How Culture and Development Influences Personality and Social Media Usage

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In the field of psychology, adolescence and culture play integral roles in determining factors of an individual's personality. Similarly, different personality types are more likely to use social media sites, like Facebook, to fulfill specific purposes that are related to specific Big Five personality trait. The goal of this paper is to show how different aspects of personality can effect an individual's reasons for using Facebook.

The Big Five personality theory is widely regarded as universal in regards to personality. This means that across all cultures, researchers have found that each category; neuroticism, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness, can be found (Matsumoto & Juang, 2016). With the rise in social media popularity, studies have been done to examine whether there is any relationship between the factors of the Big Five and type of Facebook use. For example, Ryan and Xenos (2011) show that there is a positive correlation between the traits of narcissism and extraversion and the amount of time that is spent on Facebook. It is not a far leap then, to assume that culture plays a big factor in determining the reasons for Facebook usage. South Korea scores relatively low on Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions of Individualism/Collectivism, meaning that South Koreans highly value community and close personal relationships, and this is evident in their social media usage (Matsumoto & Juang, 2016). Even though Koreans and Americans spend almost the same amount of time on social media sites per day, Koreans had a much smaller group of friends, giving the impression that Korean's primary motive for using social media is to maintain preexisting social relationships. On the other hand, American's use social media for more casual relationships (Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011). There is also evidence that people from the same cultures score similarly on the Big Five. In this case, since French,

Italians, and Maltese are known for scoring relatively high on neuroticism, there would be visible evidence in their Facebook usage. Neuroticism was shown to be positively correlated with general self-disclosure and emotional disclosure (Seidman, 2013). Since the Big Five is such a big indicator as to the reasons for using Facebook, and cultures generally score similarly on the Big Five, culture is a huge influence on social media usage.

Culture is not the only factor that influences personality. Studies have shown that adolescence is also a time where an individual's scores differ, albeit slightly, on the Big Five test. At the very beginning of puberty, during early adolescence, children show a decrease in three traits: extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Santrock, 2016). This means that an adolescent's Facebook habits will change as well. There is a negative correlation between time spent on Facebook and conscientiousness, meaning that when an adolescent begins to decrease in conscientiousness, they may begin to spend an increasing amount of time on Facebook. Their use of communicative features may also drop due to a decrease in extraversion (Ryan & Xenos, 2011). However, the personalities do not stay this way permanently. Eventually, towards late adolescence and emerging adulthood, conscientiousness and agreeableness will begin to rise (Santrock, 2016). As this rise begins, communication as a reason to use Facebook will increase and attention-seeking will begin decline (Seidman, 2013).

The implications of this study are vast. All the traits of the Big Five theory; neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and openness, can change because of age, or are a results of culture. It is important, then, to carefully view specific aspects of a child's life in order to gain an understanding of how they may be using social media sites. A way that a teenager is acting on Facebook may be phase or it could be a call for help. Also, in terms of different cul-

ture, it is important to remember that they may use social media for a different purpose. In this

case, it is important to understand where they may be coming from, so as to get a better picture

of the individual.

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