where they have to choose the correct example of cyberstalking. See Appendix C.

Results

Learning outcome 1 was that participants will be able to identify two ways the use of social media can cause negative impacts of romantic relationships. I believe this learning outcome was partially met. Through our discussion on the effects social media can have on romantic relationships many of the participants only shared one example. When sharing on the jamboard the 6 participants were able to share 11 examples but some only input one while others input two or more. However, more than half of the participants were able to share at least two ways social media can have a negative impact on romantic relationships. See figure 1 for their shared responses.

Learning outcome 2 was that participants will be able to identify at least one form of cyberstalking. This learning outcome was fully met considering that all participants scored 100% on their post presentation test where they identified forms of cyberstalking. See table 1 for results.

Learning outcome 3 was that participants will identify at least one form of poor communication skills. After having completed another post presentation quiz the

participants were able to answer all the questions correctly. Indicating that learning outcome 3 was met. See table 2 for results.

Discussion

I believe that this project was successful. All participants were engaged during discussions and throughout the presentation. However, there were some who were more shy than others but still tried to participate once in a while. The purpose of my presentation was to provide insight on how social media can negatively affect romantic relationships, my participants shared that they would take into consideration the risks when in a relationship or when creating one. Considering that the participants are in Erikson's stage of intimacy versus isolation, I think the project helped participants acquire knowledge of healthy relationship habits which they can incorporate when creating intimate or romantic relationships. This will then help them build strong and close connections with others.

If I had to do this over again, I would have done it in person instead of doing it via Zoom. I will also provide a pre-test to learn about the participants knowledge before the presentation. I would have liked to know how the participants used social media during their current or past relationships. Nonetheless, I feel like my presentation provided the participants good insight on how social media can negatively affect a romantic relationship.

References

Abbasi, I. S. (2018). Social media and Committed RELATIONSHIPS: What factors make our romantic RELATIONSHIP VULNERABLE? *Social Science Computer Review, 37*(3), 425-434. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439318770609

Marcum, C. D., Higgins, G. E., & Nicholson, J. (2016). I'm watching you: Cyberstalking behaviors of university students in romantic relationships. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 42*(2), 373-388. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-016-9358-2

Mcleod, S. (2018). *Erik Erikson's stages of Psychosocial Development*. Erik Erikson | Psychosocial Stages | Simply Psychology. Retrieved from https://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html#intimacy.

Roberts, J. A., & David, M. E. (2015). My life has become a major distraction from my cell phone: Partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among romantic partners. *My Life Has Become a Major Distraction from My Cell Phone: Partner phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction among Romantic Partners*, *54*, 134–141. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.07.058

van Baak, C., & Hayes, B. E. (2018). Correlates of cyberstalking victimization and perpetration among college students. *Correlates of Cyberstalking Victimization and Perpetration Among College Students*, *33*(6), 1036–1054. https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.33.6.1036

Table 1

Percentage correct for each choose one question

	Percent correct
Question 1	*100%*
Question 2	*100%*
Question 3	*100%*
Question 4	*100%*
Question 5	*100%*

Table 2

List of the responses participants highlighted as a form of poor communication

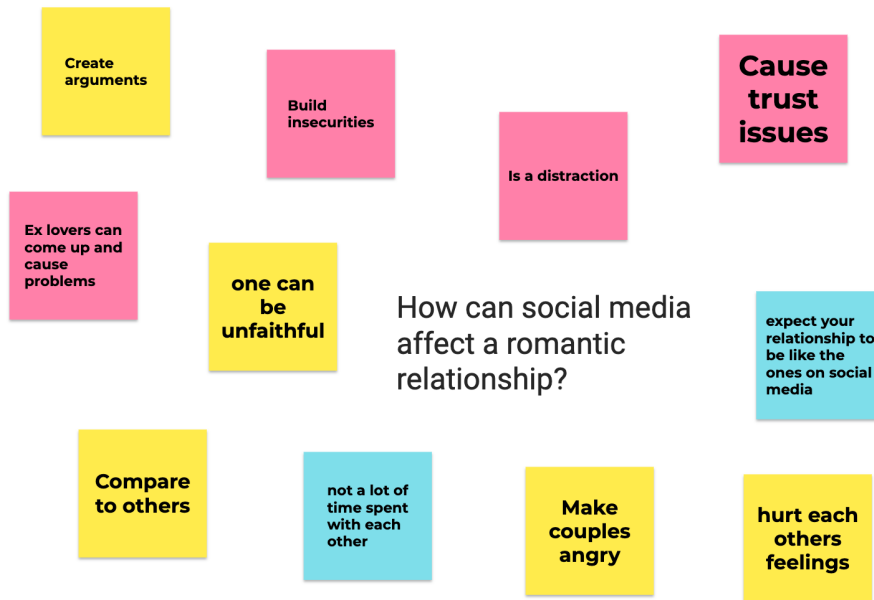|	
Question 1	Cat is constantly interfering by responding to text messages on her phone.
Question 2	Cat is yelling at Alex and accusing him of never doing what she asks.
Question 3	he is constantly interrupting her

Figure 1

Results on the discussion of how social media can negatively affect a romantic relationship
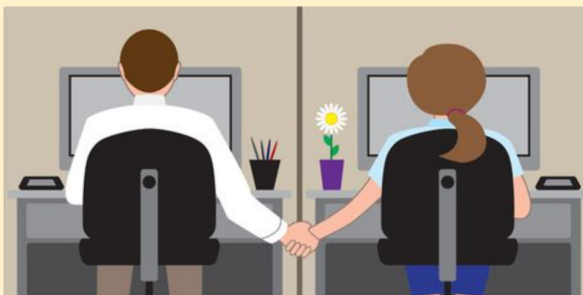
Appendix A

Powerpoint presentation

Increasing Awareness of the Effects Social Media has on Romantic Relationships

Jazmin Chaidez

What You Will Learn

- Ways social media can cause negative impacts on romantic relationships
- Forms of cyberstalking
- Poor communication skills

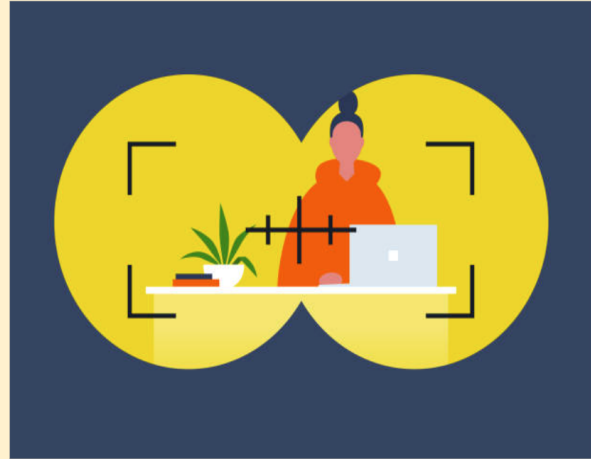## How Can Social Media Negatively Impact Your Relationship?

- Can create unrealistic expectations
- Increase jealousy
- Cause relationship dissatisfaction
- Cause arguments between partners
- Can be a distraction that keeps you from spending quality with your partner

What are Some Forms of Poor Communication?

- Passive aggressive behavior
  - Ex. Giving your partner the silent treatment for being late
- Using aggressive speech
  - Ex. Raising your voice at your partner
- Brushing things off
  - Ex. Ignoring an issue
- Multitasking
  - Ex. Using cellphone during a conversation

What is Cyberstalking?

Cyberstalking is using the internet, e-mail, or other telecommunication technology to harass or stalk another person.

Examples of Cyberstalking

- Sending unwanted or unsolicited threatening, harassing, lewd, or manipulative emails
- Sending unwanted and/or disturbing instant messages, text, or "sext" messages
- Creating false online accounts to impersonate the victim or attempting to contact the alleged victim through the use of a false persona
- Posting embarrassing or humiliating information/media regarding the alleged victim
- Posting the alleged victim's personal information (including, but not limited to a phone number, home address, or workplace)
- Hacking the alleged victim's online accounts (email, banking, social media, etc.)

Thank You!

Appendix B

Fill in the blank to achieve Learning Outcome 3

Please identify the poor communication skill by highlighting and provide an example of

how you think their communication can be improved.

1. Alex and his girlfriend Cat are discussing which family they will attend Christmas with. However, Cat is constantly interfering by responding to text messages on her phone.

   _____

2. Cat is yelling at Alex and accusing him of never doing what she asks.

   _____

3. Cat is talking to Alex about her day, but he is constantly interrupting her by bringing up things from his day.

   _____

Appendix C

Select one post test for Learning outcome 2

<div align="center">Which is a form of cyberstalking?</div>

Please select the correct answer.

1. A. Posting a picture of you and a friend on your social media.

    B. Leaving an anonymous post on social media to ridicule someone.

2. A. Sending a friend request to an individual.

    B. Creating a fake social media account to follow an individual.

3. A. Liking every single post the individual has posted.

    B. Responding to the individual's message.

4. A. Sending constant unwanted messages to the individual.

    B. Sending a greeting message to an individual.

5. A. Posting real or fake images of an individual.

    B. Emailing an individual asking for help on an assignment.

Appendix D

Presentation from Capstone Festival

Increasing Awareness
on the Effects Social
Media has on
Romantic
Relationships

By Jazmin Chaidez

Needs Statement

- Some young adults may be unaware of how social media can affect their romantic relationship.
- Understand how their relationship can be affected.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of my project, participants will be able to

1. Identify two ways social media can cause a negative effect on a romantic relationships.
2. Identify one way of cyberstalking.
3. Identify at least one form of poor communication skills.

Method

- One hour long lesson plan conducted via Zoom. Participants were six Greek community members from California State University Monterey Bay.
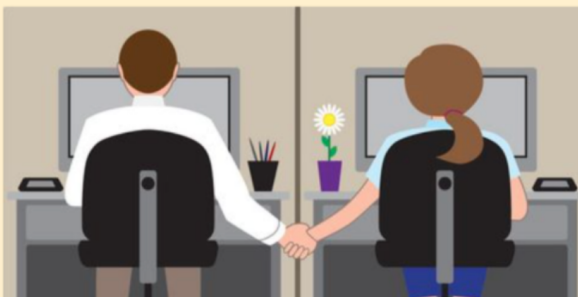- Two small worksheets had to be completed after the presentation.

Increasing Awareness of the Effects Social Media has on Romantic Relationships

Jazmin Chaidez

What You Will Learn

- Ways social media can cause negative impacts on romantic relationships
- Forms of cyberstalking
- Poor communication skills

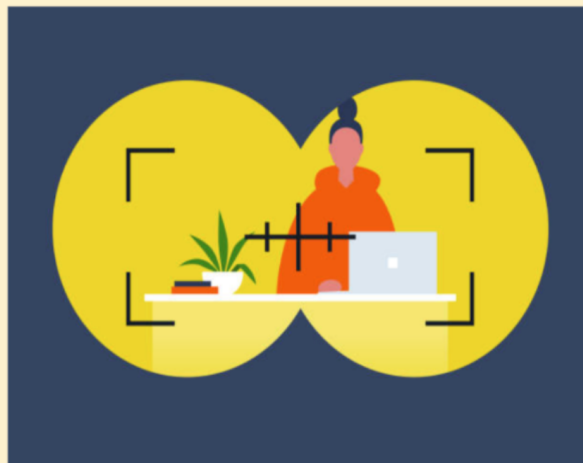## How Can Social Media Negatively Impact Your Relationship?

- Can create unrealistic expectations
- Increase jealousy
- Cause relationship dissatisfaction
- Cause arguments between partners
- Can be a distraction that keeps you from spending quality with your partner

What are Some Forms of Poor Communication?

- Passive aggressive behavior
    - Ex. Giving your partner the silent treatment for being late
- Using aggressive speech
    - Ex. Raising your voice at your partner
- Brushing things off
    - Ex. Ignoring an issue
- Multitasking
    - Ex. Using cellphone during a conversation

What is Cyberstalking?

Cyberstalking is using the internet, e-mail, or other telecommunication technology to harass or stalk another person.

Examples of Cyberstalking

- Sending unwanted or unsolicited threatening, harassing, lewd, or manipulative emails
- Sending unwanted and/or disturbing instant messages, text, or "sext" messages
- Creating false online accounts to impersonate the victim or attempting to contact the alleged victim through the use of a false persona
- Posting embarrassing or humiliating information/media regarding the alleged victim
- Posting the alleged victim's personal information (including, but not limited to a phone number, home address, or workplace)
- Hacking the alleged victim's online accounts (email, banking, social media, etc.)

Thank You!

Worksheet for Learning Outcome 2

Which is a form of cyberstalking?

Please select the correct answer.

1. A. Posting a picture of you and a friend on your social media.

    B. Leaving an anonymous post on social media to ridicule someone.

2. A. Sending a friend request to an individual.

    B. Creating a fake social media account to follow an individual.

3. A. Liking every single post the individual has posted.

    B. Responding to the individual's message.

4. A. Sending constant unwanted messages to the individual.

    B. Sending a greeting message to an individual.

5. A. Posting real or fake images of an individual.

    B. Emailing an individual asking for help on an assignment.

Worksheet for Learning Outcome 3

Please identify the poor communication skill by highlighting and provide an example of how you think their communication can be improved.

1. Alex and his girlfriend Cat are discussing which family they will attend Christmas with. However, Cat is constantly interfering by responding to text messages on her phone.

   _____

2. Cat is yelling at Alex and accusing him of never doing what she asks.

   _____

3. Cat is talking to Alex about her day, but he is constantly interrupting her by bringing up things from his day.
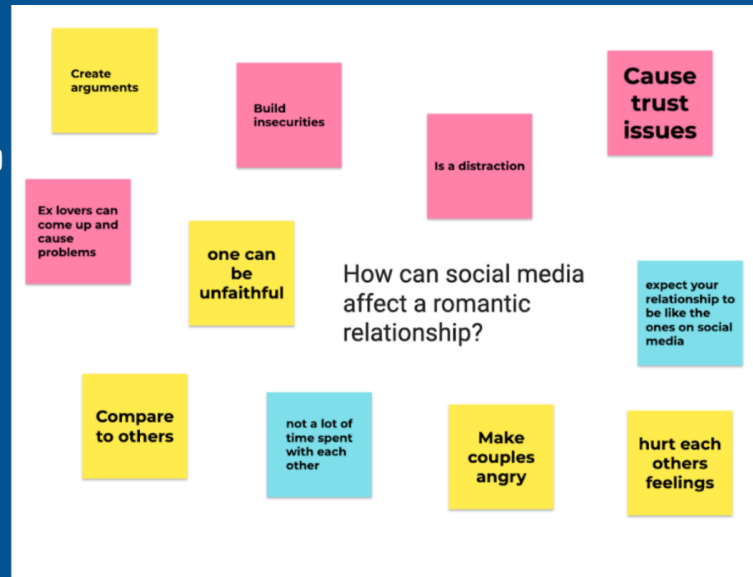
   _____

Theory

Erik Erikson theory of Psychosocial Development

Intimacy versus Isolation

Results

Learning Outcome 1: Identify two ways social media can cause a negative effect on romantic relationships.

Results

Learning Outcome 2: Identify one way of cyberstalking.

Table 1

Percentage correct for each choose one question

	Percent correct
Question 1	100%
Question 2	100%
Question 3	100%
Question 4	100%
Question 5	100%

Results

Learning Outcome 3: Identify at least one form of poor communication skills.

Table 2

List of the responses participants highlighted as a form of poor communication

Question 1 Cat is constantly interfering by responding to text messages on her phone.

Question 2 Cat is yelling at Alex and accusing him of never doing what she asks.

Question 3 he is constantly interrupting her

Discussion

- I would do an in person presentation.
- Have created more engaging lesson plan so they participants could conversate with each other.

Increasing Awareness on the Effects Social Media has on Romantic Relationships

By Jazmin Chaidez