

# Diagnóstico de utilización de Redes sociales: factor de riesgo para el adolescente

## Diagnosis of the use of social networks: risk factor for the adolescent

Diagnóstico de uso de redes sociais: fator de risco para adolescentes

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#### Resumen

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo diagnosticar y analizar la utilización de redes sociales por parte de adolescentes (12-15 años) residentes en la ciudad de Zacatecas, Zacatecas. Para cumplir el objetivo se utilizó un método de tipo mixto con un muestreo de 322 sujetos de instituciones educativas de nivel básico en secundarias. En la muestra estudiada se pudo detectar en términos de porcentajes de frecuencia lineal una gran influencia en el uso de los medios de comunicación para desarrollar conductas inapropiadas a su nivel de desarrollo cognitivo,



madurativo y social; asociándose a conductas de riesgo como lo son el acoso cibernético (83%), el sexting (72%) y grooming (47%), entre otros.

**Palabras clave:** adolescencia, medios de comunicación, redes sociales, seguridad de uso, vulnerabilidad.

## Abstract

The present research aims to diagnose and analyze the use of social networks by adolescents (12-15 years) living in the city of Zacatecas, Zacatecas. To meet the objective a mixed type method with a sample of 322 subjects educational institutions from basic to secondary level was used. In the sample studied, it was possible to detect in terms of linear frequency percentages a great influence in the use of the media to develop behaviors inappropriate to their level of cognitive, maturation and social development; associating with risk behaviors such as cyber bullying (83%), sexting (72%) and grooming (47%), among others.

Keywords: adolescence, media, social networks, safety of use, vulnerability.

#### Resumo

O objetivo desta pesquisa é diagnosticar e analisar o uso de redes sociais por adolescentes (12-15 anos) que vivem na cidade de Zacatecas, Zacatecas. Para atingir o objetivo, utilizou-se um método de tipo misto, com uma amostragem de 322 sujeitos de instituições de ensino secundário. Na amostra estudada, foi possível detectar, em termos de porcentagens de freqüência linear, uma grande influência no uso da mídia para desenvolver comportamentos inapropriados em seu nível de desenvolvimento cognitivo, madurativo e social; associando-se a comportamentos de risco, tais como o bullying cibernético (83%), sexo (72%) e grooming (47%), dentre outros.

Palavras-chave: adolescência, mídia, redes sociais, segurança de uso, vulnerabilidade.

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#### Introduction

The emergence of new technologies has influenced and transformed society; Human relationships change and adapt to the social organization of the historical context. In each period, psychosocial characteristics are observed that define the people who were born in it and generational categories are established in order to identify them and place them around certain events of the context that they have lived. In this way, there are historical and cultural elements that influence the way in which people of a certain generation behave; As Orozco (2015) refers, the communicative process is articulated to social significance as a process of cultural production, which includes the historical context, values, idols of the moment, attitudes and behavior of each era, giving rise to a social generation, which can be defined as "people within a specific population who live the same significant events in a given period" (Bulnes, 2016, p.68).

Howe and Strauss (2000) introduce the word millenials, which characterizes a new generation that has replaced the baby boomers (those born in the period from after the Second World War to sixty) and is followed by the generation "X" "(Those born after the sixties until 1981). The living and technological conditions have led to substantial changes in the different generations and their form of interrelation. As a result, the so-called "Y" generation integrates those born between 1982 and 1992. Those born after 1992 constitute what has been called the "Z" generation. According to the Executive Report of Generation "Z", referred to in ATREVIA (2016), this is the integration of digital technology, applied to all areas of life, mainly in the educational system; For this, the members of this generation seek new models of learning, which allows access to new technological tools that provide new learning alternatives as well as the creation of a new idiosyncrasy, creating interpersonal relationships that impact on adult life and mobilize new forms of social interrelation.

Adolescents are growing up in a society where privilege is directed to the investigation through new technologies: the use of Internet, virtual reality, networks and the rupture of spacetime dependence. The above allows them the possibility of being communicated with others from any place; it is a context that allows them to entertain, inform themselves, develop skills and, also, new characteristics of social interrelation, which can be counterproductive to the stage of adolescent's evolutionary development.



The content of the new ways of relating through the digital age has modified various aspects of life; for this reason, the "information society", pointed out by Salvat and Serrano (2011), focuses on a substantial change that would be "one in which information becomes the decisive factor of economic organization as a consequence of the new digital technology. and that generates profound changes in all areas of life, cultural, political and social, especially determined by the transformation of spatio-temporal conditions in the interactions between the members of these societies. "

This new form of communication can be determined mainly in a constant change and personal and group decisions that generate new conditions of communication systems and values in adolescents, as well as technological tools that generate "new social conditions ..., policies and the decisive role of these with its presence in all sectors of society and shaping the culture, social dynamics, labor structures and the economy "(Cebreiro, cited by Aguilar and Farray, 2007). For this reason, young people are immersed in a world of dangers that at a specific time can not detect potential risks such as human trafficking, sexting, grooming, extortion, exposure to antivalores, presenting inappropriate behavior and even self-destructive, among others, that are linked to these new modes of interrelation.

With the emergence of Web 2.0, in addition to the economic-commercial implications, possibilities were opened for users that were previously not contemplated. One of the outstanding aspects is that the user is no longer just a consumer of what exists on the Internet, but is now a producer of content that, in addition, can exchange and collaborate with others for the production of these, which is possible thanks to the tools and applications developed, among which social networks stand out. The product of these is created by the same participants, who contribute by contributing content on the web. As Bautista says (cited by Gonzálvez, 2013):



They do this through their own creative and personal contributions in blogs or logbooks, microblogging (Twitter), fotologs (or virtual photo albums), video hosting services (Youtube, Vimeo), discussion forums, wiki platforms, shared file services or purely social networks (Facebook, Tuenti, Google+). Thus, in Web 2.0, the content is provided by the user, who, as he passes through the network, integrates information, data and testimonies.

At present, adolescents have been born and raised in specific technological circumstances, resulting from the constant evolution of historical social contents, which have been characterized by the cultural, economic and political changes of current demands, all this, influenced by the technological generation, with new emerging tools, that they have had to live, along with the development and innovation of information and communication technologies (ICT) and how they have interacted to conform, according to Bulnes (2014), a new society where information prevails, mainly characterized by the impact of Web 2.0, giving the user the possibility of producing and exchanging information through the tools and applications that the development of this offers, mainly in the use of misuse and use of the social networks.

#### Social networks and their relationship with the adolescent

Social networks are made up of people who interact face to face and are linked to each other in different ways; They relate to family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, colleagues and others.

During adolescence, the group is important, because peer networks are essential to acquire social skills and specific knowledge that will help shape the future personality. Adolescents learn from their friends and peers the behaviors that society rewards and the roles they can take. Craig and Baucum (2009) point out that between the ages of 12 and 17, adolescents develop the capacity to establish closer and more intimate friendships. Throughout this lapse, almost all teens claim to have one or two "best friends," and other less important, "good" friends. These friendships are usually stable and last at least a year, and can be consolidated over time. Young people tend to choose their friends based on common interests and activities, egalitarian relationship, loyalty and commitment.



Consequently, in the field of the Internet, according to Marín de la I. (2010), social networks focus the interaction on the people themselves, which create a profile that represents their identity within the network and that is the object liaison with other people. The new forms of communication, specifically the use of current applications, have made possible the progress of the use of social networks, at different ages, through which the human being communicates and interacts according to their needs. According to Freire (2008, cited by Hurlock, 2010), networks make up a structure that encourages social interaction, including reciprocal links between people, seeking the same objective and, with it, the adolescent, aims to adjust the social environment and, at the same time, create belonging, which momentarily offers stability to peers.

The possibility of expanding and spreading the networks allow a new domain to promote new affective contacts; Solomon and Schrum (2007) point out that it encompasses a series of tools that allow creating and sharing in real time several types of interactions, such as those of a social nature that promote self-expression, and thus, emerge community networks, blogs, wikis and photo and video sites. Between 2001 and 2002, the first sites that foster networks of friends emerge. In 2003 they became popular with the appearance of sites such as Friendster, Tribe and Myspace. Google launches Orkut in January 2004, supporting an experiment that one of its employees carried out in their free time. In 2005, Yahoo 360° and others enter (Freire, 2008). In February of 2004 the social network Thefacebook arises like a project for the students of Harvard; in 2005 it had five million users and officially became, then, Facebook. In the same year, it incorporated high school students and it was opened worldwide in the fall of 2006 (Kirkpatrick, 2011).

#### Adolescence

Adolescence, as a phase of development and evolution of the subject, arises from the Latin verb adolescere, which means to grow. This period is characterized by the transition of various changes, specifically the physical and psychological changes that are present to change from a state of third childhood to a state of adulthood. Sorenson (cited by Hurlock, 2010) characterized this stage of development as a necessary step to reach adulthood and is based on a constructive transition, necessary for the development of the self; therefore, in this phase the pseudo-estrangement of the dependencies by the family and in a constant effort to reach



adulthood is conformed. In this way, young people only adopt criteria for their intellectual development and, when making use of networks, they encounter a lot of information and do not know how to organize it; For this reason, it constitutes a significant aspect in the process of human progress, which implies changes of diverse behavioral orders, being able to generate risk factors within development.

Horrokcs (2012) suggests that adolescence should take into account the time, the culture, its current links and the psychological past, as well as the factors of the physical environment; These factors usually use them in a dual way: on the one hand, they are used to integrate compensatory behaviors in a favorable way and, on the other, they use spaces to evade realities through ideologies that are not favorable for reaching the adult stage, focusing in virtual networks.

Therefore, the characteristics that adolescents have, according to Harrocks (2013), refer to the relevance of psychological aspects and the environment, which provide strengths and / or weaknesses in development to guide the growth and development of young people. , highlighting the following:

- 1. Adolescence is a stage of development, in which the young person puts to the test the knowledge acquired previously and, due to his own immaturity, tries to perform pseudo stabilizations in a gradual way until reaching adulthood; which will allow a gradual adjustment of himself with the social environment, causing emotional pain in the integration of his ideal world with the real one.
- 2. On the other hand, the adolescent will have a constant search of status before the parental figures and before the surrounding environment; For this reason, they develop diversity of interests as a form of self-acceptance before society and, above all, before themselves.
- 3. As a consequence, group relationships acquire greater importance; the young person seeks to acquire an achievement and status within the group of equals, so that age-specific sexual interests emerge, which will be intense but ephemeral and that, nevertheless, may be full of conflicts that foster difficult emotional relationships and even dependent relationships that can put the young person's physical and emotional health at risk, as is the bad use of networks.



- 4. The reaching of physical maturity leads to a series of changes, among which are the bodily and their own vision in their body image, how they are perceived and the feelings that are associated with that perception, a decisive factor in establishing the self-assessment (Pacheco, 2014); generating the search for recognition among equals as well as in their social environment.
- 5. The recognition should allow greater strength in intellectual development and, therefore, a greater understanding and academic expansion, achieved by the evolution of emerging technologies. However, the integration of networks, within the educational field, is still limited in the use for school development purposes (Pacheco and Lozano, 2014).
- 6. On the other hand, the formation and evaluation of values is accompanied by their own ideals that will gradually be incorporated into their behavioral repertoire, maintaining the congruence between them.

The previous points of reference integrate common aspects to conceptualize the period of adolescence, according to Horrocks (2013); It should be taken into account that there are individual differences that will manifest as the person develops his personality, until reaching the adult stage.

#### Adolescence and social networks

The group is important for adolescents and, with the emergence of social networks, the type and form of interaction among the young people themselves have transformed the type of link (Vidales, 2011); Communication refers to the integration and inclusion of interpersonal and mass communication. Therefore, there have been numerous investigations related to the use of the Internet and its possibilities of communication between adolescents and young people. According to Livingstone (2008), the interest of academics, parents, and even young people themselves has been aroused regarding the following question: what is now what characterizes the construction of relationships with oneself? and peers, since it is increasingly mediated by social networking sites?



Young people are users of media that allow not only the reception, but also the creation of the content; the language of social networks is being reformulated: people nowadays build their "profile", make it "public" or "private", express themselves by "comment" or "message", their "best friends" in your "wall" and what people "block" or "add" to your network, among others. It seems that the creation of online content and networks means for many a means of managing their own identity, lifestyle and social relationships.

For adolescents, online dominance is adopted with enthusiasm because it represents "their" visible space for the peer group, but escapes adult vigilance; an exciting opportunity still relatively safe to carry out the task of the social psychology of adolescence to build, experiment and present a reflective project of the self in a social context (Buchner, Bois-Reymond and Kruger, 1995; Giddens, 1991, cited by Livingstone, 2008).

The arrival of the Internet has changed the traditional conditions for the constitution of identity. Physical interaction is no longer present, which means that people interact with each other in a non-face-to-face way; the text reveals nothing about its physical characteristics. The anonymity creates a technologically mediated environment and an important characteristic of this modality emerges from the constitution of identity, the tendency to play to be another person or to create different characters online, producing new identities (Zhao, Grasmuck yMartin, 2008).

In this context, the risks of the use of social networks are presented, since non-physicality enables the creation of characters, communities, activities or games that put adolescents at risk physically and psychologically; Therefore, the question is asked: How do social networks influence risk behaviors in adolescents? This is because the monopoly of social networks, referred to by Berkin (2015), forms trends, but these must be oriented towards quality to create a protective core; In this study, aimed exclusively at young people, who still do not clearly identify the protection of these resources from emerging technologies, the following hypothesis is established: the greater the use of social networks, the greater the risk factors for adolescents.

## Method

In the present study, it is oriented to the analysis of risk behaviors in adolescents based on the management of the media, specifically social networks. In order to achieve the objectives outlined in the study, it was necessary to use a non-experimental design with a mixed approach, from a descriptive perspective of an inductive-cross-section, in order to point out the behaviors exercised by the young adolescent in the use of the media. social, which can be risky in their personal and social development.

The population was selected in a sampling area frame of high school students of the morning shift in the zone of Zacatecas, Zacatecas, with a probabilistic sample type with conglomerate characteristics (schools), with an adjustment sample of 95% of Reliability

The information was collected in a systematized and structured way by means of primary research techniques. To do this, only one unit of analysis was assessed, consisting of 322 young people, whose ages fluctuate between 12 and 15 years (with an average of 13.7 years), of both sexes (50% female and 50% male), with data constituted a collection time of six months (October 2016 to March 2017), noting that the information obtained was based on an informed consent of the students, parents and educational centers.

In order to respond to the research, a questionnaire of 32 structured reagents was designed with the intention of evaluating the presence and use of communication media (social networks), detecting the risks they imply for the population of early adolescence (Papalia, Oldsy Feldman, 2009) and include descriptive criteria for the use of social networks in the young people evaluated, expressed in five multi- national categorical levels (Alaminos and Castejón, 2006), with items from 0 to 4 based on Likert scaling, which were consolidated by thematic areas grouped in social networks and risk factors, each one of them integrated by specific indicators to be evaluated.

With the initially designed questionnaire, an expert evaluation was carried out and then a previous piloting of 77 students, obtaining an internal consistency validity of 8.63 derived by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, for which the reliability of the instrument was estimated by applying it to the population selected individually. In this way, the research was organized around the assessment of the use of social networks and risk behaviors that involve the population of



adolescents studied, whose inclusion criteria were adolescents aged 12 to 15 years, indistinct sex and be enrolled in a school-based educational program.

The information was collected in the educational institutions chosen by the sampling procedure, limited to Zacatecas capital, with prior authorization from parents and / or guardians of the minors, applying the instrument within the educational facilities in strategic places, where they were explained the pertinent instructions for the correct application of the questionnaire.

In the research, indicators were conceptualized and operationalized in relation to the thematic areas designed by the instrument, which were integrated into specific categories (described in Table 1):

No.	Indicadores
1	Conceptualización (conocimiento de redes), tipo de uso,
	tiempo.
2	Reglas de uso, cyberbullyng, sexting, grooming.
	No. 1 2

Table 1. Integración de Categorías.

#### Fuente: elaboración propia.

The information obtained was codified in electronic support, for which a data platform was created according to the established objectives. Consequently, the percentages corresponding to absolute and relative frequencies were calculated around the degree of conceptualization of user use, use of technologies related to the type and form of use of social networks and the time dedicated to the devices, integrating the levels of risks that category 1 throws; On the other hand, category 2 established risk behaviors that adolescents can execute on social networks, which generate negative consequences in their personal and social development; for this, once the categories described above were formed, the analysis indicators defined by way of diagnosis were identified by the instrument, characteristics that were complementary and of relevance for the articulation between them and that helped to establish linear frequencies of interpretation of results between the use of social networks and elements of risk to which the adolescent may be endangered.



## Results

In order to make a description and analysis of the uses of social networks in adolescents in a precise manner, firstly, the results related to category 1 are presented and then those referring to category 2, which describes the risk behaviors in the use of such networks.

## Category 1

In relation to social networks, it was possible to identify that young adolescents have a wrong conception of social networks, integrating them in their entirety as a form of hobby and not as a social structure that is integrated by diverse performances of order, origin and functions. with social significance (Orozco, 2015); Linear frequencies were reached with a total of 100% of the sample studied. On the other hand, the time used reached a minimum of six hours a day and a maximum of 14 hours a day, obtaining an average of 11.2 hours per day in the use and use of social networks; In turn, the instrument evidenced the type of use of networks, which reached 93% of use as a hobby, 4% for academic uses and 3% of varied uses (described in Table 2).

Uso de redes	Porcentaje de uso de redes	
Utilización como pasatiempo	93%	
Utilización en usos académicos	4%	
Usos variados	3%	

Fuente: elaboración propia.



## Category 2

In correspondence with the use of networks, the type of behaviors and activities that young people perform in their social networks is described, highlighting the importance of linear frequencies that reach 98% in which young people report that there are no risks on the Internet and / or social networks; 86% "believe everything the networks say" and for 92% there are no rules of Internet use within the home and 86% of the sample reported having created four or more profiles.

In relation to the frequencies of attitudes and behavior, it is important to note that there are risk behaviors in the use of social networks: 83% have had some type of cyberbullying, mostly by schoolmates, with a greater tendency in sex feminine than in the masculine; in addition, 81% have received some material with sexual connotation; 72% have sent material with some sexual content, with a higher tendency in women than in men, as in turn 21% of them (72%) have access to adult pages (with a greater tendency in the males than in women). Finally, 47% of the sample studied has received proposals from strangers and only 2% of them have communicated it to an adult (description of general frequencies in Table 3).

Conductas de riesgo presentadas en la muestra	Porcentajes globales al 100% referidos en la
	muestra
No existen reglas de uso en el hogar	92%
Creación de cuatro o más cuentas	86%
Conductas de cyberbullyng	83%
Conductas de sexting	72%
Conductas de grooming	47%

Fuente: elaboración propia.

#### Discussion

The purpose of this research was to diagnose and analyze the use of social networks in early adolescence; With the data exposed in the research, organized in the categories previously described, the results showed, in principle, that the use of social networks through the use of the Internet, whether at school or at home, is part of the adolescent's daily activities, reaching high levels of time of use (an average of 11.2 hours per day); the acquisition of network management is focused almost entirely (93%) to satisfy the interests of the age of the group, coupled with the lack of rules of use in the home.

The aforementioned result highlights the risk adolescents may be in due to the misuse of social media when diagnosing how they organize their social networks and with whom they are interacting, including the various accounts they create and use; This is because adolescents, through anonymity, increase the possibility of having even more false autonomy, and do not develop online self-care; this is due, as mentioned by Papalia (2009), to the immaturity of interpreting messages and the impossibility of forming adequate criteria, coupled with limited expertise, which makes them configure themselves in social networks as subjects vulnerable to a possible criminal-type event in these media, in accordance with the high percentages of sexting and grooming behaviors recorded.

Associated to this, 72% have referred to send material with characteristics of exhibitionism, with a greater tendency to appear in young women, as well as evidence that, of this percentage, 21% have access to pages of adults with high sexual content. These data become alarming when one of the significant discoveries of the research is the elevated existence of sexual behaviors that occur voluntarily, including higher risk behaviors such as grooming, and, on the other hand, the poor communication have with the immediate majors to be able to expose and feel guided before an event of alarm of this characteristics, in agreement with which they refer in the sample, almost in its totality when referring that there are no risks in the handling / use of these applications of social networks.

On the other hand, it is important to point out that there is a serious limitation in the use of social networks, such as ignorance of them, specifically their use, since most of them use them as a form of entertainment and not as a function of specific educational issues, so it is pertinent to emphasize what Berkin (2015) referred to in emphasizing the quality of the use, since the



percentage in quantity is high, however, it does not refer to an optimization of the use of networks used by the Young.

The use of communication media, specifically in social networks, as well as the possession of mobile phones, have produced a new model of social relations (Orozco, 2015) that allows integrating the world in its various areas, for which they are reformulated new human behaviors, including pathological ones, understood as technopathies, that have evolved around the subjects' culturality and have opened new forms of intervention within anonymity as the multicreation of new profiles, dominating a large part of everyday life and forming new representations of social and interpersonal relationships, to which obeys a great challenge of heuristic-multidisciplinary order for intervention in risk behaviors that are related to the media, strictly social networks, developed by adolescents in the sample studied.

## Conclusion

Recapitulating the integration of results in research, it can be concluded that the approach to new technologies and emerging applications are integrating a new way of relating and establishing links between young people, who must be protected to avoid risk behaviors that impede growth and adequate development in the evolutionary stage in which it is found in the sample obtained.

Consequently, it is evident, with the data obtained, that minors dedicate high percentages of hours in social networks, occupying them almost in their entirety as a form of hobby and not in the use of academic uses, for what it represents, according to the frequencies high linear risk factor indicators, beginning with the non-regulation of uses of technology within the home; they are also creators of several accounts simultaneously, saying that there are no risks in the use of these social network applications; however, interpreted from a behavioral perspective, it hinders the formation of their identity as a subject, not by measuring the scope of profiles created by them, creating unnecessary risks under a sense of immunity on the part of the minor.

Therefore, the finding that integrates the research is the low participation of tutors and / or parents for the rules of use, combining a high percentage of risk behaviors and even imminent risk factors such as grooming. Circumstance referred by young people, where only a very low percentage is communicated to parents; therefore, it is invited to conduct research on the use of technologies but focused on parents of families that favor levels of trust within the family in order to have a better coping with risk behaviors.

It is important to conclude that there are risk behaviors in young people, so the diagnosis of the research invites us to carry out other remediation studies, as a risk factor for adolescents; likewise, it is emphasized that the research being limited only to diagnosis and analysis tends to open future replicas with other designs that integrate a larger cut that helps to more accurately substantiate the costs-benefits provided by social networks. For this reason, even though they should fulfill an educational function, which, although it is true in research, reveals that the use is of a minimum percentage, there is a need to seek instrumental resources within education, which will allow an opportunity to learning as a means of identifying the adolescent.



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