



Feeling happy: adolescents' emotion sharing on social media

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Introduction

Adolescence: time of change



Intense emotional experiences and fluctuations in emotional state



Sharing emotions is a human need

The **social sharing of emotion** “entails a description of the emotional event in a socially-shared language by the person who experienced it to another” (Rimé, 2009, p. 65).

Emotions can be shared

with different audiences

- E.g. parents, siblings, (best) friends, lovers, strangers, ...
- Adolescents spend less time with their parents and develop closer ties with their peers

via different communication modes

- E.g. face-to-face, by calling, sending a text, posting on SNS, on a photo-sharing site, ..
- These have different affordances
 - Influences the media selection process
 - Influences the personal expression and feedback process (e.g. disinhibition effect, misinterpretation)
- Certain communication channels seem to be better for adolescents' wellbeing than others when sharing emotions

Aim of the study

Providing a deeper understanding of adolescents' motivations to share specific emotions to certain persons and via certain communication modes

Methods

In-depth interviews

- Positive advice of our Ethics committee

Sample: 19 adolescents between 14-17 years old

- Boys (8) – girls (11)
- 14 years old (4), 15 years old (4), 16 years old (6), 17 years old (5)
- Type of education: general (12), technical (6), vocational (1)

Interview

- Conducted at the respondent's school, home or at the university
- +/- 45 to 75 min
- Informed consent from both respondent and parents

Preliminary results

Audiences

- Mostly (best) friends
- Followed by family members (mothers > fathers)
- But also
 - Teachers
 - Strangers (e.g. on Twitter)

Communication modes

- Face-to-face
- SMS (WhatsApp) / FB chat
- Calling / Skype
- Twitter
- FB status
- Snapchat / Photo-sharing sites
- E-mail



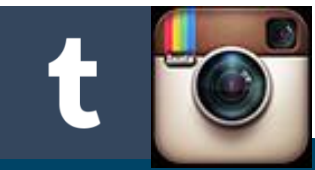
- Private: often used, + and – emotions
- Public: no emotions or otherwise mostly + emotions
 - Directly or indirectly (quotes, ...)
- Mostly with friends, or family members such as cousins



- + and – emotions
- Some very direct, others rather vague
- Account: own name or anonymous
- Friends and (or only) strangers

- Less popular for sharing emotions: not appropriate
- With friends and (often) strangers

- Only for “funny things”, not for sharing - emotions
- Mostly with friends



Sharing publicly on social media...

- Although less popular than talking face-to-face, calling, texting or sharing in private on social media, this does not mean they do not do that at all

Discussion

Influencing factors

- The emotion (which emotion, intensity)
- Privacy concern
- Contextual factors
 - General use of communication modes
 - Affordances
 - Weekday or weekend, day or night, ..
- Social factors
 - The audience
 - Social presence
 - Reactions of others (earlier + or - experiences)
 - Social/ behavioral norms
 - Impression management



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