

Facebook Friends: Near and Far

Introduction

- Variables:
- Distance– geographically close or long distance
- Facebook use– using Facebook or not

- Facebook is the most popular social network on the internet today.
- We connect with our friends that are close to us as well as ones that live across the country.
- This tool could be effective in maintaining relationships and enhancing new ones.

- RQ: How has the use of Facebook strengthened the emotional relationships of those both geographically close and far away?

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Results

- Two-way ANOVA test was conducted.
- Significant main effect was found for Facebook use. $p=.001$.
- Also, significant interaction between Facebook use and geographic proximity was observed. $p=.05$
- Facebook use strengthens the emotional closeness between long distance friends.
- Also, the combination of being geographically close to a friend and using Facebook significantly strengthens a relationship, compared to long distance friends who do not use Facebook.

Method

- Participants
 - 83 students participated for a response rate of 41.5%
 - 3 responses were not used because the survey was not completed by the respondents.
 - All were Caucasian . Four participants were freshmen, 33 were sophomores, 30 were juniors, and 13 were seniors, and 3 did not report their class standing, which was measured by credits completed.
- Procedure
 - Convenience sampling was used with each researcher recruiting 40 different friends through email.
 - Survey was completed on Websurvey system
- Measures
 - Johnson's 2001 scale was used in a repeated measures design
 - Participants reported about each type of friend (geographically distant, geographically close, on Facebook, and not on Facebook)

Abstract

The research question under investigation is how has the use of Facebook strengthened the emotional relationships of those both geographically close and far away? 200 full time University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire Students were asked to take an online survey. 80 of them responded. We found that Facebook use strengthens the emotional closeness between long distance friends. Additionally, geographically close friends who use Facebook are emotionally closer than long distance friends who do not use Facebook. However, friends' use of Facebook and their geographic proximity are otherwise not related to their emotional closeness.

Discussion

Conclusion:

- Within our research, according to the data collected, general use of Facebook increases the closeness felt in a friendship relationship, especially in long distance relationships.
- With these results, we can imply that the use of Facebook, whether used in long-distance relationship or geographically close relationships increases closeness in both, simply because there is more interaction other than face to face.

Limitations:

- Small sample (N=83)
- Limits generalizability

Convenience sample

- Non-random samples can reduce generalizability.
- However, it was important that Facebook users were targeted.
- Therefore, a convenience sample was justified.

Further research

- More direct questionnaire
- More in-depth study of the exact distance of the relationship (out of state, different countries)
- A background of the relationship being defined (new friend/high school friend)
- More diverse participant base