MEANING OF LIFE AND THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THREE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *Social networks have taken a prominent role allowing the human being to enter a cyberculture and interact with his peers and relatives, bringing with him a possible impact on his relationship with others in the search for belonging, fullness, wish for happiness and hence, a sense of meaning in life. Due to that, the current research aimed to analyze the meaning of life and the use of social networks among the inhabitants of the City of Campeche in three different stages of development, this research is quantitative with a transversal design and a correlational scope. The sample was selected by quota: 500 inhabitants of the City of Campeche. A "use of social networks" questionnaire was created with a Cronbach's Alpha of .803 and the Purpose in Life Test (PIL) was the instrument used. The data was analyzed with the SPPSS v25 data analysis program. Obtaining as main results the existence of a significant relation ($p<0.05$) between the meaning of life and the use of social networks. As the use of social networks increases, the meaning of life decreases and as the use of social networks decreases an increase in the meaning of life happens.*

KEYWORDS: Meaning of life, social networks, stages of development, existence.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to confirm the existence of a relation between the variables meaning of life and social networks among the inhabitants of the city of Campeche based on their different stages of development, ¿How does the meaning of life and the use of social networks on the three stages of development relate? The research about this relation will aid increasing the current information about both variables. The Cooperative University Of Colombia informed in 2017 that Spain had 29 articles that equals to 61.70%; which demonstrates they have the most demand in studies about the use of social networks and how

it affects the personal, social, academic and familiar areas of the youth population. In Mexico we found 6 articles, with a percentage equivalent to 12.77% researches about social networks among the adolescents (Gómez Ferreira & Marín Quintero, 2017); however, there is a scarce amount of researches regarding the relation between this variable with the meaning of life. This research will bring current information about the city of San Francisco de Campeche, as for how the social networks affect the meaning of life through three different stages of development, starting with the adolescence. Salas & Escurra (2014) emphasize about the social networking use that operates as a leisure for adolescents, leading to a decrease in their meaning of life due to the large amount of time dedicated to them. In the adult stage (early, middle and late) the human being begins suffering from the loss of some links and starts getting closer interpersonal relationships, but less numerous than the ones he had during his youth; therefore, it is important to know how the meaning of life remains through the relation with the social networks during this stage. There are a lot of researches regarding the adult and the variable meaning of life, however, there is limited information about this stage of development and the social networks.

At present, the human beings are found immerse into a cyberculture, in which the social networks and their use stand out during the stages of development such as adolescence, early adulthood and middle adulthood. In these stages, the human being finds interest in his peers and the people around him providing stability; that is why Espinar Ruiz & González Rio (2009) mentioned that the use of social networks has generated evident modifications in the daily dynamic of millions of people within the family environment, besides building a new scenario with possible modifications in the psychological structure of every person. Social networks are defined as a service that allows individuals to create a public or semi-public profile within a delimited system, see or articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, walk through their connections list and the ones done by others inside the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). These are schemes that allow individuals to find a common point of interest to share contents in multiple forms of communication and stablish interpersonal relationships (Fernández Sánchez, 2013). Within the categories that everyone can give to the use of social networks there are the horizontal social networks, these type of networks aims towards all kind of users without a defined theme, the most representative ones are Facebook and Twitter. On the other hand, we find the vertical social networks, these social networks aim towards a defined theme or a concrete group, for example, the leisure social networks, the professional social networks that allow the generation of professional relationships and finally the mixed ones that allow the user the possibility to stablish both professional and personal relationships (Burgueño, 2009). Some of the most used social networks are Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, among others. The human being relies on the social networks to facilitate his/her relations with others, and in that way, search for belonging and fullness, a longing for happiness. His search goes from the outside to obtain a wish for meaning and some recent researches show that the virtual social communication of young people is influenced by the perception of their identity and self-esteem, but also by the compensation and social environments (Colás, 2013). However,

even though these lead to an increase of the interpersonal communication, they might be decreasing the meaning of life of the individual. The meaning of life links to the manifestations of spirituality (freedom, responsibility, and consciousness); it is the reason, or the meaning given to the existence itself. Considered as a subjective phenomenon, because the meaning of life is different and unique for each human being (Frankl, 2007).

When we talk about a construction of the meaning of life, we refer to a process that begins and keeps shaping within the familiar, being this one the primary socialization. All the experiences, learnings, and interactions provide a solid foundation that offer safety and existential certainty. This transition that the man has to find the wish for meaning and fill up a void or eliminate a lack of interest keeps changing as the perspective of each one keeps building up, it is a feeling of inner emptiness that comes from a "will of meaning", to which Frankl (2007) named existential vacuum, even though the existential vacuum is overwhelming, it is not an illness, it is only the proof that the affected individual is committed to the search for meaning in his life.

Lukas (2001) claimed that the lack of meaning in life leads to an existential frustration in which one despairs. Therefore, it exists a relation between the existential vacuum and hopelessness, due to both leading to a state of cheerfulness and motivation, feelings and expectations about the future.

The meaning of life is a personality system that plays the basic role in the self-regulation and mobilization of psychological resources. It features the personal positions towards the world, on the form of feeling, thinking, acting and decision making of each one. The philosophical belief of logotherapy indicates that in life there is an unconditional purpose that needs to be discovered by the human being, the purpose of his existence.(García Alandete & Pérez Delgado, 2009).

The generations keep modifying their perspectives and there is a narrow difference in every one of the stages of the human development that involves the change and the evolution that occurs on a subject in order to free their maximum potential (Martínez Velázquez, 2012). "The youth has a very small sight of the past, in comparison to their future" (Avellar De Aquino, Veloso Gouveia, & Salvino Gomes, 2017) non finished. The adolescent keeps developing in his environment and contemplates all his future possibilities, starts learning and growing in the society watching the death from afar numerous times. "On the other hand, in the oldest ages the man has a large area of his "past self" but the future possibilities are limited" (Avellar et al, 2017). As the human being chronologically matures, he acquires job achievements, experiential loves, and interpersonal relationships. The adult has a life history in which he keeps adapting to the different generations and changes that have happened in our society.Within these changes there is an increase in the use of social networks in most of the activities and areas of our lives.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative study with a non-experimental design, transversal and correlational scope (Hernández R, 2014). A significant sample was selected by quota from a total of 500 inhabitants that reside in the city of San Francisco de Campeche which were split in 3 subgroups: 150 adolescents, 150 early adults and 200 middle adults, each one of the participants met the following characteristics: the use of at least one social network and being a current inhabitant of the City of Campeche.

The meaning of life was measured by the Purpose in Life Test (PIL) questionnaire from Crumbaught and Maholick (1969). The first part consists of 20 items where the subject places himself in a 1 through 7 scale between two extreme feelings (Likert scale of 7 points). The application age range goes from 16 years and older and the method of application can be individual or group and has a duration that goes from 15 to 30 minutes of application. It has a .919 Cronbach's Alpha for the totality of the sample.

For the evaluation of the variable "use of social networks" the questionnaire applied: Use of Social Networks from own authorship consists of two sections of 20 items in total. Each item is measure with a Liker scale of 5 points that goes from "A lot" to "nothing" and has a .803 Cronbach's Alpha.

The Data Analysis Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences SPSS v25 was the program used for the analysis and data collection, getting measures of central tendency and the use of parametrical hypothesis tests: Pearson's R to determine the relation between the variables and the ANOVA test complemented with a TUKEY analysis to identify the differences between the sample groups.

RESULTS

Chart 1.
Frequencies Statistics Age, PIL Score, Social Network Score.

	Age	PIL Score	Social Networks Score
Mean	29.2340	113.4540	52.6120
Minimum	12.00	54.00	22.00
Maximum	65.00	140.00	90.00

In the chart above we wrote down the age mean, the PIL score and the social network use. We observe a mean age of 23 years old, a mean of 113.4540 that represents a "Presence of purpose and defined meaning in life" in the PIL score and a mean of 52.6120 that represents the "Regular use of social networks" in the social network use score chart.

Chart 2.
Frequency y Percentage of the most used Social Networks.

		Frequency	Percentage	Validity
¿Which are the social networks that you use the most?	Facebook	439	87.8	500
	WhatsApp	329	65.8	500
	Instagram	212	42.4	500
	Twitter	52	10.4	500
	YouTube	63	12.6	500
	Messenger	27	5.4	500
	Outlook	8	1.6	500
	Pinterest	5	1.0	500
	Tumblr	5	1.0	500
	Snapchat	5	1.0	500

According to the data shown on the previous chart, we can see that the most used social network is Facebook with a 439 frequency and 87.8% according to the sample (500). WhatsApp showed a frequency of 329 and 65.8% according to the sample.

Instagram had a 212 frequency and 42.4% according to the sample. YouTube showed a 63 frequency and a 12.6% according to the sample. Twitter had a frequency of 52 and a 10.4% according to the sample. Messenger showed a frequency of 27 and a 5.4% based on the sample. Outlook had a frequency of 8 and a 1.6% according to the sample. The least frequent social networks were Pinterest, Tumblr and Snapchat with a frequency of 5 and a 1.0% according to the sample.

Chart 3.
Comparison of Stages of Development Means with the Time Spent on Social Networks

	Stages of Development	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
	Adolescence	6.5533	150	4.21652
¿How many hours a day do you dedicate to Social Networks?	Early Adulthood	6.1000	150	3.51364
	Middle Adulthood	3.4380	200	2.53895
	Total	5.1712	500	3.68829

As we can see on the previous chart, the mean time use of social networks is 5.1712 which represents a total of 5 hours of time dedicated daily to the use of social networks. At the same time, a comparison is shown of the mean time used on social networks with their respective stage of development. We can see that there is no difference between the time spent of adolescents of 6.5533 that represent 6 hours of daily use and the early adults one of 6.1000 that represents 6 hours of daily use. However, in the middle adults we can highlight that the time used on social networks decreases to 3.4380 that represents roughly 3 hours of daily use of these.

Chart 4.

Analysis of the Age, PIL Score and Social Network use correlations.

		Age	PIL Score	Social Networks Score
Age	Pearson's Correlation	1	.421**	-.321**
	Bilateral Sig.		.000	.000
PIL Score	Pearson's Correlation	.421**	1	-.133**
	Bilateral Sig.	.000		.003
Social Networks Score	Pearson's Correlation	-.321**	-.133**	1
	Bilateral Sig.	.000	.003	

**. The correlation is significant at 0,01 level (bilateral)

After the Pearson's R hypothesis test analysis, we found that statistically significant relations exist ($p<0.05$) between the variables. Regarding the age and the PIL Score test, we observed a magnitude of .421 with a positive vector, indicating that a moderate correlation between the variables exist, where as older someone gets, a greater sense of meaning in life exists and as younger someone is, a lesser sense of meaning in life occurs. At the same time a magnitude of -.321 between the age and the social network use score with a negative vector is presented, showing that a low correlation exists when as older someone gets a minor use of social networks happen and as younger someone is, an increased use of social networks happen. Also a correlation coefficient of -.133 with a negative vector exists, indicating the fact that a low correlation between the PIL Score and the social networks use exists, showing that as greater the sense of meaning in life is, a lesser use of social networks occurs and when a low sense of meaning in life appears, an increased use of social networks happens.

Chart 5.

One Way ANOVA Analysis of Variance, Differences between the Mean among people in the Adolescence, Early Adulthood and Middle Adulthood stage regarding the PIL and Use of Social Networks.

		Sum of Squares	DoF	Square Mean	F	Sig.
PIL Score	Inter-groups	33097.189	2	16548.594	74.893	.000
	Intra-groups	109818.753	497	220.963		
	Total	142915.942	499			
Social Networks Score	Inter-groups	9373.060	2	4686.530	31.130	.000
	Intra-groups	74821.668	497	150.547		
	Total	84194.728	499			

According to the previous chart data after using the ANOVA hypothesis test we can see the obtainment of statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) of .000 in the stages of development, regarding the meaning in life levels and the social networks use score.

Chart 6.

Comparison of Multiple Stages of Development regarding the Meaning of Life and the Social Networks Use Score with TUKEY Tests.

Dependent Variable	(I)Stages of Development	(J) Stages of Development	Mean differences (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig
PIL Score	Adolescence	Early Adulthood	-7.72667*	1.71644	.000
		Middle Adulthood	-19.30667*	1.60559	.000
	Early Adulthood	Adolescence	7.72667*	1.71644	.000
		Middle Adulthood	-11.58000*	1.60559	.000
	Middle Adulthood	Adolescence	19.30667*	1.60559	.000
		Early Adulthood	11.58000*	1.60559	.000
Social Networks Score	Adolescence	Early Adulthood	2.51333	1.41679	.179
		Middle Adulthood	9.86833*	1.32528	.000
	Early Adulthood	Adolescence	-2.51333	1.41679	.179
		Middle Adulthood	7.35500*	1.32528	.000
	Middle Adulthood	Adolescence	-9.86833*	1.32528	.000
		Early Adulthood	-7.35500*	1.32528	.000

*. The mean differences are significant at 0.05 level.

After the use of the TUKEY test in the previous chart we can highlight the existence of significant differences ($p<0.05$) among the types of development stages. The adolescents show a significant difference ($p<0.05$) with the early adults of -7.72667 and a -19.30667 with the middle adults in relation to their meaning of life. These results demonstrate that the adolescents show a lesser meaning of life in comparison to the early adults and middle adults, at the same time that a significant relation ($p<0.05$) is presented between the early adults and middle adults of -11.58000 regarding their meaning of life showing that early adults have a lesser meaning of life than the middle adults, corroborating the hypothesis that states that as someone gets older, a greater sense for meaning in life appears. The previous chart also shows

the significant relations (p<0.05) between the types of stages of development regarding their use of social networks of .000, in which we can find a significance between the adolescents and the middle adults of 9.86833 that represents the greater use of social networks on adolescents in comparison to the middle adults, and another significant difference (p<0.05) between the early adults and middle adults regarding their use of social networks of 7.35500 in which is shown that the early adults have a greater use of social networks compared to the middle adults, however, between the adolescents and the early adults we got a .179 score that shows no significant difference between them in relation to the use of social networks test. Reading into these results we found that the early adults have a lesser use of social networks than the adolescents.

DISCUSSION

After analyzing the results of this research, it is shown that the stage of development influences the meaning of life among people, on the same topic, Avellar De Aquino, Veloso Gouveia & Salvino Gomes, (2017) identified that the middle adults are found at the accomplishment level of the meaning of life in comparison to the adolescents which are located in the search for identity level, they also mention that the adolescent during his development continuously searches for belonging and identity through the social networks, contrary to the middle adult case, which shows a higher meaning of life due to other factors, for example, the experiences; The adolescent keeps inquiring and remains at the expectation to discover that belonging with the support given by the social networks, contrary to the middle adults in which they show a higher meaning of life as they use other resources to communicate with their family and peers.

In this research we found the existence of clear significant differences among the stages of development (adolescence, early adulthood and middle adulthood) from the results obtained through the "meaning of life" and "use of social networks" variables regarding the descriptive characteristics and the subject's age.

The Maseda-Moreno (2011) study is related to the presented research, where young people as they increase their time spent on social networks, they tend to have a decrease in their meaning of life perceived, the predominant characteristics among the social network users are: searching for new friendships and keeping in contact with the ones already known. However, the results obtained in the present research are wider if we take into matter the comparison among the three stages of development in which it evidences that the adolescents and early adults utilize the social networks during long periods of time in comparison to the middle adult.

On the other hand, in the study conducted by Barataria (Gallejo Trijueque, 2011), the presented results indicate that the social networks are significant for the communication in the current human being, besides acting as a source for expressing emotions and feelings,

which allow people to promote their trust and the creation of their sense of belonging that produce well being either individually or by group.

Through the examination of the obtained results we can see that the use of social networks benefits the development and adaptation of the socializing process with others, however, it also influences negatively. According to the obtained data on this research we can observe that a large amount of time spent on social networks links to a minor meaning of life. In other words, the use of social networks for long periods of time generates a state of discomfort, this statement was based on the comparison among the three stages of development.

The study results of the (Malo-Cerrato & Martin-Perpiña, 2018) shows that people with excessive use of the social networks tend to show neuroticism signs and impulsivity related to addictive and problematic conducts in comparison to those that tend to use less the social networks. Also, they mention that the adolescents with high scores tend to use Facebook as a controlling resource of their mood, satisfying their sense of belonging and their need of safety.

Relating it to our research we can identify that the people that have a greater use of social networks tend to show a scarce meaning of life, troubles with their spirituality and difficulties with the understanding of their emotions, through the attempts of searching for an identity on social networks.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this research has been to know the relation between the meaning of life and the use of social networks according to the stage of development in which they are. At the same time, identify the characteristics of each one of the stages that influence on the meaning of life and the use given to the social networks. According to the obtained results, we can conclude that, the meaning of life and the use of social networks depend on the different stages of development among the inhabitants of the City of Campeche and these variables are associated with each other.

The "age" variable had the most representative significant relation, in which as older someone gets, an increased meaning of life occurs and a lesser use of social networks, at the same time as younger someone is, a decreased meaning of life occurs and a greater use of social networks happen. It is important to highlight that the globalization keeps increasing, bringing with it changes on the society and this new cyberculture that is developing among all the life stages.

Based on the results obtained on this research we highly recommend giving a proper follow on the analysis of the realization between the use of social networks and the meaning of life, including different stages of development, besides adding more variables that might be

related to the use of social networks and the meaning of life among people. This might allow the identification of a possible relation between the variables, it could also bring some major benefits considering the null researches on Mexico related to this topic, taking into consideration that the meaning of life plays an important role on the motivation and self-realization of the human being.

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