

'Managing peer relationships online – Investigating the use of Facebook by juvenile delinquents and youths-at-risk' by Lim Sun Sun et al. Computers in Human Behavior

In this paper A/P Lim Sun Sun (Communications and New Media) and her three CNM colleagues demonstrate that use of online social media, such as Facebook, may prove an obstacle to rehabilitation for young male delinquents.

While extensive research has been conducted on young people's peer interaction via online communication, the focus has been on mainstream youths, with marginalized youth communities being understudied. To help address this inadequacy, the current study conducted interviews with Singaporean male juvenile delinquents (n = 36) to understand the role of online communication in their peer interactions and the salient characteristics of such interactions. Our findings show that Facebook was the principal tool of online peer interaction. However, given the particular circumstances of juvenile delinquents, online social networking presents issues that may compromise efforts to rehabilitate them. These include extending the time and opportunities for unstructured and unsupervised peer socialization, peer endorsement of delinquent acts and the pressure of having to display group loyalty in the online space. Even after rehabilitation, youths who attempt to distance themselves from their delinquent peers are challenged by the persistence of their online social networks.

Sun Sun Lim, Yoke Hian Chan, Shobha Vadrevu and Iccha Basnyat (2012) Managing peer relationships online – Investigating the use of Facebook by juvenile delinquents and youths-at-risk Computers in Human Behavior. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.04.025>

Image Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reproduced with permission.