PANEL 2: SOCIAL MEDIA

Is Social Media a Psychological Drug? A Psychosocial Investigation into the Personality of the Social Media User and the Effects their Level of Usage has on Socialisation

The smartphone enables instant access to social media, empowers global connections and gives individuals an endless database of information and could rightfully be regarded as one of the biggest phenomena of the twenty-first century. However, research suggests that it could also be a leading factor in the breakdown of personal relationships, aid the development of inadequacy, isolation and depression or, in contrast, allow generations of people to self-promote leading to an increase in narcissistic personality disorder? Whichever outcome prevails, today, virtual acceptance appears to be the biggest source of validation.

This major project will concentrate on establishing the motives behind social media usage and the amount of time focussed on the smartphone screen and how these two combined factors of contemporary society are a core consideration in the breaking down of socialisation and relationships. The research will focus on the differing personality characteristics of the social media user, their level of usage and dependency on their smartphone and any correlations with self-esteem, mood and quality of relationships.

Women's magazines – have social media impacted on the prevailing stereotypes?

Women's magazines influence the way women are perceived and treated, creating stereotypes which society is challenging. With the worldwide web in 1989, women's fashion has transitioned to different platforms away from magazines, broadening the consumption. This topic is important as many women look up to fashion magazines to the extent that they feel they must change who they are to look like the people in the magazine. However, magazines have transitioned to social media, influencing women more than we could imagine. I want to understand and highlight how stereotypes continue to be perpetuated despite challenges from action groups. I want to analyse traditional print magazines & social media to generate case studies that highlight how despite the transition of platforms and how society has become. Goffman (1959) analysed the ways individuals presented themselves to others in magazines and I want to use this theory to analyse social media against magazines.

A sociological content analysis of images on Instagram: how individuals present themselves online'

My dissertation will be based on the social media application Instagram. I will be focusing on how users present themselves to their followers via the images they share. I want to delve into the ideas of users portraying an ideal lifestyle which is fabricated to gain followers and arguably 'show off'. I then want to develop this further to examine the concept of capitalism and how users portray an expensive lifestyle which individuals want to re-create. The rationale of the research is the societal impacts. Instagram is becoming increasingly popular and it is argued that certain aspect of the

application are damaging to individuals self-esteem as users cannot live up to the celebrity life style and see themselves as unsatisfactory. The chosen methodology will be a qualitative content analysis. A number of images will be selected from Instagram and then analysed using semiotics, exploring the hidden meanings behind the picture.

A Psychosocial Study into the personalities behind Britain's 2017 General Election

The focus of this research will be how the electorate's personalities influenced their voting choices during Britain's General Election 2017, and how different personalities then engage with politics on social media. The research will evaluate an individual's personality and then consider participants social media habits in relation to reading and sharing political opinions and news This research will consider if political persuasions can be predicted based on personality and whether Social Media engagement can affect political beliefs and ideologies. Britain is period of great political engagement, yet voter turnout is low, as shown from data from The British Social Attitudes Survey (2016). The polls during the 2015 EU Referendum were not reflective of the result (BBC, 2016) and engagement on social media was high (Polonski, 2016). The electorate have social media in their pockets, at their work and in their homes, and it offers not just the experience to absorb media but also create and share it too. With the rise of fake news and the issue of "social bots" (Ferrara et al, 2014) there are concerns that not only is our online world effected but they could also endanger our society (Ferrara et al, 2014). Baudrillard argues that power is not available to individuals as they are not in a position to change anything. Social media is a new phenomenon in political activism, but is it merely creating "slacktivism"? This research hopes to contribute to the discussion of voter engagement and modern democracy within Britain.

Individual's perception on the perfect body and the psychological insight of achieving a competition ready body

For this dissertation, the researcher is going to be looking at individual's perception on the perfect body and the psychological insight of achieving a competition ready body. This research will also be looking at whether social media has influenced how an individual view's their body. The major issue of this research is around the basis of how women view their body, and the perception of the ideological body. The purpose of this research is too see if women face pressure to achieve a body that society deems as 'perfect' and how social media has affected their perception. With also analysing the psychological affects behind achieving a competition ready body. The motivation for this research was because of the researcher's previous experience in the fitness world. As a previous competitor in the fitness industry the researcher was impacted negatively through diet, social media and the competition in general. Therefore, this research aims to see how social media has affected other individuals in the fitness world. With there being a link to feminism the researcher will bring to light the real reasons behind feminism and the empowerment it has to offer.