The digital footprints of adolescent depression, social rejection and victimization of bullying on Facebook

# Details

## Year

2019

## DOI

10.1016/j.chb.2018.09.025

## Issued

2019

## Language

English

## Volume

91

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Computers in Human Behavior

## Publisher

Elsevier BV

## Topics

## Sample

A total of 101 adolescents achieved their parents' consent and agreed to participate in the study. Altogether, the ultimate sample used for analyses in Study 1 consisted of 86 (51.2% girls) Hebrew speaking adolescents, aged 13 to 18 yrs (M = 15.98, SD = 1.3). STUDY 2 A total of 162 adolescents (51.3% girls) participated in Study 2.

# Abstract

Online Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are immensely popular, especially among adolescents. Activity on these sites leaves digital footprints, which may be used to study online behavioral correlates of adolescent psychological distress and to, ultimately, improve detection and intervention efforts. In the present work, we explore the digital footprints of adolescent depression, social rejection, and victimization of bullying on Facebook. Two consecutive studies were conducted among Israeli adolescents (N = 86 and N = 162). We collected a range of Facebook activity features, as well as self-report measurements of depression, social rejection, and victimization of bullying. Findings from Study 1 demonstrate that explicit distress references in Facebook postings (e.g., "Life sucks, I want to die") predict depression among adolescents, but that such explicit distress references are rare. In Study 2, we applied a bottom-up research methodology along with the previous top-down, theory driven approach. Study 2 demonstrates that less explicit features of Facebook behavior predict social rejection and victimization of bullying. These features include 'posts by others', 'check-ins', 'gothic and dark content', 'other people in pictures', and 'positive attitudes towards others'. The potential, promises and limitations of using digital Facebook footprints for the detection of adolescent psychological distress are discussed.

# Outcome

In their study, Ophir, Asterhan and Schwarz (2019) FOUND that explicit references to distress predict higher levels of depression among adolescents. Most of the documented explicit references to distress were to depressive symptoms (58% of the distressed posts) and, remarkably, seven out of the ten (70%) participants who published posts with explicit references to depressive symptoms experienced at least mild depression. STUDY 2: The results of Study 2 suggest that even though explicit distress references are rare in teenage online Facebook postings, some forms of distress (i.e., social rejection and victimization) leave less explicit, yet discernable digital footprints on adolescents' Facebook activities