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Perceived Health/Safety Risks and Critical Thinking Skills in College Students Using Social Media Networking

Denise Mary Makri-Werzen
Walden University

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Perceived Health/Safety Risks and Critical Thinking Skills in College Students

Using Social Media Networking

by

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MS, Fairleigh Dickinson University Dental School, 1990

BS, Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1975

ADN, Bergen Community College, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Health and Health Sciences

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

The 21st century has brought about an increase in the popularity of social media networking usage on a global level, especially among college students. Social connectivity has become a vital part of the daily lives of college students, providing connections with their educational, personal, and social lives. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the actual experiences and self-reported perceptions of health/safety risks in college students using social media networking sites and to assess whether critical thinking skills were employed. The sample size of the targeted population originated from 23 volunteer college students, recruited from the Walden University Participant Pool. The data compiled from their individual responses when interviewed, were coded based on the participant responses and placed into themes based on the 14-research question survey. The two conceptual frameworks used in this research were self-efficacy theory and the health belief model. The qualitative analysis applied was thematic. The results of this study revealed that the perceived health and safety risks of the college students and individual critical thinking skills were applied in making informed decisions when using social media networking. This preliminary study has implications for positive social change, in that the findings may inform advocacy in the proposal of public health legislation policy measures that can secure safe social media networking usage while protecting individual personal identity information and physical safety.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my loving and supportive family, who made this difficult, cumbersome journey possible.

To my beloved husband, Bill, who left us all suddenly and much too soon! You stood by my side throughout this arduous journey, and my heart breaks that you could not see me graduate, but you will remain faithfully always in my heart and soul. This doctoral degree is dedicated to you, Bill, Amor de Mi Vida!

To my loving parents, the late Robert Makri and Irene Makri, thank you for your unconditional love, constant guidance, and unwavering faith in my perseverance procuring this doctoral degree. You always instilled in me, “Everyone can accomplish anything they want in life, follow your dreams and you will succeed!”

To my children, Shannon Leigh, William Robert, and Lauraleigh Ashley, the souls of my life and existence, I thank you for your patience and support this past decade. I hope to implement the highest standards for the three of you throughout your individual journeys in life by placing importance on education and professional happiness. I hope to instill this motto in my children: “Dream big and there will always be a way to achieve what you most desire in your life.”

To my late grandparents, my maternal Mary and John Paflitzko, and my paternal Marie and Hazbi Makri, who emigrated from Europe, for always holding education in the highest regard and instilling in their grandchildren the importance of education and respect, as an American dream, honor, and privilege.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The dramatic worldwide increase and popularity of social media networking has come about in the 21st century with phone texting and social media networking sites. This has provided the ability to upload photos and messages, while specific sites on the web can connect to music, photos, and real-time messaging, which can be shared globally. Through video gaming, individuals can use an interface to interact, generating two- to three-dimensional videos displaying real-time feedback to all connected players (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Internet connectivity can be accessed through diverse devices including iPhones, iPads, or computer-generated devices. Social media networking usage has a unique set of barriers that can compromise an individual's health/safety if critical thinking is not initiated to problem solve and make informed decisions on individual health/safety (Finset, 2011; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Wang et al., 2011).

Social media networking has become a public health challenge on a global level because individuals who enter these sites may not be forthright and honest with their profiles, causing a major threat to other people's privacy, health, and safety (Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008). The objective of this study was to assess college students to determine whether an association existed between perceived health/safety risks and the application of critical thinking skills when using social media networking sites (Ali, 2015; Kapidzic & Herring, 2015). College students visit social media sites frequently due to their digital savoir-faire (Ali, 2015). According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) and Kapidzic and Herring (2015), all individuals must be aware of their social media networking activity usage based on sites entered, time spent

at these sites, health/safety risks encountered, and the individuals communicating within these sites. Social media networking sites are not always safe and secure, which can leave individuals vulnerable to predators (Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008). Additionally, studies performed by Ali (2015) demonstrated that all college students must comprehend the perceived health/safety risks presented with social media networking usage and apply critical thinking skills in making informed personal well-being decisions. This preliminary work has implications for positive social change, in that it may help in initiating the development of public health policies that secure safe usage of social media networking sites and aid in the prevention of individual health/safety risks while attempting to secure individual privacy.

In Chapter 1, I present an overview of the social media timeline, addressing the creation of social media and the growth and progression of global networking sites in the 21st century. This chapter focuses on the study's background, purpose, research questions, theoretical foundations, and definitions of essential terminology. I address the scope of the study, convey the study's contents, and justify the research in proposing the research problem. Each section provides information that contributes to the background and contents that answer the research questions.

Background

Retrospective studies help in exploring the possible effects that social media networking usage has on the population from a public health perspective (i.e., individual health/safety risks). In existing studies, college students have assessed their individual perceived health/safety risks when using social media networking sites. There are several health/safety factors that have been examined in college students who use social media

networking: addiction, anxiety, depression, sexting, social isolation, sleep deprivation, abated self-esteem, loss of privacy, compromised physical safety, and exposure to ruthless or aggressive individuals (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Finset, 2011 ; Hurly, 2018 Wang, Chen, & Liang, 2011; Wertalik & Wright, 2017). All individuals using social media networking sites must apply critical thinking skills, which form the basis for problem solving and informed decision making. Communication, a component of critical thinking, is a paramount core skill for all individuals to master that is used in daily living. Individuals entering social media networking sites must always protect and safeguard their personal identities along with their mental and physical safety. Recent research sources have helped to establish the current research gap concerning social media networking safety and security—concerns that have grown on a global level in the 21st century.

Despite previous research studies (Finset, 2011; Hurley, 2018Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010; Schein, Wilson, & Keelen, 2010) on the general population, there is a need for further study of the perception of health/safety risks and the application of critical thinking (communication) skills in college students using social media networking as a 21st-century public health problem due to the advancement of digital technology. Through this research, I attempted to address the escalating public health dilemma of potentially compromised individual health/safety risks and loss of privacy due to predators engaging in social media networking (Bernhardt, Alber & Gold, 2014). The data compiled provided current guidance and evaluation in public health policy creation in protecting social media safety in young people while teaching and implementing critical thinking applications. Addressing critical thinking helps individuals

to solve problems, which empowers them in making knowledgeable lifestyle choices (Finset, 2011; Hurley, 2018).

Problem Statement

Technological advances in social media networking have increased significantly in the 21st century as social media sites have become primary means of staying connected to family, friends, and strangers. Social media networks are updated on a global level due to continuous technological advances. In the world's population, 51% of people use the internet; these rates continued to rise from 2012 to 2021 (Internet World Stats, 2021). Advances in technology have led to more exposure of worldwide social media networking sites to users of younger ages, as well as to college-age students and mature adults. On a global level, there has been an increase in computer-savvy individuals who may or may not apply critical thinking skills when entering social media networks (Ali, 2015). This places an individual's health and safety in harm's way. This research study may assist stakeholders in the future development of public policies and practices to educate individuals using social media networking on how to protect their health/safety while applying critical thinking skills in making informed decisions to secure their privacy and well-being. Communication skills must be taught, mastered, comprehended, and implemented into an individual's daily life commencing at an elementary school level. Enhancing communication skills with critical thinking increases an individual's knowledge base to make informed lifelong decisions. In this research study, I examined the continuous technological changes in connecting to social media networking sites that affect public health on a global level (Ali, 2015). Population health, safety, and security are paramount challenges in public health. Predators can target

individuals in social media networking sites and can harm their well-being and security. Public health policies can help to protect targeted populations by keeping individuals safe and secure from these potential predators (Ali, 2015).

Individuals connecting to social media (cyberspace) networking on a global level allow the collection of diverse information (both public and private) to be disseminated (O’Keefe et al., 2011). Social media networking is a tool used to communicate, entertain, procure informational knowledge, and at times provide companionship to a myriad of individuals (Kapidzic & Herring, 2014). College students who use social media networking sites are faced with potential health/safety risks (e.g., addiction, anxiety, depression, sexting, social isolation, sleep deprivation, abated self-esteem, loss of privacy, compromised physical safety, and exposure to ruthless or aggressive individuals; Finset, 2011). Applying critical thinking skills in sustaining privacy, safety, and well-being is of paramount importance for individuals using social media networking sites (Finset, 2011). Retrospective studies have demonstrated that college students must be alert and aware of the potential dangers present when entering social media sites, the amount of time spent there, and what activities take place within these sites (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kapidzic & Herring, 2014). To date, there have been limited public policies in place to protect individual health/safety for those engaging in social media networking usage (Flecha & Sordé -Martí, 2016). This research study may provide a framework for the creation of future public health policy development by helping to advocate for individual health/safety issues while reinforcing critical thinking skills in college students using social media networking sites. Policy makers must peruse current policies in determining whether they conform to rising and potentially detrimental

lifestyle trends, which include trusting strangers who could be posing as people other than their true selves. Retrospective research regarding health/safety risks using social media networking remains a significant challenge (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016). The use of various terms (e.g., cyberbullying) to refer to online threats to safety and well-being makes comparing statistics and data difficult and at times inaccurate. Identifying specific gaps in knowledge based on research studies can be difficult. The identification of these gaps defines the online safety issues facing individuals using social media networking on a global level in relation to public health. In this research study, I sought to address a variety of online safety issues perceived by college students, analyze data attained through a questionnaire, identify any existing gaps in technological knowledge, and promote public health policies that focus on specific areas relating to online safety, security, and privacy issues.

Purpose of the Study

Retrospective research has indicated that there are perceived health/safety risks along with critical thinking issues for those using social media networking sites (Finset, 2011). These potential risks can arise from immaturity, lack of digital technology experience, and poor critical thinking skills (Ahn, 2011; Ali, 2015). Perceived health/safety risks emerge daily when individuals are using social media networking and may lead to detrimental effects on an individual's health and well-being. Public health policies are instrumental in overseeing a targeted population's safety and security, with a global population using social media networking (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016). Monitoring individual health, wellness, and safety on a global level helps in preventing detrimental effects from occurring in targeted populations. Empowering individuals with

knowledge aids in the application of critical thinking skills and enables them to solve problems and form competent lifestyle decisions. Reporting and prosecuting predators through a legal justice system will help to keep targeted populations safe and secure (Ali, 2015).

This research study was critical in two specific areas: investigating how college students perceive individual health/safety risks when using social media networking sites and exploring individual critical thinking skills utilized when using social media networking. The self-reported answers to these questions help in advocating for health and safety and addressing the knowledge gap (through public policy initiation) for better individual online health/safety protection and abatement of potential detrimental health/safety risks. Social media usage with advanced technology is always evolving. Technological advancements bring increased threats of individual breaches of privacy and compromised security of personal information; for a targeted population entering these sites, this presents a significant detriment (Farrukh, Sadwick & Villasenor, 2014). To date, the rapid advances and expansion in technology on a global level in social media networking sites have left researchers unable to keep up with changes (Hurley, 2018).

New risks emerge daily in cyberspace that can be detrimental to an individual's health, well-being, and safety. Public health plays a paramount role in assessing and developing policies and assuring those social media sites are monitored and secured to protect individuals' privacy along with their mental and physical safety. The current research gap results from a lack of updated studies pertaining to ongoing health/safety issues that exist when college students connect to social media networking sites (Hurley, 2018; Sabella, Patchin & Hinduja, 2013). The research reviewed revealed limited

comprehension on both research questions posed, which addressed college students' perceptions regarding health/safety risks when using social media networking and whether critical thinking skills are applied when using social media networking sites.

The next chapter presents the research approach and contains an explanation of interpretative phenomenological analysis. The sections are organized based on the research design, the characteristics of the approach, and the way in which the study was conducted.

Research Questions

In this research study, I investigated the following research questions regarding college students who engage in social media networking sites and their perception of health/safety issues encountered while applying critical thinking communication skills.

RQ1: What do college students perceive as potential health/safety risks when engaging in social media networking usage?

RQ2: What are college students' perceptions of critical thinking skills that help them make informed decisions when using social media networking sites?

Conceptual Framework

According to Patton (2002), a qualitative research study is an inexpensive method of conducting research analysis that produces noteworthy observations. The conceptual framework of this study incorporated two theoretical frameworks used to interpret the literature related to the research questions: self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977; Kapnek & Morelli, 2021; Klein & Huff, 2008) and the health belief model (Boskey & Snyder, 2020; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002; Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952).

SET addresses methods that help to empower individuals in making decisions that help them to create a more positive life experience. When assessing health decisions, this theory aids in assisting individuals in diverse populations to set small goals that help enhance their feeling of being auspicious in their health demeanors. The feeling of optimism helps to empower individuals to recognize modes in which they can make minute changes that will enhance their quality of life. This theory, when applied, serves as an intervention to build confidence and self-esteem by abating levels of stress (Bandura, 1977; Kapnek & Morelli, 2021; Klein & Huff, 2008).

The HBM is a conceptual framework that helps in addressing college students' critical thinking skills and assessing whether the techniques applied help individuals make cognitive decisions (Boskey & Snyder, 2020; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002; Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952). The HBM was appropriate for this study because it helps in educating the targeted population (college students) by changing individual perceived health/safety risks and attitudes about social networking site usage and its potential detrimental effects. The HBM was applied to address college students' critical thinking skills and assess whether the techniques applied help individuals make cognitive decisions.

The research data were compiled from the questionnaire answers received from the college students who participated in the study. The modification of personal beliefs and attitudes through education helped college students address their perceived health/safety risks with social networking usage. This aided in the prevention of potential health/safety risks encountered. Investigation of behavioral, environmental, and personal factors helped in determining whether each factor played a role in the individual college

students when using social media networking (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Modification of college students' attitudes helped to improve their health/safety outcomes while serving as a model to a global collegiate population. These models are effective in diverse college populations, multifaceted environments, and high executed behavioral studies in comprehending how the world appears to individual college students using social media networking sites (Ali, 2015). This research investigated how college students interpreted and applied critical thinking skills when using social media networking sites while maintaining their health, well-being, and security.

Nature of the Study

For this qualitative study, I applied tools and measured questionnaire responses (Appendix C) given by the research participants (college students) drawn from the targeted population. I aimed to gather data from a sample of 15–23 diverse individuals. The inclusion factors were college students ages 18 years and up, gender, ethnicity, race, and college major. The interview location was determined by each student; the students were attending a virtual university in a remote learning setting. I used Microsoft Word 365, applying text coding to the compiled data to analyze the number of times that a word or phrase appeared, which assisted in identifying themes (Microsoft Office 365, 2013). All data that were compiled were gathered through the originally composed 14 questions (Appendix C) posed to each college student, along with their recorded observations, if applicable. The questions answered by the college students addressed the following: their individual definition of perceived health/safety risks when using social media and their application of critical thinking skills based on their technical adroitness. The evaluation of the compiled data addressed their individual perceptions of susceptibility, severity,

benefits, barriers, and cues to action and self-worth (Galesic & Garcia-Retamero, 2011). The saturation point was defined as duplicate responses attained, thus defining the study sample size (Creswell, 2009). Informed consents were distributed to a population of 15-23 diverse college students posing questions on their social media networking usage and personal awareness on the effects of possible perceived health/safety risks and critical (communication) thinking skills. This was crucial in obtaining thorough answers from all research participants while observing their facial expressions. I used Microsoft Office 365 Word software to analyze the compiled data results, which were coded into themes and patterns (Microsoft Office 365, 2013). Thematic analysis was utilized by taking the compiled data and identifying the patterns that emerged using Microsoft Office 365 (Word) software (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Operational Definitions

Data collection measurements must be clear and concise when addressing operational definitions. Operational definitions are paramount when assessing all types of data collection in a research study. When reviewing compiled data, it is imperative in deciding what is correct or erroneous. I used the same mode of data collection for all of those who participated in the research study. The protocol defined how research data were compiled and stored. To ensure reliable data collection, detailed operational definitions helped to eradicate any uncertainty that existed (Simon, 2011). Thematic analysis is applied in qualitative clinical studies, in which emphasis is placed on exactly locating, assessing, and recording patterns of data and how they are defined (with no single definition of a theme; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Social media networking: Refers to websites and applications that are designed to allow communications between individuals to share information, photos, and videos in real-time formats on a global level (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Townsend & Wallace, 2016).

Internet (cyberspace): Refers to the virtual computer world, which is the foundation that forms a global computer network that enables online communication and sharing of information through the internet (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Townsend & Wallace, 2016).

Critical thinking: Refers to the process of independently analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information that guides demeanor and beliefs (Kivunjal, 2014; Lusk, 2010).

Internet health/safety risks: Refers to websites and applications on a global level, which can present as a potentially predatory source endangering a person's health (well-being) and physical safety, along with threatening loss of privacy (Townsend & Wallace, 2016; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008).

Themes: Refers to the identification of patterns compiled from the research data collected, which is organized and analyzed based on content through queries. This is accomplished by applying software programs that assess each piece of data collected (QRS International, 2016).

Patterns: Refers to nodes, a repetitive arrangement of compiled data that establishes a basis for comparison, also known as a *prototype* (QRS International, 2016).

Assumptions

Common assumptions should be a part of a qualitative study, ensuring that valid results can occur. All participants must be open and honest and must answer all questions

posed in a candid manner and have experienced the phenomenon under investigation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). All study participants should possess a legitimate interest in the study, without having any gratuities or personal motives present (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Justification of all assumptions must prove as true, and all participants must be given the option to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalization (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). All study participants must be open, honest, and able to answer each interview question with complete truthfulness. Honesty was reinforced throughout the study in each participating individual, that the study sustained altruistic integrity. This targeted population of college students was used to evaluate participants' individual similes (firsthand experiences and perceptions) of health/safety risks in using social media networking sites (Galesic & Garcia-Retamero, 2011).

The purpose of this study was to explore the real-time experiences of college students, assessing their perceived health/safety risks using social media networking and to determine if critical thinking skills were applied. The study was conducted on a remote university campus; as such, the interview location was determined by each participant. The inclusion criteria of the study were based on the assessment of diverse college students (ages 18 and up), gender, their engagement in the use of a social media platform, the health/safety risks that concerned them, the number of hours that they engaged in social media usage, their college major, and the rating of their computer adroitness. The identification of self-reporting behavioral strategies was determined if critical thinking was applied as each college student answered the questionnaire provided. This helped to establish whether individuals were empowered to make cognitive decisions that affected their health/safety while securing their privacy. The information in this study from

college students on their experiences may assist researchers conducting future studies on social media networking.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this study was to explore the real-time experiences of college students, assessing their perceived health/safety risks when using social media networking and determining whether critical thinking skills were applied. The study location was on a virtual university campus, with the interview locations determined by the volunteer participants. The inclusion criteria for the study were based on the assessment of diverse college students (ages 18 and up), assorted areas of study (i.e., majors), race, gender, and ethnicity. The identification of self-reported behavioral strategies was used to determine whether critical thinking was applied as each college student answered the questionnaire provided. This helped to determine whether individuals were empowered to make cognitive decisions that affected their health/safety while securing their privacy. The experiences of the college students participating in this research study may help with future studies on social media networking.

Delimitations are factors that limit the scope of a study and define its margins. Delimitation factors are those within the researcher's control, such as the research questions, the choice of facts, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives adopted by the researcher, and the targeted population evaluated. The purpose statement clearly defines the accomplishments set forth in a study and explicitly explains what the research study does not cover. It is critical to define the potential impact that a research study may have on the reader (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

This analysis was restricted by certain criteria to identify successful strategies. I sought to recruit 15-23 diverse college students who used social media networking. Purposive sampling followed specific criteria to identify college students who were experienced in using social media networking sites. All eligible college students who participated were registered in a college program, had successfully completed a minimum of one semester in a college setting, and had demonstrated proficiency in using internet technology.

The transferability of the findings of this research study relates to the study's potential for inform future investigations of college students using social media networking to sustain health/safety criteria as educational policy and practice on a global level. The comprehension gained from this research may provide awareness as to how college students adapt to the challenges of health/safety issues in social media networking and their extension throughout the United States and on a global level. This study provides insights from college students using social media networking sites by offering direct accounts from diverse students and their perceptions of health/safety issues connected with cyberspace technology.

Limitations

The most significant limitation to this study was the gap in research on the effects of social media networking on college students and their lived experiences in the 21st century (Ali, 2015; Hurley, 2018). Limitations are defined as potential weaknesses present in a research study. Limitations cannot always be controlled (e.g., time). Sample collection (convenience or random) must be explained to maintain the integrity of a study (Simon, 2011; Wargo, 2015). A weak point presented in this research might be untruthful

answers presented by the study participants. All study participants needed to be honest and forthright with their responses to the questions posed.

The principle of saturation involves the point of a study that is defined as when duplicate responses are attained, thus defining the study sample size (Creswell, 2009). This study's principal limitation was the narrow parameters in selecting the college participants. When I reviewed the past literature on social media networking usage in college students, I found that a significant gap was present based on the continuous advancement in digital technology and new social media sites presented (Ekahitanond, 2013). This posed a significant problem in relation to individual breaches of health/safety, security, and privacy issues when using social media networking sites (Ekahitanond, 2013). This research was significant in dealing with social change on a local population level and advocating for public policy development in social media networking safety and security. Future studies could be promoted on a global geographic level based on these findings in promoting cyberspace safety and security. Because the size of the targeted population in this study was small, the findings may not be transferable to a larger sample, but the data compiled could be applied to future research studies. A larger targeted population could assist in transferability, but the data compiled by the minor targeted inclusion population could limit the depth and description of data described (Schein, Wilson & Keelen, 2010).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research study resides in its potential to advance college students' well-being by focusing on their individual health/safety and reinforcing the application of critical thinking skills when engaging in social media networking sites.

Cybersecurity is a global challenge that continues to pose a threat to the safety and security to all individuals who use the internet (Ali, 2015). Social media networking is a business and social tool that helps individuals meet and stay connected with people on a global level. The results of social media networking research advance educational technology by assessing and providing college students' own perceptions and insights regarding their individual health and safety risks (Hurley, 2018). Stakeholders can assess, develop, and implement interventions in public health that will add to safety and security for all individuals entering social media sites. This study provides crucial information based on individual lived experiences with social media networking applications (Hurley, 2018). Research evidence has demonstrated that well-educated, informed individuals are empowered to make lifestyle choices that help to protect their individual well-being (health/safety) (Schein, Wilson & Keelen, 2010; Schurgin O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). This establishes and reinforces individual critical skills by applying problem-solving techniques, which aids in empowering daily lifestyle choices. Privacy issues (e.g., computer security settings) must be monitored closely by all individuals involved in social media networking activity. Individuals lacking internet technological knowledge have an increased risk of adopting perilous and aberrant demeanors (sexting, cyberbullying, and privacy issues) (Finset, 2011). Family communication is of paramount importance between parents and college students (Finset, 2011). Critical thinking is an applied skill used to influence, build trust, and empower individuals. Critical thinking is associated with problem solving, which assists in making competent lifestyle decisions (Finset, 2011). Risk perception with applied critical thinking is vital in keeping a targeted population safe and healthy (Finset, 2011). Barriers encountered could be due to

computer illiteracy, fear, denial, low self-esteem, and poor family communication patterns when engaging in social media usage (Finset, 2011).

This preliminary work has implications for social change in that it may be helpful in advocating globally for college students in the development of public policies for safe and secure social media networking usage. This may assist in the prevention of health/safety risks while empowering students' cognitive reasoning skills, which may be sustained throughout their mature adult lives. Comprehending barriers that exist with social media networking assists in creating social change by providing college students' individual reported auspicious approaches used to diminish threats to individuals' health, safety, and security by unknown predators (Hurley, 2018). Future programs created by stakeholders empowering individuals to apply critical thinking in perceived health/safety risks while utilizing social media networking could be assessable on a global level.

Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 contained information that may help in comprehending how each individual college student associates perceived health/safety risks when using social media networking sites. This study assessed college students' critical thinking skills and their application in forming cognitive decisions regarding their well-being/safety when using social media networking sites in their daily lives. Social media networking provides global access to all individuals (for business or personal use) who want to meet and communicate with others expediently. Without this form of technology, relationships would be difficult to manage. College students were asked about the barriers and challenges that they faced when using social media networking through the survey questions and interviews in this study.

Chapter 2 provides an amalgamation of past and current research on social media networking usage in college students from the past 10 years and beyond. The literature search strategies provide a basis for reproducing this study in various settings. All material used (scholarly articles, books, journals, and periodicals) were reviewed and arranged according to the research questions developed. The two conceptual foundations applied to this study were the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977; Kapnek & Morelli, 2021; Klein & Huff, 2008) and the health belief model (Boskey & Snyder, 2020; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002; Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952) which address how individuals adopt demeanors that modify personal beliefs that empower them to make better lifestyle choices by creating positive lifetime experiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In recent years, a trend has developed with the popular and increasing usage of social media networking at a global level, especially among college students. Social media networking brings individuals together on a global level to communicate in real time both personally and professionally. The disadvantage of this form of communication is that individuals must be aware of health/safety issues and losses of privacy and security upon entering these sites. Critical thinking must be applied to safeguard an individual's health, safety, and privacy. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the perceived health/safety risks for college students who use social media networking and to determine whether individuals apply critical thinking skills when utilizing social media networking sites. These potential risks can evolve from immaturity, lack of experience with digital technology, and underdeveloped application of critical thinking skills (Ahn, 2011; Ali, 2015). Perceived health/safety risks emerge daily when individuals are using social media networking and could lead to detrimental effects on individuals' mental and/or physical health and well-being.

This literature review highlights past research studies and the effect that social media networking usage has on college students, affecting their health/safety risks (addiction, anxiety, depression, sexting, social isolation, sleep deprivation, abated self-esteem, loss of privacy, compromised physical safety, and exposure to ruthless or aggressive individuals) and critical thinking skills that could abate these dangers. The literature gaps addressed by this study involve growing health/safety and security concerns related to the targeted population, college students.

As Boyd and Ellison (2007) explained, Use Net, initiated in 1979, introduced communication via a newsletter. During the 1980s, home computers started to gain popularity, and Internet Relay Chats (IRCs) were developed and continued into the 1990s. The first social media networking site, introduced in 1997, was Six Degrees. This site provided individuals the capability of uploading their biographies while sharing their personal information with others. The birth of the first blogging site in 1999 introduced a popular social media phenomenon that exists today. The commencement of YouTube (2005) introduced viral communication to a large global population in an expedient manner. This led to the dissemination of personal information based on health, political, religious, recreational, and social issues on a global level.

The literature reviewed examined the past 10 years to provide foundational background and present the most up-to-date information available. This research study was based on the continuously changing nature of social media networking technology and the perils faced by individuals when they enter these sites and can be subject to predators. A population's well-being and personal security could be impacted when predators target individuals on social media networking sites with the intent to harm them (Ali, 2015). Public health practitioners must be active in assessing this dilemma and developing policies that protect this targeted population from these potential offenders.

Literature Search Strategy

The search engines utilized for this literature review included Google Scholar, accessed through Walden University. Additionally, I used Walden's library databases, including ProQuest and SAGE Premier, to access peer-reviewed articles from sources such as the following: American College of Pediatrics, *Journal of Computer-Mediated*

Communication, Health Communication, Political Communication, Elsevier Science Direct, *Patient Education and Counseling, Archives of Suicide Research, JMIR Mental Health, New Media and Society, Planning Health Promotion Programs: An Intervention Mapping Approach, Prevention Researcher, Pediatrics*, and Atomic Dog Publishing. The following literature search terms used were to locate relevant materials: *social media networking, college students, perceived health and safety risks, critical thinking, communication, and internet: cyberspace.*

Cyberspace, where social media networking sites are located, can be intriguing, inviting, and perilous at times. All users must comprehend the potential risks involved when entering social media networking sites and must apply critical thinking (problem solving to ensure competent decision formulation) when making lifestyle decisions that can compromise their health/safety and personal privacy (Ali, 2015). This literature search assisted in establishing a substantial foundation for this dissertation investigation. The literature established a comprehensive knowledge base that connected back to social media networking usage and helped in determining whether the individuals (college students) studied applied critical thinking skills.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2015) explored deprivation of adequate sleep time as a major risk factor for abundant social media usage. This study explored the effects of sleep deprivation when individuals do not obtain a substantial amount of sleep (6–8 hours per night) due to excessive social media usage and abated cognitive reasoning. The CDC analyzed data to determine the prevalence of healthy sleep duration (≥ 7 hours) among 444,306 adult respondents in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Among respondents, 65.2% reported a healthy sleep duration;

the age-adjusted prevalence of healthy sleep was lower among non-Hispanic Black people, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, and multiracial respondents, compared with non-Hispanic Whites, Hispanics, and Asians. State-based estimates of healthy sleep duration prevalence ranged from 56.1% in Hawaii to 71.6% in South Dakota.

The CDC (2015) concluded that geographic clustering of the lowest prevalence of healthy sleep duration was observed in the southeastern United States and in states along the Appalachian Mountains, and the highest prevalence was observed in the Great Plains states. More than one third of U.S. respondents reported typically sleeping less than 7 hours during a 24-hour period, resulting in a weakened immune system (more illnesses arising) and abated cognitive reasoning.

Finset's (2011) study on risk perception and risk communication demonstrated a theoretical rationale for improving individual-centered communication on perceived health and safety risks through the implementation of a communication skills training program in addressing potential health risks. This prospective study investigated how individuals responded to verbal or nonverbal communication during encounters. Sixty-two students (43 females and 19 males) composed the study population. Individuals assessed their own general self-efficacy in communication training. Observers trained, scored videos, and applied a well-validated instrument to rate communication demeanor. Using a two-evaluation method, participants were analyzed at two time points. Males presented with higher self-efficacy than females. Due to gender differences, males and females need to be studied separately.

Finset (2011) concluded that a lack of positive correlations between self-efficacy assessment and expert ratings points to limitations in the application of self-assessment measures of communication skills. Individual strength and weaknesses must be determined to build critical thinking skills and contribute to cognitive reasoning.

Hinduja and Patchin (2010) assessed the effects of bullying, cyberbullying, and suicide in relation to social media networking sites. Bullies felt that they could get away with this form of harassment and evade any negative outcomes due to their feeling of anonymity. This random investigation assessed 1,963 middle-school students from one of the largest school districts in the United States. Student participants answered survey questions on their personal Internet use and experiences. Participants who experienced traditional bullying or cyberbullying (as offenders or victims) presented with increased suicidal thoughts and were more prone to attempt suicide than those individuals who had not experienced episodes of peer aggression. Victimization was strongly related to suicidal thoughts and demeanors rather than offending. A limitation of this study was that the data were compiled over time, such that it was difficult to conclude that being bullied led an individual to have suicidal thoughts. Future studies must incorporate multiple time points to determine chronological provisions.

Hinduja and Patchin (2010) created a theoretical foundation by comparing both traditional bullying and cyberbullying as major factors playing a role in suicidal risks among adolescents. These results provided additional evidence that adolescent peer aggression is a serious consequence and suggested that suicide prevention and intervention components are paramount in bullying response programs when taught and implemented in school settings. Critical thinking (communication) skills must be

incorporated in preventing online harassment in this targeted college population. An initiative approach in obtaining knowledge and strategies for developing critical thinking is imperative in building and sustaining lifetime communication (Finset, 2011). Critical thinking that leads to cognitive reasoning decisions could help prevent college students from being physically and/or mentally harmed using social media networking sites (Yuan, Kunayiktikul & Williams, 2008).

A Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF, 2010) study examined daily media use among children and teens, which had increased dramatically from 5 years before. The research followed an increase in social media usage by adolescents and teens due to social media accessibility based on their computer literacy skills. Two data sets were analyzed based on ethnicity and race. The KFF 2010 Family Foundation Generation M2 survey addressed social media use by individuals 8 to 18 years old. This study showed that in this age group, more time was spent using various social media networking sites on a daily basis. Minority youths have been quick to adopt new social media usage in their daily activities of life. This social media networking exposure has a direct impact on how individuals take the information accessed, how they learn, the individuals and ideas they connect to, and the creativity that they form. Media usage varies based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

The KFF (2010) study indicated that as social media networking usage sites continue to grow and become more prominent in the lives of college students, they have both negative and positive outcomes in individual interactions and targets. This study took ANOVA results and presented the power of race, family structure, and parent education in the prediction of social media usage. The controlling of these three variables

presented that race predicted media exposure more than family structure and parent education.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) provided a perspective on the historical roots and future evolution of social media. This study evaluated practical insights on individual use in the rapid area of social media application. On a global level, the expedient use of social media networking sites has become a daily aspect of college students' lives. The social media networking explosion is the internet going back to its foundational roots.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) concluded that social media networking usage helps facilitate information on various levels: business, educational, and personal. Social media networking sites implemented by corporations and individuals reveal their ideas and products to a global audience. Virtual and real-time experiences bring reality on a global level into areas of tranquility and/or turmoil. Social media experiences can be awe-inspiring or precarious. Critical thinking skills must apply to all who interact on social media networking sites.

Campbell and Park (2014) evaluated how and why minor teens sent sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images via text messaging, also known as *sexting*. This study formed a framework for the interpretation of sexting in this targeted population, trying to explain this behavior, informed decisions made on an individual basis, and how to address this issue. Mobile communications in the social emancipation of this targeted population were developed and evaluated by applying a national survey of teenagers in the United States.

Campbell and Park (2014) hypothesized that sexting was associated with family and peer connectivity using mobile devices as well as parental supervision in some

instances. Sexting was linked as positive when connected to peers through mobile devices and negative with connectivity to family members. As per Brown and Larson (2009), peers had more influence on social media networking connectivity than parents did on individuals' attitudes and activities. Greater independence with internet usage offers more privacy and control over college students' lives due to their social consecutiveness.

Wilson and Keelen (2010) reviewed the effectiveness of the use of social media networking. Their study presented how social media networking sites promoted health-related issues via You Tube, Twitter, Facebook, and video gaming. This study involved original research, case study reviews, and commentaries that dealt with public health communication. Additional information was compiled and extracted from online sources dealing with public health campaigns (interviews, podcasts, PowerPoint presentations, and public health websites; CDC, World Health Organization [WHO], and American Public Health Association [APHA]). Systematic literature searches were compiled based on multiple databases composed of diverse areas (medicine, public health, psychology, business/marketing, and related social media). Search results ($n = 551$) placed into Endnote software and a primary database were evaluated. The final set ($n = 39$) of articles analyzed were placed into the following categories: article type, research methodology and major themes. Brief descriptions drafted were in the categories created, and new (snowball) references were cited that were relevant to this study. Snowball references compiled followed the same protocol found in the previous database searches. Reviewed papers rated from low to high as the ranked in the core objective. Of the thirty-nine articles reviewed, seventeen were rated as highly relevant, fourteen were of medium

relevance, and eight were of low relevance. The mainstream platforms examined were YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, while other studies applied custom interfaces using social media capabilities. A consistent finding that surfaced was an abundance of both informal health discussions related to public health issues and planned health-related actions found on prominent social media platforms (YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook). The quality of information secured from these platforms was variable, which led researchers to believe that individuals on social media sites are exposed to viewpoints that can contradict core public health recommendations and contemporary science, such as opposition to immunizations in children and campaigns that promote smoking. A chief finding of this research was the lack of peer-reviewed studies that assessed social media communication interventions for desired outcomes (increasing awareness of health topics, alterations in public health proficiencies, or adoption of desired behavioral outcomes). In controlled research studies where an evaluative component was applied, the results were confounded often, due to failure in isolating the intervention from other communication strategies.

Wilson and Keelen (2010) found that social media tactics can have a positive impact on public health campaigns that increase public health awareness, increase knowledge and skill, and help to alter demeanors. Behavioral change studies have demonstrated the important link of social media connections in supporting behavioral change. Internet intervention studies have shown that online networking creates and supports social connections and assists individual activation and empowerment through direct participation in managing personal health issues. There is no proof of principle to date showing that health-focused social media communication and information exchange

have a significant impact on relevant public health behavior. Future studies are warranted to provide evidence-based theories that support this statement.

Vandelanotte et al., (2014) evaluated whether freely accessible websites delivering physical activity interventions used evidence-based behavior change techniques and provided social media applications. Systematic searches of 750 websites were conducted. Data were extracted by applying the following variables: self-monitoring, goal setting, and social media applications. Forty-six public websites were selected for this study. Study participants' generated content (73.9%), social media components (Facebook—65.2%, Twitter—47.8%, and YouTube—48.7%), and smartphone applications (34.8%) were high, considering their innovative and untested nature. The websites applied behavioral and social media applications.

Vandelanotte et al, (2014) concluded that despite large developments in Internet technology and growth in the knowledge of how to develop more effective web-based interventions, overall website quality was low, and freely available physical activity websites lacked the components associated with behavior change. The results demonstrated that it is possible to improve a website's quality by taking several simple steps. The most important is the addition of social media applications located within the website.

A study executed by Seabrook, Kern & Rickard, (2016) provided a systematic review of how the use of social media networking sites increased depression and anxiety in individuals. Mixed reactions were prominent in this study. Positive interactions using social media networking sites provided social support and social connectedness, which related to lower levels of depression and anxiety, while negative interactions and social

comparisons related to higher levels of depression and anxiety. Seabrook, Kearn & Rickard (2016) assessed the positive effects social media networking sites on individual mental health.

The Impact of social media on Children, Adolescents and Families by Schurgin O'Keefe & Clarke-Pearson (2011) assessed the impact of social media usage and the influence that it created in health awareness. This study evaluated a systematic review to determine: 1) for what purposes social media used in child health and its effectiveness; and 2) the attributes of social media tools that may explain how they are or are not effective in health awareness. The methodology was based on analytical studies that perused primary quantitative research in students that evaluated social media tools were assessed. Data compiled from Medline, CENTRAL, ERIC, Pub Med, CINAHL, Academic Search Complete, Alt Health Watch, Health Source, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Web of Knowledge, and ProQuest Dissertation databases. The results identified twenty-five studies related to youth health. Sixty-four percent adolescents were targeted, 52% social media for health promotion was assessed and 68% was composed of health forums. Sixty-four percent of social media sites were viewed as an intervention of interconnected components. The objective of social media interactivity is the ability to communicate between peers and adolescents. Several authors drew positive conclusions in the social media site being evaluated (80%), although there is little evidence to support this argument based upon improved outcomes.

Conclusion of the (Schurgin O'Keefe & Clarke-Pearson) study: Social media networking usage could be used for a wide variety of purposes in the assessment of adolescent's health conditions. This study provided a baseline for clinicians and

researchers to develop identification tools and recounted how they were applied, and how the separations of components were effective in the studies analysis.

As per the Warner (2011) investigation, this study examined sleep deprivation in teens and the consequences of abated concentration and thought processes that led to perilous demeanor causing bodily injury or death. Increased depression in adolescents can present a higher risk in abated growth and development which can lead to additional problems in adulthood. Early depressed states that develop can reoccur or continue in adulthood which may cause psychosocial struggles, along with turmoil in interpersonal relationships, abated educational achievements, and abated professional performance and unemployment, and an increased peril for suicidal demeanor. Juvenile depression carried into adulthood can lead to an economic and psychosocial burden to society. A paramount public health factor is identifying individuals who have the highest risk for this condition. The role sleep plays in an individual are complex. The mechanisms for regulation for normal cognitive, physical, and psychological purposes during adolescents, management of sleep disorders related to demeanor and psychopathological conditions in young adults can be used as an approach for abating the risk of depression and a means of prevention during this period of development.

Conclusion of the (Werner) study: Adolescence is a superlative period during the growth and development phase. Hormonal, somatic and demeanor differences which are comparable to alterations in sleep physiology, structural design and regulatory mechanisms play a paramount role in normal performance during adolescents. An augmented focus to both sleep alterations and pathological conditions in adolescence by

parents, medical doctors, psychiatrists, and sleep researchers are critical to monitor. This can lead to poor academic achievement and abated psychological well-being.

According to the study done by Ybarra & Mitchell (2008), research compared online sites where youth sexual solicitation and harassment occurred. It examined the danger of unsafe social media sites where prostitution and nudity took place with individual's pictures posted. The social media networking sites entered some parents were unaware what these potentially detrimental sites harbored. No data compiled compared relative rates of distress caused in individuals who were bullied on- line versus offline using social media networking sites.

As per the Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008 study; online bullying has a unique potential of protecting the bullies from being identified through anonymity. The assumption that all victims are cognizant of their offline perpetrators cannot be validated with the data compiled in this study. Low reporting of unwanted sexual experiences both on and offline was documented. This study reported overlaps in persecution for harassment and unwanted sexual experiences online but could not report the relative rates of unwanted sexual experiences online and offline. No other studies through research literature review have reported these relative rates of online and offline unwanted sexual solicitation in this targeted population of adolescents and young adults (college students). To address this gap, further studies must be conducted implementing a national survey for public policy initiatives using school based and other community-based interventions used to compile data to support these relative rates in this targeted youth population. The origin of bullying and sexual harassment (distinct environments) must be determined: establishment of whether it is on- line social media networking

sites, cell phones or in person (face to face). Future studies executed must determine if the convergence of these specific environments (where and when) can be applied to compare rates of prevalent bullying in this targeted population and where they live. The creation and implementation of public financed policy prevention programs addressing offline and online bullying and or sexual harassment, is supreme in the 21st century within the early years in the school environment. Schools are important in instituting curriculum that addresses cyber aggression and harassment issues to all youth. The challenge to future research studies is the determination of when the measurement of technology is a significant factor to assess and include. Distress, initiated, must be evaluated on an individual bases comparing rates based on age, educational levels and based on the environment received (online or face to face). Sexual harassment was noted not to be a common adolescent demeanor in this study. The data provided in this study did not support a premise that social media networking sites are more detrimental environment for youths and that online victimization confrontations are more stressful to individuals.

Conceptual Framework

A qualitative research study is a method of conducting research analysis producing noteworthy observations (Patton, 2002). A phenomenological study applied to this research provided a better comprehension of the study participants (college students) perceptions. This was established through their live experiences encountered with social media networking. This is paramount in analyzing the college student's interpretations of their experiences and not the researcher elucidation of their experience (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology identifies strategies and develops auspicious demeanors that help

in comprehending the perceived experiences of the study participants. The conceptual framework of this study applied two theoretical frameworks used to interpret the literature related to the research questions: The Self-Efficacy Theory (SET) peruses methods that help to empower individuals in making decisions that help them to create a more positive life experience. When assessing health decisions this theory aides in assisting individuals in diverse populations to set small goals that help enhance their feeling of being auspicious in their health demeanors. The feeling of optimism helps to empower individuals to recognize modes in which they can make minute changes that will enhance their quality of life. This theory applied serves as an intervention to build confidence and self-esteem by abating levels of stress (Bandura, 1977; Klein & Huff, 2008). The health belief model (HBM) is a conceptual framework which helps address college student's critical thinking skills and assess if the techniques applied help individuals make cognitive decisions (Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002). The HBM is appropriate because it helps to educate the targeted population (college students) by changing Individual perceived health/safety risks and demeanors about social networking site usage and its potential detrimental effects. The HBM helped address college student's critical thinking skills and assess if the techniques applied help individuals make cognitive decisions. Data was compiled by the questionnaire answers received from the college students who participated in the study. The modification of personal beliefs and demeanors through education helped college students address their perceived health/safety risks with social networking usage. This assisted in the prevention of potential health/safety risks encountered. Investigation of behavioral, environmental, and personal factors determined if this factor played a role in

the individual college students when using social media networking (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Modification of college student's demeanors benefit in improving their own health/safety outcomes while serving as a model to a global collegiate population. Past studies have presented that applying SET and HBM frameworks assisted in modifying individual's demeanors that cognitive reasoning be implemented in making health and safety decisions (Ekahitanond, 2013).

These models are effective in diverse college populations, multifaceted environments, and high executed behavioral studies in comprehending how the world appears to individual college students using social media networking sites. This research investigated how college students interpret and apply critical thinking skills when using social media networking sites while maintaining their health/well-being and safeguard their personal privacy. The implications for social change, from this preliminary work, helped to advocate for college students on a global level, by developing public policies for social media networking sites and aiding in the prevention of health/safety risks while empowering student's cognitive reasoning skills that benefited in their mature adult lives.

Gaps in the Literature

There is a limited comprehension in college students perceived health/safety risks when using social media networking based on the review of the current literature. Applied critical thinking skills were limited in this targeted population based on past reviewed research. Social media networking is a popular tool used on a global level for the main purpose of staying connected to family, friends, and professional colleagues. To date there is limited evidence-based information that examines the live experiences of college students and their perceptions on health/safety risks when using social media

networking sites and if individuals are applying critical thinking (problem solving and competent informed decision choices) when communicating while engaging in social media networking.

Chapter 2 provided a summary of all past and present literature research pertaining to social media networking in college students and the risks to health/safety. The literature search approach applied provided future repetition of this study in other frameworks. Articles organized were based on the research questions and their significance to social media networking. Chapter 3 explains the research approach chosen. The sections organized were based on the research design, the characteristics of the approach, and the way in which the study was conducted.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Methodology

Chapter 3 provides information on the methodology applied in this research study. This chapter addresses the research design and rationale (research questions, central occurrences, research procedure, selection of study participants, instrumentation applied in the study, recruitment protocol for study participants, and concerns of trustworthiness). My role as the researcher is defined within the framework of data collection, along with the assessment of any biases or ethical considerations. In the methodology segment, I describe the selection of the targeted study population (college students) and how the compiled data were analyzed. I also address the reproducibility and transparency of the research study. Issues of trustworthiness are covered by addressing conformability, credibility, dependability, ethics, and transferability. A summary of the chapter is provided at the end.

Comprehending the targeted college population's responses to the health/safety issues encountered when using social media networking sites is paramount in emergent interactions. The sharing of information is significant in ensuring unbiased health/safety measures while partaking in diverse social media networking. The knowledge presented in this research study may enable stakeholders to develop policies and practices that aid in safe and secure social media networking for college students while promoting privacy despite global demography, individual education backgrounds, or socioeconomic status.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions developed for this study were based on my observations as a certified school nurse and health teacher. The literature search presented a better

comprehension of college students who use social media networking sites and their perceptions of health/safety risks that might be encountered. The research study addressed the following two questions concerning college students who engage in social media networking sites and their perception of health/safety issues encountered while applying critical thinking skills when using social media networking:

RQ1: What do college students perceive as potential health/safety risks when engaging in social media networking usage?

RQ2: What are college students' perceptions of critical thinking skills that help them make informed decisions when using social media networking sites?

The perceptions and live experiences of the targeted population (college students) were paramount in assessing their comprehension of potential health/safety risks encountered while using social media networking sites and whether these individuals applied critical thinking skills in making informed lifestyle decisions. As the researcher, I was able to interpret the college students' perceptions and form strategies that helped in educating these individuals in a way that promoted knowledge and critical thinking to make informed lifestyle choices that would secure their health, safety, and privacy.

A phenomenological study design was applied to this research to provide a better comprehension of the study participants' (college students') perceptions. This established their lived experiences when using social media networking. This was of paramount importance in analyzing the college students' interpretations of their experiences and not my elucidation of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology identifies strategies and develops auspicious demeanors that help in comprehending the perceived experiences of study participants.

Two theoretical frameworks used to interpret the literature related to the research questions: SET (Bandura, 1977; Klein & Huff, 2008) and the HBM (Boskey & Snyder, 2020; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002; Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952).

SET addresses methods that help to empower individuals in making decisions that help them create a more positive life experience. In relation to health decisions, this theory may be applied to assist individuals in diverse populations to set small goals that help enhance their feeling of being auspicious in their health demeanors. The feeling of optimism helps to empower individuals to recognize modes in which they can make minute changes that enhance their quality of life. This theory has been applied in interventions to build confidence and self-esteem by abating levels of stress (Bandura, 1977; Klein & Huff, 2008; Shaw et al., 2021).

The HBM is a conceptual framework that helps in addressing college students' critical thinking skills and assess whether techniques help individuals make cognitive decisions (Boskey & Snyder, 2020; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002; Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952).

The HBM was appropriate because it helped in educating the targeted population (college students) by changing individual perceived health/safety risks and demeanors about social networking site usage and its potential detrimental effects. The HBM was useful in addressing college students' critical thinking skills and assessing whether the techniques applied helped individuals make cognitive decisions. SET involves methods that empower individuals in making decisions that help create a more positive life experience (Shaw, Kapnek, & Morelli, 2021).

A qualitative study provides a lens for observing the lived experiences of a targeted population (in this case, college students) and identifying the core meaning of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Purposeful sampling of twenty-three college students was the method applied for data collection. Themes and patterns were analyzed and coded to reflect perceptions of their experiences using the Microsoft Office 365 Word software (Microsoft Office 365, 2013). Microsoft Office 365 Word arranges, stores, and retrieves data proficiently while backing up results with corroboration (Microsoft Office 365, 2013). All data are stored at a secured site where privacy is monitored.

Role of the Researcher

As the chief researcher/investigator of this clinical study, I had the main objective of interviewing all study participants by procuring their responses to the research questions, their experiences of social media networking, and their perceptions of the health and safety risks encountered. Follow-up questions assessed whether critical thinking applications were applied by each college student in making cognitive lifestyle decisions. I procured a letter of cooperation in the initial phase of the study from each college student enrolled in and attending college. The next step occurred when I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to selecting the research study participants (college students). The IRB approval number (06-16-20—0163181) has been duly recorded for this study. The study participants (college students) were invited to enroll in the study as the targeted population, and a signed consent form was obtained from each willing individual (Appendix A) once the scope of the study was explained and comprehended by the individual. Once the location was determined for the study via a

remote college campus setting, the survey questions and narrative data were collected and compiled from each college student based on their individual perspective using social media networking. Interviews were based on a relaxed time schedule so that each study participant was at ease and able to elucidate their thought processes (Smith et al., 2009).

To establish a bona fide research study, each participant was relaxed and approached the study in a casual manner, alleviating any apprehension that existed. Providing the survey questions in advance to each participant helped make them feel at ease and assisted them in reflecting on their experiences and perceptions about using social media networking (Patton, 2002). An open rapport was established with each college student to reflect their experiences using social media networking and comprehend their perceptions on potential health/safety risks (Patton, 2002; Van Manen, 1990).

This research study addressed the following two questions pertaining to college students who engaged in social media networking sites and their perception of health/safety issues encountered while applying critical thinking skills when using social media networking:

- RQ1: What do college students perceive as potential health/safety risks when engaging in social media networking usage?
- RQ2: What are college students' perceptions of critical thinking skills that help them make informed decisions when using social media networking sites?

Participant Selection Logic

College students aged 18 and older enrolled in a college program were chosen to participate in this research study. Defining the true definition of phenomenon, as per Van

Manen (1990), an individual who had experienced an event was recruited for the study, was interviewed, and allowed the subject of the study to be presented. All participants (diverse college students) chosen met the study's predefined inclusion criteria: ages 18 and over, diverse areas of major college study, race, gender, and ethnicity. As per Moustakas (1994), the implementation of predefined criteria in selecting study participants ensures their individual confidence by protecting their participation in the research study. All participants who were chosen volunteered of their own free will, without any incentives promised or any compromise of their livelihoods. All study participants interviewed agreed to a remote location determined in their college campus setting. To ensure the authenticity of the compiled research survey data, a phone number or email address was obtained to verify or ask any subsequent questions of each study participant (Patton, 2002).

All chosen study participants experienced social media networking connectivity. An analysis of sample sizes ranging from five to 23 participants were recruited in establishing a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2007). I, as the researcher, set study boundaries to establish study participants' knowledge and uniformity as well as applying the conceptual frameworks (SET and HBM) for the research topic. A sample population size of 15- 23 diverse college students was recruited to procure a saturation point reached (duplicate responses). This helped to determine the study sample size (Creswell, 2009). Sampling helped in identifying the college students in the study who had experienced the circumstances applicable to the research.

All compiled data were analyzed, based on each research participant's responses establishing the depth, quality, and homogeneity of the study information (Creswell, 2007).

Instrumentation

The instrument was defined as the researcher overseeing this qualitative research study. The primary source of data collection was the research study questions answered along with follow-up questions based on each college student's responses (Appendix C). Each participant interview was planned for between 30 and 60 minutes (longer if needed) to establish a rapport in relationship to the study. Ample time was given to each study participant in answering the study questions and follow-up inquiries (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The study questions were developed and implemented based on my prior experience as a school nurse educator (high school–collegiate level) and reflections of my social media networking experience. Semi structured interviews gave more flexibility to me as the researcher and helped to uncover broader data, which helped to develop a rapport with the study participants. Validating the study was comprised by establishing face validity. This was developed by having an expert peruse the questionnaire and comprehend the questions. The study questions were effective in examining the topics researched, and the questionnaire was assessed for common errors (confusing or leading questions). Pilot testing of the research questions with a subset of the targeted population (five college students) was implemented. The analysis helped to determine what questions were relevant to the study. Post collection, the data examined negatively phrased questions, and the responses were comparable to those for positively phrased questions. If the responses given were not consistent, then those responses were removed.

Interpersonal viewpoints were investigated by applying qualitative studies that helped to uncover personal events or issues that were not anticipated by the research investigator (Creswell, 2009). The aim of this research study was to have the research questions answered by the targeted participants in a truthful and nonbiased manner. The interview process was formatted to provide the research participants adequate time to peruse and answer the research study questions and, if needed, expand upon the explanations given when requested by the interviewer (Smith et al., 2009).

The questions addressed by the college students via the research study were based on the following: their individual definition of perceived health/safety risks when using social media and their application of critical thinking skills empowering them to solve problems, which could lead to formulating competent lifestyle decisions. The evaluation of the compiled data assessed their individual perception on susceptibility, severity, benefits, barriers, and cues to action and self-worth (Galesic & Garcia-Retamero, 2011).

This study was based on in-depth interviews with college students answering an original 14-item questionnaire. The questions addressed by the college students pertained to the following: their individual definition of perceived health/safety risks when using social media and their application of critical thinking skills based on their technical adroitness. The evaluation of the compiled data involved their individual perceptions of susceptibility, severity, benefits, barriers, and cues to action and self-worth (Galesic & Garcia-Retamero, 2011). Theme analysis was applied to this research study, which involved pinpointing, perusing, and collecting patterns and/or themes from the data compiled from the survey questions posed to the individual college students. Themes are

patterns across data sets that are crucial to the description of an event and are clearly related to the research question (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

This study was critical in two specific areas: investigating how college students perceive individual health/safety risks when using social media networking and exploring critical thinking skills if applied when using social media networking. The answers to the research questions may help in advocating for better individual online health/safety and abatement of potentially detrimental health/safety risks.

The data collected from this research study have been secured at a determined site where privacy is monitored. The posed questions addressed by the college students were based on the following: their individual definition of perceived health/safety risks when using social media and their application of critical thinking skills based on their technical adroitness. The evaluation of the compiled data assessed their individual perceptions on susceptibility, severity, benefits, barriers, and cues to action and self-worth (Galesic & Garcia-Retamero, 2011).

Upon conclusion of the survey interview, each college student was graciously thanked for their time and commitment to this research study. All participants were reminded that they had the right to withdraw from participating in this study at any time that they so desired to. A follow-up interview was arranged if the research participant requested to reflect or add to any information related to the survey answers given (Smith et al., 2009). Contact information was noted and distributed to each research participant, including contact details for me (Denise Makri-Werzen), the researcher; my dissertation program chair, Dr. Chester Jones; and the IRB contact at Walden University.

Data Analysis Plan

I was the instrument as the researcher overseeing the qualitative research study. The proposed analysis was based on the compiled data placed into Microsoft Word 365 via the software coding program. This software program analyzed the number of times that a word or phrase appeared and identified themes and/or patterns. To ensure validity, member checking was done at the end of each interview through notes recorded asking about the individual responses given. This ensured the validation of the qualitative research study being performed.

The compiled data were transcribed and coded from the responses obtained from the original 14-item questionnaire, along with facial observations (when applicable) from the targeted population (college students). To aid in the coding of the data, verbatim recordings from the research participants helped me in interpreting their perspectives on social media networking (Smith et al., 2009). For theme messages, the raw data coding took place as the transcripts were read. To comprehend common attributes (shared participant experiences), the following protocol was initiated using the compiled data: perusing initial notes, observing and recording emergent themes, observing and monitoring connectivity of themes presented, and moving to the next occurrence (Smith et al., 2009).

To ensure validity, member checking was completed at the end of each interview through notes recorded and asked in the questionnaire. Compiled data were coded. This served as another form of validation through double checking of the individual responses given to the survey questions.

Emails were sent out to the individuals who were part of the targeted population, the same day they responded to the survey questionnaire, compiled data was coded, and served as another form of validation through double checking of the data.

A pilot study was comprised of (5 college students) conducted and applied (on a small - scale study), this was implemented to evaluate the study design of the original fourteen study questions for this qualitative study. This defined the survey questions, so the study participants fully comprehended the questions they answered.

Microsoft Word 365 was utilized in this research study which functioned to monitor, code, and track the data (QRS International, 2016). Microsoft Word 365 was applied to store and code the research participants (college students) survey responses (Microsoft Office 365, 2013). Storing data in a central and secure locale helped in the retrieval of the compiled data if a review or audit was warranted by individuals involved in the study. Microsoft Word 365 supports the analyzing process that codes multiple classifications creating a data model. Upon coding the data, participants examined their responses to guarantee trustworthiness. To ensure complete confidentiality all information was removed to protect the anonymity of the college students who participated in the research study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this qualitative study the following elements were defined: credibility, transferability, and dependability, confirm ability and ethical procedures.

Credibility: Data compiled was based on an abounding description of each college student lived experiences, using social media networking which provided Internal

validity of the study (Maxwell, 2005). Triangulation of the compiled data, with the college student's individual response validation, helped assured the validity and clarity of the researcher's interpretation of the study results. College students were able to share their individual emotions, thoughts, and interpretations by using diverse data sources based on survey questions, oral and written responses, in person and phone interviews. Triangulation was based on multiple individual assessments completed at separate times, individual personal narratives and multiple observations noted by different research participants (Maxwell, 2005).

Transferability: Transferability in qualitative research studies is tantamount with generalizability and recognized by providing all individuals perusing the research study with verification that the findings could be applied to other contexts, populations, circumstances, and periods (Hellstrom, 2008). The researcher's role provided substantiation that the findings could be applicable in future studies (Hellstrom, 2008). To connect emerging themes based on a meaningful manner in a research study, contextualization of similar themes within the same interview was analyzed (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenological analysis is defined as the rich description described by each research participant when experiencing lived life moments (Smith et al., 2009). Promotion of transferability was accomplished by taking inconsistent data descriptions and assessing it so a profound understanding of the data can be interpreted.

Dependability: All compiled data recordings were transcribed word for word in addition to applying triangulation procedures (Smith et al., 2009). To sustain transparency and future research study replication, all data was documented for the time

and means of how it was collected. All compiled data was securely coded, managed, and stored so the integrity of the data would be sustained.

Confirmability: All qualitative studies established were confirmed by basing the results of the research study on its context and not on the researcher's biases

Ethical Procedures: Contact with the Walden University Participation Pool (WUPP) was chosen to procure the targeted population of college students for this study. Letters of cooperation were distributed to the research study candidates (college students) to obtain their consent for their participation in this study. All individuals were informed of their rights in the studies participation and were instructed they could leave the study at any time, without any personal retribution taken place. All study participants were given a copy of their consent form and participation rights, including my full name (researcher), contact information, scope of the study content, IRB contact information, and collegiate organization chosen should they wish to withdraw their participation. IRB approval was obtained prior to the collection of data for this study. Consent to conduct this study, from the Walden University Participation Pool was executed, procured, and documented. My role as the primary researcher was clearly defined, and communicated to each study participant, stakeholders, and collegiate organization that their full comprehension was noted. All college students engaged in this research study clearly met the study criteria established to become active participants. Upon the studies completion, the research conducted impacted the social change needed to develop public legislative policies governing and protecting health, safety and privacy issues using social media networking on a global level. All compiled data was electronically monitored and stored in an encrypted file in an external drive. Access to this research data will only be

retrieved through a secure central processing unit (CPU). No other individual has access to this secure data except for me, the researcher.

Research Ethics

The Belmont Report (1979) identifies and serves as the basis for ethical principles which must be followed relevant to using human participants in a research study: Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice.

These three principles provided the framework for ethical decision making involving human research subjects. Informed consent from each study participant ensured they comprehended the research study and if they did not, the study coordinator would inform them for a detailed explanation. Informed consent was paramount because it poses as a safeguard in which human research participants are protected against coercion and deception. Informed consent helps protect the privacy of each research subject's identity and ensure the right to join or refuse participation at any time during the study. All data compiled from this study was shared regardless of the outcome with other researchers (Belmont Report, 1979). All subjects, partaking in this study remained anonymous, and submitted informed consent documentation to participate in this proposed study. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University reviewed and authorized final approval for this study to take place. The college students who volunteered for this study answered an original drafted fourteen question survey. Appendix C is where the drafted survey questions of this dissertation proposal can be viewed.

Summary

To ensure research credibility in this qualitative study, the research process used were described in detail throughout the study protocol. The protocol included participant

selection and their treatment while participating in the study. Chapter 3 provided a synopsis of the conceptual framework chosen, the benefit in comprehending safe and secure social media networking access, and the anticipated social change that could be of benefit on a global population level with public health safety. The lived experiences contributed from each research participant, (answered through the survey questions based on the research questions) and helped support a full well-defined comprehension of perceived health/safety risks in college students who use social media networking. The study addressed if critical thinking was applied by the research participants in securing their safety and leading to competent decision choices. Chapter 4 delivered an analysis of each college students lived experiences using social media networking and the compiled data results based on the research questions proposed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the data collection methods, the data results, and the interpretation of the research findings pertaining to diverse college students and how they perceived potential health/safety risks when engaged in social media usage. The second part of the research explored whether college students applied critical thinking in making informed decisions when using social media sites.

Purpose and Research Questions

This qualitative study included twenty-three diverse college students who used different social media sites (platforms). Each individual student reported their experiences and/or opinions on potential perceived health/safety risks encountered and whether critical thinking was applied in making informed decisions when using social media sites. The twenty-three surveys were divided as follows: The first five surveys served as the pilot study, in which the college students were asked to rate the research questions on comprehension and whether the research questions had to be modified in any way. All five college students stated that the research questions were satisfactory and did not need any modifications. The other eighteen students served as the main contributors to the results of the research investigation. Two additional volunteers dropped out of the study of their own free will, and their data were not used in the final research study analysis. These actions were based on the Belmont Report, which ensured the rights of research volunteers to join or refuse participation at any time during the study (Belmont Study, 1979).

The design of this qualitative case study was based on the following two research questions:

RQ1: What do college students perceive as potential health/safety risks when engaging in social media networking usage?

RQ2: What are college students' perceptions of critical thinking skills that help them make informed decisions when using social media networking sites?

The purpose of these questions was based on each participant's social media experience usage and their interactions with others on social media sites.

This chapter presents the characteristics and demographics of the research volunteers (participants). I describe how the data were compiled and analyzed. The analysis of data included the coding of themes and patterns applied to the questionnaire results. The results of the study were based on using the words of the volunteer participants who engaged in social media usage. The evidence presented provided trustworthiness of the results compiled, which designated the strategies applied to confirm credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Settings

The interview mode of choice was chosen by the individual participants via email, FaceTime, or telephone. The participants were recruited via the Walden University Participant Pool (WUPP). All interviews were done within the initial contact for each participant who volunteered after signing the informed consent. I retrieved email and phone numbers (if permitted) from all participants for follow-up information if warranted. Upon completion of the study, the participants were issued a \$5 gift card for Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts.

Demographics and Participant Selection

The research participants in the study were college students, both females and males, all greater than 18 years of age. The data were collected from across U.S. demographic regions. All study participants were engaged in the use of a social media platform, documenting the health/safety risks that concerned them, the number of hours that they engaged in social media usage, their college major studied, and the rating of their computer adroitness. Volunteer participants were recruited from the WUPP, where the study flyer was posted, and those participants who were interested responded and volunteered. I manually perused all data compiled after verifying all information received and proceeded to load the data into Word 365 Qualitative Testing (codes and themes) to form tables, in which I analyzed the compiled data responses.

Pilot Study

The pilot study was composed of five participants (four females and one male), which set the criteria of the questionnaire to determine whether it was comprehensible and needed any modifications.

The targeted population size was a total of twenty-three college-age participants. There were five participants in the pilot study (four females and one male) and eighteen in the main body of the study (14 females and four males). Table 1 presents the demographics for the five pilot study participants (four females and one male).

Table 1*Demographics of Pilot Study Participants*

	Female (<i>n</i> = 4)	Male (<i>n</i> = 1)
Age of college students		
20–21	1	1
24 and up	3	
College major		
Business administration	2	
Healthcare	1	
Science & engineering		1
Liberal arts (humanities)	1	
Social media sites used		
Facebook	3	
FaceTime	1	
Instagram	2	
LinkedIn	1	
Twitter	1	
Snapchat		
YouTube		1
Video gaming		
Tumblr		
Tinder		
Skype		
Computer adroitness		
Novice		
Intermediate	3	1
Advanced	1	
Potential health & safety risks		
Addiction	1	
Anxiety	4	1
Cyberbullying	1	
Decreased self-esteem	3	
Potential stalking	3	
Sleep deprivation	4	
Hours per day on social media sites		
1–2 hours	1	
3–4 hours	1	
5–6 hours	2	
7–8 hours		
9 hours or more		1

The methods of procuring pilot survey interview responses were as follows. Two participants took part using FaceTime. I noted that the first FaceTime participant's facial expressions conveyed that the participant was affable, cooperative, and relaxed, and the second FaceTime participant's facial expressions conveyed that the participant was cooperative, relaxed, and eager to address the survey. Two participants took part by phone, and another participant took part by email.

Participant 1 (P1) in the pilot study was a female 24 years of age or older. Her college major was business administration (MBA). Her main social media site visited was Facebook. She rated her computer adroitness as advanced. Her potential health/safety risk concerns were sleep deprivation, anxiety, low self-esteem, addiction, cyberbullying, and potential stalking. She visited social media sites 3–4 hours per day. She completed the questionnaire via phone. Her answers were as follows:

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My safety is paramount to me, and there is an increased risk in cyberbullying and potential stalking, I believe.

RQ2: Anonymity: Does not exist! Digital fingerprints are disseminated, and public records are easily available to obtain any individual's personal information.

RQ1: False Impressions: Facade of perfection is present. It is politically correct, in my opinion, to gain another individual's trust, pretending to be someone they are not.

RQ2: Lying: On social media sites, there is an increase in lying due to more exposure trying to make themselves perfect in the eyes of others.

RQ1: Meeting Strangers on Social Media Sites: This is a real concern to me. I worry about meeting strangers, so I do not get involved with conflict. I remain polite and nonthreatening to strangers; my safety and security is always a concern.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity Used: No alias identity should be used, in my opinion, on social media sites. First line of defense should be your name and picture of yourself; anyone has easy access gaining personal information on any individual through exploring public records.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in Physically Meeting Strangers Gained Through Social Media Sites: My privacy settings on my computer are locked so strangers cannot post any messages on my wall. If stranger's friend "requests" me, I can prohibit them from accessing me on my social media site. I take precautions to protect myself; if posts are made by others and they do not like or agree with the posted comments, the comment can be thought of as a personal attack.

Participant 2 (P2) was a female 24 years of age or older. Her college major was healthcare. Her main social media sites visited were Facebook, LinkedIn, and FaceTime. She rated her computer adroitness as intermediate. Her potential health/safety risk concerns were sleep deprivation and potential stalking. She visited social media sites 1–2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via FaceTime. Her facial expression was affable, cooperative, and relaxed.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: I always block my personal information on my social media sites.

RQ2: Anonymity: It does not “exist!” I use LinkedIn, which I feel is a safe social media site compared to other social media sites.

RQ1: False Impressions: I am not easily fooled and do not believe everything I see. I observe all details when on social media sites. I am always cautious when communicating with others on social media sites.

RQ2: Lying: Since I am an older student, I consider myself not to be naïve! I am a healthcare professional, and I am skilled at reading other individuals. I always try to remain truthful and post basic things on my social media sites. I block my identity so strangers cannot see me.

RQ1: Meeting Strangers on Social Media Sites: I feel 100% safe when on social media sites. I use complete caution since you do not know when a stranger will investigate you by obtaining your personal information, background, and identity via Google. There is always the possibility of an increase in scamming by strangers who want to deceive others, so I am an advocate of self-safety.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity Used: I believe it can happen! You do not know the strangers you are speaking with on social media sites. A stranger can post a picture of a dog and place their name on it. This to me is surreal, they could be pedophiles.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in Physically Meeting Strangers Gained Through Social Media Sites: I am always on guard, but the other person communicating with you could be at ease! I do not trust strangers. I check strangers out

thoroughly, and I do not trust a stranger on social media sites until they are completely legitimate in their presentation to me.

Participant 3 (P3) was a male age 20–21 years. His college major was science and engineering. His main social media site visited was YouTube. He rated his computer adroitness as intermediate. His potential health/safety risk concern was anxiety. He visited social media sites 9 or more hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via U.S. mail.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: Anxiety increases for me when having to watch something to escape reality for a while.

RQ2: Anonymity: It does exist! It accounts for the unknown individuals, and then their identity exists.

RQ1: False Impressions: Some individuals can appear to be in a good place emotionally, so they escape reality.

RQ2: Lying: Yes, I believe it is acceptable during times of conflict. Lying about where you work or who you really are can be acceptable.

RQ1: Meeting Strangers on Social Media Sites: I do not show my face to strangers, I text only as a way of communication instead of speaking with them and I do not divulge my physical location to them.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity Used: Since strangers do not know your identity, they cannot discriminate against you!

RQ1: Trustworthiness in Physically Meeting Strangers Gained Through Social Media Sites: I am nervous initially and then I become more trustworthy as

time goes by. Safety remains a major concern, but I still will engage in conversation with strangers.

Participant 4 (P4) was a female 20–21 years of age. Her college major was business administration. Her main social media sites visited were Twitter and Instagram. She rated her computer adroitness as intermediate. Her potential health/safety risk concerns were anxiety, low self-esteem, potential stalking, and sleep deprivation. She visited social media sites 5–6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone through voice mail.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: Safety is my paramount objective since I am concerned with the loss of my personal information.

RQ2: Anonymity: “It is nonexistent!”

RQ1: False Impressions: I do not personally care if they are presented by others.

RQ2: Lying: I do not engage in lying when I visit social media sites.

RQ1: Meeting strangers on social media sites: I do not think about my safety and security when speaking to strangers on social media sites.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity Used: My safety is increased because strangers do not know your identity.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in Physically Meeting Strangers Gained Through Social Media Sites: I would never consent to meet a stranger in person.

Participant 5 (P5) was a female aged 24 years or older. Her college major was liberal arts (humanities). Her main social media sites visited were Facebook and Instagram. She rated her computer adroitness as intermediate. Her potential health/safety risk concerns were anxiety and low self-esteem. She visited social media sites 5–6 hours

per day. The questionnaire was completed via FaceTime. Her facial expression conveyed that she was relaxed, cooperative, and eager to address the survey.

RQ1: Safety/Health Risk Potential: I am concerned with the loss of my privacy and potential loss of my identity, my financial especially. I worry about sleep deprivation and lowering my self-esteem.

RQ2: Anonymity: Total anonymity does not exist! Your identity can be stolen by strangers just by using Google.

RQ1: False Impressions: I view this as a negative outcome. When an individual misleads another person, a false sense of security is established.

RQ2: Lying: I try not to lie when I visit social media sites. If another person lies and I find out, I do not trust them. Small white-lies I am all right with if it deals with loneliness since most individuals want to be accepted by others.

RQ1: Meeting strangers on social media sites: There is a decrease sense of safety and security when meeting strangers on a social media site. I am always on guard, and if I have any doubts, I will end the meeting and block them from my social media site. I do worry at times about potential stalking.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity Used: This can be extremely dangerous if it takes place with a stranger. If I use an alias, this can protect my own safety from strangers on social media sites visited. If a stranger applies uses an alias, I view this as a threat to my personal safety and security.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in Physically Meeting Strangers Gained Through Social Media Sites: Threats to my personal safety, I take very seriously. I do not

totally trust strangers. I will continue to talk and communicate with strangers, and given more time, I can perceive them better. The COVID-19 pandemic, I believe, has brought forth more individuals seeking companionship with others via social media sites. Trust between individuals must be built over time. I always apply critical thinking skills to judge others and determine if they are altruistic in their actions.

Table 2 presents the demographics for the 18 survey volunteer participants recruited from the WUPP. The 18 participating college students included 14 females and four males.

The methods of procuring the 18 survey interview responses were as follows: Eight interviews were conducted by phone, one interview was conducted by FaceTime (participant's expression appeared cooperative, enthusiastic, and serene), and nine interviews were conducted by email.

Table 2*Demographics of Study Volunteer Participants*

	Female (<i>n</i> = 14)	Male (<i>n</i> = 4)
Age of college students		
20–21	1	
24 and up	13	4
College major		
Business administration	3	
Healthcare	4	1
Science & engineering	2	1
Liberal arts (humanities)		1
Education	4	
IT (computer science)	1	1
Social media sites used ^a		
Facebook	8	1
FaceTime	3	1
Instagram	6	
LinkedIn	3	
Twitter	3	2
Snapchat	1	
YouTube	8	1
Video gaming	1	
Tumblr	1	
Tinder	1	
Skype	1	
Computer adroitness		
Novice	1	1
Intermediate	4	2
Advanced	9	1
Potential health & safety risks		
Addiction	4	1
Anxiety	6	1
Cyberbullying	0	1
Decreased self-esteem	2	0
Potential stalking	4	1
Sleep deprivation	7	3
Hours per day on social media sites		
1–2 hours	6	2
3–4 hours	3	1
5–6 hours	2	1
7–8 hours	3	0
9 hours or more	0	0

^a Some participants used multiple social media sites.

Data Collection

The research data was collected from twenty-three participants, during the period of June 2020 through January 2021. The first five volunteers served as the Pilot Study which established the questions clarity and comprehension commencing June 2020 through August 2020. Each participant contacted me, the primary investigator, by either email, Face Time, or phone after eligibility was confirmed. I scheduled a remote interview of the participants personal choosing (Email, Face Time, Google Meet, Zoom or phone). The interviews lasted between 35 – 60 minutes which covered the introduction, the flyer, the informed consent form, survey questionnaire, Q & A's, and closing comments. Compensation was offered and accepted by twenty-three participants, a \$5.00 gift card (Starbuck's or Dunkin Donuts). Two participants (P24 & P25) voluntarily withdrew from the research study and their data was not applied or analyzed. All participants agreed to a second meeting for clarification of their responses if warranted. The raw data compiled in this research study are presented in Appendix D.

The interviews were recorded by writing all responses given via Face Time, phone, or Email. This method clarified the interview responses establishing the accuracy of the data compiled. All responses were read back to each participant for clarity that responded via Face Time or phone. Email responses received were read for clarity and the participants were contacted if any verifications on accuracy were warranted. All compiled data was scanned into my personal computer and stored on both a flash drive and in my file documents where security and confidentiality are secure. All volunteer participants were affable and cooperative in assisting a fellow Walden student during this research study. I numbered each participant's number based on their interview order.

I sought my volunteers (college students) using flyers posted on Walden University Participation Pool (WUPP). This was an arduous time (2020) throughout the United States due to the COVID 19 global pandemic. Six college students who were initially interested in this research study became ill, notified me, and never returned the questionnaire survey or answered the emails sent to them after the notification.

I incorporated any additional information given to me by the volunteer participants (Email, FaceTime, or phone) into the survey documentation.

All volunteer participants were informed of the methods of storage of the study data compiled and were assured that the data was confidential, and password protected. All the volunteer participants returned a signed informed consent form.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were transcribed, I placed the data based on participant responses into the drafted themes based on the research questions. Codes were established directly from the responses submitted by each participant. Codes were transcribed and placed into the qualitative software program of MS Word 365 (Coding Themes & Patterns). All volunteer participants were labeled in order of interview as P 1 – P 23. All volunteer participant names were anonymous in this study. Themes were established directly from the research questions answered in the questionnaire. Inductive coding was created based on the responses (data) given by the twenty-three research volunteer participants. I proceeded to match the codes established to the research question themes. Themes were established directly from the research questions answered in the questionnaire and I proceeded to match the codes established to the research question themes.

Themes

The themes were as follows:

- RQ1 Personal Safety & Health Risks
- RQ2 Complete Anonymity
- RQ1 False Impressions
- RQ2 Lying
- RQ1 Safety & Security With Strangers on Social Media Sites
- RQ1/RQ2 Alias Identity Used on Social Media Sites
- RQ1 Safety & Trustworthiness Meeting a Stranger You Have Never Physically Met

<p>Participant 1 (P1) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Business Administration (MBA), her main social media site visited is Facebook, she rated her computer adroitness as advanced, her potential health/safety risks concerns were sleep deprivation, anxiety, low self-esteem, addiction, cyberbullying, and potential stalking. She visits social media site 3- 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.</p> <p>My safety is paramount to me and there is an increased risk in cyberbullying and potential stalking I believe. It does not exist! Digital fingerprints are disseminated, and Public Records are easily available to obtain any individual's personal information Facade of perfection is present. It is politically correct in my opinion, to gain another individual's trust,</p>	<p>Gender: Female Age 24 or older Major: Business Administration (MBA) Social Media: Facebook Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: Sleep deprivation, anxiety, low self-esteem, addiction, cyberbullying, stalking Hours on social media: 3-4</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: cyberbullying and stalking</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: No anonymity, easy to obtain personal data</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: people pretend to be someone they are not. People pretend to be perfect</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: increase in lying to seem perfect</p>
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<p>pretending to be someone they are not: On social media sites there is an increase in lying due to more exposure trying to make themselves perfect in the eyes of others This is a real concern to me. I worry about meeting strangers, so I do not get involved with conflict. I remain polite and Non-threatening to strangers, my safety and security is always a concern. No alias identity should be used “in my opinion,” on social media sites. First line of defense should be your name and picture of yourself, anyone has easy accessed gaining personal information on any individual through exploring public records.</p> <p>My privacy settings on my computer are locked so strangers cannot post any messages on my wall. If strangers’ friend “request” me, I can prohibit them from accessing me on my social media site. I take precautions to protect myself, if posts are made by others and they do not like or agree with the posted comments, the comment can be thought of as a personal attack.</p>	<p>RQ1: Meeting strangers: Major concern for my safety and security</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: never should be used</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: privacy settings so strangers cannot connect, block strangers,</p>
<p>Participant 2 (P 2) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major Healthcare; her main social media site visited is Facebook, LinkedIn & Face Time; she rated her computer adroitness as intermediate; her</p>	<p>Gender: Female Age: 24 or older Major: Healthcare Social Media: Facebook, LinkedIn & Face Time</p>

<p>potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation stalking. She visits social media site 1- 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via Face Time. Her facial expression was relaxed, cooperative and friendly.</p> <p>I always block my personal information on my social media sites. It does not Exist! I use LinkedIn which I feel is a safe social media site compared to. “I am not easily fooled and do not believe everything I see.” I observe all details when on social media sites. I am always cautious when communicating with others on social media sites. Since I am an older student, I consider myself not to be naïve! I am a healthcare professional, and I am skilled at reading other individuals. I always try to remain truthful and post basic things on my social media sites. I block my identity so strangers cannot see me.</p> <p>I feel 100% safe when on social media sites. I use complete caution since you do not know when a stranger will investigate you by obtaining your personal information background and identity via Google. There is always the possibility of an increase in scamming by strangers who want to deceive others, so I am an advocate of self-safety.</p> <p>I believe it can happen! You do not know the strangers you are speaking with on social media sites. A stranger can post a picture of a dog and place their name on it. This to me is surreal, they could be pedophiles! I am always on guard but the other person communicating with you could be at ease! I do not trust strangers. I check strangers out thoroughly and I do not trust a stranger on social media sites, until I am sure they are completely legitimate in their presentation to me.</p>	<p>Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: sleep deprivation, stalking Hours on social media: 1-2</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: block personal information</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: No anonymity</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: I do not believe everything I see, cautious when communicating with others</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: skilled at reading others, not naïve, post basic posts</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: feel 100% safe, use caution when you don’t know a stranger</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: possibility of it, easy to pretend to be someone else</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: always on guard, do not trust strangers until they can confirm they are real</p>
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<p>Participant 3 (P 3) is a male, ages 20 – 21, his college major Science & Engineering; his main social media site visited is YouTube; he rated his computer adroitness as Intermediate; his potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety. He visits social media site 9 hours and > per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>Anxiety increases for me when having to watch something to escape reality for a while: It does exist! It accounts for the unknown and then their identity exists. Various individuals can appear to be in a good place emotionally. Yes, “I believe,” it is acceptable during times of conflict. Lying about where you work or who you really are can be acceptable. I do not show my face to strangers, I text only as a way of communication instead of speaking with them and I do not divulge my physical location to them. Since strangers do not know your identity, they cannot discriminate against you! I am nervous initially and then I become more trustworthy as time goes by. Safety remains a major concern, but I still will engage in conversation with strangers</p>	<p>Gender: Male Age: 20-21 Major: Science & Engineering Social Media: YouTube Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: anxiety Hours on social media: 9+</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: increased anxiety RQ2: Anonymity: it exists RQ1: False Impressions: false emotions RQ2: Lying: acceptable to lie to protect anonymity RQ1: Meeting Strangers: don’t show face, only text, no location given RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: strangers cannot discriminate RQ1: Trustworthiness: nervous at first, trust more over time, safety concerns</p>
<p>Participant 4 (P 4) is a female, ages 20 – 21, her college major Business Administration; her main social media site visited is Twitter & Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as Intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety, low self-esteem, potential stalking, and sleep deprivation. She visits social media sites 5- 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone via voice mail.</p> <p>Safety is my paramount objective since I am concerned with the loss of my personal information: It is non-existent! I do not personally care if they are present.</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 20-21 Major: Business Administration Social Media: Twitter & Instagram Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: anxiety, stalking, sleep deprivation, low self-esteem Hours on social media: 5-6 RQ1: Health Risks: safety with loss of personal information RQ2: Anonymity: non-existent RQ1: False Impressions: doesn’t care RQ2: Lying: do not engage in lying</p>

<p>I do not engage in lying when I visit social media sites. I do not think about my safety and security when speaking to strangers on social media sites.</p> <p>My safety is increased because strangers do not know your identity.</p> <p>I would never consent to meet a stranger in person.</p>	<p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: doesn't think about safety</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: increased safety because strangers don't know personal information</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: never meet a stranger in person</p>
<p>Participant 5 (P 5) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major Liberal Arts (Humanities); her main social media site visited is Facebook & Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as Intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety and low self- esteem. She visits social media sites 5- 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via Face Time. Her facial expression was relaxed, cooperative and eager to address the survey.</p> <p>I am concerned with the loss of my privacy and potential loss of my identity, my financial especially. I worry about sleep deprivation and lowering my self- esteem. Total anonymity does not exist! Your identity can be stolen by strangers just by using Google: I view this as a negative outcome. When an individual misleads another person, a false sense of security is established: I try not to lie when I visit social media sites. If another person lies and I find out, I do not trust them. Small "white lies" I am alright with if it deals with loneliness since most individuals want to be accepted by others.</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Liberal Arts (Humanities) Social Media: Facebook & Instagram Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: anxiety, low self- esteem Hours on social media: 5-6</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: loss of privacy, loss of identity, sleep deprivation, low self esteem</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: non-existent</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: false sense of security, negative outcome</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage in lying, okay if someone tells a white lie, does not trust when people lie</p>

<p>There is a decrease sense of safety and security I believe, meeting strangers on a social media site. I am always on guard and if I have any doubts, I will end the meeting and block them from my social media site. I do worry at times about potential stalking.</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: This can be extremely dangerous if it takes place with a stranger. If I use an alias this can protect my own safety from strangers on social media sites visited. If a stranger applies uses an alias, I view this as a threat to my personal safety and security.</p> <p>Threats to my personal safety, I take very seriously. I do not totally trust strangers. I will continue to talk and communicate with strangers and given more time I can perceive them better. The COVID 19 pandemic, I believe, has brought forth more individuals seeking companionship with others via social media sites. Trust between individuals must be built over time. I apply critical thinking skills to judge others and determine if they are altruistic in their actions.</p>	<p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: decreased security, always on guard, block if no trust</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: an alias can protect me from strangers using social media but strangers that apply it I view as a danger to my personal safety</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: do not trust strangers, trust over time</p>
<p>Participant 6 (P 6) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Education; her main social media site visited is Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation. She visits social</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Education Social Media: Instagram Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: sleep deprivation</p>

<p>media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via a phone interview.</p> <p>Safety is paramount to me, safeguarding where you live and where you are traveling to decreases the risk of being potentially harmed.</p> <p>Complete anonymity does not exist on social media sites! You cannot be on a social media site and be anonymous. I do not take stock (what others say or do) using social media sites</p> <p>I do not lie to others on social media sites. I only post pictures of my toddler daughter and engage only with other people about child rearing topics.</p> <p>Individual safety and security with strangers must not be taken lightly. I do not share personal information about myself. The Internet can be a dangerous place. I belong to a mom's group on Instagram where we share parenting stories.</p> <p>An alias identity," I believe," used on social media sites is useful and may prevent exposure of personal information being shared with strangers. Some individuals may say hurtful things on social media sites and send scary communication messages to others. An alias, when applied, provides a layer of protection to the bully. The alias identity is seen as a quick way to harass another person and get away with it.</p> <p>I would follow a person for years on a social media site before ever having a phone conversation with them. I met two friends from Canada who posted information on their toddlers. I felt at ease in communicating with these two individuals. I guarded these connections very closely before initiating a phone conversation with them. We have never met each other in person but have spoken</p>	<p>Hours on social media: 1-2</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: safety is very important, safeguarding your location decreased risk of harm</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: it does not exist</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: do not trust others on social media</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage in lying</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: do not share personal information, safety is very important</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: useful to prevent providing sensitive data with strangers, easy to harass, protects bullies</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: trust over time</p>
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<p>to them on the phone. It is hard to fake an instant story, in my opinion.</p>	
<p>Participant 7 (P 7) is a female, ages 24 or >, college major Healthcare, her main social media site visited is LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter & Snap Chat. She rated her computer adroitness as advanced, her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety, decreased self – esteem and potential stalking. She visits social media site 3 - 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via Face Time. Her facial expression was serene and cooperative she was enthusiastic to participate in the research study. Blocking information from certain individuals can help secure your safety (example: past partners) and preventing the release of your personal information. Complete anonymity does not exist on social media sites. Anyone can easily find your personal information such as your address and personal information, by googling you!</p> <p>I do not take it with any credence until I know the individual better that I am communicating with on social media sites. Being accepted by others is especially important to many people. I do not lie to others, but I limit what information I share with others about myself.</p> <p>I am trustworthy to a point! I always try to use critical thinking when meeting strangers. I never post any information that may be harmful to myself.</p> <p>I am skeptical of cat phishing on social media sites. If their picture is not posted I tend not to trust them! I personally must see them in “Real Time” frame. I must always put a name to a face. Women, I feel, possess a gut intuition when it comes to feeling threatened or being insecure. I trust people to a point in school or work. Common sense with common goals makes</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Healthcare Social Media: LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter & Snapchat Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: anxiety, self-esteem, stalking Hours on social media: 3-4</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: blocking information prevents release of personal data</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: Does not exist</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: do not trust what people say until they fully know them</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage with lying, censor what they share with strangers</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: limit personal data, critical thinking when meeting strangers</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: do not trust until meet in person</p>

<p>it easier, I believe, to trust others. I feel safe once trust is built and established with other individuals. Social media is here to stay. Communication with critical thinking is important to make the right decisions in staying safe and secure.</p> <p>This must be taught to younger individuals, so they are prepared in facing future life situations as they mature.</p>	<p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: safe once trust is built, communication and critical thinking are important</p>
<p>Participant 8 (P 8) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major: Education; her main social media site visited is Facebook; she rated her computer adroitness as Intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety (mental health depression). She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.</p> <p>I feel anxiety and depression, especially with the present social climate (Isolation/Covid19 pandemic) pose an increased safety/health risk. Constant stress, racial unrest, President's (Trump) false information on Covid19 pandemic information to the public raised anxiety. I feel anxious, having to step away at times from social media usage to feel safe.</p> <p>I do not perceive anonymity on visiting social media sites. My settings on my computer are secure and in place. I do not post all my personal information on social media sites. I review all communication I post very carefully. To my knowledge, I have not dealt with anonymity on social media sites.</p> <p>There are none (false impressions) in my opinion. I only communicate with others</p>	<p>Gender: Female Age: 24 or + Major: Education Social Media: Facebook Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: anxiety Hours on social media:1-2</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: anxiety, depression, step away from social media to feel safe</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: it does not exist, do not post personal information, high safety settings</p>

<p>on social media sites on family pages or other people that I know through family and or friends. To my knowledge, I have not been faced with this problem. This does not apply to me. I do not personally care about being accepted by others so I will not lie on social media sites! I care about myself and my personal integrity.</p> <p>I am cautious when interacting with strangers on social media sites. When I interact with other individuals, they are not strangers, since I know them through family or friends. I am always careful what I post on social media sites.</p> <p>This does not apply to me. I do not use any alias identity when on social media sites.</p> <p>If they (strangers) are friends with one of my friends, I still place an air of caution in trusting these individuals completely. If a stranger tries to befriend or contact me, I block and delete them from my social media site. I am more mature, so I apply critical thinking skills to empower my decision making in keeping my health safe and secure.</p>	<p>RQ1: False Impressions: no false impressions, only talk to people they know</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage with lying</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: does not interact with strangers always knows them</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: does not use an alias</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: block strangers, careful with friends, use critical thinking for safety</p>
<p>Participant 10 (P 10) is a female, ages 22-23, her college major is Healthcare; her main social media site visited is Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social media site 7 - 8 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone. My personal information obtained by others and used for purposes elsewhere without my consent or knowledge is dangerous. I apply safety settings on my computer, and I have faith in its protection. I believe anonymity does not exist because any individual's personal information can</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 22-23 Major: Healthcare Social Media: Facebook, Twitter & Instagram Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: sleep deprivation, anxiety Hours on social media: 7-8</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: security safety settings for safety, personal data leaks are dangerous</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: does not exist</p>

<p>be obtained by anyone very easily via the internet.</p> <p>Cat phishing is ubiquitous in existence on social media sites, so I am careful when dealing with strangers on social media sites that I do not know.</p> <p>It is not in my personal character to lie to others, so it is unacceptable to lie. If an individual has a low self-esteem of them self this can incite them to lie to be accepted on a social media site.: My confidence is boosted, and I feel more secure when I am not able to see others physically on social media sites.</p> <p>When an alias is used you can display an alter ego of yourself and express yourself more freely. You can become the person you want to be! I always try to be myself on social media sites. My anxiety would be increased, and a “Fight or Flight” trigger response would be released. I met my fiancé on a social media platform, so I feel safe, secure, and protected. I use critical thinking skills when interacting with strangers in protecting my personal safety. An emotional connection is built when meeting strangers on social media sites, rather than physically meeting them.</p>	<p>RQ1: False Impressions: people catfish- be cautious with strangers</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage with lying, people with low self- esteem lie</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: safer behind computer</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: be yourself on social media, alias’ allow you to express yourself more freely</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: use critical thinking skills when interacting with strangers, Fight or Flight Response</p>
<p>Participant 11 (P 11) is a male, ages 24 or >, his college major is Liberal Arts (Humanities); his main social media site visited is YouTube; he rated his computer adroitness as Intermediate; his potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation and cyberbullying. He visits</p>	<p>Gender: male Age: 24 or + Major: Liberal Arts (Humanities) Social Media: YouTube Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: sleep deprivation, cyberbullying</p>

<p>social media site 3 - 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.</p> <p>The sharing of my personal information by others. I believe anonymity can exist because any you can become any person you want to be.: It is wrong to give false impressions to others on social media. You possess an idea that you have a great life just like the shows presented on social media (i.e., 90 Day Fiancé). It is a waste of time to lie. People should be themselves. It is unnatural to be someone else to fit in. I do not see a risk present, unless people post personal information or are talking to minors (kids). This is good because people would not use their personal (life) information. At some given point people must feel and fit into a comfortable state to meet other individuals. As a male it is not alarming to me, but for a female it can be scary.</p>	<p>Hours on social media: 3-4 hours</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: sharing personal data RQ2: Anonymity: can exist- be who you want RQ1: False Impressions: wrong to give false impressions RQ2: Lying: people should be themselves, waste of time to lie, unnatural to want to be someone else RQ1: Meeting Strangers: no risk RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: good, people will not use their personal data RQ1: Trustworthiness: people need to fix into a comfortable state to meet people, scary for girls</p>
<p>Participant 12 (P 12) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Information Technology (Computer Science)/Liberal Arts (Humanities); her main social media site visited is Facebook, Skype, and You Tube; she rated her computer adroitness as intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are addiction, sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social media site 3 - 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>My major concern is potential stalking and Identity theft. I am not convinced that complete anonymity does exist. The inability to access one's personal information, up to and including their name, age, date of birth, and their location.</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 Major: Information Technology (Computer Science)/Liberal Arts (Humanities) Social Media: Facebook, Skype, YouTube Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: additional, sleep deprivation, anxiety Hours on social media: 3-4</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: identity theft</p>

<p>I think that all information on the web can be accessed by anyone who has a good hacking background.</p> <p>False perceptions are an intentional byproduct of curated feeds on social media. Most people tend to play their highlight reels (the best of their day or life) in search of likes (third party validations).</p> <p>Most people, especially younger people, do this often. Again, seeking validation, a sense of community or acceptance. Many social pages are comprised of perfect strangers, all attempting to find their “voice,” which is in the accordance of the majority.</p> <p>That anybody could be lying about who they are so that I become so comfortable with them to disclose necessary information for nefarious intentions.</p> <p>I suppose in theory it does if you have used the appropriate technology to create anonymity of location on your computer. I think at the very least it adds some extra steps for those with all intent, so that it deters the less experienced/committed hackers, etc. I do not meet with them in person unless it is in an academic or professional setting. If that is the case, I have been given enough information to research them. I do not think it is wise to connect via the internet and meet in person. If so, the meeting should take place in a public setting (space), and preferably accompanied by a friend not alone.</p>	<p>RQ2: Anonymity: basic information is easily accessible</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: by product of curated feeds, people post their highlight reels</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: this happens often, seeking validation, sense of acceptance</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: anyone can lie</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: difficult to do</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: do not meet with strangers in person, unless professional, meet in public</p>
<p>Participant 13 (P 13) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Science & Engineering; her main social media site visited is LinkedIn; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are potential stalking. She visits social media site 7 - 8</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Science & Engineering Social Media: LinkedIn Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: stalking Hours on social media: 7-8</p>

<p>hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.</p> <p>My major concern is meeting the wrong person who is perceived as another person. I do not believe it exists, no such situation on social media sites.</p> <p>I possess good judgment when it comes to meeting strangers based on my innate feelings.</p> <p>I do not lie, and I do not expect others to lie to me! I feel safe and secure based on the safety filters I have implemented on my computer settings. The other people on social media sites do not know your identity if you use them.</p> <p>I am always on my guard and cautious.</p>	<p>RQ1: Health Risks: being cat phished</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: does not exist</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: trust your innate feelings</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage with lying</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: implement safety settings on devices</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: no one can know your identity</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: always cautious</p>
<p>Participant 14 (P 14) is a male, ages 24 or >, his college major Science & Engineering; his main social media site visited is Twitter and Face time he rated his computer adroitness as advanced; his potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation. He visits social media site 5 - 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>My major concern is not disclosing any correct personal information on my identity (name, address, phone number) in which strangers can use to contact you. This is risky!</p> <p>All your personal details of your life are being shared with a third party, which is intended to remain private. This is always present when you use social media sites. Some individuals give false impressions to others on social media sites, for their own self - interest. An example is like when they are noticed (getting attention of others). Some people want to get money from others under false pretenses. Being careful is the only way to avoid being deceived.</p> <p>Lying to others on social media sites is a way, I believe, is to be accepted by other</p>	<p>Gender: male</p> <p>Age: 24 or +</p> <p>Major: Science & Engineering</p> <p>Social Media: Twitter, Face time</p> <p>Computer Adroitness: Advanced</p> <p>Health Risks: sleep deprivation</p> <p>Hours on social media: 5-6</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: breach in sensitive data</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: Is nonexistent! All personal details of your life are being shared with a third party, which is intended to remain private and is always present when you use social media sites.</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: everything is saved by the websites</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: some people pretend to be someone else for their own interest</p>

<p>people. Lying on social media sites is not good. It goes against the conditions and terms agreed upon when you sign up for the social media site. You are presenting the incorrect information to others for your benefit and can lose the rights to remain and use the social media site.</p> <p>I feel if your true- identity is hidden, you can communicate freely with strangers. Always avoid interrogation about your privacy with any stranger. The less information strangers know about you the safer you are!</p> <p>Using an alias identity increases your personal safety because the details of your true - identity are not being revealed. If a stranger has ill preconceived motives about you, it will be hard to hurt you since the details presented do not match your true- identity! It is hard to trust a stranger that you connect with on a social media site.</p>	<p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: do not share too much personal data, communicate freely if your identity is hidden</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: increases safety, keeps personal data safe</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: difficult to trust strangers</p>
<p>Participant 15 (P 15) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Education; her main social media site visited are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Video Gaming, Tumblr, Tinder and YouTube; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are addiction, sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social media site 7 - 8 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is a stranger who cyberbullies me and coercion they could have over me.</p> <p>It exists on varying quantities on social media sites. Individuals might think complete anonymity exists when a person's identity and confidential information is completely inaccessible through all social media networking sites:</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Education Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Video Gaming, Tumblr, Tinder, YouTube Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: addiction, sleep deprivation, anxiety Hours on social media: 7-8 RQ1: Health Risks: cyberbullying RQ2: Anonymity exists in varying quantities, possible with no posts or photos RQ1: False Impressions: presents people as insincere, dishonest actions,</p>

<p>I do not approve of false impressions shown by others. It presents to me that a person is insincere, and in most cases these individuals can place you at risk (harm) with their dishonest actions. I am not a liar! The same rule applies when networking with other individuals when networking online, do not lie! For all the people that do lie on social media sites, I do not approve of their actions of dishonesty.</p> <p>Safety and security play a key component for me when on social media sites. I enhance my safety and security by making sure I do not disclose my confidential information when communicating with strangers.</p> <p>I do not believe taking on an alias identity increases your safety. An alias identity can give individuals the freedom to act in deceitful ways or commit crimes. They can also cyberbully others as their true - identity are hidden.</p> <p>I feel safe at various times because I do not disclose my personal information to strangers. I rarely agree to physically meet strangers because I do not trust them.</p>	<p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage with lying, does not approve of others lying</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: do not disclose confidential data</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I do not recommend, increased cyberbullying</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: do not disclose personal data</p>
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<p>Participant 16 (P 16) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Business Administration; her main social media site visited are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social media site 1- 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is sleep deprivation and anxiety associated with social media networking.</p> <p>Anonymity: Anonymity does not exist in my opinion. I have no privacy expectations when using social media sites.</p> <p>False Impressions used on social media sites: I assume all posting are just individual opinions, and I do not follow people who express themselves as hateful or disrespectful, even if I agree with their overview views.</p> <p>Lying: I assume all people lie on social media sites and do not expect anyone to be truthful.</p> <p>Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I do not interact with people that I do not know on social media sites.</p> <p>Alias Identity used: It is< “I believe,” wise to use an alias identity because there is less of a chance of strangers finding you.</p>	<p>Gender: female</p> <p>Age: 24 or +</p> <p>Major: Business Administration</p> <p>Social Media: Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube</p> <p>Computer Adroitness: Advanced</p> <p>Health Risks: sleep deprivation, anxiety</p> <p>Hours on social media: 1-2</p> <p>RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: Sleep deprivation and anxiety are my major concerns.</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: Does not exist! No privacy expectations present when using social media sites.</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: All posting are individual opinions, and I do not interact with individuals who are hateful or disrespectful, even if I agree with their overview views.</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: Individuals lie on social media sites do not expect anyone to be truthful.</p> <p>RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: Do not interact with any individuals that are not known on social media sites.</p>
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<p>Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I would not meet a stranger from a social media site because It is a greater risk in compromising your personal safety and security.</p>	<p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: Individuals should use an alias identity there is less of a chance of strangers finding you. This is a way to protect yourself.</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: Greater risk present in compromising one's personal safety and security.</p>
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<p>Participant 18 (P 18) is a female, ages 24 or >, college major Healthcare, her main social media site visited is Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. She rated her computer adroitness as Intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety. She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>I believe posting personal information about yourself on social media sites and giving opinions on controversial issues can be a potential risk to your personal safety. Anything posted on social media sites is a risk since it is considered public information. People need sensors on what they do and post it on social media sites. They must understand that once information is posted they cannot take it back, it is public knowledge. Complete anonymity is when a person never shows themselves to others. If others are interested in an individual's life, they can hire a private investigator to seek that information. False impressions show that nothing is completely trustworthy, any situation can be edited or falsified by others. It is important to filter out any toxic influences that can cause potential harm to another. Deception can hurt everyone involved in a relationship. A platform used should be established to influence others in a right way. Living according to others does not always bring happiness. If networking or collaborating for professional purposes, legal documents should be drafted and implemented for individual protection. Zoom or Google meets can be arranged in meeting strangers when appropriate. This is an additional safety net to guard one's safety and security.</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Healthcare Social Media: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram Computer Adroitness: Intermediate</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: sleep deprivation, anxiety</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: never guaranteed, hire private investigator to find out more information</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: nothing is trustworthy, anything can be edited, filter out toxic influences</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: deception can hurt everyone</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: meet for professional purposes, try to video call first</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: increases the danger of meeting strangers significantly</p>
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<p>This increases the danger significantly if you are in contact with a stranger. An alias implies the individual is hiding from something or someone and does not want to be exposed. That leads into an important question, “What are you being dragged into?”</p> <p>It is a risk to meet a stranger in person, but if a person decides to meet a stranger, they must take precautions. You should always tell a family member or friend your location where you are going, drive there in your own car and always meet in a public place.</p>	<p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: meet in a public place, tell a family member</p>
<p>Participant 19 (P 19) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Business Administration; her main social media site visited is Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as a novice; her potential health/safety risks concerns are becoming addicted. She visits social media site 5 - 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.</p> <p>Using social media sites while driving or walking and noy paying attention to safety. I believe anonymity can exist. By applying anonymity other people cannot identify who I really am.</p> <p>Some individual’s use false impressions and, in my opinion, I do not approve of it. I never feel the need to lie to others. I do not say anything than lie to other people. I assume I take the necessary steps to remain safe when on social media sites.</p> <p>I think that by using an alias identity it enhances an individual’s safety and security measures. This is an effective way to prevent Identity theft and ensures no one can show up at your door unannounced.</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Business Administration Social Media: Instagram Computer Adriotness: Novice Health Risks: addiction Hours on social media: 5-6</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: not paying attention while texting RQ2: Anonymity: anonymity can exist RQ1: False Impressions: does not approve RQ2: Lying: never engages with lying RQ1: Meeting Strangers: take necessary steps to remain safe</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: enhances safety and security, prevents identity theft</p>

<p>I am skeptical at first, so I do not divulge personal information until I feel safe and comfortable, and it is the right time to so.</p>	<p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: skeptical at first, do not give personal information until 100% trust</p>
<p>Participant 20 (P 20) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Education, her main social media site visited is Facebook; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are becoming addicted and sleep deprivation. She visits social media site 5 - 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>I believe risks include being hacked, dependency on staying socially connected with others and becoming sleep deprived.</p> <p>I perceive complete anonymity as a person being completely unknown with no hints to their own true-identity. It does not exist on any social media sites I use.</p> <p>: I do not worry using Facebook due to the security level I have in place on my computer. I worry about false impressions when using a dating social media site and sometimes Instagram.</p> <p>I am a very trusting person, and I feel most people do not lie. Some people may lie to be accepted by others to find someone interesting or it is a cover for future malicious purposes.</p> <p>I am apprehensive of conversing with strangers and rarely do so. I have visited several times, a trusted dating social media site named "Match."</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Education Social Media: Facebook Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: addiction, sleep deprivation Hours on social media: 5-6</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: dependency on social media, sleep deprivation</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: does not exist</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: do not worry because of security settings on social media</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: does not engage with lying</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: rarely converses with strangers, only for dating online</p>

<p>I do not use an alias Identity because there is not a need to use one on social media sites.</p> <p>I take precautions when it comes to backgrounds of strangers I meet on social media. I choose to meet strangers in person, face to face.</p>	<p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: no need to use an alias</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: take precautions when meeting strangers on social media</p>
<p>Participant 21 (P 21) is a male, ages 24 or >, his college major Informational Technology, his main social media site visited is Facebook and Twitter; he rated his computer adroitness as a novice; his potential health/safety risks concerns are becoming anxiety and potential stalking. He visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>I believe, anxiety is present due to posts read by others presenting life threatening or unpleasant events they have experienced. Those postings make me feel insecure about my safety. I want to double check my actions and those of others on social media sites. Potential stalking pots not addressed directly to me, make me feel insecure and I take them personally to heart. I feel that I must respond to these posts, in an effort, to decrease my own anxiety.</p> <p>100% complete anonymity and privacy does not exist when you are on a social media site. No matter how safe and secure you feel, there are still prying eyes from others that can make you feel insecure in browsing behaviors or activities. An individual's reputation can be potentially damaged if you do not keep yourself safe and secure.</p> <p>When someone I know posts negative information about me on social media, I feel strange and curious why they took that action to make a false accusation. I try to clarify with that person to improve our understanding and friendship with each</p>	<p>Gender: male Age: 24 or + Major: Informational Technology Social Media: Facebook, Twitter Computer Adroitness: Novice Health Risks: anxiety, stalking Hours on social media: 1-2</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: anxiety, insecure about safety, stalking posts create increased anxiety</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: does not exist</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: ask people to gain understanding why they lied, respondent does not lie</p>

<p>other. I do not post negative information about anyone on social media because I respect the privacy of others. I also expect other people to respect my privacy in return.</p> <p>It is wrong to lie by putting other people down so that they look or feel better, so they are accepted by others in a social setting.</p> <p>A win /win approach works well than a win/lose approach. This will have a less negative impact on future relations within any social settings. I personally feel fuller than half empty as a person.</p> <p>Without knowing the person, I would feel uncomfortable about my safety and security. An individual can appear to be anyone they want to on social media sites. Any individual can put up any images or write anything on their social media profile. I do not believe people will post a lot of negative information about themselves for fear of receiving negative feedback from others.</p> <p>This facade does not fit all situations or personalities. It falls upon the person whether they feel completely safe to engage in communication with a stranger without any form of safety assurance.</p> <p>Some people may think that such a risk of using an alias identity is manageable, from their own perspective, therefore revealing their own true- identity would not be an issue. On the other side other individuals who have too much to lose might think otherwise.</p> <p>If I were to use a scale (1 – 10) to measure my safety and trustworthiness when meeting a stranger through a social media site, whereas ten is the highest rating for safety and trustworthiness, I would have to rate a value of five or less because there are too many variables to account for. An example of the variables are as follows: personal background, behavior, personal</p>	<p>RQ2: Lying: it is better when you do not lie and put people down</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: uncomfortable without knowing people, people rarely share negative information about themselves</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: depends on whether people feel completely safe, people rarely share negative posts</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness somewhat trusts people, too many variables, try to stay positive and make the best out of situations</p>
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<p>preferences, emotional state, psychological and medical profile, and personal appearance. If a low rating were given, I would try to approach the situation with an open positive mind in the hope of making the best out of the setting presented.</p>	
<p>Participant 22 (P 22) is a male, ages 24 or >, his college major is Healthcare, his main social media site visited is Face Time and YouTube; he rated his computer adroitness as Intermediate; his potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation. He visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.</p> <p>My main concern is the loss of my log in information, such as the user ID or password.</p> <p>Complete anonymity does not exist in my opinion. If a third party is present anonymity cannot exist because there is always the possibility of obtaining an individual's personal information. This is a major concern to me when presented with type of behavior because it compromises one's safety and security. These perpetrators should be banned from social media sites. This is always a risk to safety and security when dealing with strangers on social media sites. Anyone, I feel, that I communicate with is trying to take something from me until proven otherwise!</p> <p>I do not believe that using an alias Identity increases your personal safety and security. It only adds an illusion of added safety and security.</p> <p>I am always nervous and apprehensive when meeting a stranger from a social media site. I always want a third person to accompany me when meeting a stranger</p>	<p>Gender: male Age: 24 or + Major: Healthcare Social Media: Face Time, YouTube Computer Adroitness: Intermediate Health Risks: sleep deprivation Hours on social media: 1-2</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: data breach of passwords and sensitive information</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: does not exist</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: major concern, compromises safety and security</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: disagree with lying</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: big risk, everyone is a threat until proven otherwise</p> <p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: does not improve security, just creates the illusion</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: nervous and apprehensive to meet in person, meet in public place, bring a third person along.</p>

<p>and it must take place in a neutral and open location.</p>	
<p>Participant 23 (P 23) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Science & Engineering, her main social media site visited is Face Time and YouTube; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are addiction, sleep deprivation, low self-esteem, and potential stalking. She visits social media site 3 - 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.</p> <p>My major concern is being both physically stalked and cyberbullied by others. Complete anonymity does not exist anywhere when using social media sites. I do not want anyone to have access to my personal information including my activities on the internet outside of the site or app. The only exception I agree to is my IP address just for the developers. All individuals in some ways are ethical and /or fall prey as some sort of victim. It is a disgusting practice, but it has always been the norm since the initial onset of social media networking. It is the same as meeting someone in person, except there is less potential of and intermediate physical harm being down. However, I know from personal experience that the potential of being stalked is much greater than meeting someone physically in person because people have the delusion that they are invisible on the Internet! Social media like real life has a bias on safety standards depending on a person's popularity. Depending on the social media platform used, the use of an alias only gives the facade of increased physical safety. You may still be connected to people who use their own personal information. They may make mention of you by using your real</p>	<p>Gender: female Age: 24 or + Major: Science & Engineering Social Media: Face time and YouTube Computer Adroitness: Advanced Health Risks: addiction, sleep deprivation, low self- esteem, stalking Hours on social media: 3-4</p> <p>RQ1: Health Risks: stalked and cyberbullied</p> <p>RQ2: Anonymity: does not exist, does not share personal data</p> <p>RQ1: False Impressions: everyone is ethical or a victim</p> <p>RQ2: Lying: this is normal in social media, disgusting practice</p> <p>RQ1: Meeting Strangers: less potential for intermediate physical harm, potential of being stalked is greater</p>

<p>name and give out locations that you visited. You would also have to share and/or possess basic common backgrounds while taking pictures or videos. An example if you use an alias, most social media platforms track all your actions (movements) and conversations within their site or app and track your internet activity and in turn inadvertently shares your activity through “suggestions” to other people when they visit your social media page. The social media site developers will even come forth and inform another user “what you like too,” which could prompt another person to do more digging about you. You cannot just use an alias you have to be truthful and not be connected to anyone you even remotely personally know! Having an alias can deter someone who is lazy and/or does not have time for social media connections. After speaking with strangers for a while and not having any red flags come up, I feel fine about meeting them (a stranger) connected to a social media platform because at least there is a history of the persons information just in case something happens</p>	<p>RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: increases physical safety, suggestions on social media make it difficult to be 100% anonymous</p> <p>RQ1: Trustworthiness: feel find of meeting strangers after building trust online</p>
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Codes

RQ1: Personal Safety and Health Risks Using Social Media Site

- Cyberbullying: P1, P11, P15
- Potential cyberstalking: P1, P2, P4, P7, P12, P13, P17, P21, P23
- Sleep deprivation: P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P9, P10, P11, P12, P14, P15, P16, P20, P22, P23
- Anxiety: P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12, P15, P16, P18, P21
- Decreased self-esteem: P1, P4, P5, P7, P23

- Addiction: P1, P11, P12, P15, P19, P20, P23
- Loss of identity (personal information): P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, P14, P18, P20
- Cat phishing: P17
- Procuring computer viruses: P10, P17
- Coercion: P15
- Physical stalking: P23
- Loss of logging in and/or loss of passwords on social media sites: P22
- Controversial issues: P18, P21
- Depression: P8
- Using social media while driving or walking: P19
- Comments become public knowledge: P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P9, P10, P11, P14, P15, P18
- Hackers: P17, P20

RQ2: Complete Anonymity on Social Media Sites

- Anonymity does exist: P3, P4, P5, P9, P11, P14, P15, P19,
- Anonymity does not exist: P1, P2, P6, P7, P10, P12, P13, P16, P17, P18, P20, P21, P22, P 23
- Questionable: P8

RQ1: False Impressions

- Perfection attained: P1
- Gaining trust: P1, P7

- Not easily fooled: P2
- Good state of emotions: P3
- Do not care about false impressions: P4, P8
- Negative outcomes with a false sense of security: P5
- Not impressed with others who build themselves up: P6, P7
- Creating personal images, wanted to be portrayed but are not: P9
- Cat phishing exists by creating these false impressions (abusive/deceptive):
P10
- Portraying a lifestyle that does not exist: P11
- Seeking third party validation or acceptance: P12
- Personal judgments based on innate feelings: P13
- Insincere and Dishonest personification presented: P15
- Portrays a stranger's individual opinions (could be disrespectful or hateful):
P16
- Inflation of one's identity (may change their images that are not real): P17
- Non trustworthy, easily edited or falsified in appearance or character: P18
- Disapprove of its use on social media sites: P19
- Security levels set high on computer only worry using Instagram or dating
social media sites: P20
- Negative information, false claims posted, privacy violated: P21
- Compromise's safety and security, they should be banned from social media
sites: P22

- Should be ethical in behavior as not to victimize others: P23

RQ2: Lying

- Increase in lying seen on social media sites: P1
- Do not believe everything I see: P2, P6
- Cautious: P2, P21
- Lie more during conflicts: P3
- I do not lie: P4, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, P13, P15, P19, P20, P21, P23
- Small “white lies” are permitted: P5
- Mistrust present when people lie: P5, P22, P23
- Lying to be accepted by others: P7, P10, P11, P14, P19, P20, P21
- Decreased self- esteem people lie: P10
- Younger people lie to seek validation: P12
- Dishonesty present: P15, P22
- Do not expect anyone to be truthful: P16
- Lying used to glorify oneself: P18
- Deception hurts everyone: P18, P20, P22

RQ1: Safety and Security When Meeting a Stranger on a Social Media Site

- Personal safety and security top priority: P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P15, P16, P17
- Remain nonthreatening and nonconfrontational: P1, P13, P 17
- Feel 100% safe: P3, P4, P9
- Always cautious: P2, P8, P9, P13, P15

- Do not share your physical location: P3, P10, P14, P16
- Text only do not speak: P3
- No sharing of personal information: P6, P7, P8, P10, P14, P15, P16
- Critical thinking skills used: P7, P16
- Trustworthy of others to a point: P7
- Self-confidence increased: P9, P10
- Nefarious intentions: P12
- Pedophiles could be present: P11
- Safety filters used on personal computer to block personal information access:
P13
- Cyberbullying: P15
- Background searches on strangers met: P17

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity Used on Social Media Site

- Acceptable using your real name and no alias picture posted: P1
- Safety increased: P2, P4, P12, P14, P16, P17, P19, P21
- Dangerous posting alias identity to others: P2, P18
- Can protect yourself (personal information) from personal exposure: P3, P4,
P6, P11, P12, P13, P19, P21
- Can be placed in harm's way: P5, P18
- Must meet in a real time format: P7
- Skeptical of being cat phished: P7
- Does not apply to me: P8, P9, P20

- Provides an alter ego to some, can be whoever they want to be: P10
- Safety filters used on personal computer to block personal information access: P12
- Gives opportunity to cyberbully: P15
- Your identity is hidden: P15, P21
- Gives a person anonymity: P17
- Danger is increased: P18, P22
- False facade of safety and security presented: P23

RQ1: Safety and Trustworthiness in Meeting a Stranger You Have Never Physically Met on a Social Media Site

- Take all necessary precautions to remain safe and secure: P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, P 10, P11, P12, P14, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20
- Computer privacy setting are locked and secured: P2
- Check all strangers thoroughly to gain trust in them: P2, P3, P7, P8, P 9, P10, P22, P23
- Need to remain safe and secure in becoming trustworthy: P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P19, P20, P21
- To meet an individual in person one must truly know them and trust them: P3, P4, P9, P17, P19, P20, P21
- Time is needed to feel secure and safe before physically meeting them: P4, P7, P8, P9, P11, P13, P16, P17, P18

- Cannot trust strangers on social media sites, they are a threat to my safety and security: P5, P15
- Covid 19 pandemic has made many individuals feel lonely and vulnerable: P5
- Critical thinking must be implemented to remain safe, secure that empowered decisions are made: P5, P8, P9, P10, P12, P17
- I guard and value my safety and privacy: P6, P12, P13, P16, P17, P18
- I follow strangers for a long time before speaking with them: P7
- I look at others by their body language: P9
- Never meet a stranger physically alone in a secluded place: P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P17, P18, P20
- A fight or flight instinct kicks in when security and safety are threatened: P10
- A point must be reached over time in feeling comfortable: P11
- Females should always proceed with caution in meeting strangers: P11
- Trust your basic instincts to remain safe and secure: P11, P17, P18
- Males feel more secure in meeting strangers: P11
- I investigate strangers and do background checks before becoming involved: P12, P21, P22, P23
- Rarely would I agree to meet a stranger: P16
- Always tell family and or/friends when meeting a stranger all details to remain safe and secure: P20
- I would only meet strangers in a public location accompanied by a friend: P12, P14, P18, P20, P22

- I do not reveal personal information, always cautious: P13, P17, P18, P19
- I would not get into a stranger's car in meeting them: P22
- I would only meet in a neutral busy location: P22
- Check out any doubts or red flags in meeting a stranger: P23

Trustworthiness of Data

Follow-up interviews were conducted if clarification of any questions regarding the responses received to the survey questions, via email, a summary of the received responses drawn from their answers verified if the interpreted answers were correct. The participants were able to modify, add, or delete any information to make my interpretation accurate. The email exchanges that took place served as a member checking procedure ensuring that study participants could not be identified from the information collected in this research study (Kaiser, 2010). Applying this method increased the credibility of the study results and minimized researcher bias (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). Increasing the credibility and validity of the research study, I applied the intermember agreement, with my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Chester Jones, acting as my additional Walden University member. Upon analyzing the data compiled, I forwarded him the themes that were created based on the research questions transcribed from the interviews so they could be analyzed for themes to examine if the results matched (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). Generalizability is arduous to procure in qualitative studies, the framework of the study and any conclusions made during data collection and analysis were explained. To make results more applicable, results and conclusions compiled from this research study were compared to similar retrospective research studies executed. The results of this research study may not apply to other

studies, sections of this studies results could help in future studies that add to the knowledge base in the literature which focuses on current gaps (Trochim, 2006; Wertalik & Wright, 2017; Hong, Liu, Ding, Fu, Zhen, & Sheng, 2021). The alignment of theory based on methodology, helps to increase the confirmability of this studies results. The phenomenological approach chosen was clarified and the selection of the SET and HB models in the data collection and interpretation was stated (Patton, 2002). The interpretation of the results based on the theoretical frameworks chosen will be presented in Chapter 5. The small sample size was justified based on purposeful sampling.

I explained my role as the researcher stated in the data collection and analysis sections (Patton, 2002; Trochim, 2006). Applying these diverse techniques helped increased the dependability of the data and its interpretation.

Results

Research Question 1 was as follows: What do college students perceive as potential health/safety risks when engaging in social media networking usage? Results for this research question appear in Table 3. Research Question 2 was as follows: What are college students' perceptions of critical thinking skills that help them make informed decisions when using social media networking sites? Results for this research question appear in Table 4. The purpose of these questions was based on each participant's social media experience usage and their interactions with others on social media sites.

Table 3*Results for Research Question 1*

	Female (<i>n</i> = 76)	Male (<i>n</i> = 11)
Cyberbullying	2	1
Cyber stalking	8	1
Sleep deprivation	13	2
Anxiety	11	2
Decreased self-esteem	5	
Addiction	7	
Loss of identity	10	2
Phishing	1	
Procuring computer viruses	2	
Coercion	1	
Physical stalking	1	
Loss of logging in/loss of passwords on social media sites	1	
Controversial issues	1	1
Depression	1	
Using social media while driving or walking	1	
Comments become public knowledge	9	2
Hackers	2	

Note. Out of four males and 19 females, many participants had multiple responses.

Table 4*Results for Research Question 2*

	Female (<i>n</i> = 19)	Male (<i>n</i> = 5)
Critical thinking is needed to remain safe, secure, and empower decisions	5	1
No note of critical thinking	142	4

Summary

The post analysis of the data compiled from interviews with the college volunteer participants who shared their perspectives on potential health/ safety risks when engaging in social media networking usage is presented. Three conclusions transpired from the research study. The first were the themes that the college students shared during the experience, based on the two research questions asked (RQ1) and (RQ2). The second

were the codes derived from the survey responses given by the individual college students. The third conclusion from the data compiled was how critical thinking in this targeted population, college students, played a critical role with their shared experiences in keeping them safe and secure when using social media networking (RQ2).

The focus that college students consistently discussed were the following: gaining trust with strangers was critical in keeping themselves safe and secure and, protecting their personal information and securing their privacy was paramount. The responses received from college students with diverse backgrounds, proved critical in changing their way of thinking about their personal health and safety with social media usage. This was derived from applying the HBM and SET theoretical foundations. This research was helpful in expanding and developing future studies with a larger population. Chapter 5 summarized this research study and its findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Social media networking has become an increasingly paramount public health challenge on a global level because individuals who enter these sites may not be forthright and honest with their profiles, causing a major threat to individuals' privacy, health, and safety (Hurley, 2018; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008). The objective of this study was to determine whether an association exists between perceived health/safety risks and the application of critical thinking skills using social media networking sites among college students. (Ali, 2015; Boskey & Snyder, 2020; Kapidzic & Herring, 2015). College students visit social media sites frequently due to their digital savoir-faire (Ali, 2015). According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), Kapidzic and Herring (2015), and Hallsworth and Kirkman (2020), all individuals must be aware of their social media networking activities usage based on sites entered, time spent at these sites, health/safety risks encountered, and the individuals communicating within these sites. Social media networking sites are not always safe and secure; as such, they can leave individuals vulnerable to predators (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008). Additionally, studies performed by Ali (2015) demonstrated that all college students must comprehend the perceived health/safety risks presented with social media networking usage and apply critical thinking skills in making informed personal well-being decisions. This preliminary work has implications for social change, in that could help initiate the development of public health legislative policies that secure safe usage of social media networking sites, aiding in the prevention of individual health/safety risks while attempting to secure individual personal privacy information. Security measures implemented through state and federal legislation help to protect and

secure personal health, information, and safety for individuals who enter social media platforms (FindLaw, 2021).

Interpretation of the Findings

The analysis of the critical thinking applied by the twenty-three college students surveyed addressed what the participants felt was most meaningful to them when using social media platforms and how they could make informed personal decisions in remaining safe. I concluded that what participants thought to be most significant was how they helped to improve their individual lives and that they felt this change was sustainable. This included picking social media (platform) sites that they felt comfortable, safe, and secure in visiting, and helped those make modifications if warranted, in their demeanor by using critical thinking when meeting others on social media sites.

Individuals make decisions based on how behavioral changes can improve their lives or those of their family members (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). An identified theme was that college students were concerned about their personal health and safety; this is a motivational factor that can be applied in changing their demeanor. The shared themes presented in this qualitative research study were based on what the volunteer participants found significant and how this helped to motivate them in making individual behavioral changes in keeping them safe and healthy when engaging in social media networking. These individual changes were adapted based on applying the SET and HBM theoretical frameworks. This study presented that 33% of the college students surveyed found it to be of paramount importance to apply critical thinking in protecting their individual health and safety when meeting strangers on social media sites. Critical thinking helped individuals remain safe and secure, empowering their decisions in guarding their personal

safety and privacy. Sixty-seven percent of the college students surveyed stated that safety and trustworthiness were dominant concerns, and precautions took priority in remaining safe and secure on social media sites.

Currently, few studies (Ahmed, Ahmad, Ahmad, & Zakaria, 2019; Malik, Ahmad, Kamran, Aliza, & Elahi, 2020; Pérez-Fuentes, Molero Jurado, Gázquez Linares, Oropesa Ruiz, Simón Márquez & Saracostti, 2019) have identified what college students value when using social media platforms and how to apply a strategy to persuade them to accept a behavioral change that will benefit their well-being. Participants' shared individual responses were as follows: Themes were based on the survey questions, and the codes were based on the participants' individual responses. The college students surveyed perceived the following health and safety risks (coded) in using social media sites and were made aware that their demeanors had to be modified in boosting their self-esteem and confidence and maintaining their personal health and safety. Empowerment based on individual critical thinking was paramount in bringing about individual behavioral changes.

There were several shared themes of motivations to change individual behavior in using social media networking. The goal was creating examples in teaching college students to improve their health and physical well-being (Hallsworth & Kirkman, 2020). Motivating factors in changing the behavior of the college students interviewed included concern for their health and personal safety, maturity based on their age, independent critical thinking not based on their peers' opinions or actions, and the long-term effects on their personal lives based on social media experiences.

The following paramount major concerns were rated by the volunteer college students who participated in this research study and served as a basis for some motivational behavioral modifications: cyberbullying (20%), potential stalking (20%), sleep deprivation (60%), anxiety (40%), addiction (20%), loss of identity (40%), comments become public knowledge (40%), personal safety and security top priority (40%), not sharing my physical location (40%), all necessary precautions taken to remain safe and secure (60%), all strangers' identities are checked out thoroughly to gain trust in them (40%), safety and security must be sustained to become trustworthy of others (40%), to meet a stranger in person you must truly know and trust them (40%), protecting personal information from public exposure (60%), all necessary precautions taken to remain safe and secure (60%), and all strangers' identities are checked out thoroughly to gain trust in them (40%). Motivating behavioral changes in college students who use social media could benefit and promote critical thinking when safeguarding their health, physical safety, and personal identity information.

According to the two theoretical foundations applied in this study, the HBM and SET, the lives of individuals who use social media platforms can be improved by increasing their confidence and self-esteem (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). Further, the HBM and SET explain the result of the collaborative learning process when using social media networking platforms (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016). The HBM and SET frameworks present a shared comprehension of learning theories that address individual demeanor modifications and learning in social networking environments (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). The research results highlight that the major perceived issues of college students were anxiety, sleep deprivation, loss of personal identity information, and the

potential of physical harm from strangers. Additionally, critical thinking was paramount in staying safe and healthy when using social media sites.

Limitations of the Study

The most significant limitation to this study was a gap in research on the effects of social media networking on college students and their lived experiences in the 21st century (Ali, 2015; Hurley, 2018). Limitations are defined as potential weaknesses present in a research study. Limitations cannot always be controlled, such as time or sample collection (convenience or random), and they must be explained to maintain the integrity of a study (Simon, 2011; Wargo, 2015). A weak point presented in this research could be untruthful answers presented by study participants. All study participants needed to be honest and forthright with their responses to the study questions posed.

The principle of saturation involves the point at which duplicate responses are attained in a study, thus defining the study sample size (Creswell, 2009). This saturation was presented by the students' perceived duplicate responses compiled: sleep deprivation (60%), anxiety (40%), loss of identity (40%), comments become public knowledge (40%), all necessary precautions taken to remain safe and secure on social media sites (67%), and personal safety and security as a top priority (60%).

This study's principal limitation was the narrow parameters in selecting the college participants. The targeted population size for this study was determined by Walden administrators and presented to me as the researcher.

Another limitation to consider is that qualitative data do not produce generalizable results. I interviewed college students with diverse backgrounds, and their shared themes were identified (Creswell, 2009). A general threat in qualitative studies can present itself

as researcher bias. Participant checking and researcher agreement increased the validity of the findings, which justified a small sample size of twenty-three individuals (Creswell, 2013).

Recommendations

The two major areas in this research study examined (a) what college students perceive as potential health/safety risks when engaged in social media networking usage and (b) what college students' perceptions are of critical thinking skills in making informed personal decisions when engaging in social media networking. This study presented that 33 per cent of the college students surveyed found it to be of paramount importance to apply critical thinking in protecting their individual health and safety when meeting strangers on social media sites. Critical thinking helped individuals remain safe and secure, empowering their decisions in guarding their personal safety and privacy. Sixty-seven percent of the college students surveyed stated that safety and trustworthiness were dominant concerns, and precautions took priority in remaining safe and secure on social media sites.

This study's findings were based on the two theoretical foundations applied, the HBM and SET. Applying both foundations can improve the lives of individuals who use social media platforms by increasing their confidence and self-esteem (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). The HBM and SET assist in the collaborative learning process when using social media networking platforms (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016). The HBM and SET frameworks presented a shared comprehension of learning theories, which influenced individual demeanor modifications and learning in social networking environments (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). Utilizing social networking technologies proved to be

beneficial with support learning facilitating collaboration between individuals using social networking platforms.

New social media platforms will continue to emerge in the 21st century as existing sites become less popular and eventually disappear. This will influence individual behavioral changes and decision making based on real-time events. The interpretation of findings indicated that college students make decisions about their actions based on their individual experiences, or those that their peers have encountered (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). Changes in college students' personal demeanor improve their personal health and safety along with that of their family and friends (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016). A theme identified in this study was that individual health and safety improve motivation and encourage demeanor change (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Future studies extending this research could track how behavioral change directly improves college students' health and safety when using social media platforms. An additional identified theme was that critical thinking is paramount in motivating college students in changing their demeanors. This was a judicious finding, based on a few college students who might not think that altering their behavior will benefit them in terms of protecting their personal health, safety, and privacy (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016).

Several studies presently exist that present how improved individual critical thinking skills on social media platforms can make health and safety a priority (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). The focus is on what college students value in their personal health and safety, and how applying this tactic convinces them to accept demeanor changes that benefit and secure their lives from harm's way. Behavioral modifications must be maintainable to improve a targeted population's health and well-being, and pursuing

these motivating factors presented could lead to sustainability (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016). Endorsing a positive social change in this targeted population is a pivotal driving force in getting more college students to accept these behavioral changes when using social media platforms (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). These shared meaningful themes of protecting individual health and safety when dealing with strangers on social media platforms link the motivating factors in which college students sense they are changing their peers' and family members' lives. Extended research studies make individuals more motivated to change their behavior by seeing the potential benefits that they could receive in protecting their individual health and safety (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). A conceivable barrier to behavioral changes in this study was that potential barriers to individuals accepting or enacting behavioral changes could be encountered. Individual college students' perceptions were identified as a shared theme of barriers to behavioral change (RQ1); however, the creation of separate themes was not warranted in this study. Barriers are paramount for future research studies on social media networking, which could be examined and rectified (Hurley, 2018). The barriers identified focused on beliefs that were individually perceived by each college student.

The interventions drafted were implemented through educating the college students so that they would accept the behavior changes and disseminate this information to others (Hurley, 2018). All research participants had access to all interventions needed to implement them. A self-evaluation was distributed to all participants to measure whether demeanor change was justifiable. This action could abate bias in reporting the implemented interventions and, if applicable, by analyzing the qualitative data generated. All participants were able to apply the information acquired to change their demeanor if

they desired (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). The behavioral change must be sustained to accomplish the actions set forth. Making a positive impact on the lives of college students, their family members, and peers brings about a positive social change. The implications for social change may help initiate the development of public health policies and laws that secure safe usage of social media networking sites aiding in the prevention of individual health/safety risks while attempting to protect individual privacy information.

The conceptual framework of this study had two elements for the interpretation of literature related to the research questions: SET (Bandura, 1977; Klein & Huff, 2008) and the HBM (Hallsworth & Kirkman, 2020; Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002). All data compiled were based on the questionnaire answers received from the college student participants who contributed and served as the body of the research study results. The modification of personal beliefs and demeanors through education helped college students address their perceived health/safety risks with social networking usage (Shaw, Kapnek, & Morelli, 2021). This assisted in the prevention of potential health/safety risks encountered. Investigation of behavioral, environmental, and personal factors determined whether these played a role for the individual college students when using social media networking (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Modification of college students' demeanors has benefits in improving their own health/safety outcomes while serving as a model to a global collegiate population. Past studies presented that applying SET and HBM frameworks assists in modifying individuals' demeanors so that cognitive reasoning can be implemented in making health

and safety decisions (Ekahitanond, 2013;). Hallsworth & Kirkman, 2020; Kapnek, & Morelli, 2021).

Implications for Social Change

Walden University considers social change as a dynamic attribute when conducting a dissertation research study. The main objective of this research was to examine college students and how they individually perceive health and safety issues when using social media networking organizations and if they apply critical thinking. This study may serve as a prototype in teaching individuals on a global level about the implementation of critical thinking regarding health and safety when using social media networking (Flecha & Sordé-Martí, 2016). Increasing the health and safety of a global internet population will be an ongoing public health commitment. When the lessons have cultural relevance, more individuals could be more approving in accepting the demeanor changes taught, which may make the health intervention sustainable through modification of personal demeanor (Hallsworth & Kirkman, 2020). This may help increase access to knowledge of safe social media networking usage. The results from this research study may assist in improving knowledge and demeanors in participating individuals, increasing the overall health and safety of social media networking by adapting and applying critical thinking (Breen, 2015). A positive social impact is achieved when policies and laws are developed and implemented to protect all individuals (health and safety) in devising their personal choices by applying critical thinking and teaching modifications in their personal demeanor and actions to improve health and safety taken when using social media platforms (Auxier & Anderson, 2021).

Social media networking will continue to be a popular, complex global issue with college students and the general population to connect with family, friends, and strangers (Breen, 2015). Health and safety risks will always be present as a major factor present (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). Every individual that connects to a social media platform must advocate for themselves to minimize the risk of detrimental mental and physical harm, along with the loss of their personal identity theft. Critical thinking must be a priority and implemented to empower everyone in making personal decisions that protect themselves (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Common sense and innate feelings play a paramount role to some individuals who use social media networking while others act on impulse and can be naïve (Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018). The 21st century has presented a wealth of information and services via the internet to a global population (Wertalik & Wright, 2017). The internet will continue to evolve, grow, and become more dangerous to the global population (Breen, 2015; Hurley, 2018). More individuals introduced to various forms of exploitation, when using social media platforms and critical thinking, must be implemented in making empowered decisions that protect personal health, safety, and wellness (Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018). A positive social impact will be the drafting and execution of policies and laws created by state and federal legislation to protect all stakeholders (Individuals, communities, corporations, schools, etc.) on a global level in making personal choices by applying critical thinking, protecting personal information, teaching changes in personal demeanor awareness and actions to improve health and safety taken when using diverse social media platforms (Ali, 2015; Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018). Updated legislation is needed to protect all stakeholders (corporations, individuals, communities,

and diverse social media platforms) engaged in social media communication, since legislation does not protect all parties engaged equally. Stakeholders are paramount in assessing, developing, and implementing interventions that aid in public health promoting safety and security for all individuals utilizing social media sites (Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018). This study provided crucial information based on individual live experiences with social media networking applications (Hurley, 2018). This study should be expanded in the future to include a larger global population using diverse social media platforms (those presently in use and the surfacing of new social media platforms sites). In conclusion, the Communications Decency Act of 1996 (CDA; Zeigler, 2009), and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA; Purdy, 2009) are two federal laws which examine social media privacy concerns. There needs to be continuous and updated (local, state and federal) legislation drafted that covers national comprehensive privacy laws protecting security measures, imposing criminal liabilities and punishment for hacking and mandating notification in real time formats for data breaches (FindLaw, 2021). The loss of personal identity information using social media platforms is a major problem on a global level (FindLaw, 2021).

Conclusions

Social media networking continues to be a public health issue that affects a large portion of the global population's health and safety (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008; Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018). Technology and education must unite to empower all individuals with the knowledge and critical thinking skills required to secure their personal health and safety when using social media sites. I contributed an explanation by overseeing this qualitative research study in discovering themes shared by diverse college

students who participated in social media usage. The shared themes revealed, included what the college students found meaningful and what inspired them to engage in demeanor change. The multifaceted issues examined contributed a solution in this qualitative study which created the themes shared by diverse college students who use social media networking.

The themes shared among the college students surveyed, were based on what the volunteer participants perceived to be meaningful and how everyone could be motivated and benefit in their individual demeanor change. This assisted in improving the health of more individuals on a global level by increasing their self- esteem and building their confidence by applying critical thinking in making empowered decisions about their personal health and safety. This was achieved by applying the two theoretical frameworks the HBM and SET which addressed college student's critical thinking skills by assessing the techniques applied and helped individuals make cognitive decisions creating a more positive life experience for everyone (Hochbaum, Kegels, & Rosenstock, 1952; Glanz, Rimer & Lewis, 2002; Boskey & Snyder, 2020) and (Bandura, 1977; Klein & Huff, 2008; Kapnek, & Morelli, 2021). Recent studies have presented the use of these theoretical foundations in addressing critical thinking when using social media in making decisions concerning their well-being (Soron, & Eysenbach, 2020). This research was beneficial and proved that social media usage can be both beneficial and at times harmful to the health and safety of all individuals.

This study, I believe as the researcher, should be expanded in the future to include a larger global population using diverse social media platforms (those presently in use and the surfacing of new social media platforms sites). The Communications Decency

Act (CDA; Zeigler, 2009) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA; Purdy, 2009) are two federal laws which examine social media privacy concerns. There merits legislation drafted that covers national comprehensive privacy laws protecting security measures, imposing criminal liabilities and punishment for hacking and mandating notification in real time formats for personal information data breaches (FindLaw, 2021). The loss of personal identity information using social media platforms is a major problem on a global level (FindLaw, 2021). Technology and education must be used in concert so that all individuals are empowered with knowledge to make informed personal health decisions. The shared themes presented in this qualitative research study can public health and technology authorities to motivate especially young populations in making individual behavioral changes to keep them safe and healthy when engaging in social media networking.

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Appendix A: Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer:

During the progression of my activity in transcribing data for this research, *Perceived Health/Safety Risks & Critical Thinking Skills in College Students using Social Media Networking*, I will have access to information which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participants.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.

I will not in any way divulge copy, release, sell, and loan, alter, or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.

I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.

I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.

I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.

I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

I will only access or use systems or devices I am officially authorized to access, and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix B: Research Study Volunteer Flyer

COLLEGE STUDENT PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH IN SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING

I am looking for volunteers (college students, aged 18 years or older) to take part in a public health study.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to participate into an interview (by phone, video call, or email) with the researcher discussing individual perceived health/safety risks when using social media networking. This data collection will take place tentatively between June 29th and September 30th, 2020. Upon completion of the interview, everyone will receive a \$5.00 gift card for their study participation which will be sent via US Postal Service to their US mailing address.

Your participation is **entirely voluntary** and could take up approximately 30-60 minutes of your time for this single occasion.

To learn more about this study, or to participate in this study, please contact:

Principal Research Investigator:
Denise Makri -Werzen

Public Health Doctoral Student
xxxxxxxxx@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Dissertation Questionnaire

Dissertation Research Questions**Perceived Health/Safety Risks and Critical Thinking Skills in College Students using Social Media Networking**

PART A- Interview Guide

RQ1: What do college students perceive as potential health/safety risks when engaging in social media networking usage?

RQ2: What are college student's perceptions of critical thinking skills, which help them, make informed decisions when using social media networking sites?

Interview Protocol

Perceived Health/Safety Risks and Critical Thinking Skills in College Students using Social Media Networking

PART A-General Questions

1) What is your gender?

Male Female Refused to answer

2) What is your age?

18 - 19 20 - 21 22 - 23 24 or >

3) What is your major area of study?

Education Healthcare Science & Engineering Business
 Administration Informational Technology (Computer Science)
 Liberal Arts (Humanities) Religion

4) What is the primary social media site you are visiting?

Facebook Twitter Snap Chat Instagram
 Video Gaming
 Tumblr Tinder Skype LinkedIn Face Time You
 tube

5) How do you rate your individual computer digital adroitness?

Novice Intermediate Advanced

6) What do you perceive as a potential health risk to yourself when
 visiting your social media site?

Becoming addicted Sleep deprivation Anxiety
 Cyber bullying
 Low self-esteem Potential Stalking

7) How many hours per day do you connect to your social media site?

1-2 hours 3-4 hours 5-6 hours 7-8 hours 9 hours
 or >

PART B- Interview Guide

1) What do you perceive as a safety risk when using your social media site?	RQ1
2) What do you perceive as complete anonymity, and does it exist when you enter a social media site?	RQ2
3) What are your perceptions on false impressions posed by individuals that you communicate with on social media sites?	RQ1
4) What are your perceptions of lying to others using social media networking sites so that you are accepted in a social setting?	RQ2
5) What is your perception on your individual safety and security when speaking to strangers using social media networking based on non- physical contact with them?	RQ1

6) If an alias identity is used when connecting with strangers using social media networking, explain how you believe this increases personal safety and security?	RQ1/RQ2
7) How do you feel about your safety and trustworthiness, when meeting a stranger connected via social media site who you never physically met?	RQ1

Appendix D: Raw Data Results

My main research study was composed of the following eighteen Walden University student volunteer participants recruited from the Walden University Participation Pool (WUPP).

Participant 6 (P 6) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Education; her main social media site visited is Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation. She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via a phone interview.

RQ1: Perceived: Safety/Health Risks Potential: Safety is paramount to me, safeguarding where you live and where you are traveling to decreases the risk of being potentially harmed.

RQ2: Anonymity: Complete anonymity does not exist on social media sites! You cannot be on a social media site and be anonymous.

RQ1: False Impressions: I do not take stock (what others say or do) using social media sites!

RQ2: Lying: I do not lie to others on social media sites. I only post pictures of my toddler daughter and engage only with other people about child rearing topics.

RQ1: Meeting strangers on social media sites: Individual safety and security with strangers must not be taken lightly. I do not share personal information about myself. The Internet can be a dangerous place. I belong to a mom's group on Instagram where we share parenting stories.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I believe an alias identity used on social media sites is useful and may prevent exposure of personal information being shared with strangers.

Some individuals may say hurtful things on social media sites and send scary communication messages to others. An alias, when applied, provides a layer of protection to the bully. The alias identity is seen as a quick way to harass another person and get away with it.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I would follow a person for years on a social media site before ever having a phone conversation with them. I met two friends from Canada who posted information on their toddlers. I felt at ease in communicating with these two individuals. I guarded these connections very closely before initiating a phone conversation with them. We have never met each other in person but have spoken to them on the phone. I believe it is hard to fake an instant story.

Participant 7 (P 7) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Healthcare; her main social media sites visited are LinkedIn, You Tube, Instagram, Twitter, and Snap Chat. She rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety, decreased self – esteem and potential stalking. She visits social media site 3 - 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via Face Time. Her facial expression was serene, cooperative, and she was enthusiastic to participate in the research study.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: Blocking information from certain individuals can help secure your safety (example: past partners) and preventing the release of your personal information.

RQ2: Anonymity: Complete anonymity does not exist on social media sites. Anyone can easily find your personal information such as your address and personal information, by googling you!

RQ1: False Impressions: I do not take it with any credence until I know the individual better that I am communicating with on social media sites.

RQ2: Lying: Being accepted by others is especially important to many people. I do not lie to others, but I limit what information I share with others about myself.

RQ1: Meeting strangers on social media sites: I am trustworthy to a point! I always try to use critical thinking when meeting strangers. I never post any information that may be harmful to myself.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I am skeptical of cat fishing on social media sites. If their picture is not posted I tend not to trust them! I personally must see them in “Real Time” frame. I must always put a name to a face. Women, I feel, possess a gut intuition when it comes to feeling threatened or being insecure.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I trust people to a point in school or work. Common sense with common goals makes it easier, I believe, to trust others. I feel safe once trust is built and established with other individuals. Social media is here to stay. Communication with critical thinking is important to make the right decisions in staying safe and secure.

This must be taught to younger individuals, so they are prepared in facing future life situations as they mature.

Participant 8 (P 8) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Education; her main social media site visited is Facebook; she rated her computer adroitness as Intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety (mental health depression). She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: I feel anxiety and depression, especially with the present social climate (Isolation/Covid19 pandemic) pose an increased safety/health risk. Constant stress, racial unrest, the President's (Trump) false information on Covid19 pandemic information to the public raised anxiety. I feel anxious, having to step away at times from social media usage to feel safe.

RQ2: Anonymity: I do not perceive anonymity on visiting social media sites. My settings on my computer are secure and in place. I do not post all my personal information on social media sites. I review all communication I post very carefully. To my knowledge, I have not dealt with anonymity on social media sites.

RQ1: False Impressions: There are none (false impressions) in my opinion. I only communicate with others on social media sites on family pages or other people that I know through family and or friends. To my knowledge, I have not been faced with this problem.

RQ2: Lying: This does not apply to me. I do not personally care about being accepted by others so I will not lie on social media sites! I care about myself and my personal integrity.

RQ1: Meeting Strangers on social media sites: I am cautious when interacting with strangers on social media sites. When I interact with other individuals, they are not

strangers, since I know them through family or friends. I am always careful what I post on social media sites.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: This does not apply to me. I do not use any alias identity when on social media sites.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: If they (strangers) are friends with one of my friends, I still place an air of caution in trusting these individuals completely. If a stranger tries to befriend or contact me, I block and delete them from my social media site. I am more mature, so I apply critical thinking skills to empower my decision making in keeping my health safe and secure.

Participant 9 (P 9) is a female, ages 24 or >, her college major is Healthcare; her main social media site visited is Facebook; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety and sleep deprivation. She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: I believe is releasing too much personal information on social media sites. I set security safety measures on my computer when using social media sites to protect myself.

RQ2: Anonymity: I believe anonymity can exist if you do not post pictures of yourself or release any personal information that can expose you to strangers.

RQ1: False Impressions: Individuals can post any image they choose to be using a social media site. I stay within my circle of friends and professional colleagues that I am linked to through social media sites.

RQ2: Lying: As you grow older in age your maturity is built and rises. I personally do not care how other individuals feel.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I feel confident and safe when I am on social media sites because I only divulge certain information about myself.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: When alias identities are used on social media sites you really do not truly know the other person you are communicating with no pictures, no contact information and their location given and or posted. I do not interact with people that I do not know!

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I feel more confident because there is limited physical interaction. I am always on my guard when I deal with others. I am a veteran from the arm forces, and I am instilled with more self- confidence. I always follow my gut feelings and first impressions carry a lot of weight with me. Body language that certain individuals present, and I do not feel comfortable with sends a message that I do not want to meet them in person or have any contact with them. This day and age when social media platforms are used by so many, there is always the possibility of Cat fishing innocent people.

Participant 10 (P 10) is a female, ages 22-23; her college major is Healthcare; her main social media sites visited are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social media site 7 - 8 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My personal information obtained by others and used for purposes elsewhere without my consent or knowledge. I apply safety settings on my computer, and I have faith in its protection.

RQ2: Anonymity: I believe anonymity does not exist because any individual's personal information can be obtained by anyone very easily via the internet.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: Cat fishing is ubiquitous in existence on social media sites, so I am careful when dealing with strangers on social media sites that I do not know.

RQ2: Lying: It is not in my personal character to lie to others, so I feel it is unacceptable to lie. If an individual has a low self-esteem of them self this can incite them to lie to be accepted on a social media site.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: My confidence is boosted, and I feel more secure when I am not able to see others physically on social media sites.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: When an alias is used you can display an alter ego of yourself and express yourself more freely. You can become the person you want to be! I always try to be myself on social media sites.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: My anxiety would be increased, and a "Fight or Flight" trigger response would be released. I met my fiancé on a social media platform, so I feel safe, secure, and protected. I use critical thinking skills when interacting with strangers in protecting my personal safety. An emotional connection is built when meeting strangers on social media sites, rather than physically meeting them.

Participant 11 (P 11) is a male, ages 24 or >; his college major is Liberal Arts (Humanities); his main social media site visited is You Tube; he rated his computer adroitness as Intermediate; his potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation and cyberbullying. He visits social media site 3 - 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: The sharing of my personal information by others.

RQ2: Anonymity: I believe anonymity can exist because any you can become any person you want to be.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: It is wrong to give false impressions to others on social media. You possess an idea that you have a great life just like the shows presented on social media (i.e., 90 Day Fiancé).

RQ2: Lying: I think it is a waste of time to lie. People should be themselves. It is unnatural to be someone else to fit in.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I do not see a risk present, unless people post personal information or are talking to minors (kids).

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: This is good because people would not use their personal (life) information.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: At a point people must feel and fit into a comfortable state in meeting other individuals. As a male it is not alarming to me, but for a female it can be scary.

Participant 12 (P 12) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college majors are Information Technology (Computer Science) & Liberal Arts (Humanities); her main social media sites visited are Facebook, Skype, and You Tube; she rated her computer adroitness as intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are addiction, sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social media site 3 - 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is potential stalking and Identity theft.

RQ2: Anonymity: I am not convinced that complete anonymity does exist. The inability to access one's personal information, up to and including their name, age, date of birth, and their location. I think that all information on the web can be accessed by anyone who has a good hacking background.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: False perceptions are an intentional byproduct of curated feeds on social media. Most people tend to play their highlight reels (the best of their day or life) in search of likes (third party validations).

RQ2: Lying: Most people, especially younger people, do this often. Again, seeking validation, a sense of community or acceptance. Most social pages are comprised of perfect strangers, all attempting to find their "voice," which is in the accordance of the majority.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: That anybody could be lying about who they are so that I become so comfortable with them to disclose necessary information for nefarious intentions.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I suppose in theory it does if you have used the appropriate technology to create anonymity of location on your computer. I think at the very least it adds some extra steps for those with all intent, so that it deters the less experienced/committed hackers, etc.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I do not meet with them in person unless it is in an academic or professional setting. If that is the case, I have been given enough information to research them. I do not think it is wise to connect via the internet and meet in person. If so, the meeting should take place in a public setting (space), and preferably accompanied by a friend not alone.

Participant 13 (P 13) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Science & Engineering; her main social media site visited is LinkedIn; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are potential stalking. She visits social media site 7 - 8 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is meeting the wrong person who is perceived as another person.

RQ2: Anonymity: I do not believe it exists, no such situation on social media sites.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: I possess good judgement when it comes to meeting strangers based on my innate feelings.

RQ2: Lying: I do not lie, and I do not expect others to lie to me!

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I feel safe and secure based on the safety filters I have implemented on my computer settings.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: The other people on social media sites do not know your identity if you use them.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I am always on my guard and cautious.

Participant 14 (P 14) is a male, ages 24 or >; his college major is Science & Engineering; his main social media sites visited are Twitter and Facetime; he rated his computer adroitness as advanced; his potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation. He visits social media site 5 - 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is not disclosing any correct personal information on my identity (name, address, phone number) in which strangers can use to contact you. This is risky!

RQ2: Anonymity: All your personal details of your life are being shared with a third party, which is intended to remain private. This is always present when you use social media sites.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: Some individuals give false impressions to others on social media sites, for their own self - interest. An example is like when they are noticed (getting attention of others). Some people want to get money from others under false pretenses. Being careful is the only way to avoid being deceived.

RQ2: Lying: Lying to others on social media sites is a way, I believe, is to be accepted by other people. Lying on social media sites is not good. It goes against This goes against the conditions and terms agreed upon when you sign up for the social media site. You are

presenting the incorrect information to others for your benefit and can lose the rights to remain and use the social media site.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I feel if your true-identity is hidden, you can communicate freely with strangers. Always avoid interrogation about your privacy with any stranger. The less information strangers know about you the safer you are!

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: Using an alias identity increases your personal safety because the details of your true - identity are not being revealed. If a stranger has ill preconceived motives about you, it will be hard to hurt you since the details presented do not match your true – identity!

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: It is difficult to trust a stranger that you connect with on a social media site.

Participant 15 (P 15) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Education; her main social media sites visited are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Video Gaming, Tumblr, Tinder and You Tube; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are addiction, sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social 7-8 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is a stranger who cyberbullies me and coercion they could have over me.

RQ2: Anonymity: It exists on varying quantities on social media sites. Individuals might think complete anonymity exists when a person's identity and confidential information is completely inaccessible through all social media networking sites.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: I do not approve of false impressions shown by others. It presents to me that a person is insincere, and in most cases these individuals can place you at risk (harm) with their dishonest actions.

RQ2: Lying: I am not a liar! The same rule applies when networking with other individuals when networking online, do not lie! For all the people that do lie on social media sites, I do not approve of their actions of dishonesty.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: Safety and security plays a key component for me when on social media sites. I enhance my safety and security by making sure I do not disclose my confidential information when communicating with strangers.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I do not believe taking on an alias identity increases your safety. An alias identity can give some individuals the freedom to act in deceitful ways or commit crimes. They can also cyberbully others as their true - identity are hidden.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I feel safe most of the time because I do not disclose a lot of my personal information to strangers. I rarely agree to physically meet strangers because I do not trust them.

Participant 16 (P 16) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Business Administration; her main social media sites visited are Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. She rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation and anxiety. She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is sleep deprivation and anxiety associated with social media networking.

RQ2: Anonymity: Anonymity does not exist in my opinion. I have no privacy expectations when using social media sites.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: I assume all posting are just personal opinions, and I do not follow people who express themselves as hateful or disrespectful, even if I agree with their overview views.

RQ2: Lying: I assume all people lie on social media sites and do not expect anyone to be truthful.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I do not interact with people that I do not know on social media sites.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: It is wise to use an alias identity because there is less of a chance of strangers finding you.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I would not meet a stranger from a social media site because it is a greater risk in compromising your personal safety and security.

Participant 17 (P 17) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Business Administration; her main social media site visited is You Tube; she rated her computer adroitness as Intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are potential stalking. She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is phishing emails from hackers and exposing my computer to any potential harmful viruses.

RQ2: Anonymity: Anonymity does not exist. Even if I am in a private mode on my computer, you can still be tracked. Internet Providers (IP) are still able to track an individual's searches so there is no anonymity.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: Individuals could inflate their true real identity on all social media sites. I am not a member on most social media sites. I receive my information from friends, family members and co-workers, personal websites. Being engaged with other people on a personal level effect my perceptions of what a person portrays to be in comparison what I know to be true. I know that individuals can constantly change their images that they want others to see versus reality.

RQ2: Lying: Is a prominent action used by others on social media sites. Some individuals post pictures of the cars they drive (rent), the communities they live in (some barely making the monthly payments) and themselves in their finest attire (outfits) or best-groomed days. I am not a fan of social media for the reasons stated above.

Individuals can go to extremes in their actions to be accepted by others on social media sites.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites:

I do not engage in conversations with strangers on social media sites. On rare occasions, I was careful to use pseudonyms. To remain safe, you must conduct extended searches on individuals with various search engines such as Google, to learn more about their

identity. Using real names or locations can potentially propel a stranger's ability to locate you. I do not feel safe or secure speaking with strangers via social media sites.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: This can increase personal safety and security by adding a layer of anonymity to your identity.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I am not nervous or anxious if a stranger does not know my personal life and its details (name, address, my current location, and employer). Strangers who do not know these intimate details about myself, I am safe for any stranger I communicate with on social media sites. Trustworthiness, there is never 100% trust when dealing with a stranger whether it be on a social media site or in person.

Participant 18 (P 18) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Healthcare; her main social media sites visited are Facebook, Instagram, and You Tube; she rated her computer adroitness as Intermediate; her potential health/safety risks concerns are anxiety. She visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: I believe posting personal information about yourself on social media sites and giving opinions on controversial issues can be a potential risk to your personal safety. Anything posted on social media sites is a risk since it is considered public information. People need sensors on what they do and post it on social media sites. They must understand that once information is posted they cannot take it back, it is public knowledge.

RQ2: Anonymity: Anonymity is never guaranteed. Complete anonymity is when a person never shows themselves to others. If others are interested in an individual's life, they can hire a private investigator to seek that information.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: False impressions show that nothing is completely trustworthy, any situation can be edited or falsified by others. It is important to filter out any toxic influences that can cause potential harm to another.

RQ2: Lying: Deception can hurt everyone involved in a relationship. A platform used should be established to influence others in a right way. Living according to others does not always bring happiness.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: If networking or collaborating for professional purposes, legal documents should be drafted and implemented for individual protection. Zoom or Google meets can be arranged in meeting strangers when appropriate. This is an additional safety net to guard one's safety and security.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: This increases the danger significantly if you are in contact with a stranger. An alias implies the individual is hiding from something or someone and does not want to be exposed. That leads into an important question, "What are you being dragged into?"

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: It is a risk to meet a stranger in person, but if a person decides to meet, they must take precautions. You should always tell a family member or friend your location where you are going, drive there in your own car and always meet in a public place.

Participant 19 (P 19) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Business Administration; her main social media site visited is Instagram; she rated her computer adroitness as a novice; her potential health/safety risks concerns are becoming addicted. She visits social media site 5 - 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: Using social media sites while driving or walking and not paying attention to safety.

RQ2: Anonymity: I believe anonymity can exist. By applying anonymity other people cannot identify who I really am.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: Some individual's use false impressions and in my opinion, I do not approve of it.

RQ2: Lying: I never feel the need to lie to others. I rather not say anything than lie to other people.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I assume I take the necessary steps to remain safe when on social media sites.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I think that by using an alias identity it enhances an individual's safety and security measures. This is an effective way to prevent Identity theft and ensures no one can show up at your door unannounced.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I am skeptical at first, so I do not divulge personal information until I feel safe and comfortable, and it is the right time to so.

Participant 20 (P 20) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college major is Education; her main social media site visited is Facebook; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are becoming addicted and sleep deprivation. She visits social media site 5 - 6 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: I believe some risks include being hacked, dependency on staying socially connected with others and becoming sleep deprived.

RQ2: Anonymity: I perceive complete anonymity as a person being completely unknown with no hints to their own true- identity. It does not exist on any social media sites I use.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: I do not worry using Facebook due to the security level I have in place on my computer. I worry about false impressions when using a dating social media site and sometimes Instagram.

RQ2: Lying: I am a very trusting person, and I feel most people do not lie. Individuals may lie to be accepted by others to find someone interesting or it is a cover for some future malicious purposes.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: I am apprehensive of conversing with strangers and rarely do so. I have visited a few times, a trusted dating social media site named "Match."

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I do not use an alias Identity because there is not a need to use one on social media sites.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I take precautions when it comes to backgrounds of strangers I meet on social media. I choose to meet strangers in person, face to face.

Participant 21 (P 21) is a male, ages 24 or >; his college major is Informational Technology; his main social media sites visited are Facebook and Twitter; he rated his computer adroitness as a novice; his potential health/safety risks concerns are becoming anxiety and potential stalking. He visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: I believe anxiety is present due to posts read by others presenting life threatening or unpleasant events they have experienced. Those postings make me feel insecure about my safety. I want to double check my actions and those of others on social media sites. Potential stalking pots some not addressed directly to me, make me feel insecure and I take them personally to heart. I feel that I must respond to these posts, in an effort, to decrease my own anxiety.

RQ2: Anonymity: 100% complete anonymity and privacy does not exist when you are on a social media site. No matter how safe and secure you feel, there are still prying eyes from others that can make you feel insecure in browsing behaviors or activities. An individual's reputation can be potentially damaged if you do not keep yourself safe and secure.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: When someone I know posts negative information about me on social media, I feel strange and curious why they took that action to make a false accusation. I try to clarify with that person to improve our understanding and friendship with each other. I do not post negative information about anyone on social media because I respect the privacy of others. I also expect other people to respect my privacy in return.

RQ2: Lying: It is wrong to lie by putting other people down so that they look or feel better, so they are accepted by others in a social setting. This is a win /win approach working better than a win/lose approach. This will have a less negative impact on future relations within any social settings.

I personally rather feel fuller than half empty as a person.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: Without knowing the person, I would feel uncomfortable about my safety and security. An individual can appear to be anyone they want to on social media sites. Any individual can put up any images or write anything on their social media profile. I do not believe people will post negative information about themselves for fear of receiving negative feedback from others.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: This facade does not fit all situations or personalities. It falls upon the person whether they feel completely safe to engage in communication with a stranger without any form of safety assurance. Individuals may think that such a risk of using an alias identity is manageable, from their own perspective, therefore revealing their own true- identity would not be an issue. On the other side other individuals who their identities lose might think otherwise.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites:

If I were to use a scale (1 – 10) to measure my safety and trustworthiness when meeting a stranger through a social media site, whereas ten is the highest rating for safety and trustworthiness, I would have to rate a value of five or less because there are too many variables to account for. An example of the variables are as follows: personal background, behavior, personal preferences, emotional state, psychological and medical

profile, and personal appearance. If a low rating were given, I would try to approach the situation with an open positive mind in the hope of making the best out of the setting presented.

Participant 22 (P 22) is a male, ages 24 or >; his college major is Healthcare; his main social media sites visited are Face Time and You Tube; he rated his computer adroitness as Intermediate; his potential health/safety risks concerns are sleep deprivation. He visits social media site 1 - 2 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via phone.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My main concern is the loss of my log in information, such as the user ID or password.

RQ2: Anonymity: Complete anonymity does not exist in my opinion. If a third party is present anonymity cannot exist because there is always the possibility of obtaining an individual's personal information.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: This is a major concern to me when presented with type of behavior because it compromises one's safety and security. These perpetrators should be banned from social media sites.

RQ2: Lying: I disagree with this type of behavior, and I believe it should not be tolerated!

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: This is always a significant risk to safety and security when dealing with strangers on social media sites.

Anyone, I feel, that I communicate with is trying to take something from me until proven otherwise!

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: I do not believe that using an alias Identity increases your personal safety and security. It only adds an illusion of added safety and security.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: I am always nervous and apprehensive when meeting a stranger from a social media site. I always want a third person to accompany me when meeting a stranger and it must take place in a neutral and open location.

Participant 23 (P 23) is a female, ages 24 or >; her college majors are Science and Engineering; her main social media sites visited are Face Time and You Tube; she rated her computer adroitness as advanced; her potential health/safety risks concerns are addiction, sleep deprivation, low self-esteem, and potential stalking. She visits social media site 3 – 4 hours per day. The questionnaire was completed via email.

RQ1: Perceived Safety/Health Risks Potential: My major concern is being both physically stalked and cyberbullied by others.

RQ2: Anonymity: Complete anonymity does not exist anywhere when using social media sites. I do not want anyone to have access to my personal information including my activities on the internet outside of the site or app. The only exception I agree to is my IP address just for the developers.

RQ1: False Impressions used on social media sites: I feel that all individuals are ethical and /or some sort of victim.

RQ2: Lying: It is a disgusting practice, but it has “ALWAYS” been the norm since the initial onset of social media networking.

RQ1: Safety and security with meeting strangers on social media sites: It is the same as meeting someone in person, except there is less potential of and intermediate physical harm being down. However, I know from personal experience that the potential of being stalked is much greater than meeting someone physically in person because people have the delusion that they are invisible on the Internet! Social media like real life has a bias on safety standards depending on a person's popularity.

RQ1/RQ2: Alias Identity used: Depending on the social media platform used, the use of an alias only gives the Illusion of increased physical safety. You may still be connected to people who use their own personal information. They may make mention of you by using your real name and give out locations that you visited. You would also have to share and/or possess basic common backgrounds while taking pictures or videos. An example if you use an alias, most social media platforms track all your actions movements and/or conversations within their site or app. It is also able to track your internet activity and in turn inadvertently shares your activity through "suggestions" to other people when they visit your social media page site. The social media site developers will even come forth and inform another user "what you like too," which could prompt another person to do more digging about you. You cannot just use an alias you have to be truthful and not be connected to anyone you even remotely personally know! Having an alias can deter someone who is lazy and/or does not have time for social media connections.

RQ1: Trustworthiness in physically meeting strangers gained through social media sites: After speaking with strangers for a while and not having any red flags come up, I feel

fine about meeting them (a stranger) connected to a social media platform because at least there is a history of the persons information just in case something happens.