



Risk of Adolescent and Young Adult Problematic Internet Use Based on Communication Medium Used with Parents

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INTRODUCTION

- Problematic Internet Use (PIU) affects up to 7-10% of American adolescents and young adults (AYAs)
- PIU is associated with a number of mental health concerns, including depression, among AYAs
- Parents' media behaviors are associated with their children's media behaviors
- Few studies have explored the influence of parent-adolescent digital communication on AYA PIU risk

This study aimed to examine the relationship between parent-child digital communication frequency—via phone call, text, and Facebook—and PIU among AYAs.

METHODS

Setting: Universities located in the Midwest and Northwest

Subjects: Third-year undergraduate students who were randomly selected from university registrar lists

Design: Secondary analysis of longitudinal phone interview study

Variables: Social Media Use, Digital Communication with Parents, & PIU risk

| Social Media Use | Digital Communication with Parents | PIU Risk |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Facebook Visits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Phone Calls • Weekly Texts • Parent Facebook Friendship • Weekly Facebook Contacts • Blocking Facebook Content from Parent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problematic and Risky Internet Use Screening Scale (PRIUSS) Score (25+ = At Risk) |

Analysis: Conducted on participants who reported visiting Facebook at least once per day

- Descriptive statistics
- Multiple Linear Regression
- A post-hoc mediation with Hayes Process Macro

RESULTS

Participants

- 265 students (81% response rate)
- Daily Facebook users (N=151) visited the site an average of 4.28 times a day ($SD=3.34$)
- Among them, 24 scored at risk for PIU

Demographics (N=151)

| Demographic Variable | Number (%) |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Gender | |
| Female | 90 (59.6) |
| Male | 61 (40.4) |
| University | |
| Midwestern | 94 (62.3) |
| Northwestern | 57 (37.7) |
| Ethnicity | |
| Caucasian/White | 119 (78.8) |
| Asian | 14 (9.3) |
| Mixed | 8 (5.3) |
| Hispanic | 5 (3.3) |
| African American/Black | 2 (1.3) |
| East Indian | 1 (0.7) |
| Native American/Alaskan | 1 (0.7) |
| Other | 1 (0.7) |

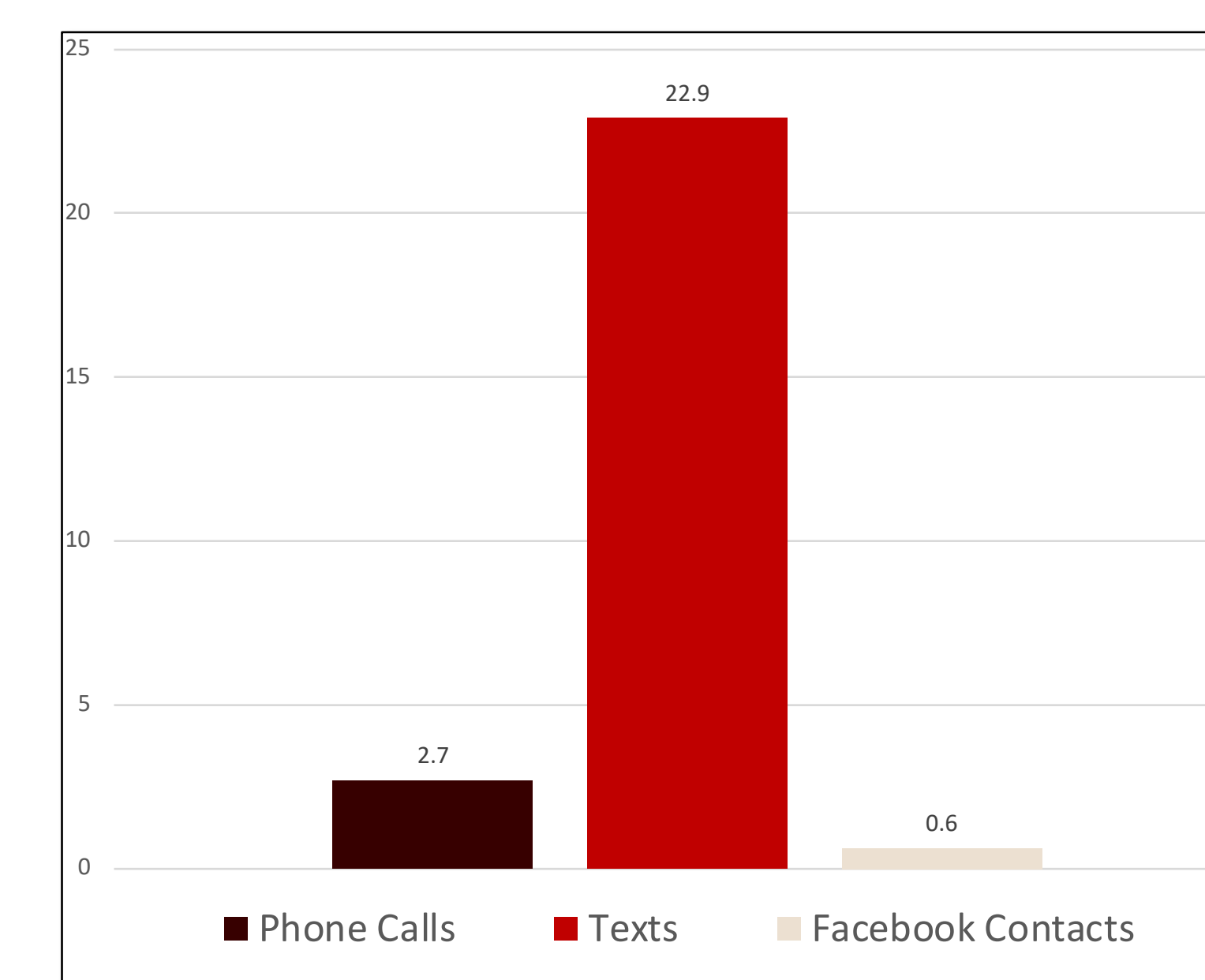
Participants with Weekly Digital Communication with Parents

| Communication Medium | Number (%) |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Phone Calls | 137 (91.9%) |
| Texts | 137 (92.6%) |
| Facebook Contacts | 50 (37.3%) |

Parent-Child Facebook Connection Status

- 146 (96.7%) had at least one parent Facebook user.
- 136 (93.2%) had a parent as a Facebook friend.
- 24 (17.6%) blocked Facebook content from a parent.

Mean Weekly Parent-Child Contacts



Predictors of PIU Risk

- The Multiple Linear Regression indicated that there was a collective significant effect between participant daily Facebook visits, participant-parent phone calls, texts, and all 3 Facebook connection variables ($F(6, 144) = 2.60, p = .02, R^2 = .10$)
- Model Fit: $R = .321; R^2 = .097; \text{adjusted } R^2 = .060$

| Variable | B | SE B | β | t | p Value |
|---------------------------------------|-------|------|---------|--------|---------|
| Daily Facebook Visits | .036 | .013 | .223 | 2.808 | .006 |
| Weekly Parent Phone Calls | -.006 | .012 | -.041 | -.517 | .606 |
| Weekly Parent Texts | -.008 | .010 | -.066 | -.826 | .410 |
| Parent Facebook Friendship | -.661 | .244 | -.219 | -2.708 | .008 |
| Weekly Facebook Contacts | .003 | .034 | .007 | .093 | .926 |
| Blocking Facebook Content from Parent | -.101 | .121 | -.006 | -.079 | .937 |

- Daily Facebook Visits were associated with increased PUI Risk
- Parent Facebook Friendship was associated with decreased PIU Risk
- Daily Facebook Visits was not a significant mediator of the relationship between participant-parent Facebook friendship and PIU risk ($b = -.04, BCa CI [-.1098, .0348]$)



CONCLUSIONS

Main Findings

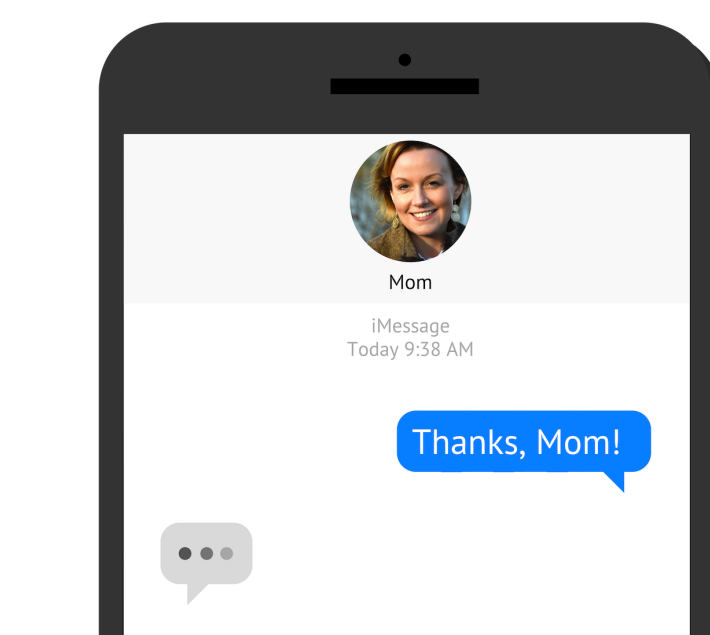
- Findings did not suggest a relationship between parent-child weekly phone calls, texts, or FB contacts and PIU Risk
- Being Facebook friends with a parent was associated with lower PIU Risk

Implications

- Parent-child Facebook friendships may allow modeling of healthy internet use
- Future studies should explore mechanisms underlying the association between parent Facebook friendship and lower PIU Risk

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