Professional socialisation, accountability and social media: what's the relationship and should we care?

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AIM

Critically analyse and explain the relationships between professional accountability and Facebook during the journey of professional socialisation.

METHOD

Critical realist ethnography employing online observation of three cohort groups, 30 public profiles and professional group discussion topics, focus groups (academic and practicing nursing staff n=8) and semi-structured interviews with student nurses over two sites (n=16). Critical realist retroductive analysis (Bhaskar, 1998) was developed as part of this study (figure.1).

BACKGROUND

The rapid diffusion of social network sites such as Facebook have presented a wealth of challenge and opportunity for the nursing profession. A large majority of student nurses have adopted Facebook but [as developing professionals] may not understand the implications and unintended consequences of the information shared in a personal or innocent way.

No studies have yet critically analysed [in depth] the underlying factors that influence and determine the relationships between professional accountability and social media or if there is actually a 'problem' with social media.

Figure 1 - example of components and how they were related

WHAT IS CRITICAL REALISM?

Causal mechanisms are a 'reality' that cannot be directly observed. However, the components and outcomes of this reality can be observed and measured. **Components** for coding data are: morphostatic and morphogenic structures, entities, tendencies, events, behaviours and outcomes (figure.1).
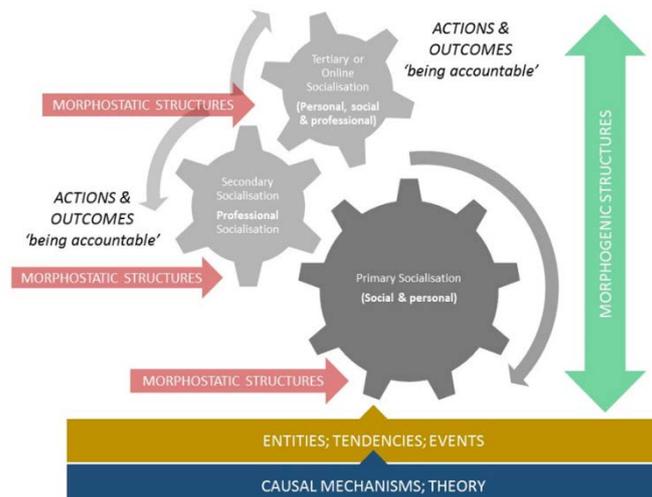
RESULTS

Three key *relationships* were identified and six *models* were generated to explain and test *theories* about the possible 'causal' mechanisms within the data. From this three *explanatory frameworks* were confirmed,

I) SPO (figure2): This study has indicated a potential 'tertiary' or 'online' socialisation process and illustrates the factors, context and socialisation informs accountable behaviours; linking the physical and online (personal, public, professional).

II, III) UAPU, A2A: The lack of physical context and presence in the online environment causes dissonance between perceived (self-efficacy/awareness) and actual behaviours.

Figure 2 - The SPO framework

CONCLUSION

With further research and validation these three frameworks may be used in education and practice, for personal and group assessment, reflection and/or for raising awareness of personal and professional practices online. They may also be used by organisations and professional bodies to assess the 'acceptability' or professionalism of scenarios or incidents.