

Report on Bachelor's Thesis

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Name of marker: Dr Rachel Horsley BSc(hons); PG Cert; PhD; fHEA

Mark: **Class 3 (55%** - see marking criteria: Appendix 1)

This thesis concerns the psychological impact of Facebook use, in particular it draws on social comparison theory to critically review the evidence that Facebook can engender feelings of envy, and negative self-evaluations. This is an interesting topic, and the theoretical elements complement one another well. The format is a systematic review.

The student sets the background context reasonably well with a review of the general literature pertaining to Facebook use (e.g., numbers of users); and she sets the review within a general sociological framework (which works okay). However, she does not always reference her assertions, and she does go into too much detail regarding peripheral issues (such as data protection issues), leading to a loss of focus. In some ways, the work appears to be two somewhat, but not completely related halves – I think the student could have been more selective, and integrated the information more seamlessly, even with the mix of sociological and psychological perspectives.

The format is a systematic review; as such, it should follow the conventions for this type of work in psychology and health research (e.g., PRISMA), and systematically apply evaluative criteria to the articles included in the review. The student does do this to some extent, although not necessarily to a very high standard. The method is described reasonably well. I would like to have seen a bit more integration of findings (e.g., in tabular form), and a PRISMA diagram would have been useful to illustrate the search results. PRISMA process was not thoroughly applied. The studies were described okay, but perhaps rather too detailed, at the expense of analysis and synthesis. Clear conclusions are drawn from the review, centred around the type of usage that appears to be most damaging (heavy passive use) – which illustrates application of thoughtful evaluation of the overall psychological evidence. There is some attempt to make practical recommendations for the amelioration/prevention of negative effects, although these are not always artfully expressed.

The work is generally clear and well written, although more time in editing would have made the work flow better, and reduce some repetition and redundancies. There is some evidence of fairly limited critical evaluation. There is evidence of an adequate amount of work appropriate to a bachelor's thesis. There is adequate knowledge and understanding to allow the student to defend the work. There is some application of theory, critical evaluation, and consideration of practical (but not really theoretical) implications.

The student was likely disadvantaged by having two supervisors each from different areas (sociology and psychology): in the context of her overall university performance – is this mark consistent? Methodologically, the student did reasonably well given that this systematic review approach (and critical evaluation of psychological research) was completely new to her (and working under very tight time pressures). Based on marking criteria (below), I feel that the work is solidly mid- Class 3 (55%): adequate (see Appendix 1)

APPENDIX 1: MARKING CRITERIA

CLASS 3: Pass (50-59): Will fulfil <u>ALL</u> of the criteria outlined below either ‘marginally’, ‘adequately’, or ‘strongly’.			
	<i>Marginally</i>	<i>Adequately</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
Acceptable coverage, generally accurate, and relevant to the question set		X	
Evidence of basic reading/use of resources			X
Acceptable understanding of literature, including theory		X	
Acceptable awareness of core debates/issues in the subject			X
Academic style of writing and referencing		X	
Some development of an argument		X	
Acceptable organisation and structure	X		
Some use of evidence to support/challenge an argument		X	
<i>Where appropriate</i> , demonstrates awareness of the applications, social context, or history of the subject			X
<i>Where appropriate</i> , applies principles to real world events and problems		X	
CLASS 2: Commendation (60-69): Will fulfil <u>ALL</u> of the criteria outlined below either ‘marginally’, ‘adequately’, or ‘strongly’			
	<i>Marginally</i>	<i>Adequately</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
Comprehensive and accurate coverage relevant to the question set			
Evidence of wider reading/use of a range of resources			
Sufficient use of primary resources			
Good understanding of literature, including theory			
Good grasp of core debates/current issues in psychology			
Good academic style of writing and referencing			
Development of coherent argument			
Good organisation and structure			
Thoughtful evaluation of evidence and/or textual material			
Consistent and appropriate use of evidence to support/challenge an argument			
<i>Where appropriate</i> , demonstrates a critical awareness of the applications, social context, or history of the subject			
<i>Where appropriate</i> , is able to skilfully apply principles to real world events and problems			
CLASS 1: Distinction (70+): Will excel on <u>AT LEAST ONE</u> and probably several of the criteria outlined below (in addition to strongly fulfilling <u>ALL</u> the CLASS 2 criteria)			
Comprehensive and accurate coverage of complex and specialised areas			
Evidence of comprehensive reading/use of a range of resources			
Depth of critical insight into complex theoretical issues			
Originality of exposition or treatment			
Clarity of argument and expression			
Shows a creative and imaginative approach			
Critical evaluation of evidence and research methodologies, where appropriate			

<p>Work which strongly fulfils the majority of pass criteria may be considered at commendation level.</p> <p>Strong pass : 57-59 (anchor: 58) The majority of criteria at pass level are strongly fulfilled</p> <p>Pass: 54-56 (anchor: 55) The majority of criteria at pass level are adequately fulfilled.</p> <p>Marginal pass: 50-53 (anchor: 52) The majority of criteria at pass level are marginally fulfilled.</p> <p>Work which fails to at least marginally fulfil the majority of pass criteria should be considered as a fail (see page 2)</p>
<p>Work which strongly fulfils the majority of commendation criteria may be considered at distinction level</p> <p>Strong commendation: 67-69 (anchor: 68) The majority of criteria at commendation level are strongly fulfilled</p> <p>Commendation: 64-66 (anchor: 65) The majority of criteria at commendation level are adequately fulfilled.</p> <p>Marginal commendation: 60-63 (anchor: 62) The majority of criteria at commendation level are marginally fulfilled.</p> <p>Work which fails to at least marginally fulfil the majority of commendation criteria should be considered at pass level only</p>
<p>Outstanding Distinction: 86-100 (anchor: 90) Excels on all of the listed criteria at distinction level and has additional qualities that set it aside from the norm. Rarely awarded, requiring special justification.</p> <p>Strong distinction: 80-85 (anchor: 82) Excels on most of the listed criteria at distinction level. Normally the top grade awarded on a module.</p> <p>Distinction: 75-79 (anchor: 77) Excels on more than one listed criterion at distinction level.</p> <p>Marginal distinction: 70-74 (anchor: 72) Excels on at least one listed criterion at distinction level.</p>

CLASS 4: Marginal Fail (< 50): <u>ALL</u> the criteria outlined below will either be passed or marginally failed			
	<i>Clear fail</i>	<i>Marginal fail</i>	<i>Pass</i>
Acceptable coverage, generally accurate, and relevant to the question set			
Evidence of basic reading/use of resources			
Acceptable understanding of literature, including theory			
Acceptable awareness of core debates/current issues in the subject			
Academic style of writing and referencing			
Some development of an argument			
Some use of evidence to support/challenge an argument			
Acceptable organisation and structure			
<i>Where appropriate</i> , demonstrates awareness of the applications, social context, or history of the subject			
<i>Where appropriate</i> , is able to apply principles to real world events and problems			
<p>Work which passes <u>ALL</u> criteria should be considered at pass level (see page 1)</p> <p>Marginal fail: 47-49 (anchor: 48) One criterion has been marginally failed and the rest passed.</p> <p>Fail: 44-46 (anchor: 45) A few of the criteria are marginally failed, but many are passed.</p> <p>Non-compensation fail: 40-43 (anchor: 42) Many of the criteria are marginally failed and only a few passed.</p> <p>Work for which <u>ANY</u> of these criteria have been marked as a clear fail or work which achieves <u>NO</u> passes should be considered as a clear fail (see below)</p>			
<p>Clear fail (30-39):</p> <p>37-39 (anchor: 38) One criterion has been clearly failed.</p> <p>34-36 (anchor: 35) A few of the criteria have been clearly failed.</p> <p>30-33 (anchor: 32) Many of the criteria have been clearly failed.</p> <p>Work for which most or all of the criteria have been clearly failed may be considered within the categories below.</p>			
<p>Very clear fail 20-29 (anchor: 25) Answer contains a little subject-related information relevant to the question, or some non subject-related information relevant to the question.</p> <p>Attempted an answer: 10-19 (anchor: 15) Answer contains a tiny bit of subject-related information (or some other information) relevant to the question.</p> <p>Almost no attempt: 1-9 (anchor: 5) Answer contains something which relates to the question.</p> <p>No attempt: 0 Nothing written that relates to the question (except perhaps restating the question); no submission.</p>			