

Is Social Media Making People Happier?



Green River College

CMST 213 Communication in Social Media

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Social media as a medium of entertainment, connections to others, and a method of expanding one's social network has been becoming more widely used throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Rosen et al. (2022), 68.9% of people in April of 2022 claimed they used more social media more than before the Covid-19 Pandemic. This raises the question on whether this time on social media is benefiting the mental health of the individuals who use it.

This paper attempts to answer this question by surveying 15 participants the majority being female (n = 10) with most people between 16-24 (n = 10). Social experiments like the one done with Große Deters and Mehl (2013) found that undergraduate students who posted more status updates on Facebook than normal had reduced levels of loneliness than those who posted less status updates. Social media has also been attributed to higher levels of stress and an overload of information (LaRose et al., 2014). However, social media is addicting because it can cause releases of dopamine to stimulate the brain into wanting more of it (Humphry, p.99, 2016). With all this information in mind, is social media making peoples lives better?

### **Method**

For the study, a survey was sent out to Green River College students along with people in various discords, which managed to pull 15 participants with 10 of them being female and the rest male. The questions asked details about gender, age, employment, personality, religion, and mental health conditions. After this, question asked about social media usage. Which, if they answered that they used social media rarely (or never), would be transported to a separate sheet of questions that asked if they would feel happier with social media than without. The majority answered they use social media at least moderately often (n=13) and were transported to a sheet of questions asking various question regarding mental health relating to their time on social media.

**Results**

The results were fairly mixed results among participants. Most participants (n = 10) claimed that social media was affecting their social life in some way. However, only four participants claimed that social media was taking over their life. Most people who used social media (n = 8) wanted to partially get off social media. All of the participants answered that they felt lonely to some degree (n = 13), with most saying that they occasionally felt lonely. Over half the participants didn't believe that social media was making them feel lonely (n = 6) and two were unsure. All the participants felt frustrated to some degree while using social media and all the participants felt happy while using social media to some degree. All the participants felt happy while to some degree when not using social media. The majority of the participants (n = 7) believed they would be happier with social media.

In this survey, males were more likely to say social media was making them feel lonely than females. Females also were more likely to feel frustrated while using social media. Males were just as likely to feel happy while using social media compared to females. In the survey, females spent more time on social media than their male counterparts. For those who didn't use much social media, people who didn't spend much time on social media felt just as lonely as those who spent time on social media. People that barely used social media felt connected to those around themselves whereas those who used social media frequently had a wider array of results.

How Often do you use social media?	
Daily	12
3-5 each week	1
1-2 times a week	0
1-5 times a month	1
Never	0

Do you think social media is what is making you feel lonely?	
Yes	1
Mostly	1
Somewhat	1
Maybe	2
No	5

**Discussion**

The results were not very extreme. Examples of this was that the majority of people neither disagreed or agreed with statement (n=7), four others somewhat agreed (with none strongly agreeing or disagreeing). Eight of the participants wanted to partially get off social media, with only 1 participant wishing to fully get off social media (with 2 participants wishing to completely stay on). These examples, along with many others, doesn't really show if social media is having too much of an effect. People who took this survey generally didn't think social media was making them feel lonelier or unhappy. There wasn't enough data to show if the amount of time on social media affected anything as well. It seems probable that social media affects the well being of individuals, but the data doesn't show much about anything. However, there is not much data with only fourteen participants, so more data is needed to make a definite result.

## References

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