Edith Cowan University
CSG1132
Communicating in an IT Environment
Assignment 1a

Concept Map, Thesis Statements & Learner Reflection

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Contents

Task 1: Concept Map

Focus Question:

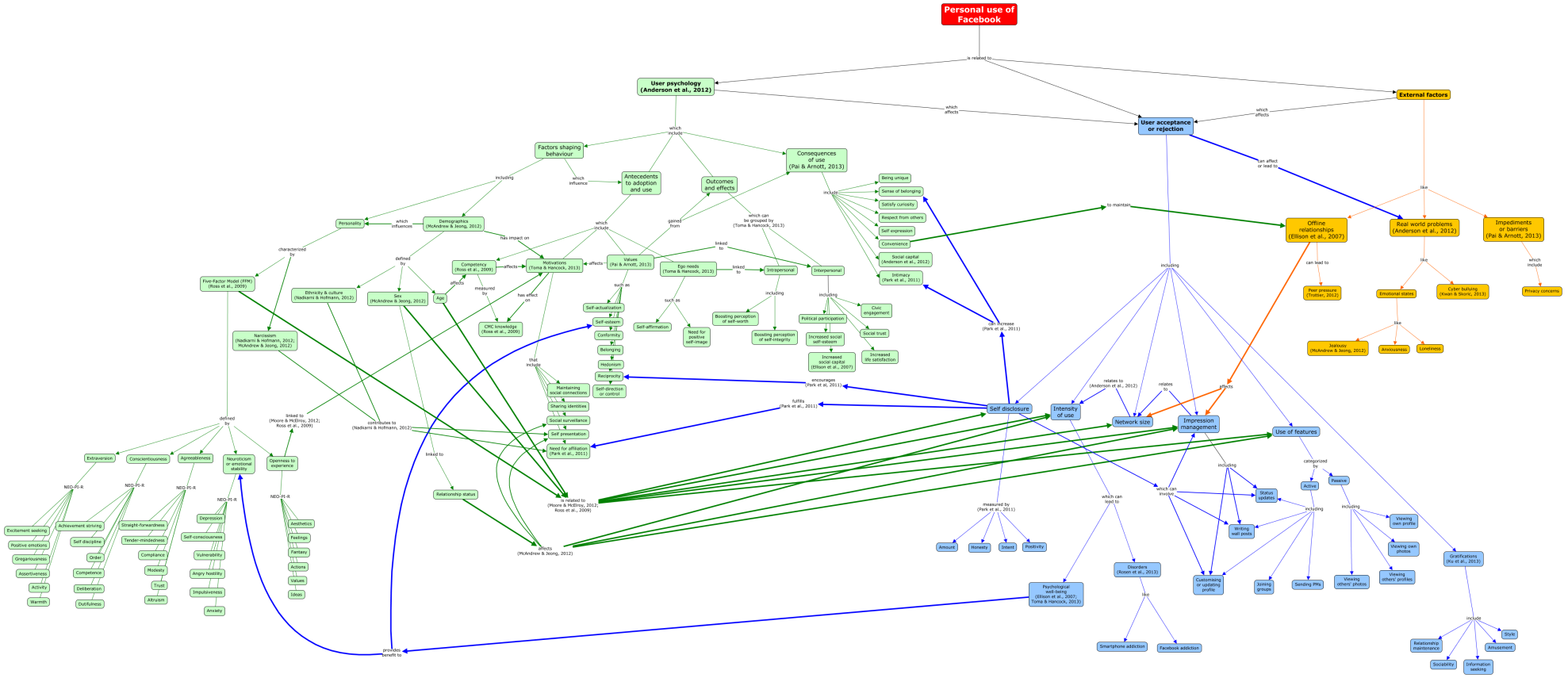
What is the role of psychology in personal use of Facebook?

See *Figure 1.*

Concept Map Reference List

- Pai and Arnott (2013)
- McAndrew and Jeong (2012)
- Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012)
- Moore and McElroy (2012)
- Ross et al. (2009)
- Toma and Hancock (2013)
- Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007)
- Park, Jin, and Annie Jin (2011)
- Anderson, Fagan, Woodnutt, and Chamorro-Premuzic (2012)
- Ku, Chu, and Tseng (2013)
- Rosen, Whaling, Rab, Carrier, and Cheever (2013)
- Trottier (2012)
- Kwan and Skoric (2013)

Figure 1: Concept map



Task 2: Thesis Statements

Argumentative Statement

Question:

Can a user's relationship status affect their usage of Facebook? (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012).

Statement Draft/s:

1. A user's relationship status as a behaviour modifier on Facebook.
2. The relationship status as a predicator of Facebook use.
3. The relationship status: Modifying user behaviour on Facebook.

Final Argumentative Statement:

User behaviour on Facebook is modified by their relationship status.

Analysis Statement

Question:

What are the motivations for self-disclosure on Facebook? (Park et al., 2011).

Statement Draft/s:

1. Self-disclosure on Facebook fulfils the human need for affiliation.

Final Analysis Statement:

Facebook self-disclosure and its relation to the human need for affiliation.

Exposition Statement

Question:

What are the psychological benefits in the use of Facebook? (Toma & Hancock, 2013).

Statement Draft/s:

1. The positive psychological effects of Facebook use.

Final Exposition Statement:

The positive psychological effects of Facebook use are increased perceptions of self-worth and self-integrity.

Task 3: Summary & Learner Reflection

Concept Map Summary

The concept map was developed in 1972 by researchers at Cornell Univesity and is used as a tool to visually organise and present knowledge, commonly in reference to a focus question (Novak & Cañas, 2006). A concept map consists of a collection of concepts that relate to a particular subject or problem domain, and are written inside bubbles or "nodes" which are then linked together with lines to express their associations with one another (Novak & Cañas, 2006). Unlike mind maps, connecting lines are labelled to express the relationships between linked concepts, otherwise referred to as "path labelling" by Rodriguez-Priego, Garcia-Izquierdo, and Rubio (2013, pp. 790). Path labels are constructed with "linking words", and concepts connected together with linking words create "propositons" and "meaningful statements". (Novak & Cañas, 2006, pp. 1).

Novak and Cañas (2006, pp. 1) explain the structure of a concept map is "represented in a hierarchical fashion with the most inclusive, most general concepts at the top of the map and the more specific, less general concepts arranged hierarchically below". Each concept may be "cross-linked" between sub-domains within a given concept map (Novak & Cañas, 2006). This is in contrast to mind maps, where the only links that exist are between parent/child domains. Cross-links demonstrate a deeper understanding, and the "creation of new knowledge", expressing relationships and propositions between sub-domains that may have not been immediately evident prior to research (Novak & Cañas, 2006).

According to Novak and Cañas (2006, pp.1), a concept map "serves as a kind of *template* or *scaffold* to help organize knowledge and to structure it". The structure of a concept map may be used to define the scope of the domain to be researched and assists in identifying knowledge gaps in domains where further research could be gathered (Novak & Cañas, 2006). The "scaffolding" behaviour of a concept map provides scalability, allowing new concepts to be logically connected to pre-existing nodes and assists in organising information as they are found during research (Novak & Cañas, 2006). Due to their structure and abilities, concept maps facilitate in the organisation of information gathered during study or research from many sources in a coherent and flexible manner, which makes concept maps a valued tool during learning and research for academic writing.

Learning Reflection

As I enrolled for university as a first year, undergraduate student, one of my main concerns was academic writing. I understood that this was something I would be expected to do and was concerned about my ability to perform in this area. Concept mapping has helped me break down the overwhelming amount of information from peer-reviewed journal articles into smaller digestible pieces and make sense of the information I was taking in.

After getting a grasp of the topic at hand, I developed a sense of which documents would become valuable for the assignment by scanning the abstracts to determine if the article is relevant to my research. This allowed me to cut down my quickly growing reading list.

As I began to develop the concept map, I found it difficult to organise the information in any kind of hierarchy and started my way from the bottom, with the most specific concepts. This resulted in concept maps that seemed more like mind maps. I found Novak and Cañas (2006) "The Theory Underlying Concept Maps and How To Construct and Use Them" a valuable resource and used the methods outlined in the article. In particular, I found the *parking lot* method the most useful, dropping concepts into the map as I was reading articles, and then deciding on their associations after I finished reading and developed a better understanding of the relationships between the concepts.

Once a good structure and foundation for the concept map was established, it was easier to identify cross-links between different concepts. The difficult part was deciding which cross-links were most important, and deciding how to present these links with so many lines intersecting and overlapping each other. This resulted in many iterations of the map, while I attempted to arrange concepts in a hierarchical sense while accommodating for these cross-links.

Completing the second assignment task, which involved writing thesis statements based on articles, provided a different view and helped identify even more cross-links from the articles. Completing this exercise also highlighted the most important cross-links and has motivated me to redesign the concept map once more to emphasise those links.

As a student, I believe concept mapping is a great tool and appreciate its value when used correctly for academic writing. It helps make sense of information that come from a variety of sources and assists in identifying/generating new ideas (Novak & Cañas, 2006). I have started using the tool for other units, and find it particularly useful for a systems analysis assignment, where there are many moving parts and concept mapping allowed me to get a broad overview of the system before making decisions. I understand there are formal ways of modelling a system, but the concept map allowed me to visualise and understand the system very quickly with specific detail without having to learn any particular modelling methodology first. I look forward to more opportunities where I can use concept maps and truly appreciate being introduced to this wonderful tool for learning.

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