

Connecting with Youth at Risk: Indigenous Organizations Use of Facebook

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A qualitative study in which we conducted four interviews with two communication managers and two youth program managers of three indigenous organizations with offices in Ottawa, the data generated from the interviews were coded based on factors identified through thematic analysis. Indigenous organizations use Facebook for two main reasons. The first reason is to promote the work of these organizations to the public and for them, in turn to listen to the public's opinions about news related to indigenous peoples' wellbeing. Secondly, Facebook is also used to engage urban indigenous youth at risk with indigenous organizations that provide social programs and outreach. Indigenous organizations use Facebook because many urban indigenous youth in Ottawa are using Facebook and it is the fastest way to connect with them when they are or feel at risk.

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Introduction

Farzindar & Inkpen (2015) describe social computing as “an area of computer science that is concerned with the intersection of social behaviour and computational systems” (p.109). Similarly, Facebook (2016) defines social computing as “computational techniques and tools to study human social behaviour”. Social computing is thus comprised of two essential elements: social behaviour and the computer systems that enable this behaviour. We believe that social behaviour is closely tied to norms of cultural behaviour in specific populations and in this research, we propose to use social computing perspectives to study how and why indigenous organizations use Facebook to engage and disseminate information with urban indigenous youth at risk in Ontario.

Our assumption is that indigenous organizations can reduce risks among urban indigenous youth in Ontario by engaging and disseminating information on Facebook. Given that urban centers pose significant risks for urban indigenous youth (Miller et al., 2011), it is critically important to develop an understanding of how indigenous organizations use social media like Facebook to disseminate information to their targeted populations, particularly urban indigenous youth, who use Facebook and other social media heavily and daily.

One problem is that help for vulnerable indigenous youth frequently arrives too late. It normally takes some time for family, friends, community members, and government agencies to identify indigenous youth in danger. It also usually takes some time for people voluntarily seeking help to inform their family members and friends about their situation. Besides these barriers, some matters are associated with social stigmas especially drug addiction and mental health. The delayed identification of indigenous youth at risk poses great challenges for how to provide assistance and treatment.

We explore how the indigenous organizations use Facebook to engage with urban indigenous youth at risk in Ottawa through conducting in-person interviews with two communication managers and two youth program managers of three indigenous organizations based in Ottawa. The interviews were conducted during the spring and summer of 2017.

Our contribution is an analysis of how indigenous organizations could reduce risk among urban indigenous youth by engaging and disseminating information on Facebook. We have found that many indigenous youth living in Ottawa experienced remote-to-urban forced migration. Many of them came involuntarily to Ottawa in order to receive medical care not available in their remote home communities. Urban indigenous youth in Ottawa are using Facebook to combat their loneliness by contacting their families and friends who reside in rural and remote communities.

Background

UNESCO (2016) defines youth as the population group ranging from 15 to 35 years of age. Youth, according to that definition, are the most at risk age group in populations

across societies and cultures. This stage of life comes with changes in hormones, physical state, mood, and social behaviour while having to find one's identity and become autonomous. Youth in vulnerable and impoverished populations face an even a higher risk since dealing with poverty and vulnerability add to the transitional challenges.

In this research, the term "at risk" means that individuals face a high probability of being exposed to physical and/or psychological harm or danger. For this research, we focus on urban indigenous youth because they face increased risks in terms of health care, education, housing, unemployment, racial and cultural discrimination, substance addiction, murdered and missing indigenous women, sexual abuse and domestic violence, and youth suicide (Boksa, Joobar, & Kirmayer, 2015); (Drache, Fletcher, & Voss, 2016). We chose to further narrow the geographic scope of this study to urban populations in the city of Ottawa, Ontario given that data from Statistics Canada shows that the majority of indigenous peoples in Canada live in the province of Ontario and mostly in urban areas rather than on reserves which are often more rural and remote. Census data collected in 2011 indicates that out of Canada's total indigenous population of 1.4 Million, 21.5 % (301,425) reside in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2015a). This amounts to 2.4% of the population of Ontario, considerably lower than the national percentage of the indigenous population in Canada at 4.3%, (Statistics Canada, 2015b). The percentage of indigenous peoples with registered indigenous status living off-reserve in Canada stands at 50.7% (Statistics Canada, 2015b). Many of them now live in urban areas of Ontario such as Toronto, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Hamilton, and Sault Ste. Marie (Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, 2013).

Ottawa is the capital of Canada and has a population of approximately one million people (City of Ottawa, 2014). It is the seat of Parliament and as the main location of the federal government, it is where important policy decisions are made that have an impact on all indigenous communities across the country. According to the 2011 statistics from the City of Ottawa there are about 18,180 indigenous peoples living in Ottawa (Statistics Canada, 2015c). The number is quickly growing and many of the indigenous peoples in Ottawa are young with 4 in 10 being under the age of 25 (Statistics Canada, 2017). Therefore, Ottawa is a good location for this study since the city attracts indigenous youth from many communities within Ontario and from other provinces as well.

The city of Ottawa has a number of diverse indigenous organizations; no other city in Ontario has the same characteristics. Ottawa's indigenous organizations look after the basic needs and wellbeing of indigenous residents, including their housing, education, health, and culture. These functions are similar to the indigenous organizations in other cities in Ontario but Ottawa is only the city in which many national-level indigenous organizations have chosen to locate their headquarters. At the time of writing this article, there are 15 indigenous organizations located in Ottawa. Of these entities in terms of focus 9 are policy-oriented and 6 are community outreach organizations. Policy-oriented indigenous organizations negotiate and participate in political matters with the Canadian federal government and parliament who are also located in the capital. Community outreach-oriented indigenous organizations focus on providing

support to all indigenous people living in Ottawa. The characteristics of indigenous organizations in Ottawa are unique and position this study well to gather both regional and national information about how the indigenous organizations use Facebook to engage with urban indigenous youth at risk.

In recent years, researchers have looked at social media and Internet usage by indigenous people who live in rural and remote areas around the world, mainly in Australia, Canada, United States, and New Zealand (Gauvin, Granger, & Lorthiois, 2015; Filippi et al., 2013; Ormond-parker & Sloggett, 2012); (McMahon, Gurstein, Beaton, O'Donnell, & Whiteduck, 2014; Kopacz & Lawton, 2011; McMahon, 2014; Singleton, et al., 2009; Watson, 2015). The purpose of social media usage among indigenous peoples include cyber-activism (Warf, 2009; Elwood & Leszczynski, 2013), digital channels to record and promote their culture (Huang, Chen, & Mo, 2015; Dalseg & Abele, 2015), connecting and maintaining relationships with other people (Watson, 2015), and seeking health information and establishing virtual health support groups (Stephens-Reicher et al., 2011; Carlson, 2013; Laakso, Armstrong, & Usher, 2012). There is no academic literature documenting the voices of the indigenous organizations in urban areas, who work diligently to offer services, run outreach programs, and advocate for indigenous rights, and how they use Facebook to connect with youth at risk.

Research methodology

Research design

We interviewed two communication managers and two youth program managers who are responsible for social media campaigns in the three indigenous organizations in Ottawa. Their social media activities are followed by many of the indigenous youth in Ottawa. We conducted four interviews in total. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. These interviews aimed to discover their Facebook strategies and practices for engaging with urban indigenous youth at risk.

Recruitment

We recruited participants by approaching them directly with a formal email that explains the research project. The information sheet, informed consent form, and interview guidelines were also attached. We used email addresses that were found on indigenous organization websites with office addresses in Ottawa. We waited for their email responses in order to schedule the interview and we followed up by telephone.

Data collection

We held our interviews at the participants' offices in a private meeting space. In this research, the interviews were semi-structured and used interview guidelines. This allowed interviewees to freely express their personal opinions and to add their own comments beyond the prepared questions. The interviews conducted with communication managers, whose roles included generating and sharing content on their organization's Facebook page, and youth program managers whose roles are to run

cultural and social activities for indigenous youth in Ottawa and act as the first responder in identifying indigenous youth at risk and help them to receive or access necessary assistance. This was followed by inquiries focused on their professional use of Facebook, the types of content they read, generate, and share on Facebook for their organizations, whether their Facebook content targets urban indigenous youth who feel at risk physically and/or psychologically, their observations when an urban indigenous youth is at risk through the language or verbal tone of the content that he or she has generated or shared on Facebook, and the support of indigenous culture toward generating and sharing content on Facebook. There was no financial compensation for their participation.

Data analysis

Our interviews were audio-recorded and done in-person. The data generated from the interviews were manually transcribed in English and coded based on patterns identified through thematic analysis (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). Based on our research question, how and why indigenous organizations use Facebook to engage with urban indigenous youth at risk, and interview guidelines, we developed predetermined codes and then created additional codes to capture specific emergent themes when we were more familiarized with the data. Our data analysis codes include Facebook usage frequency, account control and access, type and format of information generated and shared on Facebook, motivations, challenges, indigenous attitudes toward Facebook, and their observations on Facebook usage among urban indigenous youth at risk. Then we did the second and third level content analysis to identify relationships between themes. As the number of our interviews was not large, we were able to make comparisons between each interview to find the similarities and differences to further improve our data analysis with special attention to the type of indigenous organizations (1. National; 2. Regional) and their work mandates (1. Advocacy and political issues; 2. Social programs and outreach). We presented our preliminary findings to our interviewees in this research in September 2017, which helped to enhance the quality of our findings (C. Intahchomphoo, personal communication, September 19, 2017).

Ethics

This research received ethics approval from the Health Sciences and Science Research Ethics Board of the University of Ottawa (File# H02-17-01). We asked research participants to give written consent in willingness to participate in the interviews. They were given time to read the consent as much as they needed and prior to the interviews taking place. We also read the consent aloud to the participants. In the results section, we omitted all personally identifiable information including participants' names, organizations, addresses, and physical appearances. We used pseudonyms for our participants in this paper. No data from this research was stored online in a cloud-computing environment. Data will not be shared with any third parties. In terms of the assessment of risks, we only publish results where we have explicit permission from the

indigenous organizations and the communication managers and youth program managers from which we obtained data.

Results

Indigenous organizations in Ottawa frequently use Facebook and their Facebook accounts are being controlled by communication managers and management level personnel.

“I, the executive director, and one of the managers are pretty much the people who focus on communications through Facebook.”- Alinga

All of our four interviewees (whose pseudonyms are: Adoni, Alinga, Alba, and Alkina) said that their indigenous organizations use Facebook on a daily basis. We discovered that many indigenous organizations in Ottawa do not have a high capacity to constantly generate new content for their Facebook accounts due to human resources limitations. As a result, they also read and share other organizations’ and individual’s posts to display on their organizations’ Facebook walls. Generating new content of their own is usually done internally with a small team consisting of members from administrative staff, community outreach staff, and communication managers. Those people have full access to the organizations’ Facebook accounts.

Indigenous organizations in Ottawa use Facebook to share information about the important events and meetings that staff attend, to listen to public opinion about emerging indigenous peoples’ issues and concerns, and to promote their outreach campaigns.

“A couple weeks ago, he (organization leader) was in New York at the United Nations. I will post pictures of him there.”- Adoni

Two interviewees mentioned that their indigenous organizations use Facebook to share information about the attendance by their directors or staff at prominent social events and work-related meetings taking place in Ottawa or other urban cities and rural areas in Canada, as well as abroad. Furthermore, we learned that sharing information about such events on Facebook is being done at two out of four indigenous organizations we interviewed in Ottawa.

Moreover, from our interviews we discovered that indigenous organizations in Ottawa use Facebook to listen to public opinion about issues and concerns arising in indigenous communities. These are some examples of quotes from our interviewees on this matter:

“I think that we found a lot of strength on Facebook. We were able to connect with other people in term of understanding indigenous issues. I find that there are power in mini voices and sharing information” - Alba

“I use Facebook often to find news stories that people shared from other parts of the country that might be interested ... for example, the missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry”- Adoni

The national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was discussed in two of our four interviews. We were told that information and opinions about the inquiry are also being shared and discussed on the indigenous organizations' Facebook accounts. When the inquiry was starting, there were a lot of different opinions about whether they were doing a good job or whether an inquiry should be held at all and a lot of people shared their thoughts on Facebook. Some indigenous organizations in Ottawa would use the peoples' thoughts on Facebook to get a sense where the organizations should stand on this issue.

Facebook is also used to see what other peoples in the indigenous world are doing and what communities' issues and challenges are like in different parts of Canada. Adoni expressed the personal opinion that Facebook is a good tool for indigenous organizations to keep track of other politicians and other indigenous leaders to see what they are doing that could impact the wellbeing of all indigenous peoples in Canada.

In addition, we noticed another aspect of Facebook usage among indigenous organizations in Ottawa especially the ones with a mandate to provide community-based programs and services: they put a very strong emphasis on using Facebook to promote their outreach campaigns. Below are some sample quotes from our interviewees:

"We have an upcoming campaign about childhood sexual abuse. This campaign will disproportionately be on Facebook." - Alinga

"We post information (on Facebook) of our programs and any helpful information about safety or knowledge about abuses." - Alba

"Through Facebook we actually reach [out] to some of the youth that are on [the] street and our outreach people [are able] to access them and find them and get them into shelters." - Alkina

Alinga, Alba, and Alkina advised us that in Ottawa as well with other parts of Canada, there are conversations being held about indigenous youth's mental health, suicide crises, and substance abuse. These are also significant social problems among urban indigenous youth in Ottawa. Substance abuse has a strong relationship with mental illness and suicide (Agrawal et al., 2017). Our interviewees commented that there really should be more public discussion and Facebook campaigns on those specific topics. Interestingly, in our interviews we also were briefed that they have to ensure that whatever content they post on Facebook targeting urban indigenous youth must not be too manipulative, controversial, or emotionally taxing. This is particularly the case when the Facebook post targets urban indigenous youth who are at risk. Otherwise, it is possible they might see the organizations' Facebook outreach campaigns and react with psychological or emotional discomfort, which may have social repercussions particularly since urban indigenous youth in Ottawa do not necessarily know where they can get help. Therefore, indigenous organizations in Ottawa are extremely mindful of the sensibilities of urban indigenous youth when creating Facebook outreach campaigns.

Other campaign materials such as posters and press releases that the indigenous organizations have created also go through their Facebook pages. Some of our interviewees indicated that their organizations also use Twitter to disseminate information about their outreach campaigns, but remarked that it is not as popular as Facebook. They found that Twitter is difficult for the indigenous organizations' outreach campaigns in part because of the limited word count of tweets.

They also believe that Facebook functionality is better suited to oral expression, which aligns with the indigenous peoples' rich oral history traditions. Indigenous youth can use Facebook video functionality to verbally express and share their thoughts and feelings disseminated in the form of moving images and sounds to their circles of friends on Facebook. Sharing a video does not require an indigenous youth to input any text. Furthermore, Facebook videos can be produced and uploaded very easily on smartphones, which are the devices that most urban indigenous youth in Ottawa are using.

Many urban indigenous youth in Ottawa are unaccompanied and they were forced to migrate to the city. They use Facebook to connect with their families and communities in the rural and remote areas from which they came.

"It is very overloaded in the urban setting, it is very challenging. It does compound with race and class... I think when you are here alone your connectivity is so important and that why they are relying on Facebook to get in touch to their home community."- Alinga

The data from our interviews helped us to recognize the crucial relationship between remote-to-urban forced migration (Darling, 2017) and urban indigenous youth in Ottawa. Unfortunately, many of them are also living in Ottawa without any family members accompanying them from their home communities. In many cases, they were forced to migrate to Ottawa to receive medical care or better education, which are not available in their more remote communities. So, those indigenous youth often end up living alone for a long period of time in Ottawa, as some medical care can be very lengthy. Because they reside in Ottawa on their own, the connection with their families and communities in rural and remote areas is often done through Facebook on their personal cellphones. For the unaccompanied urban indigenous youth in Ottawa, it is very important to maintain ties with their home communities, so their Facebook connectivity is not only about maintaining social connections but it is also about staying connected to their indigenous cultures. Here we see the use of Facebook by unaccompanied urban indigenous youth is at the intersection of personal relationships and cultural identity. When they use Facebook to connect with remotely located family and friends, they are also being updated with a lot of social news what is happening in the community, which nourishes and sustains a very important part of their cultural identity.

One of our interviewees said that urban indigenous youth in Ottawa who wish to return to their rural and remote indigenous communities face many challenges because of the high cost of transportation to their homes. In addition, there is also now a housing crisis

in many indigenous reserves in Ontario and other provinces and territories (Anaya, 2015). For urban indigenous youth in Ottawa to return home, they must find a place to live and their families often experience overcrowding with multiple families in one house. In many cases this situation would have worsened since they left their communities.

Therefore, many urban indigenous youth who leave remote communities for southern cities like Ottawa do not have much choice but to continue to stay in the city. They therefore have to live alone for a longer period than they had expected in a place that has a very different culture with different social interactions than their home communities. Unfortunately, these circumstances are contributing factors to the struggles that many urban indigenous youth faces. The circumstances increase risks such as drugs and alcohol, which are readily accessible in urban settings.

Using minimal text and simple language with images and short videos on Facebook posts.

“The number one thing that people (indigenous youth) said is to cut back on the text (on Facebook).” - Alinga

“I was editing some videos ... I just promoted the event on Facebook. The video I did is about 30 seconds.” - Adoni

Indigenous organizations in Ottawa prefer to use short videos to communicate on their Facebook pages. For them, it is essential to use minimal text with simple language. This is due to the fact that neither English nor French are the first language of many urban indigenous youth living in Ottawa although many do speak English or French as a second language depending on where they were raised. Therefore, indigenous organizations in Ottawa prefer to use audio and visual media to communicate with indigenous youth. We observed that indigenous organizations in Ottawa use symbolic imagery on their Facebook posts such as the ancient traditional indigenous arts and paintings with the cultural representations about the concepts of spirituality, human beings and animals, and the relationship to the nature. Normally, they cut back on text as much as they can and they keep the English or French text to a reading level that is appropriate to their readership. They also ensure that the images they use represent indigenous peoples. In terms of being culturally appropriate, our interviewees indicated that this is very important because otherwise indigenous youth will just scroll right past it on their Facebook’s News Feed if they have non-indigenous themed designs.

In our interviews, the research participants discussed at greater length the fact that Facebook posts are fast paced and its News Feed has a rapid turn-over rate. However, they have to ensure whatever they post is eye catching, colorful, and not too wordy, in order to capture indigenous youths’ attentions. Adoni added in her opinion, Facebook has contributed to shortening indigenous youths’ attention spans. A study on the future of on-line news video by Kalogeropoulos, Cherubini, & Newman (2016) suggests that, to have an impact, even videos on Facebook have to be short and tight.

Indigenous organizations in Ottawa have different motivations for their Facebook strategies.

“We are trying to figure out how to get into the indigenous peoples’ Facebook algorithm for them to see our posts on their Facebook walls. That is one of our motivations—how to get ourselves out there more.” - Alinga

Some indigenous organizations in Ottawa explained that they want their Facebook posts widely shared to help their organizations to better connect with urban indigenous youth. One way to evaluate social media strategies and to measure the public reach of Facebook posts is to count the number of “shares”. All of our interviewees want to maximize the extent to which their messages reach the public on Facebook. However, the indigenous organizations in Ottawa with a Facebook outreach mandate sometimes find it difficult to get across information about programs and services that they have available to assist indigenous youth.

On the other hand, there are other indigenous organizations in Ottawa who are working on the political side and advocating for indigenous peoples’ rights. Their Facebook motivation is more about how to quickly inform all indigenous peoples about forthcoming laws, amending legislation, the House of Commons and Senate debates, and the Prime Minister messages to the members in the Chamber and the public that will be introduced in the Canadian Parliament, which they believe may have a great negative impact on their people. Their motivation for posting on Facebook is more to address political and legal changes and to raise awareness, which in some cases might lead to public mobilization (Wood, 2015).

Challenges with Facebook usage by urban indigenous youth in Ottawa include: language barriers, personal interests based on age, content creation during slow periods, and cellphone data plan limits.

“When you are 13 years old, you are usually not thinking of the term ‘mental health’. So, interest is difficult”. - Alinga

“Not all the youth have a data plan on their cellphones ... a lot of them do not own [a] cellphone. It is very important that we actually reach out to somebody.” - Alba

We found the first main challenge of reaching out to urban indigenous youth in Ottawa via Facebook is the language barrier. Across the board, language is the most common challenge for indigenous organizations in Ottawa. Language barriers among urban indigenous youth create a sizeable communication gap. For example, a study by Arnaert & Schaack (2006) in a different context suggests that Inuit patients in the emergency department at hospitals in Montreal should have a direct access to a nurse or interpreter who can speak their language. Overcoming language barriers helped to improve their experiences with medical care. Alinga mentioned in our interview that urban indigenous youth speak a wide variety of languages and dialects. Their understanding of English or French is often very basic, which creates a significant language barrier between them and the indigenous organizations who are trying to reach out.

Personal interests based on age are another challenge. Alinga thinks that youth of all societies usually do not think much about the complex truths of their lives, especially their own mental health. Therefore, it is difficult to engage urban indigenous youth in Ottawa with Facebook posts related to mental health. Another challenge described by Adoni is about creating new content when there are few significant events happening, especially within indigenous organizations that work on politics and advocacy at times when there is not much political activity. All the interviewees were not inclined to visit their Facebook pages unattended and they like to update these pages as often as possible. This is another challenge for these organizations: finding new content to post about when there is not necessarily much going on, such as when the Canadian Parliament breaks for summer.

One last challenge shared by Alba was that urban indigenous youth in Ottawa who own a cell phone typically do not have a data plan on their cellphones. Many of them rely on free Wi-Fi offered at public libraries, schools, and indigenous organizations. Interestingly, Alba also told us that a lot of indigenous youth in Ottawa do not own a cellphone. They access to their social media accounts by using public computers or their friends' cellphones. Alba faces this technological barrier in reaching out to this population and this challenge becomes more acute when reaching out to urban indigenous youth who are actually at risk and require emergency services.

Indigenous culture supports generating or sharing content on Facebook.

“It is interesting how indigenous cultures have embraced Facebook. Indigenous peoples still have powwows but you will find information about powwows on Facebook, like the electric powwow from the Tribe Called Red.” - Adoni

“We are able to reach more people through Facebook. We put out our survey and we put out other things how people can access our services.” - Alba

Adoni further explained his quote above by referring to the Idle No More movement that began in 2011, the indigenous rights demonstration that was organized through Facebook. Nowadays, it seems any kind of social event, gathering, or movement of indigenous peoples is certainly driven by social media.

Our interviewees suggested in several group meetings that the indigenous organizations in Ottawa should consider Facebook as a main source of communication for giving notices and sharing other valuable information. From our interviews, we were told that indigenous youth claim that they check email but in fact they do not like to do so and they are more easily reached on Facebook since they already log-on to Facebook multiple times every day. In conclusion, indigenous communities are supportive of generating or sharing content on Facebook. Facebook is the easiest way for many of the urban indigenous youth to connect with others at home without the restrictions of geography and hence a natural channel for urban indigenous organizations to connect with them.

Indigenous organizations have urged Facebook [the company] to help them detect the presence of urban indigenous youth at risk.

“I can see how certainly it (Facebook) will help someone who is feeling with suicide or depressed to be reminded the good things in life when everything seems bad.” - Adoni

“I think a lot of youth who are having a hard time will end up throwing all that out. They vent. They put it in text and a lot of youth are putting music. They put out videos of different songs that are sad.” – Alkina

All of our interviewees agreed that Facebook is now a big part of their organization’s social media strategy. In term of indigenous youth at risk, our interviewees think Facebook has at least shined a light on many of the issues faced by urban indigenous youth at risk. Adoni gave an example of somebody who was living in a fly-in community in northern Ontario and feeling depressed. Prior to the era of social media, nobody in the world would have known about this person’s state but because people can express their feelings and their thoughts more easily on social media and reach a wide audience, there is a higher likelihood that such people could be found and helped. Our interviewees felt strongly that Facebook could help urban indigenous youth at risk especially the ones who are struggling with mental illness and suicidal ideation.

Adoni explained to us why so many of the urban indigenous youth are facing mental illness, as evidenced by the language and verbal tone of the content that he or she has generated or shared on Facebook. One of the main causes, he says, is the intergenerational trauma of the residential schools’ policy implemented and enforced by the Canadian Government between 1880 and 1996 (Miller, 2012). Adoni began by referring to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and commented that it had done a good job of showing how residential schools stole a generation of indigenous peoples. In that one generation, children were sent to schools away from their families and never learned what it was like to have a parent. Therefore, they often did not learn to parent themselves and it is hard to break that chain of dysfunction when they have children of their own. They do not know how to be parents for their children and pass on this inability to their own children thus perpetuating intergenerational trauma (see: Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman (2014) and Elias et al. (2012)).

Whereas another interviewee remarked that Instagram has recently become popular among urban indigenous youth, it would not necessarily be a good enough medium to be able to express or identify their mental health, in part because Instagram has different purposes and modalities of expression. Our interviewees indicated that urban indigenous youth feel more of a community base with Facebook whereas Instagram is more like Twitter, less engaging with a community. Instagram is more about publishing user-generated content mostly pictures and it is less about news (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). They know their people on Facebook and they can configure privacy controls for their groups and communities. It is also a more group platform with more ways to share thoughts, opinions, and feelings. So, it was noted the youth feel that they can talk about their mental health issues more freely on Facebook including depression and suicide.

Discussion

Study findings

Our interviews revealed the unexpected fact that many indigenous youth living in Ottawa experienced remote-to-urban forced migration. Many of them came involuntarily to Ottawa in order to receive medical care not available in their remote home communities. Unfortunately, they are not able to return to their reserve communities because of the length of their treatment. Often, this forced migration also made them unaccompanied youth migrants. They had to migrate to Ottawa without being under the care of a parent or legal guardian. This situation is a result of the poor access to health care in rural and remote indigenous communities in Canada and the health care funding inequalities between rural, remote, and urban settings in Canada (Marrone, 2007).

Consequently, urban indigenous youth in Ottawa are forced to live alone for long periods of time without family interactions, which adds to their existing risks such as drug use, dropping out of school, and lack of access to good quality food. We learned from our interviews with indigenous organizations that unaccompanied urban indigenous youth living in Ottawa use Facebook to connect with their families and communities in rural and remote areas. Facebook is therefore a tool for them to stay connected to their roots while they live in the city. Facebook is being used as a place where urban indigenous youth seek dignity, love, and care from their own people and to stay connected to their culture, things that they cannot find in the city. They can also gain spiritual support when they learn about what their friends, siblings, parents, and other community members are doing from Facebook News Feeds. Even simply seeing short texts, images, and videos on Facebook, generated and shared by their circle of Facebook friends can help these youth cope with their experience of loneliness in Ottawa. Our interviewees indicated that encouragement and support are what these young people benefit from the most in their Facebook usage.

When indigenous organizations in Ottawa create Facebook campaigns for local indigenous youth they address the broad diversity of indigenous cultures, languages and dialects by creating Facebook posts with few words and focus more on images and videos. We observed that English is the lingua franca that indigenous peoples use to communicate with other groups of indigenous peoples whose first languages are different from their own. This explains why our interviewees mentioned their use of simple English syntax on their Facebook posts. Also, these organizations' use of images and videos is not straightforward because they have to come up with the materials that are culturally appropriate while avoiding possible misinterpretations caused by cultural differences. For example, when an organization envisages running a campaign about HIV prevention and safe sex practices among indigenous youth, they have to carefully consider how to disseminate the campaign information including images and videos on Facebook in a manner that is culturally appropriate given that sex is still a taboo topic in many indigenous communities (Mill et al., 2008).

We also noticed that there are differences in the ways in which Facebook is used by indigenous organizations in Ottawa, differences that depend on their mandate and their target population. For organizations who are working on outreach programs, Facebook accounts directly target urban indigenous youth in Ottawa and many of those youth are also following the organizations' Facebook posts. These outreach programs can identify

the urban indigenous youth at risk of drug addition, homelessness, unemployment, HIV, health care access hardship, and dropping out of school and their posts are aimed at this population with these issues. On the other hand, in the case of indigenous organizations whose mandate is advocacy and political issues, their Facebook accounts seldom target urban indigenous youth in Ottawa. They look more broadly at the governing bodies of indigenous peoples across the country in order to work and communicate with the Canadian Federal Government. Their Facebook pages target all indigenous people across the country, NGOs, and government.

Limitations

Our study has some limitations. We restricted our interviews only to communication managers and youth program managers of indigenous organizations with offices in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada. We did not conduct this research in other cities in the province of Ontario, nor did we conduct research in other provinces and territories of Canada where many other indigenous youth also reside. Thus, we do not aim to report findings of all indigenous organizations on the national level.

Conclusion

Indigenous organizations use Facebook for two main reasons. The first reason is to promote the work of these organizations to the public and for them, in turn to listen to the public's opinions about positive and negative news related to indigenous peoples' wellbeing. Secondly, Facebook is also used to engage urban indigenous youth at risk with indigenous organizations that provide social programs and outreach. Indigenous organizations use Facebook because many urban indigenous youth in Ottawa are using Facebook, and it is the fastest way to connect with them when they are or feel at risk. Communicating with urban indigenous youth in Ottawa via Facebook is difficult because there are several cultural and language differences among the diverse indigenous peoples in Ottawa. Indigenous organizations have solved this issue by using a minimal amount of simplified English as well as images and videos in their messaging. We learned that urban indigenous youth in Ottawa are using Facebook to stay in contact with their families and friends in remote communities in order to combat their loneliness and other risks that they are experiencing in the city. Moreover, we discovered some unexpected realities about the forced migration and unaccompanied youth migration of indigenous youth in Ottawa.

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