






# Systematic review of the current state of research on Online Social Networks: Taxonomy on experience of use

Revisión sistemática del panorama de la investigación sobre redes sociales: Taxonomía sobre experiencias de uso

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## ABSTRACT

The widespread use of online social networks (OSN) among young people has been accompanied by an increase of publications about them and their effects on the psychosocial development of users. Previous panoramic reviews on OSN research are now outdated and do not provide a comprehensive view of the complexity of the user experience. The aims of this systematic review were three: to identify quantitative studies on OSN; to build a taxonomy about the user experience; and to classify studied variables in the topics and subtopics. The literature search and review according to PICoS strategy led to 546 identified publications that met the eligibility criteria. The taxonomy included nine major topics: overall use; activities and types of use; perceptions and attitudes OSN; the social network of online contacts; needs and motives for use; profile and privacy management; social processes; identity processes; and cognitive-emotional processes related to use of OSN. The three most studied topics were: overall use; activities and types of use; and social processes related to use of OSN. Classification and quantification of the different variables studied about the users' experience is detailed. Several theoretical perspectives are discussed, as well as the gaps and challenges in OSN research. The proposed taxonomy could be useful for researchers to better delineate the aims of future studies.

## RESUMEN

La generalización del uso de redes sociales en jóvenes ha supuesto un incremento notable de las publicaciones sobre ellas y sobre sus efectos en el desarrollo psicosocial de los usuarios. Las tentativas previas de revisión panorámica sobre redes quedaron desfasadas y no aportan una visión comprensiva de la complejidad de la experiencia de uso. Los objetivos de esta revisión sistemática actualizada fueron: identificar estudios cuantitativos sobre redes; construir una taxonomía sobre la experiencia de uso; y clasificar las variables estudiadas en temas y subtemas. La búsqueda y revisión de literatura siguiendo la estrategia PICoS identificó 546 estudios que cumplían los criterios de inclusión. La taxonomía incluyó nueve grandes temáticas investigadas: descripción y cuantificación del uso; actividades y tipos de uso; percepción y actitudes influyentes en el uso; red social de contactos; necesidades y motivos de uso; gestión del perfil y privacidad; procesos sociales; procesos identitarios; y procesos cognitivos-emocionales. Los tres temas más estudiados fueron: la descripción y cuantificación del uso; las actividades y tipos de uso; y los procesos sociales relacionados con el uso. Se detalla la clasificación, cuantificación e integración de las diversas variables estudiadas sobre la experiencia de uso. Las diferentes tradiciones de estudio, así como las lagunas, problemas y retos de la investigación sobre redes son discutidas. Dicha taxonomía será de utilidad para que investigadores puedan encuadrar mejor los objetivos de futuros estudios.

## KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Review, social networks, taxonomy, identity, emotions, social relationships, privacy, motivations.

Revisión, redes sociales, taxonomía, identidad, emociones, relaciones sociales, privacidad, motivaciones.



## 1. Introduction

The pervasive use of online social networks (OSN) has been accompanied by a growing interest in researching them and the effects of use, resulting in a significant increase in scientific publications over the last decade. In this study, we have considered those OSN that are open and have specific characteristics that make them a unique research topic: an individual profile, a public list of searchable contacts, and a constant exchange of visible content that allows interaction amongst users (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Examples of the most widespread OSN of this type are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.

The use of OSN amongst youth is a normative experience constituting a new virtual platform that can potentially affect their psychological and social development. Studying this user experience is a complex matter and goes beyond evaluating the total time of use, given that the motives for using OSN are varied: maintaining contact with friends, making new friends, or simply passing the time (Krasnova, Veltri, Eling, & Buxmann, 2017). The activities they are used for are also diverse: uploading photos, making videos, writing personal things, or simply browsing what others post (Junco, 2012). Users even manage privacy differently, ranging from simply deciding to adopt a private profile to controlling the audience level for each post (Lankton, McKnight, & Tripp, 2017).

The rise in OSN research calls for a multidisciplinary, exhaustive, and updated thematic review to assess the current state of research. There are prior reviews from a particular perspective, for instance, the review by Cao, Basoglu, Sheng, & Lowry (2015) is a relevant study in the field of marketing and information systems. Systematic reviews on specific topics also exist (Verduyn, Jonide, & Kross, 2017 or Kokolakis, 2017); however only two systematic panoramic reviews on the main OSN research areas have been found. Firstly, Richter, Riemer, & Vom-Brocke (2011) identified 297 studies up to 2009 on OSN in general, classifying them in four large topics: user personal information disclosure and privacy; nature of links and the role of the personal social network; self-presentation and impression management; and motivations for adopting and using OSN. Secondly, we highlight the systematic review of studies on Facebook in social sciences by Wilson, Gosling, & Graham (2012), who identified 412 articles up to 2011. However, they also included purely descriptive studies. The authors proposed five main research topics: descriptive analysis of users; motives for use; presentation and identity; the role of Facebook in social interactions; and privacy and disclosure of personal information. These reviews have become outdated and lack a taxonomy that clarifies the overall user experience of OSN. This taxonomy could serve as a starting point for a more precise evaluation of the relationships between the experience of OSN use and the psychosocial development of users.

The general objective of this research is to conduct an updated review of studies up to 2017 that have researched the normalized OSN user experience. This consists of three specific objectives: 1) To identify prior studies addressing this experience; 2) To develop a detailed taxonomy of proposed topics, subtopics, variables, and constructs in this research area; and 3) To offer a quantitative assessment, or 'state of the art', after classifying and quantifying the identified studies based on the taxonomy.

## 2. Method

A systematic literature review of studies on the normalized OSN user experience was conducted following the PRISMA standards for methodological design: protocol, searching process, selection, and synthesis of results (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA group, 2009). The methodological decisions were compiled in a previously designed protocol.

### 2.1. Search strategy

Given the multidisciplinary nature of OSN research, a search of publications up to 2017 was conducted in specialized databases in the fields of psychology, health and medicine, education, sociology, and communication sciences (Web of Science, Scopus, Proquest, EBSCO, Annual Reviews, PsycINFO, Proquest Psychology Journals, PubMed, Medline, ERIC, ABI, ACM, Blackwell, JSTOR, SAGE Journals, Psycodoc, CSIC, and Dialnet).

The main research topics on OSN user experience were first established in order to define the search words. Next, a preliminary literature search was performed to locate key words in the title, abstract, and index terms of those publications considered relevant within each topic. Afterwards, a list of descriptors that included a combination of free terms, subject headings, and thesaurus terms in relation to two questions: social networks in general (i.e., 'Online Social Network', 'Social Networking Sites', 'Internet Social Networks', etc.) and broad research topics within these (i.e., 'time of use', 'SNS activities', 'type of use', 'uses and gratifications', 'emotions', 'attitudes', 'identity', 'online

communication', 'online interactions', 'social relationships', etc.) was elaborated. The model search equation can be provided upon request.

## 2.2 Eligibility criteria

The PICoS strategy (Population, Phenomena of Interest, Context, and Study Design) was used to define eligibility criteria.

- Population: Studies that included adolescents and/or adults selected in normative contexts (non-clinical) were taken into account. Studies that only analyzed online posts without specifying their sample of participants were excluded.

- Phenomena of Interest: The normalized experience of OSN users. Papers with an exclusive focus on problems related to OSN use such as 'cyberbullying', 'sexting', addictive use, or others, were not taken into account. Those that only used OSN as a means to recruit participants, to administer instruments, or as an intervention context without analyzing aspects related to use, were also discarded.

- Context: Studies about open OSN such as 'Facebook', 'Qzone', etc., whether they were used internationally or were specific to a country or region, were included. Studies focused on instant messaging apps, although they had a profile like 'WhatsApp', were excluded. Those focused exclusively on internet and mobile phone use, without analyzing OSN use, were also eliminated.

- Study design: The relevant publications were peer-reviewed quantitative studies with a cross-sectional, transversal, longitudinal or experimental design, either in English or Spanish. The grey literature (communications in conferences, summaries of conferences, or doctoral theses) was not initially considered; however, it was later included when their results were cited in some of the identified systematic reviews or relevant publications for each topic. Qualitative research, single-case studies, theoretical publications, or literature reviews were not taken into account.

The use of OSN amongst youth is a normative experience constituting a new virtual platform that can potentially affect their psychological and social development. Studying this user experience is a complex matter and goes beyond evaluating the total time of use, given that the motives for using OSN are varied: maintaining contact with friends, making new friends, or simply passing the time.

## 2.3. Selection process

The reference management software Mendeley was used in order to easily identify duplicates within the search results. Publication selection was realized through double screening using inclusion/exclusion criteria. A selection sheet was designed to ensure accuracy when applying the selection criteria. In phase one, the studies' relevance was determined by revising the title, abstract, and key words. In phase two, the full texts of potentially eligible studies were obtained and analyzed by two independent reviewers. Any discrepancy regarding publication eligibility was resolved through the collaboration of a third reviewer.

## 2.4. Data extraction

A standardized protocol, previously piloted by the authors, was used to extract the following data from the included publications: authors, publication date, studied OSN, study design, country, and age of the sample, instrument administration procedure, and study objectives and variables.

## 2.5. Data analysis and synthesis

Based on expert opinion, nine broad research topics regarding normalized OSN use were established. Information on the study variables was extracted from the selected publications to conduct a thematic analysis and

classify them according to these nine topics (Cherry, Perkins, Dickson, & Boland, 2014). Next, in periodic team meetings a conceptual hierarchy map was agreed upon, establishing the different subtopics within each topic, as well as discussing the differences or similarities between the different constructs included in each subtopic so that their final quantification would allow for a quantitative assessment.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Identification of selected publications

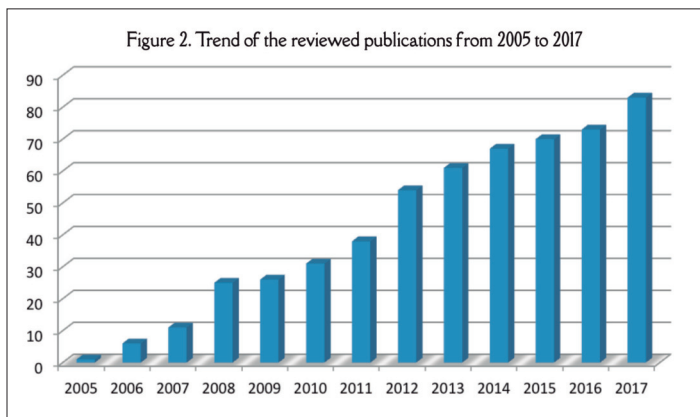
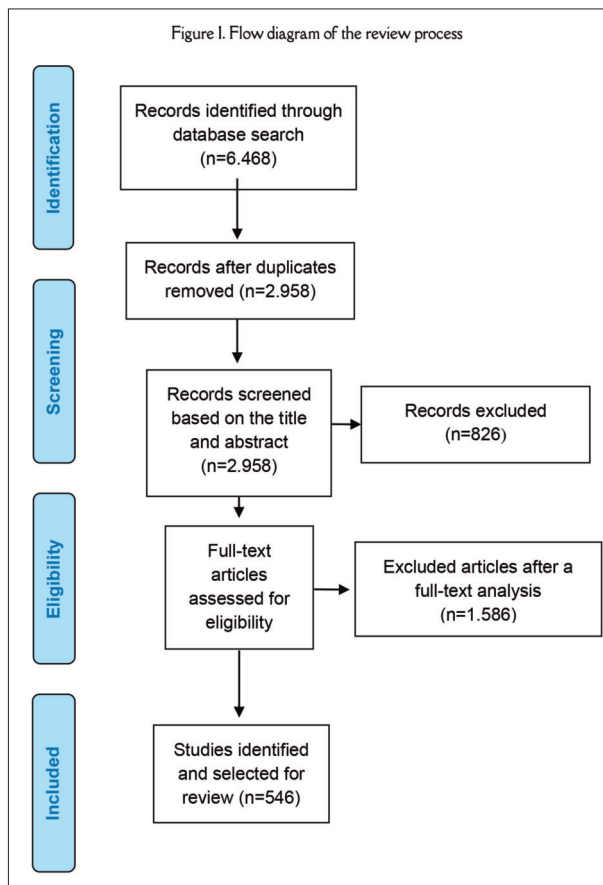
Figure 1 summarizes the search strategy and review process. The initial search resulted in 6,468 publications, of which 3,510 were duplicates. After screening the title and abstract, 826 publications (non-empirical studies, studies with clinical samples, or those focused on intervention) were discarded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. The full texts of the remaining papers were assessed to determine if they included study variables within the proposed taxonomy. This review resulted 1,586 discarded studies, mainly for their exclusive focus on OSN use-related problems or for not specifying their sample of participants. The literature review finally allowed 546 studies to be identified that met the eligibility criteria (they can be consulted at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.6809216>).

As can be observed in Figure 2, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of publications on normalized OSN use since 2005.

#### 3.2. Description of the included publications

Our search results indicated that 'Facebook' was the most researched OSN ( $n=337$ ). There were few studies on Twitter ( $n=15$ ), since many were excluded for not specifying their sample. Studies up to 2013 were found on the now extinct 'MySpace' ( $n=14$ ). Some studies since 2014 have been found on OSN currently used amongst youth such as 'Instagram' ( $n=10$ ), 'Snapchat' ( $n=8$ ) or 'Tinder' ( $n=2$ ), but they are still understudied. Others were found on OSN specific to Asia: 'Cyworld' ( $n=6$ ), 'Wechat' ( $n=6$ ), 'QZone' ( $n=5$ ), 'Kakao' ( $n=5$ ), 'Renren' ( $n=3$ ), 'Weibo' ( $n=2$ ) and 'Mixi' ( $n=2$ ). Lastly, we found studies on OSN in Europe: 'StudiVZ' ( $n=2$ ), 'CU2' ( $n=1$ ), 'Hyves' ( $n=1$ ) or the extinct 'Tuenti' ( $n=1$ ). The remaining publications studied OSN in general ( $n=141$ ).

Regarding study design, more than 80% were cross-sectional ( $n=431$ ), whereas longitudinal ( $n=54$ ) and experimental studies ( $n=54$ ), despite their increasing prevalence, were less frequent. Lastly, 15 publications were mixed studies. With respect to the



geographic location of the populations studied, almost half of the publications (n=262) included North American samples, principally from the USA (n=252). Studies conducted with European (n=124) and Asian (n=125) populations were frequent, whereas those with samples from Australia (n=17), Africa (n=4) and South America (n=2) were fewer.

Regarding the age range of the samples, young adults (18-29 years old) were the main population of study in two-thirds of the publications (n=312). Research on adolescents (12-18 years old) was much less frequent (n=54). In other cases, the sample included adolescents and young adults (n=16) or young adults and adults above 30 years old (n=62). Studies exclusively on adults were the minority (n=22). Lastly, other studies were found that included wide samples ranging from adolescents to adulthood (n=80).

Finally, there were more studies that administered instruments online (n=305) than in-person (n=233) or via other means such as telephone surveys (n=8).

### 3.3. Literature review based on the proposed taxonomy

The thematic analysis resulted in the following taxonomy of OSN use (see Table 1).

A first main topic is the description and quantification of OSN overall use. The most analyzed descriptive variable is user history or the length of time since becoming a user, normally employed as a control variable. There are few studies analyzing differences in certain relevant variables related to user or non-user status or being a single-user or multi-user. Self-reported time is the most frequently used variable to quantify use, normally calculated as the average daily use. Frequency of logins is the second most studied variable, measured either directly or using an ad hoc ordinal scale. Intensity of use is also frequently evaluated thanks to the popularization of the scale by Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe (2007), compared to other measures such as the general degree of use or the habit or routine of use.

Another topic that has been studied even more is the frequency of user activities.

<b>Table 1. Taxonomy of topics, subtopics, and variables regarding OSN use</b>	
<b>Topic 1. Overall use: description and quantification of use (n=248)</b>	
Descriptive variables of users: account, active or inactive, time using OSN, number of OSN used (n=66)	
Frequency of logins (n=76)	
Degree, habit, and intensity of use (n=69)	
Time spent on OSN (n=188)	
<b>Topic 2. Individual activity and types of use (n=275)</b>	
<b>2.1. General analysis of activity (n=46)</b>	
Number of posts (n=31)	
Analysis of post quality and content (n=23)	
<b>2.2. Frequency of activities (n=214)</b>	
General social browsing (n=28)	
Social searching (n=20)	
'One-click' activities to keep in touch ('likes', etc.) (n=21)	
Private communication: chat or messages (n=15)	
One-to-one public communication (i.e., comments) (n=42)	
Broadcasting (n=97)	
Profile configuration and revision (n=20)	
Sending and accepting 'friend requests' (n=4)	
Editing posts (n=4)	
Reactive activities: un-tagging, deleting posts, account, etc. (n=7)	
Other activities, such as games and apps (n=13)	
<b>2.3. Types of use (n=74)</b>	
Active use (n=42)	
General active use (n=21)	
Subtype interactive-communicative (n=23)	
Subtype productive (n=16)	
Passive use (n=36)	
General passive use (n=27)	
Subtype general social browsing (n=6)	
Subtype social searching (n=4)	
<b>Topic 3. Analysis of the social network of contacts (n=193)</b>	
<b>3.1. Structure of the online social network (n=156)</b>	
Size of the network (n=128)	
Composition of the network (n=61)	
Diversity or homogeneity of the network (n=8)	
Number and type of group affiliations (n=18)	
Overlap of online and offline networks (n=30)	
<b>3.2. Dynamic and functioning of the social network (n=68)</b>	
Analysis of the feedback received (n=24)	
Analysis of the usual audience (n=12)	
Analysis of the strength of ties (n=23)	
Analysis of the degree of interactivity (n=17)	
Analysis of the relationship changes in the offline network after using OSN (n=6)	
<b>Topic 4. Profile and privacy management (n=116)</b>	
<b>4.1. Profile analysis and configuration (n=64)</b>	
Analysis of characteristics of the profile photo (n=16)	
Analysis of the informative items associated with the profile (n=47)	
Overall evaluation of the profile: accuracy, attractiveness, status, etc. (n=18)	
<b>4.2. Perceptions and management of privacy (n=76)</b>	
Perceptions about privacy concerns and control (n=62)	
Privacy management behaviors and strategies (n=34)	

The activities carried out on OSN can be very diverse, classifying into 11 specific online behaviors. The most studied are those involving an active use such as broadcasting or one-to-many posts, followed at a distance by directed communication such as commenting on other's posts. Activities involving a passive use, both in the sense of general social browsing (i.e., surfing the News Feed page in general) and social searching with specific interest in others, as well as activities used to keep in touch (i.e., 'liking'), have been studied to a lesser degree.

According to the frequency of activities, researchers have typically conducted factorial analyses in order to differentiate between individuals isolating different types of use. Two clearly identified differentiated forms were active and passive use. In turn, subtypes have been identified within active use: the type of interactive-communicative use that happens between specific users (i.e., 'likes' and commenting on others' posts), or the type of productive use focused on content posting directed to a broad audience (i.e., status updates). However, passive use has been studied in general terms. Rarely have researchers taken into account the distinction between the use focused on passive social browsing and passive social searching with an interest on specific users.

Regarding the social network of contacts, the most studied aspects (size, composition, and overlap of online and offline network) have more to do with the characterization of their structure than with their dynamics or functioning. The fact that dynamics are more difficult to analyze could justify the fewer number of studies focused on aspects such as feedback quantity and quality, the strength of ties with contacts, and the degree of online interactivity.

In terms of profile and privacy management, the user profile—especially the amount of personal information revealed—is extensively analyzed. Certain studies also analyze the profile photo or make a general profile evaluation based on criteria such as accuracy, status, attractiveness, etc. Different constructs have also been proposed regarding the perception of online privacy: privacy concerns, the controllability of personal information, and even general beliefs on online trust or perceived risk in OSN. Privacy concerns, whether in general or for specific risks (i.e. undesired third-party access) are some of the most studied variables. Lastly, there are few studies on privacy management behaviors, which include not only the typical basic decision on whether to have a public or private profile, but also less frequent behaviors such as controlling the size and type of audience of the posts.

The second part of the taxonomy on OSN user experience is presented below (Table 2).

Research on both the different perceptions of OSN as well as the activities that influence use are normally included together in explanatory models of continuance intention. On one hand, different perceptions considered to be potential facilitators of higher OSN use, for example easy use, entertainment, or usefulness, have been studied. Research has also been conducted on aspects related to the perception and social representation of the OSN as well as the influence of the social presence of the peer group in its use. Both the general trust in the OSN and their members, as well as certain external or structural characteristics of the OSN that make it more appealing, such as prestige, attractive format, possible interactivity, or compatibility, have been studied. On the other hand, the continuance intention is the most studied construct regarding user attitudes towards OSN. Analyses have also been conducted on positive attitude towards use, satisfaction, engagement and commitment to use, and even identification and pride with the OSN expressed through recommending it to others. All of them are positive attitudes with different subtleties, different from research on fatigue or the intention to switch-off and 'FOMO' or fear of missing out.

The motives for use constitute another main topic. Given the social nature of OSN, it should come as no surprise that social needs motives such as maintaining social contact, establishing new relationships, or looking for social recognition, have generated the most interest. Regarding individual needs, hedonistic and mood regulation needs stand out, with seeking positive sensations, whether to pass the time or as entertainment, being frequently studied. Information access is in third place, especially the motives for seeking information: either curiosity about what happens in general or about specific people. In fourth place, motives related to personal identity development are less frequently studied. Most of them include either motives of self-validation (with the purpose of impressing others and seeking approval or reinforcement), or the self-expression of feelings or opinions.

Research typically considers processes related to user experience, albeit social, personal or cognitive-emotional, as possible mediators between OSN use and their effects on users. The social processes have been addressed the most. Four aspects stand out and have been proposed as possible benefits: the perceived online social support, the sense of online social connectedness, the quality of online relationships, and online social impact and popularity. Identity processes in OSN have sparked a notable interest. On one hand, there are studies that address the degree and aspects of online self-disclosure: extent, depth, or emotional valence. On the other hand, different online self-presentation strategies are analyzed: idealized presentation in order to impress others more than other strategies based on honesty and authenticity. Lastly, the cognitive-emotional processes, typically studied as mediators between

use and its possible effects on subjective wellbeing, have been addressed the least. Online social comparison is the most researched process due to its relationship with envy, criticism, self-devaluation, etc. Lastly, post-use emotions have been studied, paying closer attention to negative rather than positive feelings.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

This review has offered a wide perspective on research regarding normalized OSN use as well as an assessment of the presence of different research topics thanks to the proposed taxonomy.

The quantification of use is a central topic in order to answer fundamental questions such as possible user effects on subjective wellbeing and social development. The fact that the measures used are so diverse raises the issue of their operationalization and validity, since most studies are based on self-reported information and therefore introduce a certain retrospective bias. In order to preserve variability, Junco (2012) recommends that user information be collected directly and not through interval scales. Seabrook, Kern, & Richard (2016) propose using other data collection methods such as daily sampling of user experience. In the end, an accurate measure of amount of use is infrequent except in the context of a controlled experiment, which would question the validity of the results from the research on time spent on OSN.

There are different proposals of both inventories of activities (Junco, 2012) and scales about the type of OSN use based on the activities (Gerson, Plagnol, & Corr, 2017). Some studies have evaluated the type of active use according to the record of real OSN activities in the network (Burke, 2011); however, this does not allow passive use to be evaluated, which in reality is what users do most of the time. In addition, we believe it is necessary to consider different types of use, at least discriminating between more communicative and interactive use from more productive use, as well as contemplate the possible differential benefits regarding loneliness,

**Table 2. Taxonomy of topics, subtopics, and variables regarding the experience of OSN use**

Topic 5. Perception and attitudes towards OSN and its use (n=157)
5.1. Perception of OSN (n=92)
Trust and perceived risk (n=17)
Perception of external network features that potentially encourage use: prestige, attractive format, editability, etc. (n=26)
Perception of social presence and influence, as well as the peer group regarding use of the OSN (n=33)
Perception of characteristics related to user experience: ease of use, entertainment, usefulness, etc. (n=57)
5.2. Attitudes towards OSN use (n=102)
Positive attitude towards use (n=30)
Satisfaction with use (n=29)
Identification-pride with the OSN (n=8)
Engagement and commitment to use (n=19)
Continuance intention (n=42)
Fatigue from use (n=3)
Fear of missing out 'FOMO' (n=10)
Topic 6. Needs and motives related to OSN use (n=183)
6.1. The need for informative competence (n=60)
Information access motives (n=48)
Motives of usefulness and gaining information: ideas, resources, document organization, social, etc. (n=22)
Motives with an informational purpose related to certain contexts: academic, professional, etc. (n=18)
6.2. Hedonistic and mood regulation needs (n=78)
Motives of seeking positive sensations: to pass the time, entertainment, etc. (n=62)
Motives of seeking relaxation: escape, escapism, etc. (n=14)
Motives of seeking pleasure: enjoyment, flow, etc. (n=17)
6.3. Personal identity development (n=43)
Motives of exploration and clarification of personal identity (n=3)
Motives of self-expression: expression of emotions, opinions, etc. (n=23)
Motives of self-validation: seeking approval, popularity, to impress others, etc. (n=27)
6.4. The need to relate (n=98)
Motives of maintaining social contact (n=71)
Motives of establishing new relationships (n=26)
Motives of sense of belonging to a virtual community (n=19)
Motives of social rating and recognition (n=46)
Topic 7. Cognitive-emotional processes related to OSN use (n=63)
Processes related to online social comparison: lurking, envy, criticism, self-devaluation, etc. (n=41)
Processes related to consciousness of the public image: awareness of self-image, embarrassment, regret, rejection, etc. (n=23)
Processes related to different emotions stemming from the user experience: positive emotions of enjoyment and flow, or post-use negative emotions (n=34)
Topic 8. Identity processes related to OSN use (n=126)
Online self-disclosure: degree and possible aspects such as depth, valence, etc. (n=77)
Online self-presentation strategies (n=73)
Topic 9. Social processes related to OSN use (n=231)
Online social support (n=89)
Sense of online social connectedness (n=80)
Quality of online social relationships (n=80)
Online social impact and popularity (n=68)
Preference for online communication (n=30)

social connectedness, or social support. The same occurs with passive use, which has been associated with a decline in user's subjective wellbeing (Verduyn & al., 2017). However, the differential effects between passive and unspecific browsing of the news section and the searching of the specific users (Wise, Alhabash, & Park, 2010) have hardly been explored.

Research on OSN has aroused significant sociological interest (Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe, 2014). Much attention has been paid to structural aspects such as network size and composition in order to clarify the possible overlap between online and offline social networks. The size of the network has commonly been considered to be another index of quantitative and active use, whereas in reality, having a higher number of contacts is not always seen as positive (Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, & Walther, 2008). The network composition is sometimes described in great detail (Ellison & al., 2007), analyzing the possible relationship between the percentage of real friendships and virtual friendships or strangers (Antheunis, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2012). Understanding the structure of the OSN allows us to capture a specific moment in time; however, evaluation of the internal dynamic and interaction is more difficult.

Although aspects such as feedback, audience, and the strength of ties established with each contact have been evaluated, tools should be developed in order to evaluate the communicative exchange across time and, for example, to examine the different immersion experiences in OSN use and post-use relationship changes.

**The processes related to user experience, albeit social, identity or cognitive-emotional, have generated interest as possible mediators between OSN use and their effects on users. Firstly, the identity processes are protagonist in calculating how much personal disclosure is opportune for developing or reinforcing online links.**

Research on profile and privacy management have evolved

within the Privacy Calculus model (James, Warkentin, & Colignon, 2015), which argues that aspects such as photo choice, type of profile, or associated information, respond to a tradeoff between privacy costs and possible benefits of online self-disclosure. Another key aspect demonstrated by research is that a general concern for privacy is not necessarily consistent with adopting OSN privacy behaviors in the network. Little research has been conducted on privacy management strategies (Lankton & al., 2017), which range from strict privacy control based on sharing as little as possible to more permissive control strategies such as sharing everything.

Research on perceptions and attitudes towards OSN is related to applying the Technology Acceptance Models to the use of social networks (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014). These studies almost always have an underlying positive bias, assuming the user's predisposition towards certain positive expectations associated with use (attractive format, easy use, or entertainment, etc.). Thereby, if certain expectations are met, the cycle is self-fulfilling. This contrasts with the lesser-studied phenomena of what happens when the user's expectations are unfulfilled time and time again, and if this may lead to perceptions and attitudes related to fatigue and the intention of disconnecting. Another issue only recently addressed is if compulsive use amongst the youngest users could be partially explained as a consequence of social pressure towards use and involves attitudes such as 'FOMO' or the fear of missing out (Oberst, Wegmann, Stodt, Brand, & Chamarro, 2017).

Research on motives for OSN use has been bolstered through the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Krasnova & al., 2017), but it has a huge interest for its relationship to the fundamental psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Until now, research has typically focused on gender and personality differences behind these motives but rarely the possible relationships between these motives and relevant issues such as emotional wellbeing or addiction. It should be noted that the studies focus primarily on the motives for using Facebook, making it necessary to examine the use motives of certain recent and extensively used OSN amongst youth, e.g., Instagram (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Motives of non-use have also been neglected in research, which could be a form of distinction from others in the context of widespread use.

Lastly, the processes related to user experience, albeit social, identity or cognitive-emotional, have generated interest as possible mediators between OSN use and their effects on users. Firstly, the identity processes are



protagonist in calculating how much personal disclosure is opportune for developing or reinforcing online links (Bazarova & Choi, 2014). On the other hand, little research has focused on whether, despite the overall tendency of idealized and positive online self-presentation, other more honest and authentic forms of presentation are possible and adequate. We believe that a more exhaustive study of the different self-presentation strategies is in order (Michikyam, Dennis, & Subrahmanyam, 2014). Secondly, in the case of cognitive-emotional processes, Seabrook & al. (2016) consider that the literature partially demonstrates both a positive path of the social processes and a negative path of OSN use. That is to say, it seems to be fundamentally sustained that active use could lead to more social interaction and possible social benefits, such as an increase in perceived social support, the feeling of social connection, or a decrease in loneliness, especially in subjects with social anxiety who would make a compensatory use. It has also been argued that since most OSN use is passive, this could favor negative social comparison with others' lives, leading to a decrease in emotional wellbeing (Verduyn & al., 2017).

In conclusion, some of this study's limitations inherent to decision making should be addressed. Our review is not completely panoramic since an important number of studies were eliminated due to their exclusive focus on the problematic use of OSN. Constraints on the length of the present paper hinder us from further elaborating the discussion section regarding the research topics or on the necessary integration of diverse constructs proposed in the different research areas. We believe that the proposed taxonomy could help orient researchers interested in the OSN use both in the fields of communication as well as education. One must bear in mind that this is a dynamic phenomenon in continual evolution that should be socially observed and informed (Sádaba & Bringué, 2011). On the other hand, the quantitative assessment of the research conducted to date can also indicate which thematic areas have been less studied and require more research. More specific literature reviews on each of the presented topics are needed in order to further delimit the taxonomy.

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