



#Gettinghealthy: The perceived influence of social media on young adult health behaviors

Aniek Bolwerk

a.m.m.bolwerk@tilburguniversity.edu

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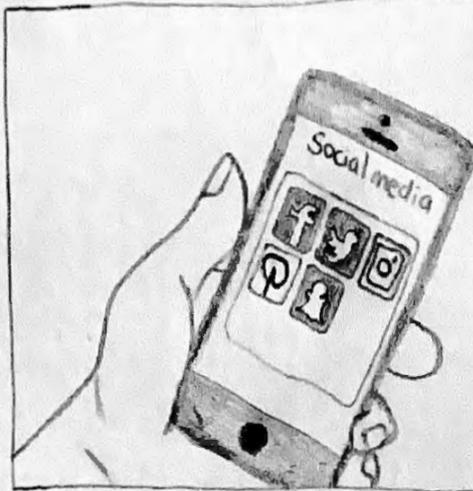
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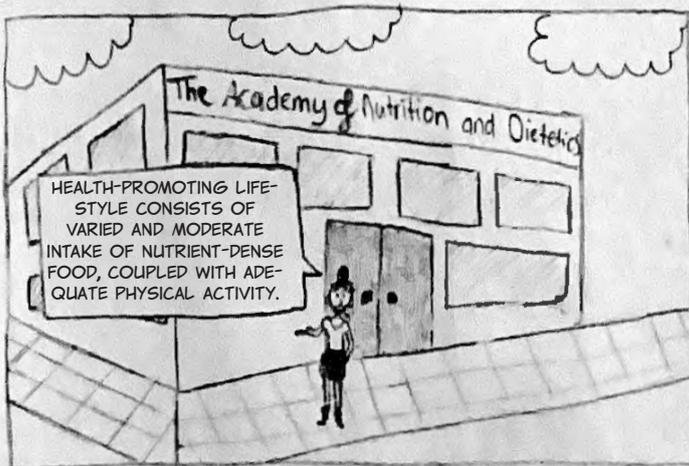
Instructor: Neil Cohn, neilcohn@visuallanguagelab.com, www.visuallanguagelab.com

#Getting Healthy

YOUNG ADULTS SPEND MORE TIME WITH MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY THAN ANY OTHER ACTIVITY (COYNE, PADILLA-WALKER, & HOWARD, 2013). A VARIETY OF FACTORS (E.G. INDIVIDUAL, ENVIRONMENTAL) INFLUENCE HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND SOCIAL MEDIA MAY BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN UNDERSTANDING YOUNG ADULT HEALTH (FREELAND-GRAVES & NITZKE, 2013).



IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT YOUNG ADULTS SPEND BETWEEN 11 AND 12H A DAY WITH TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA (ALLOY MEDIA, 2009; KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION, 2010). 89% OF 18-29 YEAR OLDS REPORT USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND 67% ACCESS THESE SITES ON THEIR CELL PHONES (PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2014). ALSO, SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME A NORMATIVE ASPECT OF YOUNG ADULT LIFE (DUGGAN, 2013).



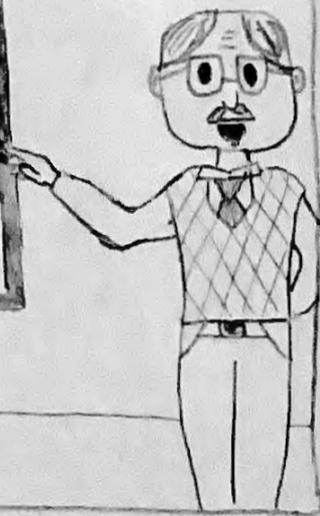
HEALTH-PROMOTING LIFESTYLE CONSISTS OF VARIED AND MODERATE INTAKE OF NUTRIENT-DENSE FOOD, COUPLED WITH ADEQUATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

THERE ARE A VARIETY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND WE PROPOSE THAT SOCIAL MEDIA COULD BE A RELEVANT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO A PERSONS' TOTAL DIET.

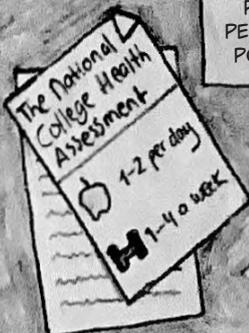
WITHIN THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL THEORY, INDIVIDUAL FACTORS IN MAKING FOOD CHOICES INCLUDE TIME AVAILABILITY, CONVENIENCE, AND PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS (FREELAND-GRAVES & NITZKE, 2013). IT IS PROPOSED THAT MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY ARE NOW A PART OF THE INDIVIDUAL FACTORS LEVEL OF THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM (MCHALE, DOTTERER, & KIM, 2009).

The social ecological model

- ↳ time availability
- ↳ convenience
- ↳ psychosocial factors
- ↳ media
- ↳ technology



YOUNG ADULTHOOD HAS BEEN PROPOSED TO BE A RISKY TIME PERIOD FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POOR DIET AND EXERCISE HABITS.



MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY (E.G., TV, MOVIES, VIDEO GAMES, INTERNET) ARE CONCEPTUALIZED AS SEDENTARY ACTIVITIES THAT DISPLACE TIME FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ULTIMATELY LEAD TO INCREASES IN BODY MASS INDEX AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (AHORA ET AL., 2013; PROCTOR ET AL., 2003).



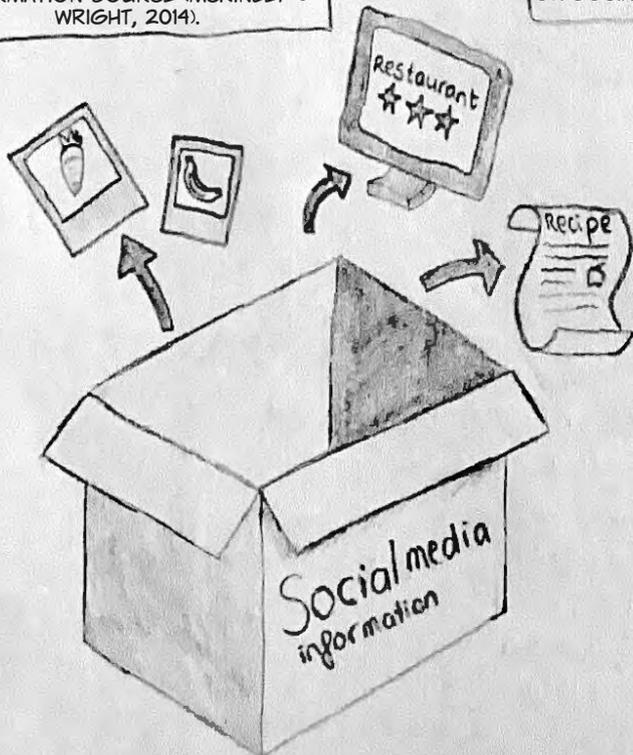
VS



BUT...

FOOD CONSUMERS NOW USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INFORM OTHERS ABOUT WHAT THEY EAT THROUGH POSTS, RESTAURANT REVIEWS, RECIPES, AND PICTURES (ZIMMER & KAPLAN, 2014). SOCIAL MEDIA COULD BE A TOOL TO LEARN ABOUT HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND SEEK SUPPORT (OH, LAUCKNER, BOEHMER, FEWINS-BLISS, & LI, 2013). YOUNG ADULTS HAVE REPORTED USING THE INTERNET AS A HEALTH INFORMATION SOURCE (MCKINLEY & WRIGHT, 2014).

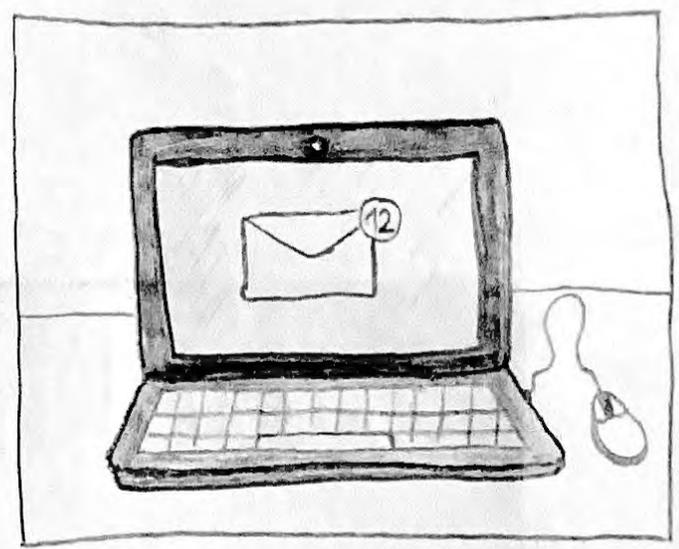
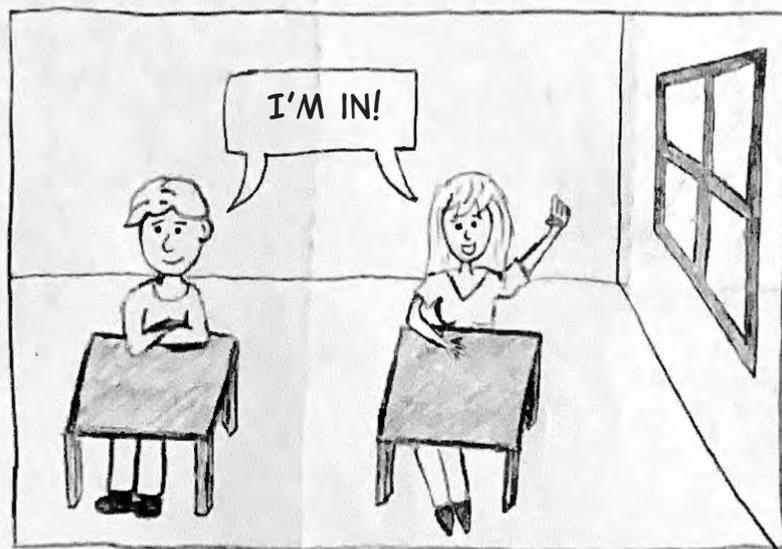
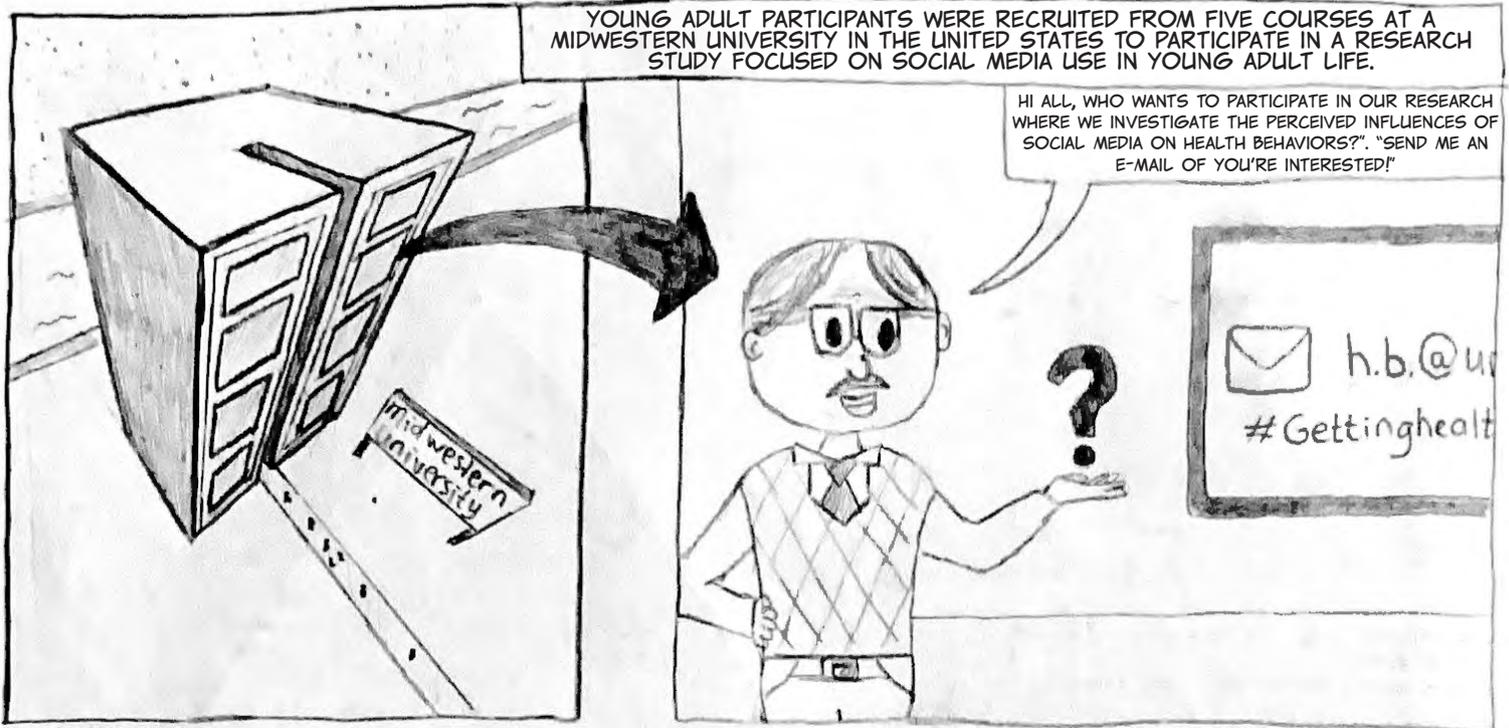
AT PRESENT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USE, DIET, AND EXERCISE IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD IS UNCLEAR. AS SUCH, WE DESIGNED AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY TO CAPTURE YOUNG ADULTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PHENOMENON. OUR AIM WAS TO GIVE VOICE AND PROVIDE A RICH DESCRIPTION OF YOUNG ADULTS' LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH THE PHENOMENON, AND TO GENERATE FURTHER RESEARCH INTEREST ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND HEALTH BEHAVIORS.



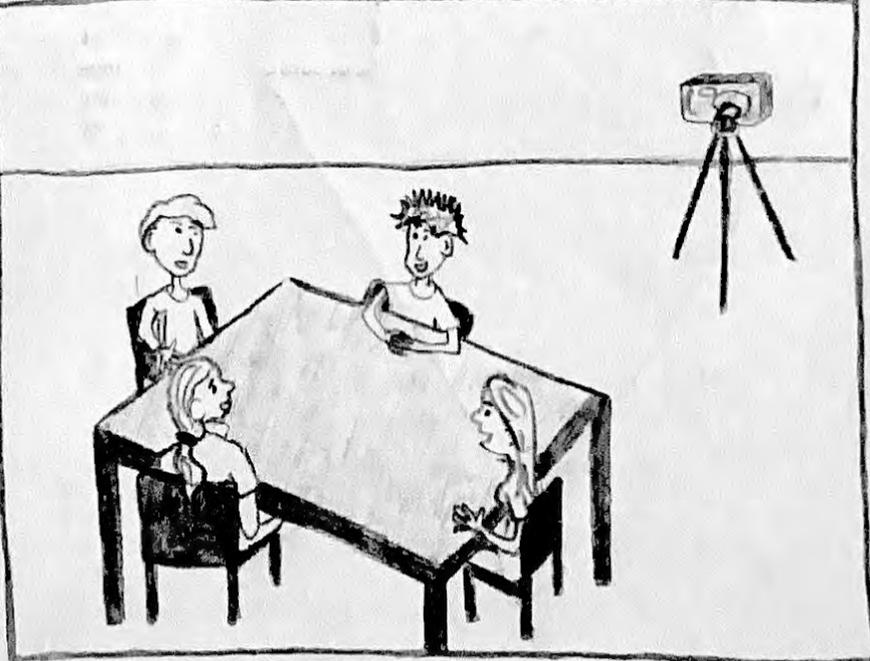
RQ: "What are the perceived influences of social media on young adult health behaviors?"

YOUNG ADULT PARTICIPANTS WERE RECRUITED FROM FIVE COURSES AT A MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY FOCUSED ON SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN YOUNG ADULT LIFE.

HI ALL, WHO WANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR RESEARCH WHERE WE INVESTIGATE THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HEALTH BEHAVIORS? ". SEND ME AN E-MAIL OF YOU'RE INTERESTED!"



A QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP APPROACH WAS SELECTED TO "UNCOVER" FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE OPINIONS, BEHAVIOR, OR MOTIVATION SURROUNDING THE TOPIC. IN TOTAL, EIGHT FOCUS GROUPS WERE SCHEDULED. ALSO, IN-DEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WERE ALSO INCLUDED WITHIN THIS STUDY.



3 THEMES WERE IDENTIFIED USING A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH THAT ARTICULATES THE YOUNG ADULT LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA AND HEALTH BARRIERS.

1 Social media as a motivator and barrier to exercise.

2 The perceived connection between food and social media.

3 The perceptions of exercise pictures and posts online.

SOMETIMES I'M ON PINTEREST AND I LOOK AT THESE COOL EXERCISES AND I'M LIKE, "I'M GOING TO TRY THIS OUT" AND THEN I EXERCISE MORE.

OR YOU SEE A LITTLE QUOTE OR SOMETHING LIKE "WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR LIFE." AND YOU'RE LIKE "HEY I'M BETTER THAN THIS" I'M NOT GOING TO BOTHER EATING THIS TUB OF ICE CREAM. I'M GOING TO GO OUT THERE AND RUN.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS A MOTIVATOR IN ITS OWN RIGHT BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO POST PICTURES AND PEOPLE ARE OBVIOUSLY GOING TO LOOK THEIR BEST FOR EVERYBODY THEY'RE SHARING PICTURES WITH

PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THAT SOCIAL MEDIA PROVIDES SPECIFIC APPS THEY USE TO TRACK THEIR PROGRESS AND INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY. ALSO, SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS INCREASE ACCESS TO NEW EXERCISES.

Social media

YOUNG ADULTS INDICATED THAT SOCIAL MEDIA COULD SERVE AS A BARRIER TO EXERCISE IN TERMS OF DISPLACING EXERCISE TIME, BEGIN DISTRACTING DURING EXERCISE, AND BY PROVIDING INACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT EXERCISE.

I WAS JUST GOING TO LOOK ON FACEBOOK JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE THEN I WAS GOING TO GO WORKOUT. THEN I GET ENTICED BY SOMETHING AND TIME FLIES BY AND THEN I'M LIKE, "OH IT'S REALLY LATE AND I DON'T WANT TO GO TO THE GYM ANYMORE." SO I END UP NOT GOING TO THE GYM...

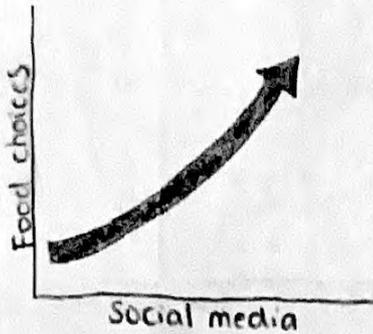
SOCIAL MEDIA IS ALSO DISTRACTING WHILE EXERCISING. WHEN I'M AT THE GYM AND MY PHONE STARTS BUZZING BECAUSE SOMEONE MESSAGED ME, OR THEY LIKED SOMETHING ON TWITTER. I'M LIKE SERIOUSLY LEAVE ME ALONE. THIS IS MY TIME TO FOCUS."

ALSO, THE ONLINE ADVERTISEMENTS MAY BE MISLEADING



PARTICIPANTS TALKED ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA AND FOOD CONNECTION IN 3 DISTINCT WAYS.

PARTICIPANTS REPORTED THAT SOCIAL MEDIA WAS ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD CHOICES.



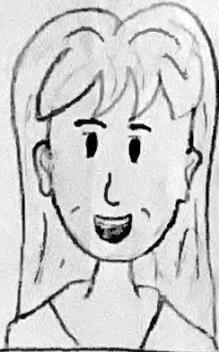
IT WAS ALSO PERCEIVED TO BE A VANUE TO SHARE PICTURES OF THEIR FOOD WITH OTHERS.



AND... SOCIAL MEDIA COULD BE A SOURCE OF DISTRACTION DURING E.G. MEAL TIMES.



SOCIAL MEDIA GIVES YOU MORE IDEAS TO WORK WITH. I MEAN, LET'S BE HONEST, WE PRETTY MUCH ALL GET INTO OUR 'EATING HABITS' AND THEY MAY NOT ALWAYS BE THE BEST OR THEY MAY BE REALLT BORING. SOCIAL MEDIA WILL GIVE YOU NEW IDEAS.



PEOPLE USE THE BIG HASHTAG #FOODPORN. THEY WANT YOU BE LIKE, 'THAT LOOKS DELICIOUS!'

BUT TOO MANY POSTS COULD LEAD TO FEELING HUNGRY AND EATING. THAT'S ANNOYING.



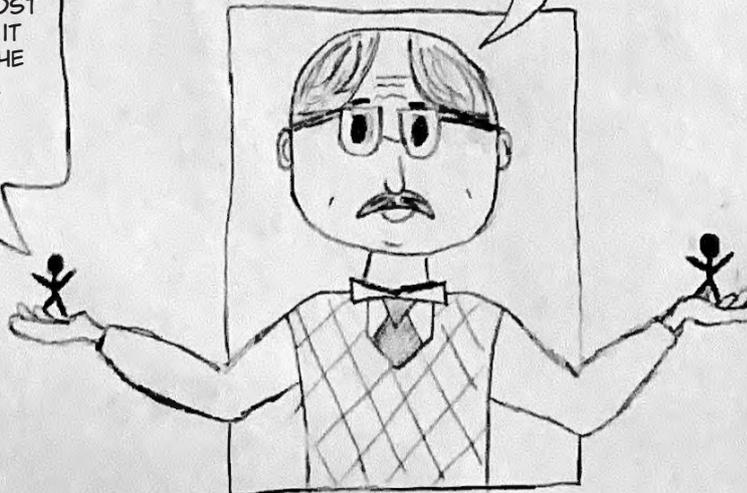
YESTERDAY I WAS CHECKING FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM AND FORGOT TO LUNCH BECAUSE I WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION TO THE TIME. I WAS LATE FOR STUDYING AND PICKED UP SOME FAST FOOD...

NORMALLY I ALWAYS TRY TO EAT HEALTHY BUT NOW I WAS HINDERED BY SOCIAL MEDIA.



PARTICIPANTS AGREED THAT IT WAS INSPIRATIONAL AND MOTIVATIONAL TO SEE A PERSON POST A PICTURE WHEN THEY HAVE LOS A LOT OF WEIGHT. BUT WHEN PEOPLE FREQUENTLY POST EXERCISE SELFIES, IT'S ANNOYING.

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT AND IT WAS COOL, INSPIRING. HE HAD NEVER POSTED A PICTURE BEFORE



SOMETIMES IT'S KIND OF MORE IRRITATING WHEN SOMEONE POST STUFF LIKE "OH JUST AT THE GYM" OR "#GETTINGSWOLL". DOING IT A FIRST TIME, OKAY, BUT NOT MULTIPLE TIMES A WEEK. THAT'S ANNOYING.

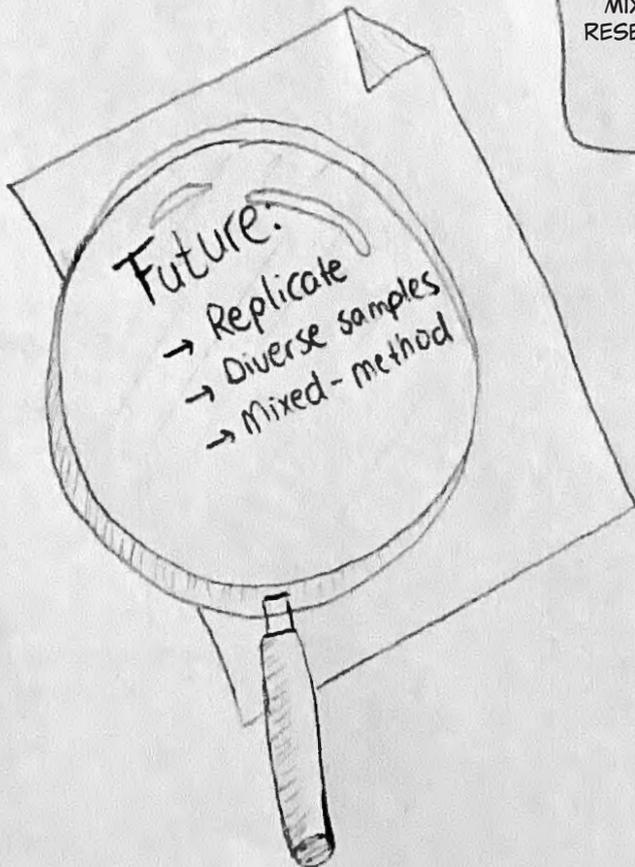


Implications:

- ✓ AN INFORMAL APPROACH MAY REACH MORE YOUNG ADULTS.
- ✓ POSTING SHORT MOTIVATIONAL QUOTES, MEMES, RECIPES, ACCURATE EXERCISE INFORMATION.
- ✓ SOCIAL MEDIA IS A RIPE AND INFORMAL VENUE FOR DISSEMINATING HEALTH INFORMATION TO YOUNG ADULTS.
- ✓ THIS STUDY REAFFIRMS THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES WITHIN THE SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES AND THE VALUE OF IMPLEMENTING A SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH.

FUTURE RESEARCH SHOULD ATTEMPT TO REPLICATE AND EXTEND THESE RESULTS WITH MORE DIVERSE SAMPLES AND WITH MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH DESIGN.

DESPITE THE LIMITATIONS, THIS STUDY ANSWERS THE CALL TO CONDUCT MORE RESEARCH ON FACTORS INFLUENCING HEALTH DURING YOUNG ADULthood (NELSON ET AL., 2008). THE STUDY ALSO GIVES VOICE TO YOUNG ADULTS' OWN LIVED EXPERIENCES - SERVING AS AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD IN UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND YOUNG ADULT HEALTH BEHAVIORS.



The END