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College students' Facebook posts and locus of control

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COLLEGE STUDENTS' FACEBOOK POSTS AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

by

Rachel M. Hartnett

A Thesis

Submitted to the
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College of Science and Mathematics
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
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at
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Thesis Chair: Roberta Dihoff. Ph.D.

Dedications

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my children, Zachary, Hayley and Hannah.

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I would like to give me appreciation to my previous advisor Dr. Terri Allen and to my current advisor Dr. Roberta Dihoff. Dr. Allen, thank you for showing me patience support and understanding. Dr. Dihoff, thank you for providing me with the strength to keep going.

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Abstract

Rachel M. Hartnett
COLLEGE STUDENTS' FACEBOOK POSTS AND LOCUS OF CONTROL
2015-2016

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Master of Arts in School Psychology

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the relationship between college students' Facebook posts and external locus of control. The primary purpose of this study is to determine if the type, frequency or number of "likes" of a Facebook post will correlate to an external locus of control. Facebook has been in use for over a decade and has over a billion users worldwide. Previous studies have researched the amount of time on Facebook and activity of users; however, this study will add to the growing number of studies on social media and examine the one particular activity of self-created posts on the user's own Facebook "wall". The thesis will then explain the background and significance for researching the most popular social media site, Facebook. The second section will explain why a modified Rotter's locus of control questionnaire was selected as the theoretical framework for studying Facebook user's posts. In the next section, Rowan University students completed a Facebook usage survey along with a modified Rotter's locus of control questionnaire through an online data collection database. In conclusion, the data was collected and analyzed. The results were not statistically significant; however, there were patterns of behavior that were observed. The patterns of behavior are related to frequency of posts, number of "likes" on posts, type of post and locus of control. Recommendations are that further studies should investigate a larger sample size and people who have both an internal and external locus of control.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 2004, the social networking site Facebook was created and now a decade later has over a billion users monthly worldwide (Statista.com). There are other social networking sites in existence and widely used; however, none come close to the vast amount of users on Facebook. Facebook works by having users create a free online account and this account is made public. Users can also have the option of making their accounts private. Users can make a post or “like” someone else’s post. Users can upload videos or pictures of themselves or others. They can “share” these posts. According to Ahmed (2015) the average user is aged 25 to 34 years old. The second highest population of Facebook users is between 16 to 24 years old and this represents twenty-five percent of the Facebook population. The number of users in this age range alone would be approximately 250 million people.

In recent years, there have been an increasing number of studies on social networking sites. Due to the popularity of Facebook, this study will only research this one specific social networking site. Several studies have researched the amount of time users spend on social networking sites. Hamade (2013) found that Twitter was the most popular, followed closely by Facebook. According to Junco (2013) computer software was used to measure college students time spent on Facebook and the results according to the software assessing for one month calculated that college students spent 26 minutes daily on Facebook. Approximately 30 minutes of daily use was also supported by the research of Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert in 2009. Other studies have researched the activity of users on social networking sites.

Activity on Facebook can be categorized as self-presenting or voyeuristic. (Yang & Brown, 2013). Self-presenting activity is activity that users upload about themselves. While the voyeuristic activity is activity that the user engages in regards to what others are uploading. This study is researching the self-presenting activities that the user is engaging in. Facebook is a social tool that allows user to connect to other users. Chang (2015), suggests that some users can be more passive with their Facebook activity while others are more assertive. It is in these differences of activity that the users engage in that is important for researchers. What is the driving force of the activity of Facebook?

This study is needed because according to Chang (2015) "... what is missing is an underlying mechanism to explain the relationships between individual differences and patterns of FB behaviors." Locus of Control, developed by Julian B. Rotter in 1954 is a theory used in studying personality. The locus of control is how one perceives the location of origin of their feelings of control. Julian B. Rotter researched that our locus of control can either come from within ourselves, internally, from our own traits, or from others, or to luck, externally. He developed a questionnaire to measure a person's locus of control (Rotter, 1966). External locus of control has been linked to the preferred method of using social networking sites and feelings of sadness. (Ye & Lin, 2015). If people with negative feelings are the ones mostly using online interaction, then to understand them further more research is needed in this area. Arslan, Dilmac and Hamarta (2009) state that those with external locus of control feel hopeless, that things are beyond their control and these feelings can lead to higher levels of stress. Higher levels of stress can lead them to find social support online. Egan and Moreno (2011) found that students did show signs of stress according to their Facebook profiles.

The purpose of this study is to discern if it is the content, the timing or amount of “likes” a post receives that can be linked to a person’s locus of control, with special consideration to the locus of control from others, or just luck (external), which for this study would be the online environment. Previous research has explored personality traits and motivations (Ross et al., 2009; Ryan & Xenos, 2011), frequency of use (Junco, 2013; Koc & Gulyagci, 2013) the social experience (Ellison, Steinfield, Lampe, 2007; Zywicki & Danowski, 2008) of Facebook users.

I have several hypotheses in regards to the behaviors of the Facebook users with more of an external locus of control. I predict there will be types of post(s) that will be used more frequently with people with an external locus of control. I predict that there will be a relationship between frequency of posts, with users with a more external locus of control. I hypothesize that the amount of “likes” a post receives will have a relationship for people with an external locus of control.

The data for this study was collected from college students at a Mid-Atlantic university in the United States. A Facebook usage survey and a Locus of Control questionnaire was completed by the participants. Using statistical data analysis computer software, I conducted tests on the data from the survey and the questionnaire. This was done to see if there is a relationship between external locus of control and Facebook use.

Limitations that I anticipated were that I am used a convenience sample from one university in the United States. The Facebook usage survey was created by myself and has not been standardized or found to have reliability. I relied on truthfulness from the participants who received extra credit for their psychology class in participating in this study. This is a small sample size and may not be generalized to a whole population of

college students. There are other forms of social media that college students are using and could be a better indication of college students' locus of control. As per previous research, there is very limited studies on Facebook and none that I have seen that have researched Facebook and locus of control together. This is a novel study.

The discussion will include previous Facebook studies and how this is a new area of research within social psychology. I will attempt to add to the literature regarding Facebook with this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Facebook, over the last decade has grown to over a billion registered users worldwide. As a social networking site users create an online account and can interact with other registered users. Research has been conducted on various aspects of Facebook users. Aspects of the users have included personality traits and motivations (Ross et al., 2009; Ryan & Xenos, 2011), frequency of use (Junco, 2013; Koc & Gulyagci, 2013) the social experience (Ellison, Steinfield, Lampe, 2007; Zywicki & Danowski, 2008). Previously, attachment theory has been used as a theoretical framework for Facebook research (Hart, Nailling, Bizer, Collins, 2014; Oldmeadow, Quinn, Kowert, 2012), and now locus of control, which has been studied in relation to personality traits will be the theoretical framework method for this study (Judge, Erez, Thoresen, Bono, 2002; Ye & Lin, 2015).

The average college student is spending 30 minutes daily on Facebook (Pempek, et al. 2009) and a study by Cheung, Chui and Lee (2011) researched one possible explanation. They introduced the concept of We-Intention through the concept of social influence and social presence theory. The basic principle of We-Intention is that both parties are mutually involved in a social interaction (which is occurring online) on a social networking site. According to Cheung, Chui and Lee (2011) social influence is when a person complies and performs a behavior that they perceived to be wanted by someone else. Social presence theory occurs on Facebook because users can see the other user's actions. Therefore, the user's activity determines another user's activity. Facebook is the platform for this to occur. The study involved 182 people, with 86%

students. The participants responded to a questionnaire. After analysis, the researchers found that "...social presence has the strongest impact on We-Intention to use Facebook." The data also found the entertainment value of Facebook was significant. Hsu, Yu and Wu (2014) found that it was the flow, and ease of use that motivated people to keep using Facebook. This motivation of usefulness was also supported by Chang, Hung, Cheng, and Wu (2015)

McAndrew and Jeong (2012) researched the question of "what" behaviors people were engaging in on Facebook. They were interested if age, sex and relationship status predicted Facebook use. Their study consisted of an online survey and 1,026 participants with 38% college students. There were nine factors and 44 items in their data collection. The factors were: social comparison, photo activity, seeking personal information about others, group interaction, photo impression management, social interaction, linking, photo avoidance, and family activity. Their results supported their expectations. They expected women to engage in more Facebook activity than males (sex). In regards to age, they predicted older people to have less friends and spend less time on Facebook. Relationship status predicted the man's Facebook use; however, it did not predict the woman's Facebook use. The researchers state their study is opening the doors for more studies on predicting Facebook use.

Mastrodicasa and Metellus (2013), have started the research on specific use of Facebook. They analyzed Junco's (2013) data of what activities college students participate in. on Facebook. According to Junco's data, in regards to activity that was uploaded by the user, and pertinent to the current study he finds that user's engage in updating a status 16% of the time, posing in a photo 11%, sharing links 6% and posting

videos 3% of the time. The researchers admit that there is insufficient information to conclude about how these activities effect the users. Kim and Hancock (2015), found that there are both benefits and risks to using Facebook.

Traud, Mucha, and Porter (2012) researched Facebook's online community and its social structure and compared it to the social structures at colleges and universities. Their study analyzed 100 institutions on a single day in regards to the Facebook user's attributes. These attributes were gender, class year, major, high school and residence. Then communities were made from the different groups and the networks were examined. The communities were compared and class year had the highest organizing factor, followed by residence. However, in comparing the Facebook network to a real institution network there were differences in the structures and this can be an area of future research.

Status updates are posted on a user's wall to connect with other online users and specifically their Facebook "friends." Friends typically are acquired through offline activities. These Facebook "friends" can also include family members and these offline relationships can influence what activities users engage in. West, Lewis and Currie (2009) conducted a study on the public and private sections of Facebook friends in terms of privacy. An exploratory study with 16 participants was conducted with seven men and nine women undergraduate students. The researchers conducted face to face interviews with the participants and their main focus was the Facebook "friends" the users had that were older adults and older family members. The findings were the majority of the participants' friends were their same age and few had their parents as friends. However, there were other older adults that were Facebook friends. The findings from the

interviews were that there is as significant relationship to not having parents as Facebook friends in regards to maintaining privacy.

Manago and Taylor and Greenfield (2012) investigated the relationships of Facebook users and their “friends.” The researchers hypothesized that the majority of “friends” of Facebook users would be superficial (i.e. acquaintances, online-only, strangers), there would be a disproportionate lesser number of close friends. This disparity reflects that the user is mainly engaging in Facebook behavior for people that the user does not have a significant and meaningful relationship with. They predicted status updates and wall posts will occur more frequently for the people with a higher proportion of superficial “friends.”

There were 88 participants recruited at a West Coast university, which consisted of both male and female. They completed an online survey which asked demographic information and about their Facebook activity and their friends. More specific questions were asked regarding number of friends, how they communicated with them online and how they would classify their relationship with their friends offline. Researchers analyzed 20 random friends of each participant. Participants also completed The Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1991) and The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and an inventory for perceived social support. The results of the study reported friends numbering 29 to 1,200, with a mean of 440. The relationships of the 20 friends that were analyzed showed a 27% acquaintances, 24% activity connections and 21% close friends and family, 18% people from their past and only 4% strangers and 2% online only, 4% other. The researchers’ hypothesis was supported and that the majority of the participants’ Facebook friends were superficial relationships. Status

updates were also the most frequent activity conducted with over 50% of participants engaged in this activity. Their findings from the psychological scales and Facebook activity and relationships did support that there is a perceived social support being provided by superficial relationships.

A study by McCord, Rodebaugh and Levinson (2014), examined users and which social features they used on Facebook. They hypothesized that the participants that scored higher for social anxiety would report less frequent use of social interactive features on Facebook. Their second hypothesis was that the participants that scored higher for social anxiety would also report higher anxiety toward Facebook use for social interaction. There were 216 participants. A sample of 185 women and 31 men were asked to complete a Facebook Questionnaire, Social Interaction Anxiety Scale and Social Phobia Scale and a Facebook Social Interaction Anxiety Scale. After correlational analysis the findings were not significant to show a relationship between social anxiety and social Facebook use. However, there was a positive correlation that was significant between the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale and the Social Phobia Scale and Facebook Questionnaire. People that have higher levels of anxiety did report more frequent use of social features on Facebook.

Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012), researched the motivation of people to use Facebook. They conducted a literature review and found that there were two main factors that contributed to people's motivation in using Facebook. Those reasons are the need to belong and the need for self-presentation. Facebook allows us to connect with other people and for other people to connect with us. The need to belong is related to

self-worth and self-esteem. Self- presentation allows people to find friends. Physical attractiveness was also found to be a factor in this decision, as it also is in real life.

Self-presentation and personality traits of Facebook users has been previously studied in relation to Facebook activity. Lee, Ahn and Kim (2014) conducted an online survey with college participants. There were 236 participants. There were 108 men and 128 women. There were a total of six hypotheses each pertaining to a certain personality trait and an activity on Facebook. Extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and narcissism were the traits that were studied. The dependent variables were, the number of *friends*, frequency of posting photos and updating statuses. Other behaviors that were measured were frequency of hitting the *like* button and *sharing* posts and *commenting* on posts. According to a Likert type scale the participants completed on their Facebook usage there were significant findings. The findings reported extraversion as the personality trait with the most significant findings. Prediction of the frequency of posting pictures, uploading statuses and number of friends were highest with extraverts. Eftekhari, Fullwood, Morris (2014) found that it was the personality trait of agreeableness that had the greatest predictor for number of likes.

Seidman (2014), researched if a person presented themselves online the same way they presented themselves offline. She questioned whether they were representing their “true self” online through Facebook. She had three hypotheses. The first was that true self would be positively associated with Facebook use as a communication tool. The second would be that true self would be positively associated with Facebook to seek attention and the third would be a positive association to gain acceptance through Facebook interaction. In her study with 184 participants from a Northeastern college in

the United States she conducted a survey about Facebook use and a measure of “true self.” This measure was a modified version developed by McKenna et al. (2002). After regression analyses were completed, the results supported all three of the hypotheses. These findings show that people are expressing their “true self” on Facebook and that they are using Facebook to gain attention and acceptance. Self-affirmation theory was used as a theoretical framework to study Facebook use. This theory has mainly been used in controlled settings and now is being used to assess online behavior. Toma and Hancock (2013) found that this theory was a good fit for studying Facebook behavior and that when there was a “blow to their ego” people would interact on Facebook to boost their ego. This reiterates that people want attention and acceptance.

In a study by Seidman (2013) she researched self-presentation and personality and Facebook use. She looked at specific activities that would foster self-presentation such as uploading photos, profile presentation and other uploads to their own wall. Participants completed Saucier’s (1994) version of the Big Five personality traits. After regression analyses were completed, the study found that extraversion was associated to actual self-presentation and conscientiousness was negatively associated with attention-seeking. These results conclude that it may be the motivations for using Facebook and not the actual use of Facebook that relates to personality traits. A similar study by Chen and Marcus (2012) found that selective self-disclosure was used to protect student’s self-presentation. In regards to gender differences they were not found to effect self-presentation according to cover photos; however, there were gender differences found in self-presentation in profile photos (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014).

Garcia and Sikström (2014) researched three personality traits and how they were semantically represented on Facebook according to status updates. They hypothesized that the personality traits of narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism would be seen in status updates. They also evaluated neuroticism and extraversion. Their study consisted of 304 participants. There were 132 men and 172 women. The participants completed self-report measures about their personality and Facebook usage; such as, number of friends and how often they updated their status. They also provided their last 15 status updates. The findings support that extraversion does correlate with number of friends and frequency of status updates. There was no support for extraversion and time spent of Facebook. Psychopathy and Machiavellianism were also found to predict semantic content in status updates. Winter et al. (2014) found that narcissism was found to be related to higher levels of self-disclosure and promotion when analyzing profile pictures. This study did not look at more interacting features such as status updates. Carpenter (2012) studied narcissism in relation to posting status updates, uploading photos and updating profiles and found that these activities could predict narcissism as a personality trait. McKinney, Kelly, and Duran (2012) found narcissism was unrelated to posting about oneself; however, their research did find that narcissism was positively correlated to number of friends. Skues, Williams, and Wise (2012) also found that higher levels of openness were related to spending more time and having more friends on Facebook.

Several studies have researched Facebook users and their seeking of social support through Facebook interactions. Li, Chen and Popiel (2015) researched the giving, receiving and perception of social support on Facebook. Several questions were

hypothesized in relation to social support. There were 566 participants at a large university that were given surveys. To measure perceived social support, the participants completed the Medical Outcomes Study (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991). To measure receiving social support, the participants completed a 5-point Likert type scale in regards to frequency of receiving social support on Facebook ranging from never to daily. To measure giving social support, the participants completed a 5-point Likert type scale in regards to how often they gave social support on Facebook ranging from never to daily. To measure Facebook interaction, the participants used a 7-point type Likert scale, which ranged from never to a few times per hour about certain Facebook activities. The activities were: updating status, upload and share photos, share links, “like” or comment on a person’s status or photo, “like” or comment on a non-person status or photo, “like” or share a non-Facebook website to Facebook, play a game, share a location. After conducting statistical analyses, the results concluded that there was not a significant relationship between Facebook interaction and perceived social support; however, there was a positive relationship between Facebook interaction and giving and receiving social support. Although there is social support given and received through Facebook interaction it tends to stay online and not generalize to offline support. Indian and Grieve (2014), also found that the utility of social support from Facebook varies for individuals with low or high social anxiety levels. In another study by Nitzburg and Farber (2013) found that when measuring Facebook use and attachment styles, that the significant predictor of using a social networking site was people with disorganized and anxious attachment styles.

In further exploration of anxiety in relation to Facebook use, Shaw, Timpano, Tran, and Joorman (2015), researched social anxiety and Facebook usage patterns. They hypothesized that the participants with greater social anxiety symptoms would have more passive use of Facebook than interactive use. The participants completed a questionnaire that asked about their Facebook usage included but not limited to updating status, receiving and sending messages, uploading photos, updating profile, and checking others' profiles. They also completed several measures to assess for social phobias, ruminating thoughts, frequency of depressive and anxious symptoms. After data analysis, the results found there is a positive correlation between social anxiety and passive use of Facebook.

Rosen, Whaling, Rab, Carrier and Cheever (2013), investigated whether Facebook use could predict psychiatric disorders. In their study with 1335 participants, they used four instruments. The instruments assessed for clinical symptoms of psychological disorders, Facebook usage patterns, technology-related attitudes and anxiety. According to their results after data collection and analysis, there was a significant relationship found between participants with more time online and more impression management. They had more clinical symptoms of major depression. Participants with more Facebook friends showed lower levels of dysthymia. More general Facebook use, more impression management and more Facebook friends also predicted clinical symptoms of bi-polar mania at a significant level. The results for technology-related attitudes were significant in relation to more friends, more impression management and more general use for clinical signs of narcissism and histrionic personality disorders. The results for technology-related anxiety and clinical symptoms was not found to be predictive. The conclusions of this study found both positive and

negative ways that Facebook use can factor in psychological well-being. Positive in having more friends showed signs of less depressive symptoms and negative with more use of general Facebook use with narcissism and signs of major depression.

Wright et al. (2013) also found that length of time on Facebook positively correlated to depression. However, depression was minimized when controlling for envy according to Tandoc, Ferrucci and Duffy (2014). Jelenchick, Eickhoff, Moreno (2013) conducted a study that asked participants about their mental state in real-time as they were using the internet (not specifically Facebook) and found no relationship between depression and internet use. It was also found by Fox and Moreland (2015) that users are unaware of how much time they are spending on Facebook. In a subsequent study there was significant findings for internet use and amount of time and depression in females in relation to problematic internet use, which is use that is considered risky and impulsive (Moreno, Jelenchick, Breland, 2015). Problematic use was also found to have a negative effect on well-being (Satici & Uysal, 2015). It is because of conflicting support that more research is needed about internet and social networking usage. Profiles of Facebook users have also been studied to see if they can give more insight into depressive symptoms and 25 percent of users were found to have depressive symptoms according to their profile (Moreno et al., 2011).

Yu and Fan (2014), researched the link between depression and external locus of control. In their study, 457 students completed The Nowicki -Strickland Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Nowicki & Duke, 1974) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Cheung & Lau, 1985) and a self-rating depression scale (Zung, 1985). After data collection and analysis, the results showed that external locus of control was

positively correlated to with self-esteem and negatively correlated with depression. This information is helpful in the current study of external locus of control and Facebook usage.

Bevan, Gomez and Sparks (2014), researched what people were sharing on Facebook and how that related to stress levels. They questioned whether there were different levels of stress and quality of life of people who shared negative health news on Facebook and how this related to social network variables. There were 599 people in their study in the western United States. The participants completed a Facebook usage survey and additional surveys created by the researchers. These items measured stress, quality of life, both using a Likert-type scale. They were also asked open answer questions about whether they had shared important health news on Facebook and the reasons for not sharing important life events on Facebook. The findings were that the participants that had shared important bad health news reported significantly higher stress and that having self-protection to not share important news on Facebook was a significant predictor of quality of life. This furthers the research on how selective people are when they post on Facebook. Moore and McElroy (2012) found that the personality trait of consciousness was positively correlated to fewer wall postings about themselves or others. Stieger, Burger, Bohn, and Voracek (2013) found that people who are concerned about privacy do quit Facebook; however, they found that personality traits are not a significant factor in why people quit Facebook.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Participants

For this study, participants from a Mid-Atlantic university in the United States completed an online Facebook usage survey and a modified Rotter's locus of control questionnaire. The data included answers from both the survey and questionnaire. All the students were at least 18 years of age and have an active Facebook account. Both males and females completed the survey and questionnaire. There was no further demographics collected. The participants were first asked to provide their gender, number of Facebook friends, date of most recent post and the date of their seventh post. There were a total of 56 participants. There were 22 male students and 34 female students. The participants then stated the nature of their posts which started from their most recent post to their seventh post. The participants then stated how many "likes" each post received and the date and time of each post. Finally, the participants answered the locus of control questionnaire, which there were two statements presented and the participant had to choose the statement that they agreed with the most.

Materials

For this study, the data obtained from the college students was collected through online subject pool software, SONA Systems, which is managed by the university. The data included questions pertaining to gender, number of Facebook friends, date of recent post and date of seventh post on Facebook. It also included a locus of control questionnaire. To compare this a most popular post was calculated for each participant by finding if there was a specific post that was used more frequently. Three out of the

seven most recent posts had to be the same type. Locus of control was determined by score on the modified locus of control questionnaire. There were 29 items on the questionnaire and 6 items were not used. A score of between 0-8 meant a more external locus of control. A score of between 9-15 was a score with features of both internal and external locus of control. A score of between 16-23 had more features of an internal locus of control.

The choices for type of post on the Facebook usage survey were: status update, video of yourself, video of other people, selfie, shared a link, checked in at a location, picture of other people, picture of yourself with other people, picture of something other than a person, meme or other. After conducting a crosstabulation there was a pattern of behavior observed; however, the results from the crosstabulation is not statistically significant.

Total likes were calculated by adding all the likes for each post to make a total number of posts for each participant. After conducting a crosstabulation there was a pattern of behavior observed; however, the results were not statistically significant.

The frequency of posts was calculated and arranged according to how many weeks the participant stated was in between post one and post seven. After conducting a crosstabulation there was a pattern of behavior observed; however, the results were not statically significant.

Design

SPSS software was used to conduct statistical analyses. Correlations were conducted to see the relationship between how the participants answered the locus of control questionnaire and how that corresponded to their Facebook usage survey.

Procedure

After obtaining the data, the researcher categorized each section in order to analyze each one of the hypotheses. Frequency of post was categorized by weeks. Number of “likes” was added for each post for each participant to find a total number of likes. Locus of Control was also separated in to three groups. The internal group, the external group and the middle group (both internal/external) with a median score on the locus of control questionnaire. The most popular specific post was calculated if the participant had three of the same post out of seven total posts. The purpose of this study was to further the research on the social networking site, Facebook. Facebook was chosen because it is the social networking site with the most users in the world (Statista.com). Locus of control, a term created by Julian B. Rotter (1966) was used to compare college students and specific Facebook posts. Locus of control was selected as the theoretical framework because of previous research by Ye and Lin (2015) finding that people with an external locus of control were more likely to use social networking sites. A Facebook usage questionnaire was developed by the researcher and a modified locus of control questionnaire was used to gather data. The objective of the study was to see if there was a relationship between users with an external locus of control and Facebook use. Facebook use, for this study was determined by number of “likes” on posts, specific nature of post, and frequency of posts.

Chapter 4

Results

Descriptive Analysis

This study analyzed whether there would be a relationship between Facebook posts and external locus of control. Previous studies have researched Facebook behaviors; however, this study researched specific Facebook behaviors.

Hypothesis 1. There would be a relationship between external locus of control and a type of Facebook post. After conducting a correlation analysis there was not found to have a statistical significance between external locus of control and type of Facebook post. However, the participants that scored within the external locus of control range did show a majority of “sharing a link” as their most popular post.

Hypothesis 2. There would be a relationship between external locus of control and frequency of posts. After conducting a correlation analysis there was not found to have a statistical significance between external locus of control and frequency of posts. However, the participants that scored within the external locus of control did have much fewer posts.

Hypothesis 3. There would be a relationship between external locus of control and number of “likes” on a post. After conducting a correlation analysis there was not found to have a statistical significance between external locus of control and the number of “likes” on a post. However, the majority of people who scored more of an external locus of control had fewer “likes” on their posts.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Summary

Previous research has shown that more studies are needed to study the reason for individual differences that relate to Facebook behaviors (Chang, 2015). Researchers have studied personality traits, motivation and amount of time on Facebook (Ross et al. 2009; Junco, 2013). Social support and the social experience were also found to explain Facebook behaviors (Ellison, Steinfield, Lampe, 2007).

It is because of the previous research that conducting a study about Facebook seemed interesting and to would be able to add to the literature with further studies into the most popular social networking site, Facebook. The theoretical framework of locus of control would be a novel approach to explaining self- presenting behaviors on Facebook. First hypothesized was that the participants with a more external locus of control would show a relationship between a specific type of Facebook post. The second hypothesis would be that the participants with a more external locus of control would show a relationship between number of “likes” on Facebook posts. The last hypothesis would be that the participants with a more external locus of control would show a relationship between frequency of posts. External locus of control was selected for further exploration because of its link to people with a more external locus of control to preferring social networking sites to face-to-face social interactions (Ye & Lin, 2015).

The questions asked of participants were questions that could be answered using exact numbers (for number of “likes” and frequency) of posts. Also participants were asked about specific types of posts and this gave the participants a choice of answers that

included an “other” option. The participants were asked about the seven most recent posts to see if a pattern of Facebook behavior would be seen. A modified Rotter’s locus of control questionnaire was used. After conducting statistical analyses, it was shown that although not statistically significant there were emerging patterns of Facebook behaviors. Patterns of Facebook behavior that were observed included data from all participants. This is due to the very small amount of participants that scored a more external locus of control.

Previous research by Junco (2013) found that students engage in updating a status 10% of the time, posting a photo 11%, sharing links 6% and posting videos 3%. However, in my study, and including all 56 participants, I found that students engage in having three out of seven posts being sharing a link at 43% of the time (the highest percentage) and status updating 20% and 16% of users had no more than two of the same post out of seven.

Previous research by Seidman (2013) has linked frequency of use to motivating factors such as self-affirmation and seeking social support. I found that when I calculated the time that occurred between post one and post seven that over 30% of the participants in this study had posted all seven posts in one week.

Previous research by Li, Chen and Popiel (2015) has found that number of “likes” on Facebook posts and that there was a positive relationship between Facebook interaction and giving and receiving support. I found that number of “likes” was highest in two categories, a total number of likes between 0-25 and a total number of likes over 100. These two categories were exactly the same at 30%. in each category, which makes 60% together.

Limitations

Limitations in this study were; the small sample size, the fact that the student participants were given extra credit for participating and that this was a novel study. The researcher did not view any of the participants Facebook pages and therefore cannot validate the answers to the Facebook usage survey. I also could not validate the modified Rotter's locus of control questionnaire which was used. There were 56 participants in this study and only 17 participants scored more of an external locus of control. Thirty-six participants scored with almost an equal amount of internal and external views. There was a very small amount of participants that scored with more of an internal locus of control. Undergraduates in a psychology class were given extra credit for their participation in this study. There may have been participants that geared their answers toward a certain side due to possible knowledge of locus of control. Due to the limited number of studies on Facebook this was a new area of research and because of this locus of control was selected as a possible explanation of Facebook behaviors.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research could include looking at the participants who scored both internal and external views on the locus of control questionnaire since they were the largest group, with double the amount of the people who scored more externally. Research could include the participants that shared a link since that happened close to 50% of the time, according to the Facebook usage survey. Posting frequency could also be further researched due to the majority of students posting at least seven posts in a week. Social networking sites allows people to connect to others and allows others to connect to them. This should be a continuing area of research.

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Appendix A

Facebook Usage Survey

Directions: In order to participate in this study you must have an active Facebook account. The questions being asked are about your last 7 posts on Facebook. Do not include posts that you were ‘tagged’ in. Please login to your Facebook account to answer the following questions. Do not rely on your memory to answer the questions. Please start with your most current post and then your previous post and so on. Please answer these questions about your last 7 posts and up to 10 months ago.

- 1) Do you identify with male or female?
- 2) How many Facebook “friends” do you have?
- 3) What is the date of your most recent post?
- 4) What is the date of your 7th post?

Please answer these questions for each of your 7 posts

Post #1 What is the nature of your post? (Please pick one)

- Status update
- Video of yourself
- Video of other people
- Selfie
- Shared a link
- Checked in at a location
- Picture of other people
- Picture of yourself with other people
- Picture of something other than a person (animal, nature, food, etc.)
- Meme
- Other _____

How many “likes” did you receive on this post?

Date and time of post:

Post #2 What is the nature of your post? (Please pick one)

- Status update
- Video of yourself
- Video of other people
- Selfie
- Shared a link
- Checked in at a location
- Picture of other people
- Picture of yourself with other people
- Picture of something other than a person (animal, nature, food, etc.)
- Meme
- Other _____

How many “likes” did you receive on this post?

Date and time of post:

Post #3 What is the nature of your post? (Please pick one)

- Status update
- Video of yourself
- Video of other people
- Selfie
- Shared a link
- Checked in at a location
- Picture of other people
- Picture of yourself with other people
- Picture of something other than a person (animal, nature, food, etc.)

- Meme
- Other _____

How many “likes” did you receive on this post?

Date and time of post:

Post #4 What is the nature of your post? (Please pick one)

- Status update
- Video of yourself
- Video of other people
- Selfie
- Shared a link
- Checked in at a location
- Picture of other people
- Picture of yourself with other people
- Picture of something other than a person (animal, nature, food, etc.)
- Meme
- Other _____

How many “likes” did you receive on this post?

Date and time of post:

Post #5 What is the nature of your post? (Please pick one)

- Status update
- Video of yourself
- Video of other people
- Selfie

- Shared a link
- Checked in at a location
- Picture of other people
- Picture of yourself with other people
- Picture of something other than a person (animal, nature, food, etc.)
- Meme
- Other _____

How many “likes” did you receive on this post?

Date and time of post:

Post #6 What is the nature of your post? (Please pick one)

- Status update
- Video of yourself
- Video of other people
- Selfie
- Shared a link
- Checked in at a location
- Picture of other people
- Picture of yourself with other people
- Picture of something other than a person (animal, nature, food, etc.)
- Meme
- Other _____

How many “likes” did you receive on this post?

Date and time of post:

Post #7 What is the nature of your post? (Please pick one)

- Status update
- Video of yourself
- Video of other people
- Selfie
- Shared a link
- Checked in at a location
- Picture of other people
- Picture of yourself with other people
- Picture of something other than a person (animal, nature, food, etc.)
- Meme
- Other _____

How many “likes” did you receive on this post?

Date and time of post:

Appendix B

Rotter's Locus of Control Scale

(Modified)

For each question select the statement that you agree with the most

1. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.

2. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world
b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries

5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
- b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
8. a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality
- b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.
9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
- b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
10. a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
- b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying in really useless.
11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
- b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
12. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
- b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
- b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to- be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.

14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
- b. There is some good in everybody.
15. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
- b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.
16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
- b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability. Luck has little or nothing to do with it.
17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.
- b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.
18. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
- b. There really is no such thing as "luck."
19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
- b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.
20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
- b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.
25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.
27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.

28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.

b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.

b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.