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***Gender Differences in Motivations for Social Media Use
Among College Students***

by

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors Diploma
to

**The Honors College
of
The University of Alabama in Huntsville**

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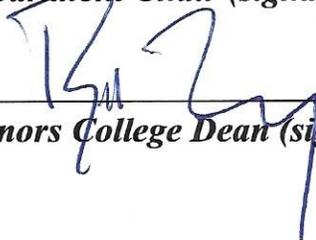
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Abstract

Users of social media gravitate towards and utilize specific platforms in order to satisfy individual gratifications in accordance with Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory. Though originally intended to explain use of traditional media, the theory has since been expanded to include new platforms such as social media and social networking sites. Using this framework, this study seeks to observe and explain trends between males and females in terms of social media use, social media preference, and motivations for using specific social media. Statistical analysis using SPSS will be used to test for statistical significance.

Introduction

Social media and social networking sites (SNSs) have quickly become entrenched in daily life. People use them for entertainment, to stay up-to-date on news and current events, for advertising, and a plethora of other reasons. Four of the most popular forms of social media (especially in the United States) are Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (Kallas 2018). It is especially common for them to be used amongst young people and college students. While each of these four media have aspects and features that make them unique and differentiate them from the other three, they also have much in common. One commonality is that when viewed through the lens of uses and gratifications theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974) it is evident that users of each media utilize it in order to fulfill certain needs or gratifications.

Due to the fact that uses and gratifications theory was first posited in the 1970s, it was originally intended to describe and explain the relationship between more traditional forms of media such as TV and radio and those who used this media. This theory has been altered and further developed as technology has changed and developed as well. Using this framework, this study explores what gratifications are derived from the four above named social media. I specifically look at what are the motivations for college students' usage of Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. In addition, I ask if there are differences in regards to gender with these motivations. Not only will any possible differences in regards to motivations between males and females be observed, but also differences in regards to time spent using social media (especially Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) Time spent using each of these social media will be observed in a few different ways. First in amount of time spent per day using social media in general, as well as number of days out of the week that individuals use social media. Secondly, users of Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram will report how often they

use each of the aforementioned apps. To further qualify how users in each gender spend their time when using either Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram; this study will observe trends in how often users actually post on these media. This is to differentiate between users who spend more time uploading their own content to these platforms vs. those who more often are “lurkers”. Furthermore, I ask if there are gender differences in time spent using Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Finally, I was curious if there are gender differences in regards to frequency of posting on Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Used in the previous paragraph, the term “lurkers” denotes users who utilize social media but do not often post their own content. Rather, they spend more time observing posts submitted by other users. In some extreme cases, these users may not post any of their own content.

In regards to posting, a “post” in this study pertains to content users upload to any of the aforementioned social media that is viewable by all other users that they are connected with on the platform (and maybe even other users that the said individual is not connected to depending on their privacy settings). So, a post could constitute content in text form, a picture/image, a video, or perhaps a combination of these. In regards to Snapchat, this study recognizes a post to be when a user sends a photo/video to their story. For Twitter, a post is recognized as when a user submits a Tweet either in the form of an image/video or text post. For Facebook, a post is recognized as any time a user updates their status, whether that includes some form of image, video, link, or simply text. Lastly, a post on Instagram is recognized as when a user uploads a photo/video to their profile, regardless of whether or not it has a caption.

This conceptual definition of “post” is used to differentiate between the aforementioned ways in which individuals can use social media and other types of uses available. Largely, this definition differentiates between posting and messaging. The first being when content is

uploaded that is viewable by any and all of the user's friends and/or followers (or other users depending on personal privacy settings) and the second focusing on when content is sent to only one or a few other users and is not intended to be viewable by all of a user's friends/followers. This definition also differentiates between uploading content and commenting on the content of other users. While an individual may comment on the post of another user and said comment may be viewable by any and all of their friends/followers, this comment is not recognized as a post for this study. If there is a chain of comments, the post is recognized as the original submission from which the comments follow.

This study will be building upon further research conducted upon differences in social media use between males and females. It has been shown in some cases that there is indeed observable differences in usage between these two genders such as time spent online and amount of posts. This study hopes to further this research while observing trends in not only one social media but four of the most popular media. This research is significant as Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are four of the most popular social media, especially among the younger generation. In understanding how much individuals are using each and why, a better understanding can be found on how people frame their world and experiences. It is also important to note that these four media are not stagnant, they are offering new uses and features regularly. A great example of this is Snapchat, originally it was essentially a messaging service, but with the addition of "stories" it greatly changed the way individuals use the platform. It also affected other forms of media as other platforms adopted "stories" in some fashion of their own. So, this research will be providing a very up to date understanding of these four extremely popular social media.

Review of Literature

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974) is a theory dealing with mass media communication, though it recently has begun to be applied to interpersonal communication and the internet as well. This theory assumes that audiences actively seek out media in order to fulfill specific needs/gratifications (Larose et. al, 2001). This is generally thought of as an iterative process, so that audiences have both expected gratifications and actual observed gratifications. Based on what gratifications are actually obtained, future expectations will be altered (Larose et. al, 2001). There were originally four types of gratifications classified within Uses and Gratifications theory, “diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance” (West & Turner, 2010).

With the rising ubiquity of Internet use, new categories have been created and “The time-honored list of gratifications derived from early television studies has been expanded to explore unique facets of the Internet medium” (Larose & Eastin, 2004). This need to expand the theory comes from the fact that traditional forms of media functioned essentially as a one way model of communication. Now with social media, individuals have more power to participate in an equivalent exchange of two way communication that more closely resembles face to face or interpersonal communication. Some examples of these new gratifications are “problem solving, persuading others, relationship maintenance, status seeking, and personal insight” (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001). Social media also affords users the ability to create their own content, so self-expression and documentation (as is seen with blogs) are also potential gratifications (Sheldon, 2015).

Social Media

Social media have been defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) Basically, these are online communities where most or all of the content is user driven and/or created. A subtype of social media are “social network sites”. These social network sites are defined by Boyd and Ellison as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). So, these social network sites mimic real world social networks as well as many aspects of face-to-face, interpersonal communication. On these sites users have the ability to send messages publicly or privately to individual users, thus simulating both public speaking as well as more private conversations. The type of language that is used to describe these online relationships is even intended to emulate real world social networks; those users that an individual is connected to are referred to as “friends” or “followers”.

As previously stated, the four social media that will be evaluated in this study are Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. These social media are all highly used. According to DreamGrow Digital, an internet marketing company, as of February 2018 Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram all rank within the 15 most popular social networking sites and Snapchat ranks within the top 10 most popular social networking apps (Kallas, 2018). The reason for the distinction between Snapchat and the other 3 is that while all social media, Snapchat exists only as a mobile app while Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have actual websites. That being said, the latter 3 social media can also be accessed in the form of mobile apps as well.

Snapchat

Snapchat was created in 2011. It was originally made with the focus of sending and receiving photos from connected users. These images were set to disappear after a user set amount of time and could be edited with text or drawings before being sent. More recently, Snapchat has also initiated a new function called a “story”. This function is also similar to the previous mentioned photo sending function in that users take an image and may add text or drawings to it but in this case rather than being sent to a specific user or users this image is posted where all other users connected to the individual doing the posting can see this image for 24 hours.

Snapchat is unique in comparison to Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram in that it deals entirely with this “ephemeral data” (Shein, 2013). One could posit that this use of ephemeral data effectively ties Snapchat more closely to real world communication, though it does raise issues of privacy management (Shein, 2013). Some individuals raise questions “about people’s motivations for wanting data to be ephemeral” (Shein, 2013), and wonder what information or content people could be sending that would need to remain fleeting. This notion however is countered with the assertion that users largely use Snapchat for insignificant, inside jokes between friends and thus do not require the content to be long-lasting (Shein, 2013).

Twitter

Twitter is unique as a social media in that users are limited in the amount of characters of text they can include in each post. This number was originally a maximum of 140 characters, though in 2017 this number was expanded to 280 characters. So, Twitter has much more of a focus on brevity than does Instagram or Facebook.

There have been some studies conducted on what motivates individuals to use Twitter. Yoo et al found that Twitter users are motivated by social influences to utilize the platform (Yoo et al, 2014). These motivating factors could be divided into two facets: “social values to yield and social pressure to comply” (Yoo et al, 2014). Basically, users are motivated to use Twitter in order to maintain or increase their social image (Yoo et al, 2014). So, in taking this into account, one could look at Twitter as a tool to be used in order to bolster one’s social stature. Interestingly, Yoo and the other researchers also found there to be a “negative relationship between social appearance and the trustworthiness of information shared on Twitter” (Yoo et al, 2014). Thus, the more use of Twitter is perceived to impact a user’s social stature, the more likely the user is to lie, withhold, or alter information.

This research does much in the way of explaining how exactly Twitter is perceived and used in order to positively impact a user’s social status, but this is only one possible gratification that an individual can be motivated to want to satisfy. On top of bettering their social image, this study hopes to identify other reasons for Twitter use as well.

Facebook

Facebook is the oldest of the four social media being observed in this study and saw the creation of its first iteration in 2004. Facebook offers several different functions, with its primary being user's' abilities to post status updates using text and images. In terms of uses and gratifications, “A number of studies have found that relationship maintenance and social interaction are the primary motivations for using Facebook” (Sheldon, 2008; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011). But, what are the other gratifications users are seeking to fulfill in using Facebook? One potential need users could be seeking to meet is documentation. Facebook allows

users to post and store whole albums of pictures so users can utilize Facebook in order to document their lives rather than using physical photo albums to do so.

Instagram

Instagram is a slightly newer social media than Facebook or Twitter. This platform focuses completely on the sharing of images and videos by its users through their posts. Sheldon and Bryant conducted a study in 2016 that sought to categorize potential motivations users had for their Instagram use. Not only this, the study further began to draw connections to other outside factors that could be contributing as to why people are seeking to fulfill certain gratifications. One of these factors being narcissism.

Sheldon and Bryant identified four possible motives for Instagram use:

“Surveillance/Knowledge about others, Documentation, Coolness, and Creativity” (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Of these four, the researchers found Surveillance/Knowledge about others to be the most dominant influence for using Instagram (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). This is consistent with thoughts on why users also utilize other forms of popular social media. This current research plans to build on this prior research and supply other potential motives for Instagram use, as well as illuminate any differences present in use between males and females.

Gender Differences in Social Media Use

It has already been shown that, in accordance with Uses and Gratifications theory, individuals use social media in order to fulfill certain needs. Not every person will be looking to satisfy the same gratification, so it is possible that any two random people could be using the same social media for completely different reasons. But what are the trends in these choices, and are there observable differences in regards to gender?

Previous studies have already shown that there are differences in the ways that men and women use social media. For example, Klemen as well as Peter, Valkenburg, and Schouten found that women disclose online more than men (Kleman, 2007; Peter, Valkenburg, & Schouten, 2005). It's also been found that on Facebook, women self-disclose more to their friends than men do (Sheldon, 2013). Thus, this study will continue to build on previous research dealing with gender and social media use.

This study aims to answer the following questions

RQ1: What are the motivations for college students' usage of Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram?

RQ2: Are there gender differences in regards to motivations for social media use?

RQ3: Are there gender differences in regards to time spent using Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram?

RQ4: Are there gender differences in regards to frequency of posting to Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram?

Methods

Participants

Participants were approximately 170 students at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. These students were primarily in entry level Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences courses. Of the surveys gathered from the participants, 11 were discarded either due to being incomplete or because of the improper input of data. Of these 159 remaining respondents, 77 of them were males and 82 of them were females. The mean age for both males and females was slightly under 21 years. Participants were also asked to specify their ethnicity. The breakdown of this data is as follows:

African American/Black	Caucasian/White	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic/Latino	Native American/Indigenous Peoples	Other
15	119	7	4	2	12

Participants were then asked if they use either Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram. If they marked that they do use at least one of these, they were directed to continue the survey, however if they did not mark that they used at least one of these social media then they were directed to end the survey. The breakdown of users per gender for each of the aforementioned social media is listed as follows:

	Snapchat	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	None of these
Male users	64	34	53	56	4
Female users	72	38	67	70	3
Totals	136	72	120	126	7

Procedures

Respondents to the survey were recruited using both network and convenient sampling techniques. Surveys were administered online to students using Qualtrics. Respondents were asked directly by the student researcher to take the survey. After being told what the survey was about, a link was provided that would take participants directly to the questionnaire. The results were thus recorded online as well.

Qualtrics was chosen so as to make the survey more easily distributable. It is also an appropriate means due to the subject matter of the study centering on social media and thus technology use. Having the respondents respond to online surveys also makes the compiling of data much simpler and provides ease of access when doing statistical analysis.

Measures

Before students could begin the survey, they had to first sign a consent form. This form also specified that if the student was under 18 years of age they were not permitted to take the survey. The survey begins by asking the respondent to specify how many days a week that they use social media. Immediately following this question is another that asks respondents to specify how many hours a day on average they use social media. In order to separate this usage into the individual social media, the respondents then used four, five point Likert scales specifying how often they use Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram ranging from Never to Everyday. After this respondents were asked to describe how often they post to Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. They did this by using four similar five point Likert scales ranging from Never to Everyday.

These previous questions were focused on the amount of time spent on the usage of each of the four social media, the following section is focused on the motivations for using each of the

social media. First, respondents were asked to indicate using thirteen, five point Likert scales ranging from Never to Always how often they use Snapchat for the following reasons:

1. To record/remember a special event	8. To be popular
2. To relax	9. To avoid loneliness
3. To show off	10. To see what public figures/celebrities post
4. To keep in touch with friends	11. To commemorate an event
5. To be creative	12. To self-promote myself
6. To keep up with current events/the news	13. To see what other people share
7. For entertainment	

However, there was also an option before being presented the Likert scales for respondents who were not Snapchat users. If the respondent was not a user, they selected that option which then directed them to the next set of scales.

A similar protocol was then followed for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, the only difference being which social media was being examined. The exact same, aforementioned thirteen, five point Likert scales ranging from Never to Always were used for the other three social media. Also as with Snapchat, respondents were again presented an option before being shown the scales that would have them skip that set of scales if they were not a user of the media those scales represented.

While some of these motivations and gratifications may not be as feasible or accessible on certain of the four social media, the same motivations were asked of each of the four in order to maintain internal consistency.

Results

RQ1: What are the motivations for college students' usage of Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram?

Snapchat

Order of motivations based off mean score for total users:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To keep in touch with friends	4.1128	.90163
2. To see what other people share	3.8667	.97583
3. For entertainment	3.8209	1.00263
4. To record/remember a special event	3.4	1.17943
5. To commemorate an event	2.9852	1.25772
6. To relax	2.9403	1.09518
7. To be creative	2.4887	1.08444
8. To avoid loneliness	2.3926	1.22228
9./10. To show off	2.3684	1.12461
9./10. To keep up with current events/the news	2.3684	1.21527
11. To see what public figures/celebrities post	1.9778	1.162
12. To self-promote myself	1.9185	1.17849
13. To become popular	1.7333	1.03087

Twitter

Order of motivations based off mean score for total users:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. For entertainment	3.6892	1.24884
2. To see what other people share	3.6081	1.25859
3. To keep up with current events/the news	3.2432	1.29076
4. To relax	2.9452	1.20058

5. To see what public figures/celebrities post	2.8514	1.27872
6. To keep in touch with friends	2.3562	1.27334
7. To be creative	1.8649	1.20869
8. To avoid loneliness	1.7432	.93722
9. To record/remember a special event	1.7027	.98939
10. To commemorate an event	1.6622	.94037
11. To self-promote myself	1.473	.86362
12. To show off	1.4521	.85051
13. To become popular	1.3514	.74819

Facebook

Order of motivations based off mean score for total users:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To see what other people share	3.5897	1.24675
2. To keep in touch with friends	3.4103	1.21168
3. For entertainment	3.0427	1.28917
4. To keep up with current events/the news	2.7863	1.23057
5. To record/remember a special event	2.7607	1.31732
6. To commemorate an event	2.7009	1.34719
7. To relax	2.4701	1.22877
8. To self-promote myself	1.8462	1.21496
9. To show off	1.7863	1.04905
10. To avoid loneliness	1.7607	1.04757
11. To see what public figures/celebrities post	1.667	.92848
12. To be creative	1.6293	.97383
13. To become popular	1.359	.71271

Instagram

Order of motivations based off mean score for total users:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To see what other people share	4.2857	.82486
2. For entertainment	3.8475	1.05106
3. To keep in touch with friends	3.7647	1.14022
4. To record/remember a special event	3.5798	1.16805
5. To commemorate an event	3.437	1.19063
6. To relax	3.2269	1.10804
7. To see what public figures/celebrities post	2.8487	1.38171
8. To be creative	2.5882	1.39255
9. To show off	2.5378	1.2473
10. To keep up with current events/the news	2.3025	1.23202
11. To avoid loneliness	2.1429	1.23017
12. To self-promote myself	2.1092	1.33905
13. To become popular	1.9748	1.28526

RQ2: Are there gender differences in regards to motivations for social media use?**Snapchat**Order of motivations based off mean score for *males*:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To keep in touch with friends	4.0635	.87755
2. For entertainment	3.6719	1.00877
3. To see what other people share	3.6562	1.08699
4. To record/remember a special event	3.0312	1.18145
5. To relax	2.873	1.11431

6. To commemorate an event	2.5156	1.20833
7. To show off	2.3016	1.11637
8. To avoid loneliness	2.2656	1.15802
9. To be creative	2.254	1.06208
10. To keep up with current events/the news	2.127	1.11431
11. To become popular	1.8125	1.02159
12. To self-promote myself	1.75	1.1127
13. To see what public figures/celebrities post	1.6094	.91923

Order of motivations based off mean score for *females*:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To keep in touch with friends	4.1571	.92683
2. To see what other people share	4.0563	.82613
3. For entertainment	3.9571	.98445
4. To record/remember a special event	3.7324	1.08177
5. To commemorate an event	3.4085	1.1536
6. To relax	3	1.08233
7. To be creative	2.7	1.06798
8. To keep up with current events/the news	2.5857	1.26826
9. To avoid loneliness	2.507	1.27474
10. To show off	2.4286	1.13663
11. To see what public figures/celebrities post	2.3099	1.26029
12. To self-promote myself	2.0704	1.22269
13. To become popular	1.662	1.0412

Statistical Significance for Each Motivation (at $p < .05$):

Motivations	P-Value	Statistically Significant?
To record/remember a special event	.000224	Yes

To relax	.252332	No
To keep up with current events/the news	.0146	Yes
To see what public figures/celebrities post	.000185	Yes
To commemorate an event	.000011	Yes
To see what other people share	.008414	Yes
To show off	.258737	No
To keep in touch with friends	.275769	No
For entertainment	.050049	No
To become popular	.199536	No
To avoid loneliness	.12672	No
To self-promote myself	.057557	No

Twitter

Order of motivations based off mean score for *males*:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. For entertainment	3.7353	1.23849
2. To see what other people share	3.5588	1.23561
3. To keep up with current events/the news	3.4412	1.21084
4. To relax	3.0882	1.19005
5. To see what public figures/celebrities post	2.8824	1.29719
6. To keep in touch with friends	2.3235	1.09325
7. To be creative	1.7941	1.00843
8. To record/remember a special event	1.7059	1.05971
9. To avoid loneliness	1.6176	.77907
10./11. To become popular	1.5588	.95952
10./11. To commemorate an event	1.5588	.74635
12. To self-promote myself	1.5	.86164
13. To show off	1.4706	.7876

Order of motivations based off mean score for *females*:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1./2. For entertainment	3.65	1.27199
1./2. To see what other people share	3.65	1.29199
3. To keep up with current events/the news	3.075	1.34712
4. To see what public figures/celebrities post	2.825	1.27877
5. To relax	2.8205	1.21117
6. To keep in touch with friends	2.3846	1.42562
7. To be creative	1.925	1.36603
8. To avoid loneliness	1.85	1.65125
9. To commemorate an event	1.75	1.08012
10. To record/remember a special event	1.7	.93918
11. To self-promote myself	1.45	.8756
12. To show off	1.4359	.91176
13. To become popular	1.175	.4465

Statistical Significance for Each Motivation:

Motivations	P-Value	Statistically Significant?
To record/remember a special event	.490062	No
To relax	.172667	No
To show off	.431572	No
To keep in touch with friends	.419858	No
To be creative	.322737	No
To keep up with current events/the news	.113223	No
For entertainment	.385944	No
To become popular	.013424	Yes

To avoid loneliness	.145442	No
To see what public figures/celebrities post	.424532	No
To commemorate an event	.193596	No
To self-promote myself	.402806	No
To see what other people share	.379107	No

Facebook

Order of motivations based off mean score for *males*:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To see what other people share	3.36	1.25779
2. To keep in touch with friends	3.28	1.01096
3. For entertainment	2.84	1.28349
4. To keep up with current events/the news	2.46	1.21571
5. To relax	2.32	1.21957
6. To record/remember a special event	2.2	1.19523
7. To commemorate an event	2.06	1.16776
8. To self-promote myself	1.66	1.1537
9. To avoid loneliness	1.6	.94761
10. To see what public figures/celebrities post	1.54	.83812
11. To show off	1.5	.8391
12. To be creative	1.3673	.69803
13. To become popular	1.24	.55549

Order of motivations based off mean score for *females*:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To see what other people share	3.7612	1.21966
2. To keep in touch with friends	3.5075	1.34134
3. For entertainment	3.194	1.28203
4./5. To record/remember a special event	3.1791	1.25439
4./5. To commemorate an event	3.1791	1.27832
6. To keep up with current events/the news	3.0299	1.19304
7. To relax	2.5821	1.23275
8. To show off	2	1.1415
9. To self-promote myself	1.9851	1.24915
10. To avoid loneliness	1.8806	1.10813
11. To be creative	1.8209	1.09994
12. To see what public figures/celebrities post	1.7612	.98611
13. To become popular	1.4478	.80309

Statistical Significance for Each Motivation:

Motivations	P-Value	Statistically Significant?
To record/remember a special event	.000021	Yes
To relax	.127706	No
To show off	.005073	Yes
To keep in touch with friends	.158503	No
To be creative	.0063	Yes
To keep up with current events/the news	.006294	Yes
For entertainment	.071204	No
To become popular	.059581	No

To avoid loneliness	.076292	No
To see what public figures/celebrities post	.101912	No
To commemorate an event	< .00001	Yes
To self-promote myself	.076575	No
To see what other people share	.042532	Yes

Instagram

Order of motivations based off mean score for *males*:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To see what other people share	4.1346	.92945
2. For entertainment	3.8235	1.07156
3. To keep in touch with friends	3.6346	1.18865
4. To record/remember a special event	3.2885	1.2732
5. To commemorate an event	3.2308	1.24641
6. To relax	3.2115	1.10855
7. To see what public figures/celebrities post	2.6731	1.98226
8. To show off	2.5	1.26025
9. To keep up with current events/the news	2.2885	1.30364
10. To be creative	2.1731	1.35359
11. To become popular	2.0769	1.38403
12. To self-promote myself	2.0192	1.30595
13. To avoid loneliness	1.8654	1.12073

Order of motivations based off mean score for females:

Motivations	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. To see what other people share	4.403	.719
2./3. To keep in touch with friends	3.8657	1.09952
2./3. For entertainment	3.8657	1.04295
4. To record/remember a special event	3.806	1.03336
5. To commemorate an event	3.597	1.12895
6. To relax	3.2388	1.11586
7. To see what public figures/celebrities post	2.9851	1.37612
8. To be creative	2.9104	1.34538
9. To show off	2.5672	1.24589
10. To avoid loneliness	2.3582	1.27566
11. To keep up with current events/the news	2.3134	1.18333
12. To self-promote myself	2.1791	1.36986
13. To become popular	1.8955	1.20773

Statistical Significance for Each Motivation:

Motivations	P-Value	Statistically Significant?
To record/remember a special event	.007946	Yes
To relax	.447211	No
To show off	.386165	No
To keep in touch with friends	.137447	No
To be creative	.001874	Yes
To keep up with current events/the news	.456695	No
For entertainment	.415072	No
To become popular	.223797	No
To avoid loneliness	.014777	Yes

To see what public figures/celebrities post	.111706	No
To commemorate an event	.048106	Yes
To self-promote myself	.260418	No
To see what other people share	.039166	Yes

RQ3: Are there gender differences in regards to amount of time users spend on Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram?

Hours per Day

At the beginning of the study, respondents were asked on average how many hours per day they spent on social media (in general, not specifically using Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram). This was to see in general how often students are using social media. The mean for hours spent on social media per day by each gender is as follows:

$$M_m = 3.0455 \text{ hours} \quad M_f = 3.9878 \text{ hours}$$

Using an independent sample t test I found the p value to be .01, so the difference in average time spent using social media between males and females is statistically significant at $p < .05$. Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in the amount of hours per day that males and females spend on social media.

Days out of the Week

At the beginning of the study respondents were also asked how many days out of the week on average they used any social media. This was also asked to see in general how often students are using social media and to help set a baseline. The mean for days out of the week where social media is used by each gender is as follows:

$$M_m = 6.3182 \text{ days} \quad M_f = 6.6402 \text{ days}$$

Using an independent sample t test I found that the p value is .09. So, the result is *not* significant at $p < .05$ meaning there is not a statistically significant difference in the number of days out of the week spent on social media between males and females.

Snapchat

Users of Snapchat were asked to rank how often they utilize the platform using a five point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: 0% Rarely: 6.6% Sometimes: 11% Often: 14.7% Everyday: 67.6%

For males:

Never: 0% Rarely: 6.25% Sometimes: 14.06% Often: 17.19% Everyday: 62.5%

For females:

Never: 0% Rarely: 6.94% Sometimes: 8.33% Often: 12.5% Everyday: 72.22%

$M_m = 4.3594$ $M_f = 4.5$

Using an independent samples t-test comparing amount of time spent on Snapchat by male and female users I found the P-Value to be .191028 and so the result is *not* significant at $p < .05$. Thus, there is not a statistically significant difference between male Snapchat users and female Snapchat users when looking at the amount of time spent using the app.

Twitter

Users of Twitter were asked to rank how often they utilize the platform using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: 1.4% Rarely: 20.8% Sometimes: 19.4% Often: 16.7% Everyday: 41.7%

For Males:

Never: 0% Rarely: 29.41% Sometimes: 11.76% Often: 17.65% Everyday: 41.18%

For females:

Never: 2.63% Rarely: 13.16% Sometimes: 26.32% Often: 15.79% Everyday: 42.11%

$M_m = 3.7059$ $M_f = 3.8158$

Using an independent samples t-test comparing amount of time spent on Twitter by male and female users I found the P-Value to be .355138, thus the result is *not* significant at $p < .05$. Following this, there is not a statistically significant difference between males and females that use Twitter in regards to the amount of time spent utilizing Twitter.

Facebook

Users of Facebook were asked to rank how often they utilize the platform using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: .8% Rarely: 16.7% Sometimes: 24.2% Often: 19.2% Everyday: 39.2%

For males:

Never: 0% Rarely: 24.53% Sometimes: 33.96% Often: 15.09% Everyday: 26.42%

For females:

Never: 1.49% Rarely: 10.45% Sometimes: 16.42% Often: 22.39% Everyday: 49.25%

$M_m = 3.434$ $M_f = 4.0746$

Using an independent samples t-test comparing amount of time spent on Facebook by male and female users I found that the P-Value is .001151 and because of this the result is significant at $p < .05$. So, there is a statistically significant difference between male and female Facebook users in the amount of time they spend on the site.

Instagram

Users of Instagram were asked to rank how often they utilize the platform using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: 0% Rarely: 4% Sometimes: 11.9% Often: 19% Everyday: 65.1%

For males:

Never: 0% Rarely: 7.14% Sometimes: 19.64% Often: 21.43% Everyday: 51.79%

For females:

Never: 0% Rarely: 1.43% Sometimes: 5.71% Often: 17.14% Everyday: 75.71%

$M_m = 4.1786$ $M_f = 4.6714$

Using an independent samples t-test comparing amount of time spent on Instagram by male and female users I found that the P-Value is .000541, which means that the result is significant at $p < .05$. So, there is a statistically significant difference between male and female users in amount of time spent using Instagram.

RQ4: Are there gender differences in regards to frequency of posting by users of Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram?

Snapchat

Participants who responded that they were a Snapchat user were asked to rank how often they post to their story on the platform using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: 5.9% Rarely: 33.8% Sometimes: 30.9% Often: 22.8% Everyday: 6.6%

For males:

Never: 10.94% Rarely: 46.88% Sometimes: 23.44% Often: 14.06% Everyday: 4.69%

For females:

Never: 1.39% Rarely: 22.22% Sometimes: 37.5% Often: 30.56% Everyday: 8.33%

$M_m = 2.5469$ $M_f = 3.2222$

Using an independent sample t-test to compare the data, it is found that the P-Value is .000049. This means that the result is significant at $p < .05$, so there is a statistically significant difference in how often male and female Snapchat users post to their story.

Twitter

Participants who responded that they were a Twitter user were asked to rank how often they send a tweet on the platform using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: 26% Rarely: 46.6% Sometimes: 21.9% Often: 1.4% Everyday: 4.1%

For males:

Never: 25.71% Rarely: 57.14% Sometimes: 14.29% Often: 0% Everyday: 2.9%

For females:

Never: 26.32% Rarely: 36.84% Sometimes: 28.95% Often: 2.63% Everyday: 5.26%

$M_m = 1.9714$ $M_f = 2.2368$

Using an independent sample t-test to compare the data, the P-Value is .118032, so the result is *not* significant at $p < .05$. There is not a statistically significant difference in how often male and female Twitter users post a tweet.

Facebook

Participants who responded that they were a Facebook user were asked to rank how often they update their status on the platform using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: 29.2% Rarely: 47.5% Sometimes: 17.5% Often: 4.2% Everyday: 1.7%

For males:

Never: 37.74% Rarely: 52.83% Sometimes: 7.55% Often: 1.89% Everyday: 0%

For females:

Never: 22.39% Rarely: 43.28% Sometimes: 25.37% Often: 6.0% Everyday: 2.99%

$M_m = 1.7358$ $M_f = 2.2388$

An independent sample t-test is used to test for a statistically significant difference in how often male and female Facebook users update their status. The P-Value is found to be .000894, so the result is significant at $p < .05$. Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in how often males and females update their statuses.

Instagram

Participants who responded that they were an Instagram user were asked to rank how often they post a photo/video on the platform using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Everyday”. The results are as follows:

Overall:

Never: 4% Rarely: 33.3% Sometimes: 40.5% Often: 20.6% Everyday: 1.6%

For males:

Never: 7.14% Rarely: 46.43% Sometimes: 28.57% Often: 16.07% Everyday: 1.79%

For females:

Never: 1.43% Rarely: 22.86% Sometimes: 50% Often: 24.29% Everyday: 1.43%

$M_m = 2.5893$ $M_f = 3.0143$

Using an independent sample t-test to compare the data, it is found that the P-Value is .002653. Thus, the result is significant at $p < .05$. This means there is a statistically significant difference in how often male and female Instagram users post a photo.

Discussion

Before gathering data, it was assumed that most of the represented social media would have fairly equal amounts of reported users. This however was not the case. The social media with the lowest number of reported users (by a good margin) was Twitter, reporting only 72 users. This came as a surprise to the primary researcher whose initial assumption was that Twitter would be one of the two most used based on anecdotal experience. The next smallest was Facebook with 120 reported users. This platform being in the bottom two did not come as much of a surprise as many people of college age have moved from Facebook in recent years due the average age of its online population growing markedly older (often due to older relatives and family members joining that younger users do not wish to interact with). The second most used social media as reported was Instagram coming in with 126 users. Thus, this leaves Snapchat with the most reported users boasting 136 total. This also came as a surprise due to the relative novelty of Snapchat compared to the other three media.

Research Question 1

The different motivations for using each of the four social media were compared using their means. The means were calculated by assigning a number to each of the rankings on the five point Likert scale which was used by each motivation. These values are: Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4, and Always = 5. Then the motivations were listed in order from highest mean to lowest.

Firstly, Facebook and Instagram share a top ranked motivation for usage, which is “To see what other people share”. Though this was also a highly ranked answer for Snapchat and Twitter, it was not the top. This response is very logical though. Snapchat and Twitter both have limitations on their posts. With Snapchat, a story can only last for so many seconds and

disappears after 24 hours. Similarly, a tweet can contain a maximum of 280 characters. If users on either of these platforms wish to post more content, they will likely have to do so in multiple posts. Facebook and Instagram on the other hand do not really have these limitations, posts on these sites can be much longer in regards to text length and do not automatically disappear. Because of this, users can fit more content per post. Thus, it can be assumed that users would post more meaningful, impactful, or personal content to these two sites as they can easily fit all the details in one post and users do not have to worry about the content being automatically deleted. Because of all this, users on these sites have the opportunity to be more nosy and learn more about other users' lives, so it makes sense that users would report using these sites largely to see what others post.

As stated, the top reported motivation for Snapchat use was "To keep in touch with friends" with a mean of 4.1128. This can be assumed to be due in large part to the fact that one of the primary functions of Snapchat is still to serve as a messaging application. So, users can keep in touch with their friends by sending messages. Snapchat is also primarily used by younger people (It had the most users out of the four and had the second youngest mean age of the four). This makes sense as it is the newest media of the four and often new technology is more readily grasped by younger generations. Since there are many young people using the app, it is likely that the average user's friends would also be using the app. So, if a user wants to use the media where the largest percentage of their friends are, they would go to Snapchat. Following the top answer, the second through fourth most popular motivations respectively were "To see what other people share", "For entertainment", and "To record/remember a special event" with each of them having a mean above 3. It makes sense that "To see what other people share" would be high on Snapchat's list as well as the other three lists because the content for each of these media

is almost entirely user generated. That aside, it is human nature to be curious or nosey, and these media allow people to satisfy this need/urge. “For entertainment” is also very logical as Snapchat contains many humorous features in regards to the types of filters and effects users can add to their photos. “To record/remember a special event” is also logical as often big events (such as concerts or sports competitions) and venues will create a special filter for their location that users can put over their photos. Thus, users can easily share where they are at or what they are doing using these. Users can also easily save photos or videos taken using Snapchat to their phone.

One surprise from this list was that “to be creative” did not report a higher mean. It was seventh on the list with a mean below 2.5. It would seem that this motivation would be higher up because as previously mentioned Snapchat has many interesting and humorous features and effects that users can add to their photos. Not only that, but these features are constantly changing so users have new opportunities to be creative on a daily basis.

The motivation for using Twitter with the highest mean was “For entertainment” with a mean of 3.6892. This makes a lot of sense for this platform. For one, as previously mentioned, Twitter has some limitations on how many characters long a post can be. Deep or personal matters often include more details to fully get a story or point across, whereas light, humorous quips can be sent using minimal characters. Not only that, but on Twitter, users can have others who follow their account without following them back (and vice versa). I believe this lends to the fact that users would utilize the site to either put out funny/interesting/entertaining content for others to see or to be a user who sees this content from others users that they may not actually know in real life. It makes sense that a user would follow someone they don’t know if that person creates funny/entertaining content vs. if that user tweets out information about their personal or family life because if the user does not have a relationship with the person they are

following, they would be less inclined/interested to want to know about that person's personal details.

The second highest response for Twitter was "To see what other people share" (with a mean of 3.608) which makes sense due to previously given reasons. The third highest motivation reported much lower means on other three media, and that was "To keep up with current events/the news". However, it really is no surprise that this motivation was high here as even the current president of the United States has and posts to a Twitter account on an almost daily basis. People also have shorter attention spans now, and due to the inherent shorter nature of tweets, users can get their news in fast little blurbs on Twitter. There is also a phenomenon known as "live-tweeting" that could be argued to have a hand in this. "Live-tweeting" is when a person/account tweets out updates or commentary on an ongoing event that they are witnessing in real time. This is done during sporting events, award shows, and even during crises where news outlets can tweet out new facts immediately as they get them. So, users can also hear their news literally as it is happening.

As previously stated, the motivation with the highest mean (3.5897) for Facebook is "To see what other people share". The next highest is "To keep in touch with friends". It makes sense for this motivation to be high for social media in general. After all, they are called "social" media. This is true for Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram, however the mean for this motivation on Twitter was somewhat low, resting at 2.3562. This is perhaps due to the fact that as discussed, users on Twitter are less likely to post personal details as users on other sites.

The fact that "To keep in touch with friends" is so high on Facebook really does make a lot of sense. The platform offers the most functions out of the four so it lends the ability to have multiple ways to stay in contact with friends and loved ones. One of these functions is the ability

of users to create and organize large numbers of pictures into albums that can be shared in one post. This makes it easy for users to feel that they are still largely involved in others' lives because they can witness so many events/details in only a few posts.

The motivation with the second highest mean for Instagram is "For entertainment". This is probably largely due to the fact that, like Twitter, users can follow another without that other reciprocating, and vice versa. Thus, there are a large amount of accounts on Instagram (commonly called "meme accounts") that post only funny, interesting, or entertaining photos/videos. These accounts are called "meme accounts" because the content that they share are "memes", or picture/video formats that are repeated or expanded upon by others with small, unique adjustments (though currently a meme can also simply refer to a humorous post). Often the users who own these accounts will not even reveal their true name or use their own picture as an avatar.

The third, fourth, and fifth highest motivations for Instagram also reported slightly higher means, these motivations being "To keep in touch with friends", "To record/remember a special event", "and "To commemorate an event" respectively. This makes sense as they have some similar qualities. First, because Instagram is image based it is easy for users to share pictures from special events in their lives' such as a special ceremony or gathering. It is easier to share this type of event on Instagram because you can quickly post the photo and provide a caption vs on Twitter where the image sharing option is not as easy or commonly used. Also, unlike Snapchat, these images will not go away so users can use Instagram in order to document their lives. Because of this fact, users can easily keep in touch with their friends and still feel involved in other people's lives by viewing these important events that their loved ones post.

One motivation that is surprising to see so low on all four lists is “To show off”, which was no higher than ninth on Snapchat (2.3684) and Instagram (2.5378) while being twelfth on Twitter (1.4521) and ninth on Facebook (1.7863). Because these media reach so many people, it is very easy for users to post content that shows off either an accomplishment, event, or perhaps a new item that they have purchased/obtained that they would like others to see. It could be said however that perhaps users stray away from using social media for this reason as they are afraid that it will alienate them from other users. While the survey was anonymous, it could also be that participants did not want to admit to doing something online that can have a negative connotation.

Research Question 2

While there is a statistically significant difference exhibited between many of the motivations, interestingly enough there was not one motivation out of the thirteen that was found to have a statistically significant difference between the genders across all four social media. This is perhaps best seen as a testament to the varied functions and features each platform has that differentiates one from the other.

There was a tie between Snapchat and Facebook for reporting the most motivations that have a statistically significant difference between males and females with 6 apiece. Having the next most and reporting a fairly similar amount was Instagram with 5. This leaves Twitter, which actually only reported 1 motivation as having a statistically significant difference.

The only motivation for Twitter that had a significant difference between males and females was “To become popular”. This was also the only time that this motivation was seen to be significant out of the four. Male Twitter users reported a mean of 1.5588 for this motivation, so halfway between Never and Rarely. Female twitter users however reported a mean of 1.175,

so very close to Never. While both of these means are low, there is still significance, so it is found that male Twitter users are more likely to use Twitter to become popular than female users. Largely though it would appear that male and female Twitter users exhibit similar motivations.

While Twitter was a bit of an outlier, the other three social media showed greater frequencies of statistical significance between motivations. Not only that, but there were actually four motivations that appeared on the list for all three. These motivations were: “To record/remember a special event”, “To be creative”, “To commemorate an event”, and “To see what other people share”. “To record/remember a special event” and “To commemorate an event” are similar in that they both deal with documentation, so they will be observed together. Females report a higher mean for “To record/remember a special event” and “To commemorate an event” on all three of Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram. This discrepancy is most prominent for Facebook, where females’ means are .9791 and 1.1191 respectively. The difference is not nearly as large for Snapchat and Instagram, but it is still obviously present. The means for female users for “To be creative” and “To see what other people share” are also higher than males. The difference between the two is fairly similar for Snapchat and Facebook where females’ means for “To be creative” are both approximately .5 above males’. There is a greater difference for Instagram however, where the mean for females’ is .7373. The difference in means for “To see what other people share” is fairly consistent at approximately .3. So, while there is a statistically significant difference, this difference is fairly consistent for Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram.

The other two motivations with a statistically significant difference between males and females for Snapchat are “To keep up with current events/the news” and “To see what public figures/celebrities post”. “To keep up with current events/the news” was actually found to be

statistically significant for Facebook as well. Just as with the previous four mentioned motivations, female users reported higher means in “To keep up with current events/the news” for both Snapchat and Facebook. There was a small difference however. For Snapchat, the difference between the means was only approximately .46, while for Facebook the difference was approximately .57. While this is not much, it does appear that there is a greater gender difference for Facebook than Snapchat when it comes to keeping up to date on the news.

The last motivation that showed significance for Snapchat was “To see what public figures/celebrities post”. This was actually a bit of a surprise as it is fairly simple and accessible to follow celebrities on some of the other platforms such as Twitter and Instagram. In fact, the means reported for both males and females (1.6094 and 2.3094) are both lower than the mean for their gender in Twitter and Instagram. That being said, the means for those two platforms are much more similar.

The other motivation that only showed statistical significance for Facebook was “To show off”, where male users reported a mean of 1.5 and female users reported 2. It is interesting that Facebook is the only platform where there is a statistically significant difference for this motivation, perhaps the ability to share longer, more permanent posts makes showing off easier. However, this would be the case for both genders so for some reason males aren’t choosing to take advantage of this opportunity. There is a difference here, but both means are still pretty low so it does not appear to be very common for either gender to really be motivated to use Facebook in order to show off.

Lastly, Instagram was the only of the four to report a statistically significant difference between males and females when it comes to the motivation of “To avoid loneliness”. Males reported a mean of 1.8654 while females reported 2.3582. Both of these means are fairly low, but

there are still more female users motivated by avoiding loneliness. Perhaps some of this has to do with the fact that often women are more attracted to visual content (such as photos/videos) while men are more often drawn towards text based content. So, in order to avoid loneliness, females may be looking at the images on Instagram in order to distract themselves. Of course, it could also be that more females on average are also motivated to utilize Instagram for documentation (To record/remember a special event and to commemorate an event), so if females are posting pictures of exciting/big events, other female users that are seeking to avoid loneliness can go online and see pictures of their friends. This can also be explained in the difference in frequency of posting to Instagram by female users.

Statistical significance aside, it is also interesting that “To keep in touch with friends”, “To see what other people share”, and “For entertainment” are ranked extremely high across the board for both genders, so it would certainly appear that these are the main reasons college students are utilizing these social media platforms.

Research Question 3

Though the difference between males and females in terms of hours per day spent on social media was found to be statistically significant, they are not separated by much (basically one hour). On average, males reported using social media for 3.0455 hours a day (so approximately 3), while females reported using social media for 3.9878 hours per day (so approximately 4). While the difference isn't astronomical, it is somewhat surprising that there was a statistically significant difference as the primary researcher had assumed that while the motivations would vary, the amount of time spent would be practically the same. This discrepancy in time can also help explain how many of the motivations reported by females had higher means across the board than males because the females are on social media a greater

amount of time and thus have a greater opportunity to utilize the various media to satisfy more motivations.

While males and females do show a significant difference in terms of hours per day spent on social media, this is not the case for days out of the week. Both males and females reported using social media almost every single day of the week. Males reported a mean of 6.3182 days while females reported a mean of 6.6402 days. This did not come as a surprise for the researcher as it was assumed before the study began that most people (especially those in college) use social media for at least a little while every single day, and so the mean would be very close to a full 7 days with a few outliers bringing it down to be in the 6 range for both males and females.

The difference between males and females in terms of how often users of Snapchat utilize the application was not found to be statistically significant. This is also true for the difference in usage between male and female users of Twitter. Most Snapchat users report using the platform every day, with 62.5% of males and 72.22% of females doing so. Percentages for male and female Twitter users that report using the site everyday are much closer, with 41.18% of males and 42.11% of females doing so. The means for each gender on both of these platforms are also only separated by about .1 for both.

Though the difference between male and female users of Snapchat and Twitter was not found to be statistically significant, the difference for Facebook and Instagram is significant. This difference can easily be seen when comparing the percentage of respondents that said they used these media every day. For Facebook, a little over a quarter of the male users reported using the site every day, while almost half of the female users responded that they use the site every day. The means for male and female users also show the difference, with there being a separation of approximately .6. Instagram has an even more impressive difference, with a little over half of

the male users (51.79%) reporting using the site everyday while an impressive 75.71% of females report that they use Instagram every day. The means are separated here by just a little less than with Facebook, reporting a difference of approximately .5.

What is the cause of this discrepancy? It could possibly be explained by the fact that there were a greater number of females using Facebook and Instagram than males. There were 14 more female users reported on these media than male, while Snapchat and Twitter had differences of only 8 and 4 users. However, this could also be because female Facebook and Instagram users reported higher percentages on the motivations for using these media, so perhaps they spend more time on them because they are utilizing them for more functions than men. Although, some of this can also be explained through observing trends in posting habits between males and females,

Research Question 4

Though a “post” may take a slightly different form depending on which social media is being used, it was predicted before the study began that trends in the frequency of posting would be similar across media, with females posting a bit more often than males. According to the data received from the respondents about their posting habits, this assumption was fairly accurate. Using an independent sample t-test, the difference in frequency in posting between males and females was found to be statistically significant for Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram. Only Twitter was not found to be significant.

There are other interesting trends to be seen in this data as well. For one, Snapchat has the highest percentage of users reporting that they post every day. An explanation for this could be due to the fact that a story on Snapchat lasts only 24 hours, so perhaps users are not as worried or selective with what they post there because they know it is not there indefinitely.

Another interesting trend is that while the difference for Facebook was found to be statistically significant, there really isn't much posting at all. About 53% of males and 43% of females report rarely posting, and while there is about an 18% difference in the sometimes category, only about 26% of female users report posting sometimes. One of the biggest discrepancies that can be seen is with Instagram. For this media, approximately 75% of female users report posting either sometimes (50%), often (24.29%), or everyday (1.43%). Male users had greater percentages on the lower end, with 46.43% of male users reporting only posting rarely. An interesting note though is that while there is a difference, the very top end is quite similar. In fact, the percentage of males reporting posting every day is just a little bit higher than females (1.79% and 1.43%). So, while it appears that females are posting more often overall on Instagram, the likelihood of a user posting everyday may not really be dependent on gender.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study was that it was conducted on a single college campus. While there is diversity present on most campuses, it can still be assumed that there will be some similarities between the students that attend due to the culture of the school or perhaps other attributes that would draw similar people. While it would require much more time and respondents, obtaining similar data from several different campuses in different regions could possibly provide even more accurate insight.

Another limitation was using a questionnaire to collect data. While an anonymous survey is effective at collecting large amounts of data and allowing for respondents to feel they can be honest with their answers, it still relies on respondents to give accurate accounts of their experiences. It is entirely possible that a person could low ball or over sell how often they are actually using social media. Also, while Likert scales are very efficient and a good tool, some of the data points could be conceived as a bit arbitrary. What one person perceives as “posting sometimes” could be seen by another person as “posting rarely” when in fact these 2 users could be posting the same amount. In order to get the most accurate data possible, one would have to go directly to the source media and observe. This poses some ethical questions though as many people would not want their data studied without their consent, and going about getting this consent could be a very long process with great amounts of paperwork.

Another limitation that this study had was that it only looked at four social media. While these four are extremely popular (especially among college students), these are not the only social media being used. While it was a very small percentage of the data, a few participants did respond that they used social media, but did not mark having used any of the four from this

study. Perhaps further research could expand upon the existing data by also observing trends in other social media.

Another possible limitation is that while there were 13 listed motivations for using social media, there is still a chance that a user could be using social media for a reason that wasn't on that list. While highly unlikely, there is a small chance that a respondent to the survey could be using social media due to none of the listed motivations. In future research, it may be beneficial to include additional motivations to the previous 13 or perhaps allow a place for respondents to list a motivation(s) that they have for using social media that was not listed as an option.

Lastly, while this study looked at motivations for social media use and frequency of posting, it did not really look at motivations for posting. While some of the motivations for using social media are also motivations to post on social media, not all are. Further research could look at what is motivating users to post as well as seeing if these motivations are the same or differ between genders.

In focusing on future research, it could be beneficial to focus on the different motivations that showed a statistically significant difference between males and females. Specifically, it could be very worthwhile to look at the four motivations, "To record/remember a special event", "To be creative", "To commemorate an event", and "To see what other people share", that were significant for Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram. Future research could seek to find out not only why females are more motivated by these, but also what about the functionality or set-up of these three social media encourages these motivations.

Appendix

Gender Differences in Motivations for Social Media Use among College Students

1. Consent Form:

You are invited to participate in a research study about how and why young adults use certain social medias. The primary investigator is Will Parsons, a student in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. You have to be 18 years old or older to participate in this study.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE STUDY: Once consent is given, you will be asked to answer a series of questions about the reasons you use different types of social media. Some of these questions will be multiple choice, some answers will be given on Likert scales, and a few will require you to type a number. This will take about 10 minutes.

DISCOMFORTS AND RISKS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY: If you feel uncomfortable answering any question you may skip it. You may also withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Whether or not you participate will have no effect on your course grade, or relations with your instructor, your department, or the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

EXPECTED BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to you. However, the results of the study will reveal information about why certain types of social media are used. There is no compensation being offered.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESULTS: Participants will not have to provide easily identifiable information such as their ID number, name, or SSN. This consent form will be destroyed after 3 years.. The data will only be released to those individuals who are directly involved in the research. All questionnaires will be digital via Qualtrics and will be stored privately on the Primary Investigator's profile.

FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW: You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You will not be penalized because of withdrawal in any form.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If any questions should arise about this study or your rights as a participant, please address them immediately or you may contact the Principal Investigator at any point in the research process. You may contact the Principal Investigator, Will Parsons, at 513.593.0334 or at wdp0009@uah.edu or the faculty advisor, Dr. Pavica Sheldon, in 342-A Morton Hall, University of Alabama in Huntsville, at 824.2305 or at pavica.sheldon@uah.edu . If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the Office of the IRB at [256.824.6101](tel:256.824.6101) or email the IRB chair Dr. Bruce Stallsmith at irb.@uah.edu.

IF YOU GIVE CONSENT TO TAKE THIS SURVEY, PLEASE SELECT I AGREE

I agree (1)

2. Please Specify Your Gender

- Male (1)
 Female (2)

3. Please Specify Your Age In Years

4. What is your ethnicity/race?

- African American/Black (1)
 White/Caucasian/European American (2)
 Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander (3)
 Hispanic/Latino (4)
 Native American/Indigenous Peoples (5)
 Mixed ethnicity/race (6)
 other (7)

5. How many hours per day on average do you use social media?

6. How many days a week do on average do you use social media?

7. Do you use any of the following social media? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- Snapchat (1)
 Twitter (2)
 Facebook (3)
 Instagram (4)
 none (5)

Skip To: End of Survey If 7. = 5

8. Please use the following scale to specify how often you use (either to post, like, scroll, etc.) Snapchat

- Never (1)
 Rarely (2)
 Sometimes (3)
 Often (4)
 Everyday (5)

9. Please use the following scale to specify how often you use (either to post, like, scroll, etc.) Twitter

- Never (1)
 Rarely (2)
 Sometimes (3)
 Often (4)
 Everyday (5)

10. Please use the following scale to specify how often you use (either to post, like, scroll, etc.) Facebook

- Never (1)
 Rarely (2)
 Sometimes (3)
 Often (4)
 Everyday (5)

11. Please use the following scale to specify how often you use (either to post, like, scroll, etc.) Instagram

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Everyday (5)

12. Please specify how often you POST (meaning post to your story) on Snapchat

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Everyday (5)

13. Please specify how often you post a tweet on Twitter

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Everyday (5)

14. Please specify how often you post (meaning update your status) on Facebook

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Everyday (5)

15. Please specify how often you post a photo on Instagram

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Everyday (5)

16. Please use the following scales on the next page to specify how often you use SNAPCHAT for each of the following reasons

- If you DO NOT USE Snapchat please click here (1)

Skip To: 17. If 16. = 1

To record/remember a special event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To relax

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To show off

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep in touch with friends

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To be creative

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep up with current events/the news

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

For entertainment

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To become popular

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)

- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To avoid loneliness

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what public figures/celebrities post

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To commemorate an event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To self-promote myself

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what other people share

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

17. Please use the following scales on the next page to specify how often you use TWITTER for each of the following reasons

- If you DO NOT USE Twitter please click here (1)

Skip To: 18. If 17. = 1

To record/remember a special event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To relax

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To show off

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep in touch with friends

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To be creative

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep up with current events/the news

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

For entertainment

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To become popular

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To avoid loneliness

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what public figures/celebrities post

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To commemorate an event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To self-promote myself

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what other people share

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

18. Please use the following scales on the next page to specify how often you use FACEBOOK for each of the following reasons

- If you DO NOT USE Facebook please click here (1)

Skip To: 19. If 18. = 1

To record/remember a special event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To relax

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To show off

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep in touch with friends

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To be creative

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep up with current events/the news

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

For entertainment

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To become popular

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)

- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To avoid loneliness

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what public figures/celebrities post

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To commemorate an event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To self-promote myself

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what other people share

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

19. Please use the following scales on the next page to specify how often you use INSTAGRAM for each of the following reasons

- if you DO NOT USE Instagram please click here (1)

Skip To: End of Survey If 19. = 1

To record/remember a special event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To relax

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To show off

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep in touch with friends

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To be creative

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To keep up with current events/the news

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

For entertainment

- Never (1)

- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To become popular

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To avoid loneliness

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what public figures/celebrities post

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To commemorate an event

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To self-promote myself

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

To see what other people share

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)

- Often (4)
- Always (5)

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