

Gender, Social Media Use, and Depression

Research Question

- Does social media use impact a user's well-being?
- Are the effects of social media on depression more prevalent for females or males?

Significance

- Many Americans use social media sites: Facebook (68%), Instagram (35%) and Twitter (24%) (Smith, 2018).
- Little is known as to how interactions through social media can influence a person's depressive symptoms (Nesi, 2015).

Background

- Popular social media use can correlate with symptoms such as addiction, cravings, and mood dysregulation (Turel, 2018).
- On popular sites, men initiate and value conflict in discourse while women avoid it (Herring, 2008).
- The role women occupy online is more restrictive than men (Herring, 2008).

Hypothesis

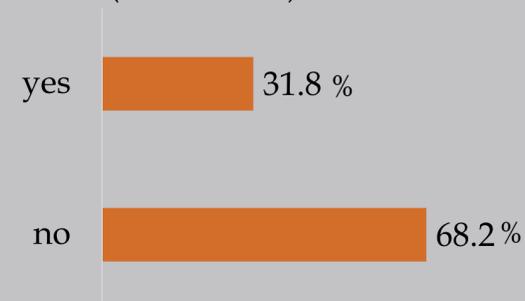
- We will see a significant link between the use of popular media use and depression.
- The association will be more pronounced in women.

Data

- General Social Survey (2016)
- American adults aged 18 - 89
- Both depression and social media use were asked in subsamples (N = 682)

Dependent Measure

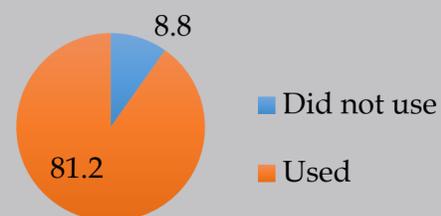
- Depression
"Have you experienced depression in the last week?"
 - Yes (sometimes, most of the time and all of the time)
 - No (none at all)



Independent Measure

- Use of Popular Social Media

% Used Any Popular Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and/or Pinterest



Control Measure

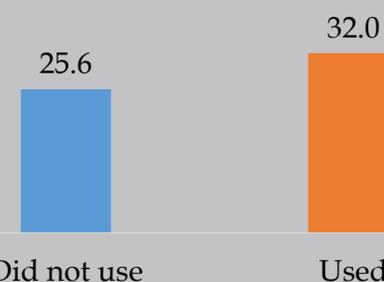
- Gender
 - Male 45.2%
 - Female 54.8%

Analysis

- Cross tabulations and Chi-square tests conducted in SPSS

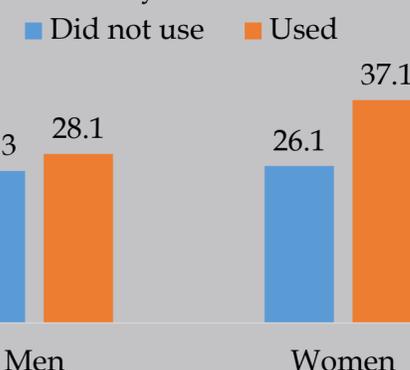
Results

% of U.S. Adults Who Reported Feeling Depressed by Social Media Use: Total Sample



The Chi-square test is not significant.

% of U.S. Adults Who Reported Feeling Depressed by Social Media Use: By Gender



The Chi-square test is significant at $p < .05$ for women only.

Summary of Findings

- The link between the use of popular social media and depression is significant in women but not for men.
- Women who do not use the four popular social media sites are less depressed than women who do use them.

Further Research

- Research ought to aim at the links between popular media sites and less popular sites to get a better grasp at additional factors that may contribute to depression or other serious 'real life' behaviors.
- More online social behaviors ought to be researched. How does the compact online space impact our expectations of the real world? Online behaviors such as aggression, depression, and honesty through internet media should be investigated further.
- Analysis on how social bonding online impacts behavior needs to be researched further.

References

- Fichman, P., & Sanfilippo, M. R. (2015). The Bad Boys and Girls of Cyberspace: How Gender and Context Impact Perception of and Reaction to Trolling. *Social Science Computer Review*, 33(2), 163-180.
- Nesi, J., et al. (2015). Using Social Media for Social Comparison and Feedback-Seeking: Gender and Popularity Moderate Associations with Depressive Symptoms. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 43(8), 1427-1438.
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- Turel, O., et al. (2018). Neuroticism Magnifies the Detrimental Association between Social Media Addiction Symptoms and Wellbeing in Women, but Not in Men: A Three-Way Moderation Model. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 89(3), 605-619.