

INVITED SYMPOSIUM EARA 2018

Adolescence and new media

Invited Joint EADP-EARA symposium

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In developmental psychology, a growing body of research supports the idea that cultural change leads to cohort and time period differences in psychological characteristics and young people wellbeing (Twenge et al. 2018). One of the most relevant change nowadays impacting on children's development is young people's use of ICT and new media. From several statistics we know that more than 90% of European and western adolescents have access to smartphones, and use them frequently to receive and post messages on social media. The four contributions of this symposium will examine how new media might influence adolescents life in relation to their body image, cyberbullying and cybervictimization experiences, social identities and possible school trajectories and school wellbeing. In relation to these different outcomes, the first paper from de Vries and collaborators tries to understand the role of positive child-parent relationship as a protective factor for adolescents' body image. The second paper by Menesini and Palladino focuses on the role of adults' reaction (teachers and parents) to bullying and how these reactions may interact in order to reduce cyberbullying. The third paper by van Oosten will focus on critical use of ICT and specifically on engaging in counter-messages on social media as a way to promote online resilience. Finally the fourth paper will address the topic of ICT use and how different profiles of new media use can impact on school wellbeing and commitment.

PRESENTATION 1: Social Media and Body Image in Adolescence: The Protective Role of Parent-Adolescent Relationships

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Body dissatisfaction is a risk factor for depression and eating disorders. Therefore, it is important to understand what factors contribute to body dissatisfaction. According to Sociocultural Model, parents, peers, and the media impact adolescents' body image through messages about what they should look like. Not meeting these ideals can lead to body dissatisfaction. Regarding media influence, scholars originally focused on mass media such as magazines and TV. However, consistent evidence shows that social media also predicts increased body dissatisfaction concurrently and over time among adolescents of both genders (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). On social media young people compare themselves and their appearance to the (beautified) pictures of their peers and feel less satisfied with their own appearance as a result.

Currently we know little about what factors may protect adolescents against the undesirable effects of social media use on body image. We therefore investigated a potential protective factor, namely positive parent-adolescent relationships. Parent-adolescent relationships predict positive body image during adolescence (Archibald et al., 2010). Moreover, adolescents who have good relationships with their parents are less likely to seek validation from others and less likely to compare themselves and their appearance with others. We therefore expected that adolescents who have more positive relationships with their parents are less likely to experience deleterious effects of social media use on their body image. We thus hypothesized that the positive correlation between social media use and body dissatisfaction would be weaker among adolescents who have more positive relationships with their parents.

We conducted a survey among 440 adolescents age 12 to 19 ($M = 14.9$, $SD = 1.8$, 47% female) that included the Multidimensional Scale of Facebook Use, The Body Attitude Test, and the positive subscales of the Network of Relationships Questionnaire (for both mother and father). We tested our hypotheses using the PROCESS macro in SPSS and controlled for age and gender. We examined the two-way interactions between social media use and positive parental relationships for the sample as a whole as these were not moderated by gender. We found no significant interaction between positive father-adolescent relationships and social media use. However, we did find a negative interaction between social media use and positive mother-adolescent relationships, $B = -0.20$, 95% $BCI = [-0.36, -0.04]$. The association between social media use and body dissatisfaction was weaker among adolescents who experienced more positive relationships with their mothers. These results suggest that positive relationships with mothers may protect adolescents against negative effects of social media use on body image. Future research should investigate why and how mothers impact the consequences of their adolescents' social media use in more detail and further explore this relationship using experimental and longitudinal designs.

PRESENTATION 2: Parents' and teachers' reactions toward bullying: do they have an impact on cyberbullying?

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Bullying tends to occur between classmates (Salmivalli, 2010) and teachers have a central role in preventing and managing bullying episodes at school (Yoon & Bauman, 2014; Campaert, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2017). At the same time, parents can be indirectly involved, at least when some incidents happen and they are called by school staff to take their own responsibilities. Despite the role of teachers and parents for adolescents results, it is still unclear whether they have an impact also in the case of virtual context and cyberbullying. The aim of the present study is to understand the impacts of parents' and teachers' reactions on preadolescents and adolescents online negative behaviour. Specifically, we want to test whether adults reaction in relation to face to face bullying incidents may influence also cyberbullying involvement and whether there are possible interactive effects between parents and teachers' reactions.

804 middle school students (female=48.3%; mean age=12.12, DS=.58) and 502 high school students (female=29.2%; mean age=14.6, DS=.83) participated in the pre-test data collection of an anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying program (Notrap! Palladino, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2016) in November 2017. We collected data about cyberbullying using the Florence Cyberbullying and Cybervictimization Scales – Short Version (Palladino, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2015). We tested students' perception of how significant adults react in bullying incidents through the questionnaire "Teachers' Reactions Toward Bullying" - revised version (Campaert, Nocentini, & Menesini, 2017) and through a parallel version developed to assess parents' reactions in bullying incidents. Both questionnaires are composed of three subscales: No Intervention; Disciplinary Methods and Relational and Supportive Interventions (e.g. mediation, discussion, support to the victims).

In middle schools, regression analyses showed a significant negative main effect of parents' Relational and Supportive Interventions ($b = -.083, p = .001$) and a significant interaction between parent's Disciplinary Methods and teachers' Relational and Supportive Interventions ($b = -.034, p = .017$): only when there was an high level (above the mean) of parents' Disciplinary Methods, teachers' Relational and Supportive Interventions had a significant impact reducing the level of cyberbullying. In the high school sample, we found a significant interactive effect between parent's Disciplinary methods and teachers' No intervention ($b = -.144, p < .001$): when there was a lower level (under the mean) of parents' Disciplinary Methods, teachers' No intervention had a significant positive association with cyberbullying.

Summarizing, adults' reactions towards face to face bullying seem to have an impact also in the virtual context, albeit with age specificities. Defining the line of "what is possible and not possible" (i.e. Disciplinary Methods) by parents is crucial both in middle and in high school, interacting significantly with teachers' interventions. The Relational and Supportive interventions led by adults have a protective role only with the younger students while in adolescence, the risk factors related to teachers' "No Intervention" and lower use of parents' Disciplinary methods emerge significantly. Implications of these results for cyberbullying prevention are discussed.

**PRESENTATION 3: Online resilience: Understanding adolescent girls' engagement with counter-messages
in social media**

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Over the last decade, research has accumulated on the potential negative consequences of sexual media exposure for adolescents' sexual behaviour, attitudes and self-concept. However, while such research is crucial, this one-sided negative perspective neglects an important part of young people's interactions with the media, namely whether young people are capable of arguing against the stereotypical sexual messages they encounter in the media. There is some evidence that adolescents are capable of criticizing sexual stereotypical content in the media, and that interventions can increase such critical views. That said, no study has focused on the question of how the internet may help adolescents' to express and share critical views and build their resilience to stereotypical messages in the media.

One way that young people may build their resilience to the influence of stereotypical sexual content is by reading and sharing messages in social media. Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, represent platforms where young people can tell their own stories, express their identity and challenge stereotypical sexual messages from mainstream media. Presently, there is some initial evidence that social media are used to share *counter-messages* or *counter-narratives*, which are messages that counter stereotypical or societal dominant messages, including stereotypical sexual content in the media.

As we currently lack knowledge on young people's use of the internet, and social media in particular, for criticizing sexual stereotypical messages, the present study focused on the question of whether, how and why adolescent girls read and/or share messages in social media that counter sexual stereotypical messages in mass media and society such as sexual objectification of women and the sexual double standard. To this end, I conducted 6 focus groups among 22 adolescent girls aged 12-17, in which I focus on their exposure to, and engagement with, messages in social media (e.g. pictures, articles and/or videos) that confront stereotypical sexual content in mass media and society.

Preliminary results indicate that, even though most girls seemed capable of being critical towards stereotypical sexual messages, they were not expressing such critical views in social media. The main explanation seemed to be related to impression management, where girls didn't want to come across as "too serious" or "feminist". In addition, they were not that interested in encountering counter-messages in social media themselves, as social media were mostly about "sharing fun content". However, they reacted positively to celebrities who openly criticized sexual objectification.

PRESENTATION 4: Socio-digital participation and academic well-being

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It has been argued that today's adolescents would be either disconnected in traditional schools (e.g. Selwyn, 2006) or being "destroyed as a generation" (Twenge, 2017) by digital technologies having a negative effect on their social and emotional functioning. We examine differences in socio-digital participation in three samples of Finnish students (i.e., elementary school 6th grade, $n = 743$; high school 1st year, $n = 1335$; higher education 1st year, $n = 1232$) and how they differ in their academic well-being (school engagement and school burnout in terms of exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy as a student). Based on socio-digital participation we identified four groups: *social media*, *knowledge creation*, *action gaming*, and *recreational gaming oriented groups*. Social media use was related negatively to study engagement and positively to study burnout. Action gaming was related negatively to school engagement and positively to cynicism. Knowledge-oriented participation was related to higher study engagement. The results demonstrate that students' digital activities reflect multiple different dimensions and that these are differently related to their academic well-being.