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The Impact of Age and Social Media Preference on Facebook and Instagram Users Reactions to Social Media

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THE IMPACT OF AGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PREFERENCE ON FACEBOOK AND

INSTAGRAM USERS REACTIONS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

by

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Abstract

Due to the paucity of research concerning age effects and social media preference, 164

individuals completed a survey pertaining to their age, preference for Facebook versus Instagram,

and responded to 20 hypothetical questions concerning their emotional reactance to different

types of events that occur on Facebook and Instagram (i.e., positive social events, positive

romantic events, negative social events, and negative romantic events). It was revealed that the

majority of participants prefer Facebook to Instagram, although this finding was weaker in

younger adults. Further, it was found that individuals who rated Facebook or Instagram as more

important tended to react more strongly to all four types of events. Finally, for those participants

who preferred Facebook, no significant differences were found for emotional reactance to events

occurring on Facebook versus Instagram. Implications are discussed.

Keywords: age, Facebook, Instagram, emotional reactance, social media platform preference

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Introduction

The impact that social media, and in particular, Facebook, has had on our real-life relationships has been extensively studied over the past few years. Unfortunately, this research tends to give a bleak outlook on the impact of Facebook on relationships. For example, undergraduate students who showed more addictive tendencies towards Facebook also experienced more cognitive jealousy and displayed more surveillance behaviours towards their romantic partners (Elphinston & Noller, 2011). In addition, it has also been found that increased Facebook use significantly predicted Facebook-related jealousy in romantic relationships (Muise, Christofides, & Desmarais, 2009).

Based on previous research, Facebook can have a negative impact on relationships. However, Facebook has also been shown to have positive effects: Seder and Oishi (2009) found that individuals who belong to homogeneous online friendship networks (i.e., who have online friends of the same race or ethnicity) have higher life satisfaction. These mixed findings are further complicated by Wolfe's (2013) findings: while 25% of participants reported that Facebook had a positive impact on their romantic relationship, 13% reported a negative impact, 25% reported both a positive and negative impact, and 37% reported no impact. Further, relationship satisfaction was significantly lower for those who reported Facebook as having a negative impact on their relationship than it was for those who reported Facebook as having a positive impact, no impact, or an ambivalent impact, which did not significantly differ from one another.

Clearly, the influence that Facebook has on our real-life relationships is complicated. Research has progressed into trying to tease apart the complex relationships between variables that might influence how Facebook impacts our relationships. For example, it has been found that there are gender differences when it comes to Facebook usage and romantic jealousy, with

women scoring higher on both counts (Muise et al., 2009). Further, it has been found that those with a preoccupied attachment style monitor former partners on Facebook more so than those with any other attachment style (Gillian, 2015).

However, to date, the majority of these studies have focused on young adults, mostly between the ages of 18 and 24. This is problematic in that, according to research by Greenwood, Perrin, and Duggan (2016), while 88% of online individuals aged 18 to 29 use Facebook, 84% of online individuals aged 30 to 49 use Facebook, and 72% of online individuals aged 50 to 64 use Facebook. The population of Facebook can further be broken down, such that: a quarter of all Facebook users are between the ages of 18 and 24, just over a quarter are between the ages of 25 and 34, just under a quarter are between the ages of 35 to 44, and a quarter are between the ages of 45 and 64 (Chaffey, 2017). Clearly, Facebook is used by all ages. However, the majority of research is conducted on undergraduate students, typically between the ages of 18 and 24, if not younger. Because the majority of research thus far has focused on young adults, it seems reasonable to assume that the mass of studies indicating that Facebook has a negative effect on romantic relationships would generalize to this population, but what about to others? For instance, Wolfe's (2013) study, which utilized a wider age range in its sample, found mixed results regarding Facebook and relationship satisfaction, with 50 percent of participants reporting that Facebook had at least some positive effect on their relationships. At present, there has been little research on how Facebook affects individuals of differing ages. One study found that young people disclose more personal information than older individuals on Facebook (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2012). Another study found that younger adults are more active on Facebook than older adults, but that older adults are more engaged in online family activities than younger adults on Facebook (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012).

Although Facebook is the most popular social media site in America, reaching 79% of American internet users, the next closest social media cite in terms of popularity is Instagram, reaching 32% of American internet users (Lister, 2017). Furthermore, 32% of teenagers rated Instagram as the "most important" social media cite, with over 50% of its users checking their platforms daily and over a third checking multiple times daily (Lister, 2017). Clearly, in comparison to Facebook, Instagram is much more popular among younger generations, with just over a third of its users between the ages of 18 and 24, another third between the ages of 25 to 34, and another third between the ages of 35 to 64 (Chaffey, 2017).

Moreover, while over half of social media users report using more than one site consistently (DiGrazio, 2017), no research has been conducted on the influence of social media preference and the impact of Facebook. In theory, an individual who values Facebook a great deal would be more emotionally impacted by events on Facebook than would a person who values Facebook very little, but this is a theory that has yet to be explored in the literature. That being said, although research in this area is sparse, some research has found that Facebook is *not* used for impression management or to present an idealized version of one's self to the world, as is commonly assumed, but is actually used to portray an accurate reflection of an individual's personality (Back et al., 2010; Buss, 2012). Comparatively, Instagram users report four main reasons for their usage: (1) surveillance/knowledge about others, (2) documentation (of the participants' social activities), (3) coolness, and (4) creativity (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). While further research will need to be conducted before one can ascertain the conclusion that Instagram is used more frequently for impression management compared to Facebook, based on these current findings, it appears that Instagram is utilized to present an ideal-self image while Facebook is used to present an actual-self image. This is further supported by the finding that the association between narcissism and deceptive like-seeking on Instagram (i.e. altering one's

appearance in photos using software or buying "likes") is mediated by motivations to increase one's popularity (Dumas, Maxwell-Smith, Davis, & Giulietti, 2017). Therefore, it would stand to reason that individuals who care deeply about presenting an idealized version of themselves to their online communities may prefer Instagram to Facebook and so may be more emotionally impacted by social events on Instagram compared to Facebook, as Instagram events may have a larger impact on their ideal-self presentations. For example, Ridgway and Clayton (2016) found that increased body image was sequentially associated with increased selfie posting on Instagram, and Instagram-related conflict was associated with increased negative romantic relationship outcomes.

However, due to the relative novelty of Instagram (launched in 2010), there is little research surrounding its impact on real-life relationships compared to Facebook. Research regarding the impact of social media on real-life relationships is a crucial area of study in that it is a fundamental need of human beings to feel connected to others through interpersonal relationships. For instance, in their prominent paper on the need to belong, Baumeister and Leary (1995) validate the belongingness hypothesis, which holds that "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (p. 497). However, in order to satisfy this drive, one must have frequent and pleasant interactions with other people within a framework of mutual concern for one another's welfare. If these criteria are not met, one is unable to form appropriate social bonds, which may result in a variety of maladaptive consequences, such as experiencing greater emotional distress, greater life stress, more physical and mental health issues, an increased risk of committing suicide, and an increased risk of becoming involved in criminal activities (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). That being said, social media sites such as Facebook can aid in forming and maintaining these interpersonal relationships as they allow people to connect with

one another at any time in any location. For example, it has been found that greater Facebook usage among undergraduate students is associated with greater social capital (i.e., the resources assembled through one's relationships with other people; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Similarly, it has been found that greater involvement with an online community among older adults is predictive of lower perceived life stress (Wright, 2000). Clearly, social media sites have the potential to facilitate the creation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships and, by extension, to aid in satisfying our need to belong.

In order to further extend our understanding of how social media can affect real-life relationships, the present research examined the relationship between social media preference, age, and emotional reactance to various social media events. To test this relationship, participants of varying ages rated their emotional responses to 20 hypothetical social media events on either their preferred or non-preferred social media platform of either Facebook or Instagram. The social media events are those that can happen on individuals' social media profile on either Facebook or Instagram and included events that were either social or romantic and either positive or negative in nature.

For older participants, because it was expected that there would be few participants who prefer Instagram, as it is less popular among their age group, coupled with the finding that older adults tend to be more family focused online (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012), it was hypothesized that older participants would report more intense emotional responses to hypothetical Facebook events than to hypothetical Instagram events. In contrast, it was hypothesized that younger participants, who I believed would be approximately equally split in their preferences for Facebook and Instagram, would report more intense emotional responses to hypothetical events on their preferred social media site.

Methods

Participants

Participants were recruited via the online crowdsourcing platform, Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). A short prescreen questionnaire was created and posted on the Mturk website to identify individuals who fit the following criteria: between the ages of 18 and 64; active users of Facebook, Instagram, or both; and currently living in the United States. Two hundred eighty eight individuals completed the prescreen survey. Following this screening, the 263 participants who met the criteria were contacted and invited to participate in the main study.

Of the participants who were contacted to participate in the main study, 175 individuals began to complete the survey. However, due to incomplete responses, 11 were excluded from the analysis. The final sample included 164 individuals (110 women and 54 men). Of these individuals, there were 53 younger adults (aged 18 to 29, $M = 25.42$, $SD = 3.04$) and 111 older adults (aged 30 to 64, $M = 40.57$, $SD = 9.39$). Moreover, 73 individuals (45%) reported using Facebook exclusively on a monthly, 6 individuals (4%) reported using Instagram exclusively on a monthly basis, and 85 individuals (52%) reported using both Facebook and Instagram on a monthly basis. However, that being said, of those included in our sample, 141 (86%) stated a preference for Facebook while only 23 (14%) stated a preference for Instagram. See Table 1 for a further break down of the sample via gender, age, and social media platform preference and Table 2 for a breakdown of the sample via gender, age, and social media platform usage.

Table 1

Breakdown of Sample via Gender, Age, and Social Media Platform Preference.

Social Media Preference	Male		Female	
	Older	Younger	Older	Younger
Facebook Preference	39 (24%)	8 (5%)	66 (40%)	28 (17%)
Instagram Preference	0 (0%)	7 (4%)	6 (4%)	10 (6%)

Note. Percentages reflect the percentage of individuals within each subsample from the total

sample ($N = 164$)

Table 2

Breakdown of Sample via Gender, Age, and Social Media Platform Usage.

Social Media usage	Male		Female	
	Older	Younger	Older	Younger
Facebook Exclusively	30 (18.29%)	3 (1.83%)	36 (21.95%)	4 (2.44%)
Instagram Exclusively	0 (0%)	2 (1.22%)	1 (0.61%)	3 (1.83%)
Both (Facebook and Instagram)	9 (5.49%)	10 (6.10%)	35 (21.34%)	31 (18.90%)

Note. Percentages reflect the percentage of individuals within each subsample from the total

sample ($N = 164$)

Materials and Procedure

A prescreen questionnaire was administered on the MTurk website via Turk Prime to ensure that only those individuals who met the criteria outlined above would be included in the main study, and that there would be an appropriate number of participants in both the younger and older adult conditions. The prescreen survey took approximately 1-2 minutes to complete and consisted of 12 questions, which included age, social media platform usage, relationships status, and a number of other questions unrelated to the present study. This was done in order to mask the questions of interest, specifically the questions pertaining to age and social media usage and encourage honest responses. Participants were compensated 0.05 USD for completing the prescreen questionnaire.

Participants who met the criteria for the main study, as outlined above, were sent an email using Turk Prime. They were told that they qualified for a 5-minute study about their social media preferences and given the link to participate. Participants were compensated 0.50 USD. The questionnaire was created to assess social media preference (i.e., either Facebook or Instagram) and emotional reactions to hypothetical social media events (e.g., receiving a new friend request or a new follower).

After implied consent was obtained, participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, and social media platform usage and whether they prefer Facebook or Instagram. Based on participants' social media preference, participants were randomly assigned to either think about their emotional reactions to hypothetical events on Facebook or Instagram. Participants were asked to respond to 20 hypothetical scenarios that occur commonly on the two platforms (e.g., "a photo you posted receives many likes"). For each event, only keywords were different so that they would be relevant to the social media platform participants were thinking about (e.g.,

"friends" in the Facebook condition would be presented as "followers" in the Instagram condition).

These hypothetical events included positive events (for instance, "a friend follows you back/accepts your friend request") and negative events (for example, "you don't receive any likes on a photo you posted") that were either romantic events (for instance, "your partner/crush doesn't like your selfie") or social events (for example, "you receive a surge of followers/friend requests"). This allowed for four different social media event types to be assessed, with five questions falling within each specific event type: (1) positive social events; (2) positive romantic events; (3) negative social events; and (4) negative romantic events. Participants responded using a rating scale that ranged from -3 (extremely upset) to 3 (extremely happy), with 0 indicating a neutral reaction. The questionnaire then concluded by presenting the debriefing form as well as the contact information of the researchers. The full questionnaire is presented in the Appendix.

For the main analyses, the emotional reactance scale was recoded such that the sign of the number (i.e. positive or negative) was removed, resulting in both "extremely happy" and "extremely upset" being recoded as the most intense emotional reaction (i.e. 3 and -3 were both recoded as 3), "happy" and "upset" being the second most intense emotional reaction, "somewhat happy" and "somewhat upset" being the third most intense reaction, and "neutral" as being the least intense reaction. Then, each of the four subscales (i.e. positive social events, positive romantic events, negative social events, and negative romantic events) were each summed to get a total reactance score for each subscale.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Time spent on social media. On average, participants reported spending 54.13 minutes on Facebook and 27.29 minutes on Instagram per day. However, that being said, it seems as

though older (M = 54.67, SD = 62.56) and younger adults (M = 53.02, SD = 61.68) spend similar amounts of time on Facebook, $t(162)$ = .16, p = .874 while younger adults (M = 54.66, SD = 80.44) spend more time on Instagram compared to older adults (M = 13.98, SD = 25.59), $t(162)$ = 4.85, p .000, d = .77.[1] Furthermore, older females reported spending the most time on Facebook, followed by younger females, younger males, and then older males while younger females reported spending the most time on Instagram, followed by younger males, older females, and then older males (see Table 3).

Preference and importance of social media platforms. When participants were asked whether they preferred Facebook or Instagram, most of the sample reported a preference for Facebook (86%) compared to Instagram (14%). In addition, older adults rated Facebook (M = 6.64, SD = 2.50) as more important than Instagram (M = 2.69, SD = 3.10), $t(110)$ = 12.25, p = .000, d = 1.16. However, younger adults actually rated Facebook (M = 6.21, SD = 3.04) and Instagram (M = 6.06, SD = 3.02) similarly in terms of importance, $t(52)$ = .32, p = .754. Further, as would be expected given these results, an independent samples t-test revealed that younger adults (M = 1.32, SD = .47) prefer Instagram significantly more so than older adults (M = 1.05, SD = .23), $t(63.81)$ = 3.91, p = .000, d = .65. This partially confirms the hypothesis that older adults prefer Facebook while younger adults would be more evenly split in their preferences for Facebook versus Instagram.

However, given that very few people in our sample reported Instagram as their most preferred social media platform, it was not possible to compare individuals who prefer Instagram versus Facebook and how they might differ in their emotional responses to events on their

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[1] This analysis held true even when excluding individuals who used Facebook or Instagram exclusively. This indicates that younger individuals truly spend more time on Instagram compared to older adults and that these findings are not due to the abundance of older adults who do not use Instagram at all.

Table 3

Breakdown of sample via gender, age, and mean number of minutes spent on Facebook and

Instagram per day.

Minutes spent on	Males		Females	
Social Media/Day	Older	Younger	Older	Younger
Facebook	34.10	43.33	65.81	56.84
Instagram	8.74	45.00	17.06	58.47

preferred or less preferred social media platform. Therefore, social media platform preference is removed from the main analyses.

Main Analyses

  Correlational Analyses. First, a series of Pearson bivariate correlations were conducted to examine how the variables measured in the study correlated with one another. These correlations revealed that, the more time individuals spent on Instagram, the stronger they reacted to positive social events, negative social events, and negative romantic events on social media. However, the same pattern was not found for Facebook: the more time individuals spent on Facebook, the more strongly they reacted to positive social events, but not any other event type. Further, individuals who rated Instagram or Facebook as more important tended to react more strongly to all four types of events. Finally, and most interestingly, younger individuals tended to rate Instagram as more important and reported spending more time on the site, while age did not seem to be associated with Facebook importance nor time spent online. See Table 4 for a summary of the correlations between variables.

  Emotional reactance to social media events. For reactance to positive social events, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for survey version, $F(1, 156) = .06$, $p = .607$, such that there was no significant difference between those who completed the Facebook version of the survey ($M = 7.48$, $SD = 3.78$) and those who completed the Instagram version of the survey ($M = 7.31$, $SD = 3.11$) on emotional reactance. Further, no main effect for age was found for age, $F(1, 156) = 1.00$, $p = .319$, such that younger adults ($M = 8.36$, $SD = 3.69$) displayed similar emotional reactance to older adults ($M = 6.94$, $SD = 3.26$). Finally, no interaction between age and social media platform preference was revealed, $F(1, 156) = .02$, $p = .887$.

Table 4

Correlations Between Age, Social Media Usage and Importance, and Reactance to Various

Social Media Events.

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	-								
2. Time spent on Facebook (minutes/day)	-.04	-							
3. Time spent on Instagram (minutes/day)	-.24**	.24**	-						
4. Facebook Importance	.01	.39**	-.14	-					
5. Instagram Importance	-.41**	.15	.50**	.23**	-				
6. Positive Social Events	-.14	.16*	.23**	.37**	.40**	.76			
7. Positive Romantic Events	-.14	.12	.06	.23**	.22**	.37**	.89		
8. Negative Social Events	-.14	.03	.20*	.22**	.32**	.54**	.51**	.86	
9. Negative Romantic Events	-.08	-.02	.16*	.16*	.23**	.48**	.63**	.78**	.88

Notes. **Cronbach's alpha reliabilities are reported in italics in the diagonal for each type of event;** *N* = **164.**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

For reactance to positive romantic events on social media, the findings showed that there was no significant main effect for survey version, $F(1, 156) = .01$, $p = .927$, such that there was no significant difference between those who preferred Facebook ($M = 9.67$, $SD = 4.43$) and Instagram ($M = 9.53$, $SD = 3.91$) on emotional reactance. Moreover, the results indicated that there was no significant effect for age, $F(1, 156) = .77$, $p = .381$, such that younger adults ($M = 10.34$, $SD = 4.07$) displayed similar emotional reactance to older adults ($M = 9.24$, $SD = 4.20$). Finally, no interaction between age and social media platform preference was revealed, $F(1, 156) = .04$, $p = .841$.

Similarly, for reactance to negative social events on social media, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect for survey version, $F(1, 156) = .13$, $p = .720$, such that there was no significant difference between those who preferred Facebook ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 3.90$) and Instagram ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 3.87$) on emotional reactance. Further, no significant main effect was found for age, $F(1, 156) = .07$, $p = .788$, such that younger adults ($M = 5.92$, $SD = 4.15$) tended to display the same level of emotional reactance as older adults ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 3.69$). Finally, no interaction between age and social media platform preference was observed, $F(1, 156) = .02$, $p = .883$.

Finally, no significant effects were found for reactance to negative romantic events. There was no significant main effect for survey version, $F(1, 156) = .08$, $p = .779$, such that there was no significant difference between those who preferred Facebook ($M = 7.51$, $SD = 4.70$) and Instagram ($M = 7.01$, $SD = 4.42$) on emotional reactance. Moreover, the results indicated that there was no significant effect for age, $F(1, 156) = .11$, $p = .746$, such that younger adults ($M = 7.79$, $SD = 4.83$) displayed similar emotional reactance to older adults ($M = 7.01$, $SD = 4.42$). No

interaction between age and social media platform preference was observed, $F(1, 156) = 1.21$, $p = .273$.[2,3,4]

Discussion

While the hypothesis that older adults would prefer Facebook while younger adults would be more evenly split in their preferences for Facebook versus Instagram was partially confirmed, it was not possible to test the hypothesis that older adults would have higher emotional reactance to Facebook despite social media platform preference and that younger adults would have higher emotional reactance to their preferred social media platform. However, it was found that among those who prefer Facebook, the majority of the sample, there was no difference in emotional reactance between those who were asked about events that occur on Instagram versus Facebook. Unfortunately, it was not possible to determine if the same pattern would be found for those who prefer Instagram due to the small number of participants who preferred Instagram in the current sample (only 14%). However, the fact that so many people openly stated a preference for Facebook over Instagram is interesting nonetheless. One reason for this finding may be that 68% of our sample consisted of older adults, who tend to use Facebook more so than Instagram (Lister, 2017). Perhaps if our sample had included a greater number of younger adults, our sample would have been more evenly divided between those who prefer Facebook and Instagram, as younger adults have been shown to prefer Instagram more so than older adults (Chaffey, 2017). However, our findings may also be a reflection of the fact that Facebook is still

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[2] The same set of analyses was conducted including gender as a factor. No significant effects emerged.
[3] This analysis was also conducted controlling for time spent on Facebook and Instagram, as well as Facebook and Instagram importance; however, the pattern of results remained the same.
[4] 20 individuals who reported not using Instagram were assigned to the Instagram survey condition while 1 individual who reported not using Facebook was assigned to the Facebook survey condition.

more popular than Instagram (Lister, 2017). Unfortunately, this question will remain unanswered until further research can be conducted.

Further, due to the highly exploratory nature of the present study, there were many limitations recognized in hindsight that should be addressed in future research. For instance, measures should be taken to ensure that an adequate number of participants fulfill each condition, as a lack of younger, and Instagram-preferring participants were the main limitations of the current research. Moreover, a manipulation check should be utilized to ensure that participants are indeed thinking about the correct social media platform while answering the questionnaire. Perhaps the participants in the current study were thinking about Facebook or social media in general instead of their assigned social media platform when completing the survey, which would explain the lack of significant results.

On that note, future research should perhaps aim to study social media platform usage using three age categories, as the older adults age category used in the present study was quite large, ranging from age 30 to 64, and so perhaps individuals in their 30s and 40s are using and reacting to social media in a distinct way compared to individuals in their 50s and 60s. After all, individuals in their 30s and 40s tend to use social media more often than those in their 50s and 60s (Chaffey, 2017), and so because these middle-aged individuals are more involved with social media, they may have stronger reactions to events on social media. However, it was not possible to analyze the current data using three age categories due to the limited number of individuals over the age of 50 (only 8.5%) in our current sample.

In addition, future research should aim to study the impact of numerous social media sites, not just Facebook and Instagram, as the current study included only individuals who use either Facebook, Instagram, or both. While Facebook and Instagram have been shown to be the most popular among social media users (Lister, 2017), there are many other social media sites

that will hold preference for some individuals, which may have distorted the current research. In addition, because this study focused on individuals who use one or both of Facebook and Instagram, future research should aim to determine if there is a different pattern of results for those who use many platforms compared to those who use only a few, specific platforms. Finally, future research should aim to replicate these results before assuming such results to reflect an accurate trend in the population.

Despite the limitations of the present study, there are some findings in which confidence is held. For example, analyses were conducted with age (young adults vs. older adults) and survey version (i.e. Facebook or Instagram) as independent variables and each of the four subscales of emotional events (i.e. positive social, positive romantic, negative social, negative romantic) as dependent variables. No differences were found in regards to age, nor survey version, nor were any interactions identified. As mentioned previously, age effects may not have been found due to the definitions of older and younger adults. Perhaps if age were split into three categories, one for each of younger, middle, and older adults, differences would be observed, such that middle-aged adults may differ from older adults in their social media preferences and reactance. Further, no differences were found in reactions to the different types of social media events, suggesting that individuals typically respond with similar intensity to social and romantic events, as well as positive and negative events on social media. Because such research was exploratory in nature, future studies should aim to replicate these findings in order to determine that no relationship exists amongst these variables.

That being said, the correlational findings indicated that time spent on Instagram was positively related to reactance on each of the subscales except for positive romantic events (to which there was no relationship), while time spent on Facebook was found to only correlate with more reactance to positive social events. These findings are in direct contrast to those by Muise,

Christofides, and Desmarais (2009), who found that increased Facebook use significantly predicted Facebook-related jealousy in romantic relationships. Future research should aim to alleviate this discrepancy.

Further, a correlation was revealed between ratings of both Facebook and Instagram importance and all four of the subscales, indicating that social media importance and preference may indeed be related to an increase in emotional reactance to a variety of events on social media. However, because these analyses are only correlational, future research should aim to explore such a relationship using experimental designs.

Finally, and most interestingly, the correlational findings showed a relationship between age and both Instagram usage and importance, but no relationship between age and either Facebook usage nor importance. This reflects the preliminary findings reported earlier, that while all individuals regardless of age seem to report preferring Facebook and using it more often, younger adults report an increased preference and time spent on Instagram compared to older adults. This finding may be due to individual differences in the need to belong, as perhaps younger adults may still be developing their identities and so may express a stronger desire to be accepted by all others while older adults may only desire acceptance from significant others. Therefore, if younger adults indeed expressed a stronger need to belong compared to older adults, they may prefer Instagram more so than older adults because Instagram may be used more frequently for impression management compared to Facebook. Future research should determine if individual differences in the need to belong influence social media platform preference or emotional reactance to events on social media.

To summarize, due to the exploratory nature of the present study, a replication of the results will be necessary before any firm conclusions can be made from the findings. Future research should be sure to include measures to ensure a greater number of young individuals and

Instagram-preferring individuals to participate in the study. However, that being said, MTurk may not be an appropriate platform to recruit such participants. Further, future research should consider testing three age categories instead of the two categories utilized in the present study and may want to include adolescents in their analyses, as 32% of teenagers rate Instagram as the "most important" social media cite (Lister, 2017). Moreover, researchers should bear in mind that the sample used in the current research was obtained from an online platform, and so these participants may be more inclined to use and react to social media than the general population.

In conclusion, although the current study was exploratory, it assisted in helping to better understand how individuals use and react to different types of events on differing social media cites. As social media websites continue to develop and grow in popularity, it is becoming increasingly important for us to understand how they affect our inner emotions as well as our relationships with other people in order for us to combat any negative consequences that social media may be generating. After all, as stated by Baumeister and Leary (1995), it is a fundamental need of human beings to feel connected to others through interpersonal relationships, and so we must continue to research and learn how social media are influencing these relationships to ensure our own future well-being.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions using the options provided.

1. What is your gender?
   Male   Female   Other (please specify:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿)

2. What is your age?
   ＿＿＿＿ years

3. Which social media platforms do you use on a monthly basis (select all that apply)?
   ＿＿＿＿ Facebook   ＿＿＿＿ Instagram   ＿＿＿＿ Neither

4. On average, how many minutes per day do you spend on Facebook?
   ＿＿＿＿＿＿

5. On average, how many minutes per day do you spend on Instagram?
   ＿＿＿＿＿＿

6. Using the scale below, how important is Instagram to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Extremely Unimportant				Neutral					Extremely Important

7. Using the scale below, how important is Facebook to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Extremely Unimportant				Neutral					Extremely Important

8. Based on your previous responses, of Facebook and Instagram, which social media site is more important to you?

＿＿＿＿ Facebook   ＿＿＿＿ Instagram

Please imagine each of the following hypothetical situations below in regards to Facebook/Instagram. Please indicate how you believe you would feel to each of the hypothetical scenarios using the rating scale provided.

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Extremely Upset	Upset	Somewhat Upset	Neutral	Somewhat Happy	Happy	Extremely Happy

1. A photo you posted receives many "likes"
2. You receive a surge of friend requests/followers
3. A friend accepts your friend request/follows you back
4. Someone shared or tagged one of your photos
5. You are tagged in a flattering photo
6. Your partner/crush likes your selfie
7. Your partner/crush posts a photo of the two of you
8. Your partner/crush posts a nice comment about you
9. Your partner/crush accepts your friend request/follows you back
10. You notice your partner/crush did not like his/her ex's photo
11. You don't receive a single "like" on a photo you posted
12. You realize your number of friends/followers has gone down recently
13. You realize a friend has deleted you/stopped following you
14. No one shares your photo
15. You are tagged in an unflattering photo
16. You partner/crush does not like your selfie
17. Your partner/crush posts a picture with another person of the sex of which they are attracted to
18. Your partner/crush posts an unflattering comment about you
19. Your partner/crush does not accept your friend request/does not follow you back
20. Your partner/crush likes his/her ex's photo

Curriculum Vitae

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