Research Articles

Social Media Use: An Exploratory Test of Effects on the Daily Lives of College Students

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ABSTRACT

This study covers the effects that social media use has on the daily lives of college students. More specifically, the current study focuses on college students' academic success, study habits, social interaction, and family interaction. Social media is a source of online tools that allow people from across the world to communicate with others. This growing trend has become very popular among those who use the internet on a daily basis, especially students. Social media has become so popular that many businesses now use it to advertise their products and colleges use it to connect with their current and future students. Because social media use is becoming more and more popular every day, college students find themselves spending the majority of their time online. Using social media excessively reduces the time that students spend studying. This can cause lowered academic standing, bad grades, and loss of scholarships. Students can also see their social and family lives become affected by social media use. Although being online allows people to have easier communication, it can also cause problems. The best research tool to use for contacting college students is the survey method because it can accurately cover a variety of people and their lifestyles.

Introduction

Today's college students are the most wired generation in history. Also known as the Net Generation or the Millennials, college students use technology such as internet, e-mail, blogs, and social networks in their everyday repertoire of communication and connection tools at a higher rate than individuals from any other generation (Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008). Social networking sites are websites that encourage people to establish a "network of connections" to others. In 2007, Kay defined social media as unique because it allows the "ability to define one's own social network and interact in new ways. Indeed, users on many of these sites aren't looking to meet new people but to communi

cate with others who are already part of their social network (Acar, 2008)". Schwalbe (2009) called this "engaging in naked conversations", meaning those involved in social networking bare their souls to family, friends, and even the world.

The purpose of our research is to examine social media and its influence on the everyday lives of college students from academic success and study habits to social satisfaction and family interaction. Schwalbe (2009) conducted a survey that found "18-24-year-old college students lead intensely social lives (p.60)". He also stated that "the Millennials' life-long interaction with digital media has created students who think and process information fundamentally different from their predecessors (p.63)". The growth of social media and its effects on young adults can be seen in "The Social Network", a movie released in 2010 describing the foundation behind Facebook and how it changed the world of technology and communication. The effect of social media can also be seen in the 2008 U.S. Presidential election. Barack Obama and his campaign leaders created a social networking site, my.barackobama.com, to recruit thousands of U.S. citizens to participate in door-knocking and precinct-walking (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). The social media efforts helped the campaign prosper.

Social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter aren't the only component of social media. Other social media tools, such as blogs and instant messaging, have also gained quite a bit of attention over the past few years. Blogging involves posting information in dated entries. Junco (2008) found that 27.9 percent of college students reported owning a blog, while 44.4 percent reported reading them for about an hour each week. Instant messaging involves using specific software applications to engage in a real time back-and-forth exchange. In 2007, 75.5 percent of college students used instant messaging and stayed logged on for a median of thirty-five hours a week (Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008).

For college students, nothing is more important than staying connected through networking, content sharing, and messaging (Schwalbe, 2009) but how does this truly affect college students, mainly those that attend Arkansas State University? Does frequent exposure to social media sites lead to bad study habits? Do bad study habits lead to lower academic success in college? Does social media use positively or negatively affect the social life of college students? Does social media use increase or decrease family involvement? The only way to confirm our speculations is to conduct research involving college students, themselves. We will be examining the relationship among four variables.

In all, social media has brought a whole new meaning to the world of communication. Whether you hear them called the Net generation, the Millennials, Digital Natives, or Generation Y, college students know more about social media than any other generation before them. They stay up-to-date with the latest news, gossip, and relationship status changes. Acar (2008) said it best: "Undoubtedly these [social media] tools enable us to connect with each other more than ever before (p.63)".

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to identify the affects of

social media use among college students. There are four key concepts considered in this study: the academic performance of students, the study habits of students, the effects of social media use on students' social lives, and the role social media use plays on students' family interaction. Attending class regularly, completing homework and in-class assignments, and studying on a regular basis are all ways to improve academic success. Support from friends and family can also be helpful to many college students while adjusting to life away from home. Social media use can have both negative and positive effects on students, depending on how they use social media in their daily lives.

Academic Performance

source: muohio.edu
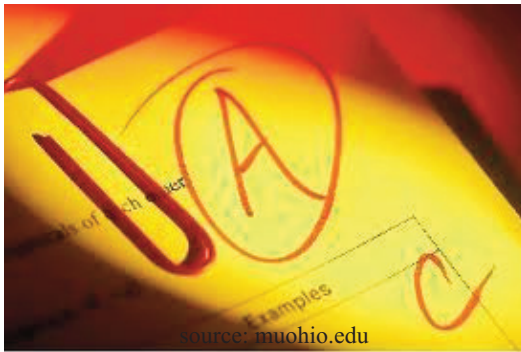
Academic formance is a major aspect of being a college student. Some students receive scholarships and financial aid that depends solely on positive performance. Academic performance can be measured in many ways. Class attendance and participation, cumulative grade point averages, ability to follow directions and stay on task, and working with others are all variables that together as a whole make up academic success. In a study by Greenhow and Robelia (2009), today's adolescents and young adults are classified as 'digital natives' or 'millenial learners' who prefer technology-enhanced communication channels, are Internet-savvy, and are constantly online. Because of the "generational divide", adults see this increased technological activity as disastrous to academic learning (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009).

According to Mazer, Murphy, and Simonds (2007), the effect of social media use can actually have a positive outcome in academic learning. Students who could interact with their teachers online via social networking sites reported high levels of motivation and affective learning, indicating positive attitudes towards the course and the teacher (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007). Hawken, Duran, and Kelly (1991) found that communication competence is important in a college student's academic life.

Study Habits

Study habits of college students can have a negative or positive effect on their overall academic performance. For the purpose of this study, the action of studying includes any time a student spends outside of the classroom preparing for upcoming course work. This could mean researching topics online, making flash cards for an upcoming test, or finishing up some homework that was assigned in class. Schwalbe (2009) surveyed 1,584 college students and found that 98 percent of students had internet access and spent a median of 14.5 hours online each week. Students spent most of their time using e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and social networking sites, but 92 percent reported that they occasionally used the internet for academic research (Schwalbe, 2009).

A study by Junco and Cole-Avent (2008) found that college students expect faculty and student affairs staff to use newer technologies to connect with them. The study also found that 72 percent of potential college applicants have an interest in exchanging instant messages with college personnel, 64 percent have an interest in reading a blog posted by faculty, and 63 percent have an interest in reading a blog posted by current college students (Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008). This surge in using online technology to access information rather than face-to-face contact can possibly be helpful to current college students looking for way to improve study habits. Online blogs, social networking sites, and instant messaging programs can connect students to professors and peers, as well as current coursework information and helpful articles.

Social Life

How does social networking use affect a college student's social life? There are thousands of articles written about this subject, and because college students are different, the answers to that question will be different, also. Schwalbe (2009) conducted a survey that found 18-24-year-old college students lead intensely social lives (p.60). He also stated that "the Millenials' life-long interaction with digital media has created students who think and process information fundamentally different from their predecessors" (p.63). Individual differences as well as motives can predict attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of Facebook (Sheldon, 2008). This study will show a possible link between social networking use and the social life of a college student.

There are not many studies that utilize the differences between internet and real-life social networks. An example of a real-life social network could be the Elks lodge or the Girl Scouts of America. The most popular social networking sites are Twitter and Facebook. A study by Acar (2011) shows that "gender and extroversion are major predictors of both online social network size and time spent online for social networking." Surprisingly, this study showed "a negative impact of users' self-esteem in relation to their inclusion of friending strangers in their online social network (p.76)."

The study by Lapsley and Edgerton titled, "Separation-Individualization, Adult Attachment Style, and College Adjustment," assessed 156 young adults and it showed that "many uses and gratifications are met by users (of social networks), in light of the impact that friend-networking sites have on communication and social needs of college students." Additionally, the profile showed there were positive college adjustments in relation to ethnic groups (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2011).

Using the Uses and Gratification theory, a study by Sheldon (2011) shows that "people go to Facebook to fulfill needs traditionally fulfilled by other media but for their interpersonal communication needs first (p.44)." The study also showed that women turned to Facebook for entertainment, to help pass time, and to maintain already-formed relationships. Men, however, went to Facebook to make new relationships (Sheldon, 2011).
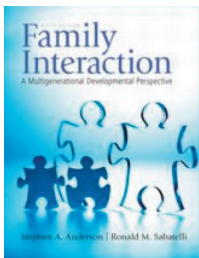
Family Interaction

How does using a social network affect a college student's relationships with their family? The study by Orrego and Rodriguez (2011) found that open communication, whether oral or online via social media has positive psychological consequences, whereas there is a "clear detrimental effect of negative, closed communication and familial conflict."

Another study, by Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2011) shows that, as known, the increase of internet use has changed the way people interact. Their study had three major points: To find out why people use online social networking sites, what characteristics are held by the typical college online social network user, and what uses and gratifications are met by using online social media. Their results show that most college students use social networking to locate old friends and to make new ones. Gender and ethnic group usage was fairly equal. "Results are discussed in light of the impact that friend-networking sites have on communication and social needs of college students (p. 172)."

Uniquely, Wandel's study "Online Empathy: Communicating via Facebook to Bereaved College Students" (2011) gave details of both advantages and disadvantages of online communication. The purpose of the study was to "examine the awareness of college students on the usefulness of online social network in communication during bereavement" (p. 44).

College students obviously use social networks for a variety of reasons. However, it could be perceived as psychologically unhealthy for a student to replace all social interactions and familial relationships with a virtual social networking lifestyle.

Current Study

The current study uses the support of previous research done on the effects of social media use in relation to students' academic performance, study habits, social life, and family interaction.

According to Greenhow and Robelia (2009), all students today are expected to increasingly develop technological fluency, digital citizenship, and other twenty-first century competencies. This makes teaching and learning complex as students learn across physical and cyber spaces. This use of the online world causes researchers to examine students' retention and academic achievement outside of class. Thus, the current study proposes the following hypotheses.

H1a: The excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites will have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students.

H1b: The excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites will not have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students, but rather a positive learning effect due to new technology and advanced communication between professors and peers.

Due to a lack of previous research, the current study is left to question existing studies. As previously stated, Greenhow and Robelia (2009) found that adults see new technological advances as detrimental to a student's ability to learn in an academic setting. Due to the different opinions caused by the "generational gap", the current study proposes the following research question.

RQ1:   Do college students view excessive social media use as a threat to their academic performance or rather as a tool that can be used to succeed throughout their college career?

The next concern is the affect that social media use has on the study habits of college students. As previously stated, Schwalbe (2009) found that students spend on average 14.5 hours a week online using social networking sites and other tools. Do these online social tools play a role in distracting students from studying for coursework? Due to the lack of research found, the current study proposes a second research question.

RQ2:   Do social media sites negatively affect the study habits of college students who use them, or are social media sites a helpful tool in the release of stress and maintaining a positive balance between school and relaxation?

This current study also considers the social aspect of the affect that social media has on the college students that use it on a daily basis. Baker and Oswald (2010) state in their study that some individuals experience difficulties establishing close and satisfying relationships with others. Therefore, online social networking services may provide a comfortable environment for these individuals to interact with family and friends (Baker & Oswald, 2010). Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2009) determined that investment in social networks enables individuals to develop norms of trust and reciprocity, which are necessary for successful engagement. This leads the current study to the next set of hypotheses.

H2a: Excessive social media use can cause isolation from family and peers that will cause emotional and behavioral issues, along with affecting the way that the student perceives and handles stressful situations outside of social media sites.

H2b: Excessive social media use does not have a negative effect on the emotions and behaviors of students who use social media sites, and it does not cause an emotional and behavioral damaging isolation.

Method

Before computers and the internet, people spent time going to the library to check out books that related to their classes. Families had dinner together and friends spent quality time together. Now the times have changed. Most people don't even have to leave the comfort of their own office chair at home to communicate with family, friends, and even professors. Social media sites can be found all across the internet. These sites give people the chance to say what is on their mind, share pictures, and effortlessly communicate with others. The most prominent group to use social media is college students. The need to always be connected can have both positive and negative effects on students. The current survey will determine just how much social media use correlates with academic success, study habits, family interaction, and social life.

Survey

According to Zhou and Sloan (2009), surveys are now

frequently used to gain interesting information to share with the general public. The best type of survey to use in the current study is the analytical survey because it can not only describe situations, opinions, and beliefs, but it can also attempt to understand why they exist (Zhou & Sloan, 2009). The current study will construct a survey that will be useful in determining how students perceive social media and how their perception of social media relates to their everyday lives. The survey method is the most convenient way to communication with college students. This method will allow predictions to be made about the relationship between certain variables and their results. The survey for the current study contains a majority of close-ended questions with only one open-ended question at the end.

Sampling

The population that will participate in the survey of the current study will be students attending Arkansas State University – Jonesboro during the spring semester of 2011. The participants are narrowed down to only students because the researchers of the current study are also students at Arkansas State University – Jonesboro. The researchers believe the students can supply the necessary information needed to complete the survey. The population sampled will include various genders, ages, and college classifications. The broad demographics of the population will allow the researchers to determine who is most affected by social media use. The only requirement the participants will have to fulfill is to be enrolled at Arkansas State University – Jonesboro during the spring semester of 2011.

The goal of the current study is to identify if social media use has any effect on the daily lives of college students. If effects are shown, the next goal is to determine if the effects have a positive or negative impact on the students. The current study will use methods of convenience sampling to find participants for the current study. Convenience sampling is more appropriate than other forms of non-probability sampling in the current study because students are readily available throughout the campus and there are no specific requirements participants have to meet to be a part of the survey other than to be enrolled in Arkansas State University – Jonesboro during the spring semester of 2011. Random selection would not be appropriate due to the fact that it would be very difficult to obtain a list of all students registered at the university. The researchers will simply request participation from several students who are readily available. The students will then have the choice to accept or deny the request with no consequences.

Measured Variables

The four variables that will be measured within the current study are: academic performance, study habits, social interaction, and family interaction. First, academic performance will consider grades and grade point averages of the current participants, as well as, how those grades and grade point averages relate to social media use. Class attendance, class participation, and time spent participating in group activities in the classroom will also be considered when measuring academic performance. The second variable that the current survey will measure is study habits related to time spent using social media. Study habits include time spent outside the classroom reviewing coursework,

studying for upcoming tests and quizzes, and researching for projects and group work. Thirdly, the current study will discuss the social interaction of students who use social media. Social interaction involves time spent with friends and colleagues on and off the college campus, as well as through technology with the use of social networks. Lastly, the current study will consider the role social media use plays in family interaction. Family interaction includes time spent with family members both inside and outside of the home. The current study will also determine how most students communicate with family members who live outside of their household.

The data from the above stated variables will be measured using frequencies, percentage, and t-test. The test of significance is set at $p<.05$. This will be completed by using the Generalized Immediacy (GI) scale. The GI scale is used to gather general impressions of the participants in the current study.

Academic Performance

The growing world of technology and social media use among newer generations both in and outside of school have led the current study to develop the hypothesis that "The excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites will have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students." Along with the mentioned hypothesis, a research question was proposed about social media being either a threat to the overall academic success of students or a useful tool to help students succeed. The current study formed the research question "Do college students view excessive social media use as a threat to their academic performance or rather as a tool that can be used to succeed throughout their college career?" The questions that aim to answer the hypothesis and research question are: (1) How often do you use social networking sites as tools for academic success? (2) What is your current cumulative grade point average? (3) From your perception, how often do you believe social networking use affects your academic success? (4) How often do your teachers encourage social networking use in their classes? (5) How often do your teachers express a social networking policy in their class syllabus? (6) How often do you contact your professors through social networking sites for help on class assignments? (7) How often do you access social networking sites while in a classroom setting? (8) How would you rate social networking's ability to help or enhance your academic outcomes?

Study Habits

Today, colleges have migrated to new technology systems that allow students to be connected at all times. The surge in social media use by both students and professors has led the current study to propose a second research question: "Do social media sites negatively affect the study habits of college students who use them, or are social media sites a helpful tool in the release of stress and maintaining a positive balance between school and relaxation?" The questions that are meant to answer the research question are: (1) On average, how many hours a day do you spend on social networking sites (SNS's)? (2) On average, how many hours a day do you spend studying? (3) If you interrupt your studying to access a social networking site, how many minutes do you spend on that site before you resume

studying? (4) How often do you use social networking sites to help you study? (5) How often do you interrupt your study time to access a social networking site? (6) Do you believe social network use while studying effects how you retain information? (7) How would you rate your own study habits?

Social Life

Social media and networking sites can meet the many uses and gratifications of their users but can also cause people to isolate themselves from friends and peers. This retraction has led the current study to develop the hypothesis that "Excessive social media use can cause isolation from peers that will cause emotional and behavioral issues, along with affecting the way that the student perceives and handles stressful situations outside of social media sites." (1) I check updates on social networking sites while out with friends. (2) I have declined a chance to go out with friends due to social network use. (3) My friends think I have an obsession with social networking. (4) I know of a situation where social networking appeared to cause a dispute among friends. (5) My friends are offended when I spend time social networking.

Family Interaction

The increase of internet use has changed the way people interact with others. While social media use can have a positive effect on the way modern families communicate, there can also be a bit of isolation from family if the student in too involved with the social media sites. This increased online involvement has led the current study to develop the hypothesis that "Excessive social media use can cause isolation from family that will cause emotional and behavioral issues, along with affecting the way that the student perceives and handles stressful situations outside of social media sites."

(1) I have experienced a family-related dispute in the last three months in which a social networking site was the cause.
(2) I decline family invitations due to social network use.
(3) I know of a situation where social network use caused a family dispute.
(4) My family is offended when I spend time on social networking sites.
(5) I post my family updates on social network sites.

Results

After reviewing the literature concerning social media use and its effects on college students, the current study formulated a number of hypotheses and research questions. The key concepts and variables should be answered through these. Regarding the concept of academic performance, the hypothesis and question were both aimed to address the concern of how social media use may or may not affect college students' grades and study habits.

The concept of the social lives of college students who use social media was addressed by a hypothesis relating to the concern that social media use may affect the ability of the players to properly interact socially and with family members. To answer the research questions and hypotheses of the current study, a survey was comprised with questions having relevance to the concepts, the variables, and their concerns.

The results of the survey can be seen on **Table 1.**

	Family Life	Social Life	Perception of SN	GPA	Study Habits	Perception SN Study Habits
Family Life Pearson P N	1 102	.342 .000 102	.234 .018 102	.089 .375 102	.303 .002 101	-.016 .873 100
Social Life Pearson P N	.342 .000 102	1 102	.436 .000 102	.181 .069 102	.325 .001 101	-.071 .480 100
Perception Of SN Pearson P N	.234 .018 102	.436 .000 102	1 102	.163 .102 102	.644 .000 101	.256 .010 100
GPA Pearson P N	.089 .375 102	.181 .069 102	.163 .102 102	1 102	.103 .304 101	-.089 .380 100
Study Habits Pearson P N	.303 .002 101	.325 .001 101	.644 .000 101	.103 .304 101	1 101	.267 .008 99
Perception SN Study Habits Pearson P N	-.016 .873 100	-.071 .480 100	.256 .010 100	-.089 .380 100	.267 .008 99	1 100

Table 1

The answers provided for the hypotheses and research questions are as follows.

RQ1: Do college students view excessive social media use as a threat to their academic performance or rather as a tool that can be used to help them succeed throughout their college career?

The current study set out to determine whether students viewed social media use as a threat to their grades. The results from the data analysis of the surveys showed that the majority of students did indeed believe that social media use has an effect on their grades, $r= .256$, $p= .010$, N= 100. Although the current study cannot determine whether or not social media use has an effect on students' grades, the study shows that the number of students who believe social media affects their grades is very significant. Thus the answer to research question one is yes, students do view excessive social media use as a threat to their academic performance. Concerning whether social media use is viewed as a tool to help succeed as students, the data analysis showed no significance.

RQ2: Do social media sites negatively affect the study habits of college students who use them, or are social media sites a helpful tool in the release of stress and maintaining a positive balance between school and relaxation?

The current study finds that there is significance in the data analysis of social media use and its effect on college students' study habits, $r= .644$, $p= <.001$, N= 101. The results in the comparison of time spent using online social media finds the concern that students who use social media may not have good study habits to be true. After analysis of the survey results, the current survey shows that students with a positive social and/or family life also have regular and good study habits, with or without the use of social networking. The constant use of social media as a way to interact can have both positive and negative consequences.

H1a: The excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites will have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students.

Excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites can have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students, r=.256, p=.10, N=100. The answer to the hypothesis that social media use affects college students' academic performance and study habits was found in the data analysis. Thus the results in comparison to the hypothesis show that excessive social media use can result in poor academic performance in college students. H1b: The excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites will not have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students, but rather a positive learning effect due to new technology and advanced communication between professors and peers.

The results from the study showed the concern that students view use of social media as an academic hindrance, for students do indeed feel that social media use can affect grades. However, the same results showed that students do not believe that social media use can help them academically, r=.181, p=.069, N=102. Further results show there is evidence that overuse of social media has a negative effect on students' academic performance.

H2a: Excessive social media use can cause isolation from family and peers that will cause emotional and behavioral issues, along with affecting the way that the student perceives and handles stressful situations outside of social media sites.

Having an addiction to social networking sites can result in a student's isolation, as they spend more time online than in social or family situations. One of the questions the survey asked was, "I decline family invitations due to social network use." The results in the comparison of time spent using online social media finds the concern that students who use social media may not have the ability to properly cope with stressful situations to be false. It is clear after the study that students with a healthy perception of social media use also have healthy relationships, both social and family, r=.325, p=.001, N=101.

H2b: Excessive social media use does not have a negative effect on the emotions and behaviors of students who use social media sites, and it does not cause an emotional and behavioral damaging isolation.

The study shows that the overall effect of social media use on the emotions and behaviors of college students is not confirmed. The results show that the effect of social media use is based on student perception, r=1, N=102. That is, if a student views social networking negatively, then as a result, the student will have negative results in all aspects.

In summary, several of the research questions and hypotheses were found to hold significance, while a couple of them did not. The results of the current study determined that the overall affect of social media use is based on how the student perceives social media. If the college student has a positive perception of social media and its uses, then academic success, study habits, social interaction, and family interaction will all mostly be positive. If the student perceives social media and its uses to be negative, then the student's academic success, study

habits, social interaction, and family interaction may also take on a negative role. Concerning the affect that social media use has on the social lives of students, there was found to be no significance between social media use and social interaction. Gender and grade point average were also found to have no significance in the current study.

Conclusion

When the current study set out with the goal of researching the effects of social media use on the daily lives of college students, it was with the assumptions that college students who use an excessive amount of social media have lower academic success in the classroom, spend more time connecting with friends then studying, connect with friends and family virtually rather than in-person, and see conflicts within their social groups because of social media.

In order to best research the topic, the current study was based on four key concepts and variables. The four concepts that were considered were academic success of college students, study habits of college students, social interaction between college students and their peers, and family interaction of college students. The variables for the previously stated concepts are: addiction, isolation, loneliness, and low academic achievement. These variables are relevant to the current study because they specifically target the main concerns of college students. All four of the variables are connected in some way. When students start spending most of their time connecting with people through social networking sites, the habit of logging on and being connected at all times can become addicting.

Being addicted to social networking sites can cause students to become isolated from friends and family because they get their happiness from being connected to multiple people at one time online. Being isolated from friends and family can eventually cause students to become lonely when they realize they have put all of their time into a website and not personal, face-to-face relationships. The addiction, isolation, and loneliness can all lead to low academic achievement. Students may not be successful in college if the majority of their time is spent connecting with people online instead of focusing on schoolwork and studying.

After the study had settled on key concepts and variables, the next step was to create a literature review. Previous studies done in the area of social media use and college students had shown a variety of results. The majority of the studies found in the research of social media use have to do with the transition schools have to make into the world of technology to keep up with their students. Although very few, the current study was able to find some studies concerning the affects of social media use on students, but most only concerned high school students. The current study was also limited in finding previous studies regarding the study habits of individuals who use social media on a daily basis, none of which covered the comparison of social media use and the study habits of college students who use the media site.

The current study was able to find a rather large amount of research concerning social media use and the social lives of college students. Most studies found that the majority of college

students today feel they need to stay connected to others in order to know what is going on at all times. This helps students gain more "friends" because the interaction is less personal than face-to-face interaction. Lastly, the current study was able to find a few articles concerning social media use and the involvement college students have with their families. Many of the sources stated that college students use social media sites to stay connected to family and loved ones while they are away at college. The constant use of social media as a way to interact can have both positive and negative consequences.

The methodology for the current study involved the convenient sampling distribution of surveys among the student population registered for classes in the spring of 2011 at Arkansas State University-Jonesboro. Results from the surveys were then entered into an Excel file and transferred into an SPSS file where the data could be calculated. There, using the tools Independent T-Test, One-way ANOVA, and Correlation, the SPSS program helped to discover the answers to the current study's research questions and hypotheses.

The results of the data analysis of the surveys confirmed the concerns of the first two hypotheses. Excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites can have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students. Also, the excessive indulgence in the activity of using social media sites may not have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of college students, but rather a positive learning effect due to new technology and advanced communication between professors and peers. The data analysis refutes the concerns of the first research question that college students view excessive social media use as a threat to their academic performance.

Do social media sites negatively affect the study habits of college students who use them, or are social media sites a helpful tool in the release of stress and maintaining a positive balance between school and relaxation? The data analysis neither refutes nor confirms the answer to the previous research question. The same goes for the hypothesis that excessive social media use may cause isolation from family and peers that will cause emotional and behavioral issues, along with affecting the way that the student perceives and handles stressful situations outside of social media sites. The results of the current study determined that the overall affect of social media use is based on how the student perceives social media. If the college student has a positive perception of social media and its uses, then academic success, study habits, social interaction, and family interaction will all mostly be positive. If the student perceives social media and its uses to be negative, then the student's academic success, study habits, social interaction, and family interaction may also take on a negative role.

When it comes to future studies of the affects of social media use on the daily lives of college students, more research should definitely be done. Technology is constantly changing. Students need to know whether they are going to receive positive or negative outcomes by joining a social media site. As previously mentioned throughout the current study, there have been many studies done concerning social media and the new technology it brings to the world. The only problem is that social media has become a major part of life. This means there should be millions upon millions of studies out there concerning social media use and its effects on college students, but as of right now, there just aren't many available. The lack of previous studies was a disadvantage to the current study. Another disadvantage was the broadness of the subject. The four key concepts mentioned in the current study are all concerns of current college students but the subject itself is so broad, research is difficult to pinpoint on the key concepts. The last major disadvantage was the lack of funds obtained by the researchers. The current study had no financial funding which meant some tools were unavailable to help assist researchers.

Social media is a growing norm within society today. More research needs to be done to show exactly how much time college students spend on social media sites and just how the use of these sites will affect the students in the long run, whether it be positive or negative. Although adequate research has been done on topics such as the ones previously listed, the world of social media will continue to change and grow more popular. Colleges may choose to move to social media to market to new students or they may start using social media as an academic learning tool. There are many possibilities out there but only continuous research will help determine where social media is now and where it will end up in the future.

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Picture source: nebraskanhistory.org

Segregation- The act of sequestering

-Charlotte Foster

When you see the historical picture of the white water fountain on the wall with the sign above that says "Whites Only" you immediately have a negative connotation of the word segregation. According to Merriam-Webster segregation means the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means.

The words "barriers", "restricted", "discriminatory" leave a negative picture in your mind. When the negative words are taken out of the definition of segregation, individual choice and the ability to self-segregate or integrate for a more diverse environment appears. Self-segregation may not be a word found in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, but according to Ethan Lee of DeAnza College of Cupertino, California, self-segregation is defined as voluntarily segregating oneself to a particular racial group. Self-segregation also takes place in socio-economic groups, religious groups, educational groups, and other groups that have similar interests and/or abilities. The ability to choose who to interact with is what gives educational and other social systems the opportunity to self-segregate and integrate at will and when necessary.

Choosing to self-segregate makes the world a more diverse place in many instances. People with motorcycle interests may choose to hang out with other bikers. A group of bikers may have a common interest but can be as diverse as a doctor that is a biker or a janitor that is into biking. Formally educated people may choose to spend time with other formally educated people and both groups may have different racial backgrounds. People with religious preferences may worship together as well, and the worshippers may or may not be of mixed races or have cultural differences. The beauty of having a choice of whom to spend time with can cross many boundaries and have an extremely positive impact on cultural diversity.

If observing students from elementary school through college, the observer may find that racial groups appear to self-segregate. Segregation by race seems very widespread among students playing basketball in the gym, sitting in the classroom, eating meals, worshipping at church. Not only do these students appear to segregate by race or ethnicity, but by gender as well.

A study by Clack, Dixon, and Tredoux (2004) found that all-female groups were half as likely to interact with those of other ethnicity as male or mixed gender groups. People have the choice to integrate and grow as individuals but they may not