

**Social Networking, its Influence on Social and Psychological Well-being, and Implications
for Counseling**

by

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Abstract

Once seen as little more than a hobby, social networking is steadily influencing culture in many ways. Social networking affects how users connect with one another, impacting how they choose to represent themselves online, and further, how they define themselves offline. Is social networking helping to foster more curious, empathic individuals, or just a culture of narcissistic over-sharers? The researcher of this study extended previous research by investigating the links between the Millennial generation, their trends of social networking use including gender differences, and their feelings of psychological and social well-being. The Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES) was developed based on key features of the literature on Internet use and used to assess Millennials' experience with various social networking platforms. The participants' social and psychological well-being was found to be significantly dependent on their daily social networking usage. Use of specific social networking platforms also had a significant positive or negative relationship with psychological and social well-being. The results of this study have implications for counseling practitioners and counseling educators.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
List of Tables	viii
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Significance	4
Purpose	5
Research questions	6
Operational definitions	6
Chapter II: Literature Review	10
Internet use and social connectedness	10
Gender differences in social networking use	14
Socialization practices: Past and current	16
Relationship building	18
Social networking and psychological well-being	20
Feelings of meaning in a technological culture	23
Social networking gains	24
Psychological and personality variables and Internet use	24
The role of anonymity in social networking	26
Safety within an online presence	28

Chapter III: Methods	29
Measure	30
Procedures	32
Selection of participants	32
Recruitment	33
Chapter IV: Results	35
Participants	35
General frequencies- Social media use	37
Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES)	39
Sub-scales	40
Analyses	42
Summary of results	47
Chapter V: Discussion	49
Discussion of findings	49
Implications for counseling practice	51
Implications for counseling education	54
Limitations of study	54
Future research	55
Summary	56
References	57
Appendix 1	67
Appendix 2	71
Appendix 3	82

Appendix 4 84

List of Tables

Table 1	36
Table 2	38
Table 3	38
Table 4	39
Table 5	40
Table 6	43
Table 7	45
Table 8	47
Table 9	47

I. Introduction

Approximately two billion people now use the Internet (Greengard, 2011). According to the latest numbers from the Pew Internet Center (released April of 2012), half of all U.S. adults now use social networking sites; two in three Americans between ages 18 and 29 use social networking sites. Social networking sites are becoming one of the most common means for people to communicate and share information (Hughes et al., 2012). Facebook, the largest social networking site, currently boasts over 1 billion users per month, 600 million mobile users, with the median age of a Facebook user being 22, and the top using countries being Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and the US (Facebook, 2012). More than 50% of these users log into the site on a daily basis. Therefore, on any given day approximately 500 million people are logging on and engaging with their friends via Facebook alone. Social networking site usage is most popular with those ages 18-49, those with some college education, and those with a household income of less than \$30,000 per year (Pew Research Institute, 2012). The speed and flexibility with which people communicate and socialize online will likely only continue to increase (Brown, 2011). Specifically, the Internet allows users to communicate across time zones, limitless distances, and personal circumstances; it also facilitates more convenient social interaction to close family, friends, confidants, coworkers, acquaintances, and even strangers (Kraut et al. 2002).

Many of these users are not just checking their email or "surfing the web", they are engaging in social networking sites. These sites, the most common by far being Facebook, allow users to create profiles and connect with friends by sharing pictures, writing comments on each other's pages, and updating what is going on with their day in the form of a "status". Although all social networking sites aim to simplify communication, each site does not offer the same uses nor have the same emphasis (Hughes et al., 2012). The number of those using social networking

sites has nearly doubled since 2008 and the population of SNS (social networking site) users has gotten older (Hampton et. al, 2011). By some accounts, Americans spend more time on SNS than doing any other single online activity (The Nelson Company, 2010). Even if users are not direct “friends” with one another, social networking enables connections to spread at a rapid rate. Hampton et al. (2012) conducted a study and found that just within their sample, at two degrees of separation on social networking (friends-of-friends), users were able to reach an average of 156,569 other Facebook users, with their median user still reaching 31, 170 people. Greengard (2011) also reported data that between 35-40% of iPhone and Android users check social networking sites before getting out of bed in the morning and at night in bed before falling asleep with the standard American being “digitally connected” on an average of 2 hours a day (p. 17).

The Internet used to be little more than a communications medium that was dominated by academics and government personnel, focusing the majority of attention on research, but most would agree that the Internet (and now most prevalent, social networking) is transforming society and how people respond to the world (Weiser, 2001; Bargh & McKenna, 2004). In the current age of social networking where people keep electronic communication devices always within an arm’s reach (i.e. smart phones, laptops, tablets), the notion of “connectedness” and the meaning of having “friends” is radically changing (Greengard, 2011). With the use of social networking, users have been able to expand their number of friends and social contacts, and also increase their ability to effectively coordinate interactions with them (Kraut et. al, 1998).

The Internet has enabled users to perform routine tasks quickly and efficiently, and like the telephone and telegraph before it, people are able to communicate simultaneously as if everyone on the planet was within hearing range (Weiser, 2001; Bargh & McKenna, 2004). The Internet, or the “virtual world” as it is sometimes described, can be used for social support in the

form of companionship, crisis aid, emotional aid, financial aid, etc. (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2002). The Internet is a domain in which users live their social lives, but are able to utilize services to attempt to fulfill additional needs and goals, whatever that may be (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). Weiser (2001) wrote, "Clearly, we have become a dot.com society (p. 724)." For users, relationships made in virtual space can be just as powerful and meaningful as those formed in the real world. We build our own personal reality of meaning based upon the actions in the world in which we live, and social networking helps to aid in that process of a built reality (Teske, 2002). Teske wrote, "It [the Internet] can widen our world and make it more inclusive. But it can also shrink our sense of relationship and personhood (p. 678)."

Since the rise of technological communication in the 1980's, there has been a great deal of speculation about the impact of these advances on users' lives. In just a few short decades, our world has become a much smaller place through interconnectivity and the ability for people to rapidly exchange information even if they are on opposite sides of the world. With this knowledge, "the age of melancholy" is how psychologist Daniel Goleman described our era. People today experience more depression than previous generations, and one has to wonder how technology expansion has influenced well-being (Amichai-Hamburger, 2009). As counselors, we must continue the dialogue and increase our awareness on the impact social networking is having on our clients and work towards models that not only harness the power of the Internet for counseling good, but also help minimize any negative implications (Lacy & Tyler, 2010).

The Internet has increased the availability of resources to users and is becoming increasingly influential, but researchers have theorized that heavy Internet use can decrease social and psychological well-being, and many users have taken their stress to the web (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). According to several large-scale national and international

surveys, though the majority of respondents consider Internet use in general to have improved the quality of their lives (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). The various levels of user anonymity the Internet can provide fosters an agenda to connect with like-minded people and appears to help people who may be more introverted build significant relationships online (Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002). This debate continues, does Internet use actually foster more positive relationship building or does Internet use have the potential to negatively affect social development and well-being? One central point to this discussion is whether this dynamic is influenced by the nature of Internet use or the amount of Internet use.

Significance

On social networking sites, disclosures and exchanges of information are so immediate that intention and meaning behind interactions are often lost through the filter and receiving process. Social networking users have to learn to speedily navigate their identities, relationships, and privacy through this immediate and continuous connectedness at some cost based on the audience perception (Teske, 2002). With this navigation comes the unwritten guidelines people use when choosing to express themselves on what is a public platform. Moreover, what is often not considered by the user is the extent to which their disclosures will be shared and the quality and nature of the responses they will receive.

An important point supported by the literature is that there is no simple main effect of the Internet on the average person; how a person is affected by a given communication medium depends on that person's reasons and goals for using that medium (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Bargh, 1998; Amichai- Hamburger et al, 2002). There is now research proposing that it is not the user, but the amount of time on social networking sites (referred to as 'time displacement') that may have long-term implications (Kraut et al., 2002; Kraut et al, 1998; Bargh & McKenna,

2004; Nie & Erbring, 2000). It is theorized that social networking use can lead to a greater feeling of connectedness and belonging, yet long-term perspective and insight gained from these exchanges are yet to be determined (Kraut et. al, 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Weiser, 2001; McKenna & Bargh, 2002; McKenna & Bargh, 1998; Amichai- Hamburger et al, 2002). One important question related to social well-being is how social networking affected a user's sense of meaning or their level of personal or social fulfillment? Moreover, there are growing concerns that for some, extent and amount of use may actually have a negative effect on both social and psychological development and well-being (Moore & McElroy, 2012; Nie, 2001; Nie & Erbring, 2000; Kraut et. al, 1998; Turkle, 1996; Stoll, 1995).

Experts within technology hypothesize that the generation that has grown up with the Internet and social networking, the Millennials, will continue to use SNS instead of “growing out” of this trend as previously expected (Anderson & Rainie, 2010). This coupled with the increased use among older adults demonstrates that SNS use will continue to be an important part of social and psychological development. What continues to be a question in the research is how the extent of use and the type of use of SNS affects social and psychological well-being. It is important that counselors and counselor educators have an understanding of the potential impact of SNS use. This knowledge will allow proactive, instead of reactive, action in order to therapeutically respond to the implications of social networking use on clients.

Purpose

This research study explored the use of social networking and its implications on a user's social and psychological well-being. This included examining the implications on a user's social and psychological well-being based on the extent and nature of their use of social networking. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on the generation that has grown up in using and

integrating this type of networking into their social and personal lives, defined as Millennials.

This project addressed and described trends of the increased use of social networking in daily life to increase the knowledge level of counselor educators, and its implications for counseling practitioners.

Research Questions

Q1: Does the use of social networking affect psychological and social well-being?

Q2a: Is there a relationship between different platforms used for social networking and psychological well-being?

Q2b: Is there a relationship between different platforms used for social networking and social well-being?

Q3a: Are there differences between social networking use and psychological well-being by gender?

Q3b: Are there differences between social networking use and social well-being by gender?

Operational definitions

Social networking. Social networking can be described as any online communication medium; an avenue for people to connect through “following” each other, sharing their thoughts through “status updates”, sending private messages, instant chatting, and receiving feedback from “friends” and “followers” (Teske, 2002). These social networking platforms currently consist of Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, blogs, messenger/ online chatting, message boards, online self-help groups, and online match-making services. Facebook is the nearly universal social networking site and it has the highest share of users’ daily visits, while MySpace and LinkedIn are occasional destinations (Hampton, et. al, 2011).

Social networking usage. In this study, hours spent daily using social networking sites defined social networking usage. “Frequent users” were defined as those who use SNS at least once a day (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012). Usage was specifically measured through the use of the Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES) (see Appendix 2).

Psychological well-being. Psychological well-being was defined in this study as a “cognitive and affective evaluation of life as perceived by the user” (Lee, Lee, & Kwon, 2011). This was further determined by described feelings of connection with others, belonging, a sense of personal meaning, and the ability to effectively cope with daily life stressors (Teske, 2002). Psychological well-being was specifically measured through the use of the SNCAES (see Appendix 2).

Social well-being. Social well-being was measured within this study in regards to positive family connections and communication patterns, an appropriate size of one’s social circle (real life versus online) as perceived by the user, positive self-efficacy, the presence of romantic relationships, appropriate boundaries, appropriate communication filtering, a sense of personal safety, and “the ability to be self-soothing, self-loving, and self-sufficient” (Teske, 2002). Social well-being was specifically measured through the use of the SNCAES (see Appendix 2).

Social involvement. In this study, social involvement was defined as family communication, the size of a user’s local social network, the size of a user’s distant social network, and social support (Kraut et. al, 1998). Social support was further described as a user’s self-report of resources that are made available due to their social networking. Social resources could consist of the accessibility of “tangible help, advice, emotional support, companionship,

and a sense of belonging (Teske, 2002).” More specifically, a user’s tendency to enjoy conversation and comfort in being the center of attention at times, the presence of family communication, a satisfactory size of a local social network, a sufficient size of a distant social network, and the presence of a dependable and reliable social support. Social involvement was specifically measured with the SNCAES (see Appendix 2).

Self-efficacy of belonging. Self-efficacy of belonging was defined in this work as a sense of relationship and personhood, meaning, purpose, focus, an awareness of the responses of others, feeling of intimacy with others, a congruent presentation of self, individualism, having a feeling of belonging, self-understanding, a sense of personal integrity, and a sense of personal worth (Teske, 2002; Turkle, 1998; Smith & Betz, 2000). Self-efficacy was specifically measured with the SNCAES (see Appendix 2).

Psychological distress. Psychological distress as it relates to social networking was defined in this study as feelings, thoughts, and symptoms of stress, depression, anxiety, paranoia, isolation, neuroticism, and addiction. This measure was further described through expression of social fragmentation, feelings of emptiness, absence of personal meaning, and personal fraudulence (Teske, 2002; Turkle, 1996; Kraut et. al, 2002; Sander, Field, Diego, & Kaplan, 2000; Hirai & Clum, 2005). Psychological distress was specifically measured with the SNCAES (see Appendix 2).

Loneliness/ social isolation. Loneliness and isolation was defined in this work as a user who becomes uninvolved, having a negative social bias, a minimal size of social support, is perceived as unfriendly, and is distant from others. (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). Loneliness/ social isolation was specifically measured with the SNCAES (see Appendix 2).

Personal safety. Personal safety was described in this work within the considerations of anonymity, self-disclosure, deindividuation, weakened self-regulation, privacy, control of one's social world, vulnerability, emotional reactivity, helplessness, minimal boundary establishment, control of information reveal, gossip, attention to physical appearance, feelings of betrayal, and codependency (Weiser, 2001; Teske, 2002; Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002; Bareket-Bojmel & Shahar, 2011; Altman & Taylor, 1973; Jourard, 1971). Personal safety was specifically measured with the SNCAES (see Appendix 2).

II. Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the implications of a user's social and psychological well-being based on the extent and nature of their use of social networking. For the purpose of this dissertation study, the focus was on the generation that has grown up using and incorporating this type of socialization into their personal lives. This project's purpose was to address and describe trends of the increased use of social networking in daily life to increase the knowledge level of counselor educators, as well as and its implications for counseling practitioners.

Internet use and social connectedness

A renowned, as well as debated, study by Kraut et al. (1998) described the "Internet paradox" stating that Internet use led to feelings of loneliness and isolation among its users. The Internet paradox concluded that social networking (or communication through technology as it has been known for the past 15 years of research) might reduce social involvement and psychological well-being (Teske, 2002). Kraut et al. (1998) reported that greater use of the Internet was associated with declines in family communication, increased time displacement, and increased feelings of loneliness. Kraut and his colleagues concluded that the Internet can be used to support strong social ties, but that many online relationships, especially new ones, were more likely to be superficial in nature (Teske, 2002). This stance also suggested that social networking and Internet usage in general, promoted social isolation and a disturbance in users' genuine, meaningful "real" relationships (Weiser, 2001). Teske (2002) reported that "such [online] relationships may be convenient, even entertaining, but, lacking both the context and the embodied basis of emotional support, they may be at the cost of more involving relationships (p. 682)." Social networking has also been found to contribute to feelings of intolerance and distrust

in interactions, especially within adolescent populations (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012).

Kraut and Kiesler (1999) later found in their follow-up study, conducted two years later, that the negative implications for Internet use was no longer a present factor in the participants' life although they did report, "People typically feel less close to online communication partners than to those with whom they have formed real-world relationships. When emotional or tangible support was exchanged, the partners were almost always friends or family who had preexisting real-world ties in addition to their communication online (p. 783)." Curiously, in a recent study researchers determined that teenagers, frequent users, and adults from lower- socioeconomic status were more likely to have had bad social networking outcomes (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012). Several scholars have stated their concerns that social networking is a cheap, convenient, and fruitless form of communication compared to traditional face-to-face interactions, and would therefore produce negative outcomes like loneliness and depression for its users as well as weaken local community ties (Bargh & McKenna, 2004).

Paralleling this research is work that has focused on whether the Internet actually provides greater opportunities for individuals to engage and increase social connectedness. Specifically, the other school of argument, as it pertains to Internet communication and social networking, is that these advances offer different opportunities for interaction with those of shared interests that does not solely depend on the convenient proximity of the interacting individuals (Kraut et. al, 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Weiser, 2001; McKenna & Bargh, 2002). Underlying this discussion is what the quality or nature of this increased social interaction is. The Internet helps people build relationships with others as it simplifies the socialization process by identifying other users that are like-minded and share common interests quickly, despite physical distances or introverted personalities (McKenna & Bargh, 1998;

McKenna & Bargh, 2002; Amichai- Hamburger et al, 2002).

Kraut et al.'s follow-up to their controversial study found that the negative effects initially observed in their sample from Internet engagement had faded (minus increased stress), that user involvement with family, friends, and community was unaffected, and that even greater Internet use was associated with positive psychological and social outcomes (Kraut et al., 2002). Kraut et al. also reported that teens, as compared with the adult participants, increased their social support and family communication with more Internet use, while the adult participants actually increased their face-to-face interactions with family and friends, and used the Internet to connect more with distant relatives and friends (p. 64). Other studies have found a positive relationship with life satisfaction and the use of the specific social networking site Facebook (Ellison et al, 2007; Valenzuela et al., 2009).

Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi's findings (2003) directly combat Kraut et. al's original conclusions (1998) proposing that it is lonely people who are attracted to the Internet, rather than the Internet being the cause of their loneliness. It should be clarified though, that these results were found to be true only for their sample of women, not men (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). Hampton et al. (2011) reported that overall, Americans have more close friends than they did two years ago and that the average user of social networking has more close relationships and is half as likely to be socially isolated as the average American (p. 24).

Teske (2002) explored how human meaning is derived in a technological culture and its effect on the formation and maintenance of social relationships (p. 677). Teske presented findings that implications of Internet use may depend as much on individual differences, intention and expectation in use, their developmental status, and their available social resources

(p. 683). McKenna & Bargh (2000) suggested that because social networking allows a user to choose when to engage and when to draw back (logging on and off), and repeatedly edit and modify their statements and responses, it gives users a greater control, and then in turn, greater self-efficacy within their interactions than a typical relationship. With the use of social networking, people who are more introverted or uncomfortable in social situations are still able to show their 'real selves' in far less time than typical in the relationship-building process, which is important as this revelation of self is vital for psychological health (Rogers, 1951; McKenna & Bargh, 2002).

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, the overall social and psychological atmosphere of social networking sites (SNS) appears to be a positive one where adult users get personal rewards and feelings of fulfillment at far higher levels than negative interactions with their peers (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012; Hampton, Goulet, Marlow, & Rainie, 2012). A recent study by Gonzales & Hancock (2011) reported results supporting that use of the social networking site, Facebook, can enhance "social self-esteem," by being able to receive immediate feedback from other users (Facebook "friends") on their physical appearance, romantic attraction, and close bonds with others (p. 79). Researchers reported that when social networking users were asked for a word to describe their experiences using these sites, "good" was the most common response, and that overall, positive far outweighed negative responses (Madden & Zickuhr, 2011). Other interesting findings were that Facebook users who received and accepted "friend requests", participated in posting status updates, and responding to others via "wall" posts, reported feeling high levels of social support from their friends on and offline. Researchers postulated that this was due to the continuous feedback received even while "logged out" as other Facebook users (their "Facebook friends") interacted on their posted reflections and

discussions. Also, in comparison with responses from non-Internet users, other Internet users, and even users of other SNS, frequent users of Facebook (those who logged on at least one time daily) were more likely to demonstrate higher levels of social trust, political engagement, close relationships, and social support (Hampton, Goulet, Marlow, & Rainie, 2012).

Benefits from social networking could be attributed simply to the fact that users have a platform in which to express themselves thoughtfully and discuss daily their latest concerns. Hampton et al (2011) found that there was little validity to concerns that people who use SNS generally had smaller, less diverse and genuine social networks, but that social networking benefits were dependent on the user's personality, interests, and intentions. For example, the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that adults who had large social networks and those with more years of education would be more attracted and involved with professional and succinct SNS, such as LinkedIn and Twitter. Hampton, et al (2011) even went as far as stating,

“The likelihood of an American experiencing a deficit in social support, having less exposure to diverse others, not being able to consider opposing points of view, being untrusting, or otherwise being disengaged from their community and American society generally is unlikely to be a result of how they use technology, especially in comparison to common predictors. A deficit of overall social ties, social support, trust, and community engagement is much more likely to result from traditional factors, such as lower educational attainment (p. 42).”

Gender differences in social networking use

With regard to social networking, there has been some exploration of gender differences as a predictor for use (Brown, 2011; Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003; Hughes et al., 2012; Correa et al., 2010; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000; Thompson &

Lougheed, 2012). In May 2011, 69% of women were users of social networking sites, compared with 60% of men (Brown, 2011). According to a study conducted by Moore & McElroy (2012), females reported spending more time on Facebook, having more Facebook friends, posting more photos, and posting more personal information than the participating males. While the females spent more total time on Facebook, they visited less often than the males. This research concluded that both gender and social networking experience were important predictors of Facebook usage and substance presented, and should be controlled for in future research (Moore & McElroy, 2012).

Researchers have postulated the interesting notion that because women generally place a greater importance in life on establishing and maintaining relationships with others, they are more drawn to the opportunities social networking provides than men (Correa et al., 2010; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). While extraverted men and women were both likely to be frequent users of social networking, researchers found that the men with less psychological well-being were the more consistent users, presumably to help improve their self-esteem and sense of belonging (Correa et al., 2010). Muscanell & Guadagno (2012) also found that women were more likely to use the Internet to promote relationship upkeep, while men focus on more “achievement-orientation” behavior online like researching and obtaining information. Men have also been found to be more likely to use social networking sites for dating and to learn about new events compared to women (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). This suggests that men may use social networking sites more for forming new relationships compared to women. Women have been found to express more privacy concerns than men, spending more of their social networking time connecting with individuals they already know, versus creating new bonds online like men (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). Also,

in a study conducted by Thompson & Loughheed (2012), females were more likely than males to report feelings of stress associated with Facebook use, females were more likely to report feelings of anxiety if they experienced difficulty accessing their social networking sites, and also reported experiencing negative self-body image over pictures posted of them online more than men.

Additionally, these results have also been demonstrated in other studies looking at personality and SNS usage. In their research looking into personality variables within social networking use, Hamburger & Ben-Artzi (2003) reported that women in their study who scored as having a “neurotic” personality were also positively related to loneliness while males who scored with neuroticism were positively related with extraversion. Earlier, Hamburger & Ben-Artzi (2000) presented data demonstrating that it is lonely women who are attracted to the Internet, rather than as was previously argued that the Internet was the cause of their loneliness.

Socialization practices: Past and current

Katz et al. (2001) described how with every new advance in communication within the last 200 years, there has been skepticism and theories of negative implications for society (past examples being the telegraph, telephone, radio, movies, television, and now the Internet) (p. 406). Positive social interaction is vital for life satisfaction, and social networking is an available tool to meet that need (Neustadtl & Robinson, 2002). With the convenience of socialization these days using social networking, there is a fear that it will reduce genuine social participation. This was also true with the invention of the telephone, which in fact enhanced social involvement, and the television, which actually reduced social immersion as it kept people home watching their sets (Kraut et. al, 1998).

Williams and Merten (2009) discussed that during the current youth development,

individuals rely heavily on feedback from their peers in order to positively influence morale, reflection, direction and belonging, while also providing a socially acceptable and relevant way to express oneself and publicly cope with challenging feelings and situations. Social self-efficacy comes into play here as it defines a person's confidence in their perceived ability to engage in social interactions necessary to initiate and sustain positive interpersonal relationships (Smith & Betz, 2000). Self-disclosure is a powerful way to form, maintain, and enrich relationships, but as a process is still poorly understood (Bareket-Bojmel & Shahar, 2011; Altman & Taylor, 1973).

Appropriate self-disclosure has long been an mark of social and psychological health, as it often leads to intimacy in relationships and a level of insight within one's self and experiences (Jourard, 1971). The phenomenon known as "stranger on the train" is described as a human occurrence where one finds themselves feeling secure and open enough to share intimate, and largely private details with a "safe" and relatively anonymous "seatmate" or travel companion (Rubin, 1975). This phenomenon occurs frequently on SNS, where users have the ability to be anonymous in their online interactions, free of any predisposed expectations and constraints, and are able to open up and discuss intimate and personal details of their life with essentially online "strangers" (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002). Users begin to display disinhibition online, where they often disclose things in cyberspace they wouldn't typically say in their physically present world as they become desensitized to the public platform and begin expressing themselves more openly (Suler, 2002; Suler, 2004).

In the social networking world, time becomes relatively inconsequential. Not only can an individual engage in a social exchange without the other person being online at the same time, but also has far greater control over their side of the interaction than is ever possible in a more

traditional interaction, because there is no need for an instantaneous response. Online, the many causes that foster social anxiety are no longer an issue as an individual can take all the time they need to formulate a retort, many times improving and refining an answer to better reflect their emotions, or even to appear adequately prepared for any exchange whether playful, romantic, or serious (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). With this though, the notion of intimacy comes into query as physical presence and touch have long been the most basic forms of connecting deeper and more personally with others (Teske, 2002).

Kraut et al. (1998) also questioned whether the quality of online relationships positive or negative affected a user's offline relationships, leading to an impact psychological well-being. Their results showed that greater use of the Internet was associated with small, but statistically significant declines in social involvement, depression, and loneliness (p. 1028). Sherry Turkle, in her 2011 groundbreaking book "Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other," describes the social networking/ connectivity paradigm writing, "We are lonely but fearful of intimacy. Constant connectivity offers the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. We can't get enough of each other if we can have each other at a distance and in amounts that we can control." Turkle later writes about society's fault for using technology to decrease human contact as a defense to keep intimacy and with it, vulnerability low, but interaction and a feeling of connection high (Greengard, 2011).

Relationship building

Has social networking altered the way that people conceptualize their relationships with others? Is this generation, the generation of online sharing, as comfortable or even competent to transition into real-life, offline interactions? What are the social rules to appropriate and considerate interactions online? More and more people view social networking as a place where

they can have satisfying, but less demanding relationships; relationships on their own terms and at their own discretion (Brown, 2011). Unlike the traditional communication mediums of telephone and face-to-face conversations, online messages do not need to be answered immediately, and it is often the understanding that it won't be for several hours, days even (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). Through social networking, response time is now up to the user and at their preference. Also, addressing the fear of skeptics that increased loneliness and isolation is associated with Internet use, people can and do use the Internet to meet others with similar interests and values, even with distance would have once made that impossible (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). With this, users are able to carefully craft their exchanges and this feeling of control seems to lead individuals to be more open and self-disclose more than typical face-to-face interactions (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; McKenna, 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004).

Previous studies have shown that people use social networking more to keep up with relationships they already have offline rather than to form new ones online (Kraut et al., 1996), but with the rise in popularity with social networking platforms (i.e. Twitter, blogging), one is left to wonder if this is still the case. With online communications, users are able to start a relationship with a high level of control over the direction and flow of the intimacy, and as their comfort level grows over time, they begin to lower their defenses and open up communication more and more (McKenna, 1998). While this is also a natural process with real-life interactions, social networking provides a greater level of intentionality over the timing of revelations, enabling this intimacy process to slow down or speed up immensely depending on the user's desire and level of comfort. Social networking relationships can in fact, and often do, become real-life relationships. Although some may argue that online interactions are more superficial and less transparent, it is possible that relationships formed via social networking are deeper,

stable and longer lasting than those formed in the real-world environment as they are based on shared internal processes and experiences, versus just physical attractiveness or convenience (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Teske, 2002).

Social networking can also strengthen family relationships as it increases convenience over communication across distances (Kraut et. al, 2002). Recent studies have shown that with the boom of social networking and Internet communication entities, college students were in touch with their parents on average 10 times a week compared to previous generations where weekly phone calls were more the norm (Brown, 2011). Important events that were once extraordinarily difficult for family to attend due to distance are now possible with social networking technology (i.e. graduations, birthdays, celebrations), improving user morale.

Social networking and psychological well-being

While Kraut et al. (1998) resolved that the use of the Internet was likely to result in an increase in depression and loneliness, Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2000) pointed out that for a full understanding of the influences of the Internet on users's well-being, one must consider the whole spectrum of Internet uses, which fall within three categories: social, work-related, and leisure services (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). While social networking users are instantaneously gaining visual information about others' actions, whereabouts, and musings, the human brain's thought functioning requires a processing time that allows for compartmentalization and prioritization. To illustrate, Miller (2012) reports, "Millennials have been found to switch their attention between media platforms like laptops, smartphones, tablets, and television 27 times per hour on average as compared to only 17 times for older generations (p.1)." Many users may not be cognizant of these factors and do not use social networking intentionally, while also allowing a reprieve in order to avoid overstimulation and enable the

mind's natural filtering practice to focus on offline interests and interactions that are actually positive and constructive to the user (Teske, 2002). Teske theorized that with the introduction of the Internet and the limitless possibilities for easy communication and leisurely distractions, the Internet (and in turn, social networking) enables a degree of personal avoidance in coping with the anxieties of life, which could be problematic with those in the critical socialization developmental process. Turkle (2011) writes that heavy users of digital technology are trained over time to have less patience for the pace and attention involved in face-to-face interactions, leading to more avoidant behavior as it relates to meaningful human contact.

Another notion of social networking effect is time displacement. Nie and Erbring (2000) reported results that the Internet and social networking did not affect real-life interaction with family and friends, but more displaced time that users would typically engage in hobbies like watching television or reading. The time a user spends online will inevitably leave less time for other activities and hobbies previously used to relax and decompress from life's pressures, and this time displacement may lead to a generalized perception of stress and feelings of loneliness associated with the hours during which they may be away from family and friends participating in social networking (Kraut et al., 2002; Kraut et al., 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Nie & Erbring, 2000). Time displacement in any form (i.e. sports, career, romantic relationships, children) has an effect on one's social well-being, but current focus is put on social networking's influence. Add to the fact that many social networking users question whether they are a "master or slave" to the technology as they are constantly distracted by their digital media, and even after unplugging, users find it difficult to concentrate and think critically on their real-life tasks away from their digital companions (Greengard, 2011).

Time spent with strong social relationships is a common and effective coping strategy for

life's stresses, which leads to greater self-esteem and stronger psychological outcomes (Kraut et al, 1998). Psychological well-being is most strongly associated with an individual's *perception* of their social support regardless of any accuracy in their assessment (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Amichai-Hamburger et al. (2002) found that due to the options social networking provides of "anonymity, lack of need to reveal physical appearance, rigid control of information revealed in the interaction, and the ease with which it is possible to find like-minded people", users felt more comfort and positive feelings in forming social contacts online (p. 127). McKenna and Bargh (2000) also found a decrease in social anxiety associated with social networking use due to the absence of many of the situational factors that would foster feelings of social fear. If a user perceives a significant lack or abundance of social support, this can have an impact on their psychological well-being and how they cope with the variety of life's challenges. Kim & Lee (2011) found within their sample that happiness was derived from the number of Facebook friends a user had, as it served as a visual reminder of the user's social connections, therefore providing confirmation of their self-worth (p. 362).

Also, the social stage that SNS provide for a user to have an open and uninterrupted dialogue to hundreds of listeners (or "friends) must be considered in regards to psychological well-being (Weiser, 2001). The range and intensity of emotions that are openly and frequently expressed in a social networking platform can be unexpected and overwhelming, so awareness and reliance on deep, meaningful relationships outside of social networking can be a protective factor in use as it relates to psychological well-being (Williams & Merten, 2009). Due to the deindividuating nature of online communication, inhibitions can be lowered, leading to more forceful and intimidating exchanges that are not as typical in face-to-face interactions (Bargh & McKenna, 2004). On the other hand, a level of trust is established early in online interactions as

communication is documented through keystrokes that leave a digital trail long after the conversation has ended, leading user feelings to lay within the spectrum of confidence or paranoia within these relationships (Bargh & McKenna, 2004).

Feelings of meaning in a technological culture

Transparency versus partial identity disclosure is also a discussion in the literature. Teske (2002) explored the chaotic whirlwind of new social encounters with partial identities on display as users can present themselves as an ideal, and many times incomplete, self. People who don't feel comfortable expressing their "real self" are likely to be impacted psychologically as well as socially (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Teske, 2001; Rogers, 1951). With social networking, an introverted person that may be perceived as "unfriendly, uninvolved, and distant" (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003) now has the capability to represent themselves differently with little immediate negative consequence. Without the pressures of physical cues and interactions, some are able to better figure out and express their developing selves, leading to increased self-understanding and emotional maturity (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). Also, those who are marginalized in society (perhaps based on sexual orientation and inclinations, radical political or religious beliefs, or various health conditions) are able to use social networking to find others who share the aspects of their identity and are able to join in their ostracized experiences to gain emotional support and a feeling of belonging (McKenna & Bargh, 1998; McKenna & Bargh, 2000). This may be taken to the extreme though, where social networking users filter and customize their online behavior in a way that keeps them connected only to those with highly parallel interests, restricting the users' worlds instead of its intended purpose of expansion (Teske, 2002).

Social networking gains

Bargh and McKenna (2004) suggested that effects of social networking use are largely dependent on the user's goals in directing their interactions (i.e. self expression, membership with an organization or group, or competition). According to the Pew Internet Center, Internet users list several reasons for their social networking involvement stating such motives as staying in touch with current friends and family members, connecting with old friends they've lost touch with over the years and distances, and having a public platform to express oneself. In addition, the study found that users also indicated that social networking allowed them to document memories, connect with others that share a common hobby or interest, make new friends, have access to communicate with celebrities/ politicians/ athletes, and even find potential romantic partners (Smith, 2011). Also, it is theorized that given respect to personality dynamics and intention of the user, social networking may work to build empathy, understanding, openness, and tolerance within the social world. Hampton et al. (2011) found that the typical Internet user is more than twice as likely as others to feel that people can be trusted, with Facebook users the likeliest of all to be trusting. Researchers from the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2011) also report that Facebook users get more social support than others "equivalent to about half the total support that the average American receives as a result of being married or cohabitating with a partner (p. 4)."

Psychological and personality variables and Internet use

The Internet provides a diverse set of social networking services, which is used differently by every person according to their communication styles and expectations in engaging (Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002). Therefore it is necessary to consider personality variables as part of the process of understanding the personality of the user and

concluding negative or positive implications of Internet use and social networking (Moore & McElroy, 2012; Hughes et al., 2012; Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Amiel & Sargent, 2004; Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). These internal differences may explain why some people become addicted to social networking, while others dislike it intensely. It may also help us understand the potential effects of Internet use and how this differs by individual.

One of the personality characteristics that have been found in the research to influence Internet use is that of extroversion and neuroticism (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox (2002) reported that introverted and “neurotic people” were found greater ease and comfort in expressing their real selves online while extroverts preferred traditional social interactions. The neurotic user is anxious and emotional, while the extroverted personality is described as outgoing, easy sociable, impulsive, often seeking new stimulation, as opposed to the introvert, who is thoughtful, reserved, and comfortable in their own company (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). Kraut et al. (2002) described a “rich get richer” model, stating that Internet use predicted better outcomes for extraverts and those with more social support but worse outcomes for introverts and those with less support (p. 49). An alternative model would argue that it is those people who are already lonely who spend time on the Internet and not that the Internet causes loneliness (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). Consequently, attention to the SNS users’ participation and feelings of fulfillment associated must be considered from a subjective perspective. Different personalities have different behavior and needs online.

Another area of attention as it relates to SNS user personality is the consideration of the real self versus the presented ideal self (previously discussed in greater depth). Because of the absence of any time obligation and little accountability within online interactions, users have

time to formulate their image and responses unlike ever experienced within real life exchanges. Granted, in initial meetings people tend to present their best selves to make positive impressions, and this is seen to be as no different with social networking where users often present an idealized version of themselves (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). Researchers are also exploring how social networking is affecting this generation and a rising “culture of narcissism” where users overshare and exhibit attention-seeking behavior online, treating their problems as individualized versus part of the normal developmental process, and acting as unique individuals over part of the greater whole (Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Teske, 2002; Lerner, 1991; Lasch, 1978). This growing generational culture also displays a heightened sense of esteem, often in the absence of justification through positive choices and actions, and how this will affect how this group utilizes social networking in the future is still to be determined (Teske, 2002). Some already argue that social networking sites specifically gratify narcissistic behavior through immediate positive feedback (“likes”, comments, retweets) to the individual’s superficial self-promotion (Ryan & Xenos, 2011).

The role of anonymity in social networking

Internet communication is often executed with a great degree of anonymity. This has led to the identification of, and research on the process of deindividuation. Deindividuation indicates a lack of internal and external personal accountability present; a sense of concealment and impersonalization that focuses only on external events, reducing awareness of one’s behavior and often supporting impulsive and disinhibited actions with little consideration to consequences (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Teske, 2002; McKenna & Bargh, 2000). With this heat-of-the-moment thought process, social networking users have to be intentional in self-monitoring their emotional regulation and immediate reactivity, their spontaneous inhibitions,

self-centeredness, and consider long-term implications from exchanges (Teske, 2002; McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Bargh & McKenna, 2004).

With today's technology, information travels on the Internet at lightening speed, enabling impulsive and reactive behavior, and depriving chances for a user to be thoughtful and deliberate in discussions. 85% of adult SNS users report that with their experience, interactions are mostly positive, but 49% of the same users have witnessed unkind and callous behavior (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012). Rainie, Lenhar, & Smith (2012) also report from their findings, "Adults are generally more positive and less negative than teens about the behavior of others and their own experiences on social networking sites (p. 3)."

Social networking sites also provide a public platform for many to witness others' encounters. It is also a platform that allows engagement and interaction in these encounters, posting their own comments and replies, which can be positive and empowering, or negative and destructive (Rainie et al., 2012). Moreover, misunderstandings, greater responses that are negative in nature, and rebellious behavior are more likely to occur in the low accountability interactions online, rather than in face-to-face conversations (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). This often parallels the process of groupthink. Groupthink is described as a psychological phenomenon where one feels a sense of unity with group values and ethics; a simulated sense of consent by numbers at the loss of independent, critical thinking (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Merriam-Webster, 2012). With the anonymity social networking can provide, along with groupthink, this communication avenue can also be utilized for more sinister forms of expression, reinforced by positive feedback given by others of similar mind (i.e. hate groups, cyber bullying), and with the false belief that countless others feel the same (McKenna & Bargh, 2000).

Safety within an online presence

Social networking intends to facilitate and maintain close, meaningful relationships within a relatively safe and controlled environment, rather than the isolating, personally and socially maladaptive activity it is feared to be. One must also consider though, that given the tendency for strangers present an idealized version of themselves, more may take it to the extreme and completely misrepresent their identities enabling deception to self and others (Teske, 2002; McKenna & Bargh, 2000). Are social networking users territorial of private information as they once were? With this generation's increased openness and permanent digital footprint, it is raising attention to the concepts of stimulation overload (constant connectivity), reduction in perceived control of one's reputation (or the most recent used term of "brand"), and experienced helplessness (i.e. bullying) (Moore & McElroy, 2012; Teske, 2002).

III. Methods

Introduction to the study

A review of the literature revealed that finding long-term implications for Internet use, more specifically social networking use is in its infancy. The purpose of this current study was to explore trends of the rise in social networking use in daily life to increase the knowledge level of counselor educators, as well as and its implications for counseling practitioners. Research questions addressed on this topic were: Is there a relationship between social networking and the psychological well-being of users? Also, is there a relationship between a specific level of involvement in the online world and a user's social well-being?

One way to address these questions was to analyze the contents of social networking use and draw inferences regarding how a certain level of participation may promote concerns among users related to social and psychological well-being. During the present study, a quantitative, rather than qualitative content analysis was conducted in order to measure for effect and influence, which could be causal versus descriptive in nature. In developing research questions, developing the measurement instrument, and interpreting statistical results, the researcher made decisions that was reflective of her background, experience, education, and knowledge.

Research Questions

Q1: Does the use of social networking affect psychological and social well-being?

Q2a: Is there a relationship between different platforms used for social networking and psychological well-being?

Q2b: Is there a relationship between different platforms used for social networking and social well-being?

Q3a: Are there differences between social networking use and psychological well-being

by gender?

Q3b: Are there differences between social networking use and social well-being by gender?

Measure

The Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale

The survey for this study, The Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale, was a researcher-developed based on analytical review of the literature on Internet use, communication, technology, and social and psychological well-being (refer to Appendices 1 & 2). The measure contained a brief demographic form for aggregate purposes, and 65 questions on a Likert scale. Survey questions consisted of thoughts and feelings the user had experienced in the context of participation in social networking, and was on a four-point Likert scale. This measure addressed SNS use and characteristics of use, as well as containing items assessing psychological and social well-being.

The measure of social networking use was measured by survey questions requesting a sum of average of hours spent daily on social networking sites (mobile device/ electronic tablet usage included). The measure of online social involvement was addressed with survey questions assessing the amount of immersion within social networking environments, the depth and breadth of this participation, as well as the levels of socialization outside of on-screen connections, involving family and face-to-face relationships. Social well-being was conceptualized and reflected in the survey as productive and beneficial family communication patterns, the presence of a healthy social circle outside Internet relationships, positive self-efficacy, and appropriate consideration to personal safety in social interactions. The measure of psychological well-being was addressed with survey questions reflecting common positive

emotions experienced within social engagements (i.e. excitement, happiness, feelings of fulfillment and belonging) and reflected an overall positive perception and evaluation of life (Lee, Lee, & Kwon, 2011, p. 151). The measure of psychological distress was addressed with survey questions reflecting common negative emotions experienced within social engagements (i.e. symptomology of depression, anxiety, paranoia, isolation, and addiction) and reflected an overall negative perception and evaluation of life (Sander, Field, Diego, & Kaplan, 2000; Hirai & Clum, 2005). The survey consisted of 65 statements which were related to experiences in social networking use within the last 6 months, including social and psychological aspects which were consistently cited in the research literature and which the participant was asked to rate on a four-point Likert scale including the potential responses: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree.

The researcher conducted a focus group in the summer of 2012 to assess the produced measure within a graduate course several months prior to the start of data collection. The researcher met with a Lifespan Development course that consisted of 9 students who volunteered to participate with an incentive of class extra credit. The researcher in no way had any involvement with the Lifespan course aside from this interaction. The researcher identified the research purpose and presented a paper-draft of the measure to the focus group participants. The focus group was given 1 hour to assess the measure and provide feedback on problematic survey items either through written or verbal comments. These comments were noted and influenced the final outcome of the survey dispersed to research participants.

Comments that emerged from the discussion consisted of feedback to include a more comprehensive list of social networking platforms and daily, versus weekly, social networking usage options. Questions were also added to the measure to include topics of vicarious trauma

and shock, the effect social networking has on real-life relationships, the dynamic of employers on social networking sites, the common disregard for typical social norms on social networking sites, and the experience of catharsis while using social networking sites. The focus group feedback also allowed the researcher to make several questions clearer and better defined.

Procedures

The present study aimed to examine the implications on a person's social and psychological well-being for those who use social networking. The study served to explore and report trends of social networking use and its influence on one's sense of social and psychological well-being. The purpose of this study was to gather data to investigate implications for counselors and counselor educators, as well as integrate into evidence-based clinical counseling practice. To increase the chances that there was representation of participants with high to lower rates of social networking usage, two methods of data collection were used for this study. Recruitment methods included data collection among a pool of undergraduate students at Auburn University, as well as data collection among users of popular social networking sites.

Selection of Participants

Requirement for participation was being within the age range of 19-33, commonly defined as the Millennial generation (Pew Research Center, 2010). This generation has been referred to as "social media obsessed" and "tech savvy" due to their constant multitasking between social media and technology platforms (Miller, 2012; Anderson & Rainie, 2010). According to Pew Research Center statistics (2010), this population, born after 1980, have grown up with the most technological advances and social networking capabilities. Internet use was clearly established among this generation, who embrace multiple means of self-expression, with

three-quarters having created a profile on at least one social networking site compared with half of Generation Xers, 30% of Boomers and 6% of Silents. Sixty-one percent of Millennials in Pew's 2010 survey reported that their generation has a unique identity because of their use of technology and the way they have merged their everyday social lives into online behavior. Also, Millennials report that technology makes their lives easier and brings them closer to the people they care about (Pew Research Center, 2010). This study aimed to further explore the social and psychological impact of social networking on this generation.

Recruitment

Participants for this study included 188 individuals who met the age parameters for inclusion and identified as using social networking sites. The target sample size was 120 individuals, based on estimates about the number of participants needed to ensure statistical power based on the number of variables in the study (Cohen, 1988). There were no expected risks in participation of this study. After approval from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board (see Appendices 3 & 4), participants were recruited using two methods to increase the likelihood of greater representation across social networking use levels. The first method included collection of data among undergraduate students in the College of Education at Auburn University; this sample was recruited in general enrollment courses. These participants were provided a packet including an information sheet about the study and the measure (Appendices 2 and 3), which they anonymously completed and submitted back to the researcher, or returned back to the researcher incomplete if they did not wish to participate, or did not meet the criteria for participation.

The second method of recruitment involved posting invitations on well-known social networking sites (Twitter, Facebook, Blogger, and Reddit). Online measures have been shown

to attract samples that are diverse with regard to age, gender, geographic region and socio-economic status, because it obviates the need to travel or to be personally located in each of the countries or cultures studied (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Gosling, Vazire, Srivasta, & John, 2004). Similar to the first phase of data collection, the invitation included the information page about the study with a link to continue to the survey (see Appendix 4), which was hosted online by Qualtrics.

In both data collection processes the nature of the survey was the same; the only difference was an electronic version versus paper version. At the beginning of the survey, participants were asked questions regarding the extent to which they have used or currently use specific social networking platforms within the last six months. Participants were then asked to identify their method of accessing social networking sites (via mobile phone, home computer, tablet, etc), their daily social networking usage within the last six months, and how many days per week they used social networking. Participants were then able to advance to complete the measure and demographic data (see Appendix 2). In addition, the participants were given the chance to withdraw from the survey at any time by simply exiting the webpage; however once the participant's answers were submitted at the end of the survey, they were not able to withdraw their responses as their data was anonymous. After completion of the online survey, participants were directed to a page thanking them for their interest and involvement in the study.

The website used to host the survey in this study was secured through Qualtrics, with rigorous privacy standards imposed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Acts (HIPAA) with the use of hidden passwords and real-time data replication.

IV. Results

Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to quantitatively explore the relationship among social networking use, and feelings of social and psychological well-being within a sample of Millennial participants. To collect the research data, the researcher-developed Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES) was used. This study intended to determine whether the use of social networking affected psychological and social well-being, any relationship between the use of different social networking platforms as it relates to psychological and social well-being, and further determine the presence of any differences between social networking use and psychological and social well-being by gender. Descriptive statistical analysis, exploratory factor analyses (EFA), univariate analyses (ANOVA), multivariate analyses (MANOVA), regression analyses, and appropriate follow-up analyses were conducted to assess the quality of the researcher-developed measure and the relationship between Millennial social networking users and feelings of psychological and social well-being as indicated by the research questions established for the current study. The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. Additionally, information related to the participants involved in the study, the methodologies used, and the results of the statistical analysis are presented in this chapter.

Participants

Using a convenience sample of undergraduate students at Auburn University and an online sample and self-report measure, responses for 188 participants were included in the data analysis. There were one hundred and twenty responses generated from the online recruitment with 75 completed surveys. One hundred and twenty two surveys were collected from the

undergraduate student sample, with 113 completed. Only completed surveys were included in the data analysis, generating 188 total participants for this study. Of the 188 participants, 155 were female (82.4%) and 33 were male (17.6%). Although the gender skew may introduce bias into findings, it is common to obtain higher response rates among women in both web and paper surveys (Sax et al., 2003). Regarding race/ ethnicity, 90% were Non-Hispanic White, 4% Black or African American, and 3% Hispanic or Latino (see Table 1). The majority of participants were between 20-21 years old (38.3%) with the mean age of participants being 23 years old. The majority of participants (45%) were single and had some college completed (47%). In regards to full-time work or school status, 178 participants were active in full-time work or schooling, and 53 were involved in part-time work or schooling. Participants in this study ranged in residence from 23 states in the United States, and three countries. The majority of participants were Alabama residents (n= 123; 65%).

Table 1
Demographics

<u>Sample Characteristics</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Female	155	82.4
Male	33	17.6
Non-Hispanic White	170	90.4
Black or African American	8	4.3
Hispanic or Latino	7	3.7
Other	1	.5
Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	.5
Single	85	45.2
In a committed relationship	53	28.2
Married	35	18.6
Dating	13	6.9
Divorced	1	.5
Separated	1	.5
Some college	90	47.9

College	46	24.5
Graduate or Professional school	32	17
High school or GED	11	5.9
Some advanced schooling	6	3.2
Technical college	3	1.6
Alabama	123	65.4
Georgia	19	10.1
Tennessee	9	4.8
Ohio	5	2.7
Virginia	5	2.7
Pennsylvania	4	2.1
Hawaii	3	1.6
New Jersey	3	1.6
Indiana	2	1.1
Maryland	2	1.1
Outside of US	2	1.1
Illinois	1	.5
Iowa	1	.5
Louisiana	1	.5
Michigan	1	.5
Minnesota	1	.5
Missouri	1	.5
New York	1	.5
North Carolina	1	.5
Rhode Island	1	.5
South Carolina	1	.5
Utah	1	.5
<u>Age</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
19- 32	23	3.96

General Frequencies- Social Media Use

Of the 188 participants, the majority (55.9%) reported their daily frequency usage within the last six months to be between ½ hour- 2 hours daily. Also, the majority (80.3%) reported using social networking platforms 5-7 days weekly (see Table 2). In regards to social networking platforms used, the participant means resulted in MySpace use being “not at all,” Facebook being used “often,” Twitter being used “occasionally,” Google Plus “occasionally,” Blogger “not at all,” match-making services “not at all,” Tumblr “not at all,” Linked in “not at

all,” Pinterest “regularly”, Instagram “regularly”, online gaming “not at all”, and other “not at all.” In regards to mode of use through either home computer, mobile phone, work computer, public computer, or tablet, mobile phone was the most common with a mean of 4.21 (“often”) (see Table 4).

Table 2
Daily usage

	Frequency	Percent
less than 1/2 hour daily	20	10.6
1/2 hour -2 hours daily	105	55.9
2+ hours daily	63	33.5
1-3 days weekly	10	5.3
3-5 days weekly	27	14.4
5-7 days weekly	151	80.3
Total	188	100.0

Table 3
Social networking platforms used

	Mean (n= 188)	SD
Facebook	4.11	1.036
Instagram	3.00	1.655
Pinterest	2.93	1.515
Twitter	2.84	1.540
Google Plus	1.95	1.419
Blogger	1.38	.816
Online Gaming	1.37	.870
Tumblr	1.36	.869
Linked In	1.35	.784
Other	1.08	.506
Match making services	1.06	.353
MySpace	1.03	.309

Table 4
Modes of social networking use

	Mean (n= 188)	SD
Home computer	3.39	1.281
Mobile phone	4.21	1.067
Work computer	1.66	1.175
Public computer	1.26	.565
Tablet	1.85	1.268

Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES)

The Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale was divided into five subscales (self-efficacy, personal safety, psychological distress, social involvement, and loneliness/ social isolation) in order to measure particular thoughts and feelings the social networking user had experienced in the context of psychological and social impact. Psychological well-being entailed the subscales of feelings of self-efficacy, feelings of personal safety, and experiencing moments of psychological distress in social networking. Social well-being included social involvement, and feelings of social isolation and loneliness within social networking. As this measure was researcher-developed, the integrity of each scale was examined before using these scales in the primary analysis. Initial internal consistency estimates were computed in order to assess appropriateness of item inclusions before primary analysis could be completed. After reverse coding appropriate items in the measure, reliability tests were run to determine internal stability. Items within these scales were deleted if doing so led to a significant increase in Cronbach's Alpha; Cronbach's Alpha of .70 was used as the standard for this analysis. In addition, exploratory factor analysis was used with each scale in order to display evidence of a dominant factor within each subscale. A summary of these findings is found in Table 5.

Table 5
Reliabilities & factor analyses

Subscale	Original Scale		Revised Scale		EFA results	
	# Items	Reliability α	# Items	Reliability α	Eigenvalue	Proportion of Variance
Self- efficacy	13	.488	7	.699	2.7	38.6
Personal safety	7	.383	6	.567	1.9	32.1
Psychological distress	15	.870	15	.870	5.5	36.7
Social involvement	19	.591	16	.644	3.2	20.1
Loneliness/ social isolation	11	.747	9	.758	3.2	35.9

Self-efficacy subscale

To assess self-efficacy, participants completed questions on the Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES). The assessment includes 7 items used to measure user self-efficacy. The original alpha reliability was .488, and became .699 after the removal of 6 identified problem items. Based on the exploratory factor analysis, the scores from the internal subscale yielded one dominant factor accounting for 38.6% of the variance among the items.

Personal safety subscale

To assess personal safety, participants completed questions on the Social Networking

Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES). The assessment includes 6 items used to measure feelings of personal safety within social networking use. The original alpha reliability was .383, and became .567 after the removal of 1 identified problem item. Based on the exploratory factor analysis, the scores from the internal subscale yielded one dominant factor.

Psychological distress subscale

To assess psychological distress, participants completed questions on the Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES). The assessment includes 15 items used to measure psychological distress experienced within social networking use. The scales alpha reliability was measure as “good” at .870. Based on the exploratory factor analysis, the scores from the internal subscale yielded one dominant factor.

Social involvement subscale

To assess social involvement, participants completed questions on the Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES). The assessment includes 17 items used to measure user feelings of social involvement. The original alpha reliability was .591, and became .644 (acceptable) after the removal of the 3 identified problem items. Based on the exploratory factor analysis, the scores from the internal subscale yielded one dominant factor.

Loneliness/ social isolation subscale

To assess loneliness and social isolation, participants completed questions on the Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES). The assessment includes 9 items used to measure user feelings of loneliness and/ or social isolation. The original alpha reliability was .747, and became .758 (acceptable) after the removal of the 2 identified problem items. Based on the exploratory factor analysis, the scores from the internal subscale yielded one dominant factor.

Research questions

Q1: Does the use of social networking affect psychological and social well-being?

Q2a: Is there a relationship between different platforms used for social networking and psychological well-being?

Q2b: Is there a relationship between different platforms used for social networking and social well-being?

Q3a: Are there differences between social networking use and psychological well-being by gender?

Q3b: Are there differences between social networking use and social well-being by gender?

Analyses

The first research question was examined using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and regression analysis. The use of a multivariate analysis (MANOVA) allows for the study of the effects of one or more independent variables on multiple dependent variables. A multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was used to determine the effects of the independent variable (daily social networking use) on the two dependent variables (psychological well-being and social well-being). Multiple regression was used to address the second research question to determine which social networking platforms were related to psychological and social well-being. A chi-Square and two univariate analyses (ANOVAs) were used to examine the third research question.

Q1: Does the use of social networking affect psychological and social well-being?

Social networking use was divided into three groups; less than 1/2 hour daily (n= 20), 1/2 hour -2 hours daily (n= 105), and 2+ hours daily (n= 63). Using Wilks's Lambda criterion to

determine differences, the dependent variables of psychological well-being and social well-being were significantly affected by daily social networking use, though it was a small effect size ($F(2, 368) = 3.120, p < .05$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.935, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .033$). Follow-up univariate F tests revealed that users' social and psychological well-being was significantly dependent on their daily social networking usage. Further post-hoc follow-up analyses were performed to reveal specific pairwise differences among the social networking usage group. All statistical significance tests were evaluated using an alpha level of .05. In general, those that spent less time social networking (i.e., < ½ hour or ½ to 2 hours) reported higher levels of psychological and social well-being than those spending more time (2+ hours daily). More specifically, those spending less than ½ hour daily or between ½ and 2 hours daily were found to have significantly higher levels of psychological and social well-being than those spending 2+ hours daily. In addition, those spending less than ½ hour daily reported higher levels of psychological well-being than those spending between ½ and 2 hours daily using social networking.

Table 6

	Daily social networking use			F	Sig.	Effect size
	< ½ hour	½ to 2 hours	Over 2 hours			
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
Psychological well-being	2.86 (.19)	2.83 (.32)	2.67 (.32)	6.11	.003	.062
Social well-being	2.77 (.17)	2.72 (.27)	2.63 (.29)	3.34	.038	.035

NOTE- A multivariate test (Wilk's Lambda= .935, $p < .05$) resulted in a statistically significant difference among the social networking groups.

Q2a: Is there a relationship between different platforms use for social networking and psychological well-being?

Q2b: Is there a relationship between different platforms use for social networking and social well-being?

Linear multiple regressions were computed to assess whether the platform of social networking use predicted psychological and social well-being. This type of analysis allowed the researcher to track changes in R^2 at each step in the analysis in order to determine whether or not each predictor variable (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Google Plus, Blogger, matchmaking services, Tumblr, Linked In, Pinterest, Instagram, and online gaming) contributed significantly to the predicted variance in the outcome variable (psychological and social well-being). The option of “other” was removed from data analysis due to low response rate ($n= 5$). A backward elimination approach was used to first determine the overall relationship between the various platforms with psychological and social well-being, as well as a restricted model, limiting to those platforms having a statistically significant relationship with each outcome. Regression results show mixed relationships between each social networking platform and the dependent variables. Results from these regressions are summarized in Table 7.

Psychological well-being. Using all eleven social networking platforms as predictors, an overall R^2 of .096 was reached. This model was not statistically significant ($F= 1.686$, $p= .080$). A backward elimination regression analysis resulted in a final model restricted to just one predictor, Instagram ($\beta = -.246$, $p< .01$). Therefore, greater use of Instagram is associated with lower levels of psychological well-being. This restricted model had a R^2 of .061. A comparison of the full model and restricted model resulted in a R^2 difference of .035. An F-change test was

completed in order to assess the R^2 change in order to measure if the variables significantly improved the prediction; this difference was not statistically significant ($F = .686, p > .05$).

Social well-being. Using all eleven social networking platforms as predictors, an overall R^2 of .156 was reached. This model was statistically significant ($F = 2.936, p = .001$). A backward elimination regression analysis resulted in a final model restricted to two predictors, Linked In ($\beta = .286, p < .001$) and Instagram ($\beta = -.160, p < .05$). Therefore, greater use of Linked In is associated with higher levels of social well-being, and Instagram is associated with lower levels of social well-being. This restricted model had a R^2 of .142. A comparison of the full model and restricted model resulted in a R^2 difference of .014. An F-change test was completed in order to assess the R^2 change in order to measure if the variables significantly improved the prediction; this difference was not statistically significant ($F = .292, p > .05$).

Table 7

		<i>Psychological well-being</i>		<i>Social well-being</i>	
		<i>Full model</i>	<i>Restricted model</i>		
		<i>Full model</i>	<i>Restricted model</i>	<i>Full model</i>	<i>Restricted model</i>
R Square		.096	.061	.156	.142
# Predictors		11	1	11	3
<i>Platform</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>Beta</i>
Instagram	-.244**	-.177*	-.246**	-.208**	-.137
Blogger/ Wordpress	.032	.048		.131	.112

Linked In	.151*	.114		.323**	.277***	.286***
Facebook	-.127	-.098		.001	.006	
Twitter	.095	.004		-.111	-.006	
Myspace	-.060	-.055		-.017	-.021	
Google Plus	.049	.057		.003	.018	
Matchmaking services	.101	.061		.137	.046	
Tumblr	-.008	-.012		.113	.094	
Pinterest	-.133	-.069		-.077	-.059	
Online gaming	.002	-.037		-.007	-.031	

Q3a: Are there differences between social networking use and psychological well-being by gender?

Q3b: Are there differences between social networking use and social well-being by gender?

Previous studies, discussed earlier in the literature review, found that the relationship between demographic characteristics, personality factors, and Internet use showed different patterns for men and women, so it was decided to analyze data to assess for gender differences in social networking use (Brown, 2011; Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003; Hughes et al., 2012; Correa et al., 2010; Krasnova, et al, 2013; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000; Thompson & Loughheed, 2012). A preliminary analysis of gender was conducted to determine its effects on social networking, psychological well-being, and social well-being.

A chi-square was used to determine the relationship between social networking use and gender. This analysis was not significant ($\chi= 7.18$; $p= .066$). In order to examine gender's

relationship with the dependent variables (social well-being and psychological well-being), two univariate analyses (ANOVAs) were used. It was found that gender did not have a significant relationship with psychological well-being ($F(1, 186) = .573, p = .450$) and social well-being ($F(1, 186) = .200, p = .655$), and therefore was not included as a covariate on this study's primary data analysis (see Table 8 and 9).

Table 8
Daily usage and gender

Social networking use	Males (n= 33), n (%)	Females (n= 155), n (%)
< ½ hour daily	6 (18.2%)	14 (9.0%)
½ to 2 hours	22 (66.7%)	83 (53.5%)
More than 2 hours	5 (15.2%)	58 (37.4%)

Table 9

	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	F	P
Psychological well-being	2.82 (.32)	2.78 (.32)	.573	.450
Social well-being	2.72 (.24)	2.69 (.28)	.200	.655

Summary of Results

The main interest of the present study focused on the relationship of social networking use in Millennials, and its impact on social and psychological well-being. One hundred and eight-eight people participated in the study. Descriptive results, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and linear regressions all contributed in providing the researcher information regarding the survey measure (Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale) and the focus of this study. The data provided by the present study allows the researcher to interpret some

possible areas of importance as it relates to impact of social networking use on social and psychological well-being.

Based on analyses, in regards to the relationship between social networking use and psychological well-being (research question 1), the participants' experience of psychological well-being as it relates to their social networking use was significant. The relationship between social networking use and social well-being experienced by the social networking user (research question 2) was also significant. Interesting findings were the significant negative relationships between the use of Instagram and psychological and social well-being, suggesting that higher use of Instagram relates to lower feelings of psychological well-being and social well-being. LinkedIn provided the only significant positive relationship between the use of a social networking platform and social well-being. The results also indicate that while there appeared to be a difference in gender and amount of daily social networking use within the sample, the difference was not significant. In addition, as there were no significant differences between gender and psychological well-being as it relates to social networking use, nor gender and social well-being as it relates to social networking use (research question 3).

V: Discussion

There is growing research on the topic of Internet use, social networking, and its effects on users socially, emotionally, psychologically, and developmentally. Social networking's influences can no longer be minimized, as the topic has become a staple in the current culture; social networking is seamlessly intertwined into daily dialogue, news reports, educational institutions, business and marketing, and relationship building. It has been reported that Facebook has 618 million daily active users on average (Facebook, 2012). The purpose of this study was to determine if social networking use had an effect on a user's psychological and social well-being; this included considering the platform used for social networking and gender.

Discussion of findings

The participants in this study were a sample of 188 social networking users within the Millennial generation (born 1980- 1994) recruited through either online surveying or attendance of an undergraduate class at a university in the Southeastern United States. Because this study was exploratory in nature, it is not possible to fully explain the impact on psychological and social well-being of social networking users. In interpreting the results, participants' social and psychological well-being was significantly dependent on their daily social networking usage. Gender, as it related to social networking use and psychological and social well-being, was not significant although female participants had higher rates of use than men, which is also supported in the literature (Brown, 2011; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Correa et al., 2010; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008 Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). These studies have found that females are more likely to report higher rates of use of social networking sites when compared to males.

As noted earlier, the results of this study suggest that there may be a general relationship between social networking use and social and psychological well-being. In general, participants

in this study that spent less time social networking reported higher levels of psychological and social well-being than those spending more time, which is also supported by the literature (Moore & McElroy, 2012; Nie, 2001; Nie & Erbring, 2000; Kraut et. al, 1998; Turkle, 1996; Stoll, 1995). Researchers have found that many users who report lower amounts of social networking use are using that time for real-life relationships, hobbies, and other activities that naturally help to cope with life's stresses (Kraut et al., 2002; Kraut et al, 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Nie & Erbring, 2000). These findings provide additional support for the idea that social networking use may have implications for both psychological and social well-being as a matter of time displacement (discussed previously in the literature review). This may include the consideration that while these are mediums for social interaction, higher levels of use may be linked to lower levels of social and psychological well-being.

In reference to the type of social networking platform used, there were several interesting findings. For example, the social networking platform Instagram showed a significant negative relationship with social and psychological well-being. A possible interpretation of this finding is that Instagram is an online photo-sharing service that can be shared across multiple social networks. Therefore, it does not have the level of engagement as other platforms where a user can message or chat another user. Feedback from Instagram consists primarily of sharing a picture and anticipating likes, follows, and comments; this can foster an environment of competition over connection, and envy over relationship, where a user visually compares their experiences and numbers with the results of others.

Conversely, the social networking medium Linked In was the only platform that showed a significant positive relationship with use, and that being with social well-being. Specifically, the findings suggested that individuals reporting higher levels of use of Linked In also reported

higher levels of social well-being. A possible interpretation of this finding is that Linked In provides a place for users to discuss their strongest skills and qualities in a professional setting in order to network to build their careers, versus sharing stories and pictures of one's latest experiences. This online environment in particular can foster feelings of pride, empowerment, and motivation to pursue productive activities and further one's accomplishments. No social networking platform showed a significant positive relationship with use and psychological well-being. Research regarding use of specific social networking platforms have been limited thus far to major mediums like Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace; this finding can serve as direction for future research in social networking's influence on users.

Implications for counseling practice

There are many potential implications of the results of the present study, particularly for those within the Millennial generation. A person who is suffering psychologically and socially within their real world will probably not solve their problem by retreating to their virtual world (Kim, LaRose, & Peng, 2009; Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011). However, the implications of this study and consideration of the current research literature suggest that there are many positive and negative implications of social networking use.

Positive implications of social networking use can consist of increased access to socialization, support, and connectivity (Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002; McKenna & Bargh, 2002), increased access to information, increased personal awareness and opportunities to reflect, increased activity level, increased exposure to diverse environments and people (Kraut et. al, 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Weiser, 2001; McKenna & Bargh, 2002), increased sharing and expression, increased feedback from others (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011), increased quantity of interactions, increased feelings of belonging in meeting milestones, increased speed

and exchange of interactions, increased time and control in responses (McKenna & Bargh, 2000), increased skill in information seeking, and working to fulfill a deep human desire to be social (McKenna & Bargh, 1998; McKenna & Bargh, 2002; Amichai-Hamburger et al, 2002; Hampton, Goulet, Marlow, & Rainie, 2012).

Negative implications can consist of increased feelings of isolation and alienation, decreased feelings of fulfillment, increased feelings of paranoia, depression, anxiety (Kraut et al., 2002; Kraut et al, 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Nie & Erbring, 2000), increased comparison of experiences and milestones met, decreased impulse control (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Teske, 2002; McKenna & Bargh, 2000), increased attention-seeking behavior, decreased genuineness, decreased boundaries (Suler, 2002; Suler, 2004), decreased privacy, decreased quality of interactions (Teske, 2002), increased feelings of anger, increased narcissism (Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Teske, 2002; Lerner, 1991; Lasch, 1978), increased misunderstandings in social interactions (Bargh & McKenna, 2004), increased dissociation with projected and true self (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Teske, 2001; Rogers, 1951), increased hyper-connection, decreased control of social presentation, increased trouble with work, familial, and romantic relationships (Kraut et. al, 2002), and increased opportunities to witness negative social encounters (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003; McKenna & Bargh, 2000). These outcomes are important to consider when looking at the findings in the current study that suggested that increased use may actually be linked to lower levels of social and psychological well-being. This, when coupled with the limited findings related to type of platform, highlights that use levels may be a critical element of understanding the negative implications of use.

Social consequences of social networking use can be increased self-promotion and narcissism (Teske, 2002), increased impression management (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; McKenna, 1998; Bargh & McKenna, 2004), increased group evaluation, difficulties in engagement (Turkle, 2011), problems with authenticity and trust, feelings of peer pressure to join or be involved in virtual world, feelings of trust/distrust and truth/ isolation in relationships (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012), superficial over meaningful relationships (Kraut et al, 1998), interpersonal feedback and peer acceptance on self-esteem, jealousy, emotional entanglements, and inappropriate competitiveness (will we have to work to express how ‘unique’ we are? How ‘special’ we are?). Psychological consequences of social networking use can be reduction of platform use and platform sustainability, increased content consumption, effects on identity, emphasis on superficial issues, lack of coherence/ presenting an incomplete self, disconnection between the real world and the digital world, emotional effects of exclusion, and engagement in self-destructive behavior (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012).

Within this study, the development of the SNCAES (Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale) may provide clinicians with an assessment tool to help to explore this phenomenon in clinical practice. Clinicians should ask questions and assess their clients’ social networking use as it is as common a staple in today’s culture as television watching, video game playing, extracurricular sports, and clubs. This assessment and understanding of use patterns can be critical to being able to determine risk factors and level of use. Several researchers have found that there is more self-disclosure in computer interactions than in other types of communication (Kiesler & Sproull, 1986; Kummervold et al., 2002; Sproull & Kiesler, 1991). While there are indications that social networking can have therapeutic benefits; social interaction, therapeutic service provision, and outreach (Windstrom, 2009), there are also

indications that high levels of use may be detrimental (Borgia & Myers, 2001; Bulent, 2009; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Nie, 2001; Nie & Erbring, 2000; Kraut et. al, 1998; Turkle, 1996; Stoll, 1995). Thus it will be important for clinicians to consider the extent and nature of use as part of the counseling process.

Implications for counseling education

Through this study and the introduction into the pattern of use and effects of social networking on the Millennial generation, there are also implications for counseling educators. Social networking has potential for new levels of engagement with students as an educational tool, as well as with increased interactivity outside of class between students and instructors. Education regarding social networking could be included in introductory courses in order to instruct on social networking etiquette within the program and appropriate protocol in their future careers, as well as process its current impact on the students themselves in their personal lives. Social networking can also be utilized as a cohort enhancer where students can plan outings, share discussion on assignments and academic news, and keep connected as part of the group and university during periods of more independent study within their programs. An area of concern in education that should be monitored is the possibility of boundary complications between educators and students with the use of social networking and having access to more private information. In addition, there needs to be awareness of any concerns about high levels of use.

Limitations of study

The study's findings should be interpreted in the light of several limitations. The researcher-based measure, the Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale, contained correlations that were weak to moderate; comparisons and conclusions based on this

scale should be made with caution. This study was exploratory in nature and survey items should be studied further for reliability and validity. Another limitation of the current study was that this study relied on self-report of social networking use and associated thoughts and feelings, which always presents a possibility of response bias.

Additional limitations were related to the demographics of the sample. Although the sample size generated met the criteria as established in Chapter 3 (n= 120), at 188 the sample size can still be considered small. To increase generalizability, two methods of data collection were conducted, but the majority of the sample (n= 113) was one of convenience, limiting the random sampling. Also, the majority of participants were Non-Hispanic White (n= 170; 82%) and female (n= 155; 90%). Other studies are needed to extend the knowledge base about males and other ethnic and/or culture groups and social networking impact. Lastly, it may be useful in future studies to recruit participants with high level of social networking use in order to measure how it relates to this study's found predictors. Despite these limitations, the results provided adequate information for the purpose of this study.

Future research

Given that social networking will continue to have an impact on current and future generations (Anderson & Rainie, 2010), there are several considerations where future research on this topic is necessary. Researchers need to continue to study how social networking can facilitate or hinder a user's growth and development socially and psychologically; is social networking contributing directly to the development of new social norms? How society shares information? Peoples' transparency? Will users retain their willingness to self-disclose online? Also, as social networking has been found to be used as a coping strategy for loneliness and isolation, what does expectation of social networking participation have to do with psychological

and social well-being? Likewise, the growing statistics of how often and who is using social networking shows that for many, social involvement is a reward for social networking use; there are incentives for sharing. What impact does social networking use have on romantic relationship building? How will the increased use of mobile devices contribute to social networking attachment and intrusion as it relates to daily life functioning? Moreover, what are the work implications of social networking? Is there fear or intentional thought from social networking users about how current openness in regards to their personal life might affect their potential professional and family lives in the future? What will be the experience of having youthful mistakes on display for everyone to see and re-see?

Summary

Yair Amichair-Hamburger, a leader in internet psychology research, made a statement that society has to draw limits to this growing trend and decide whether they are to be aided, or bound by technology, and writes on the importance of electronically disconnecting stating, “It reminds us that we have to lead technology and not be led by it. It gives us space to think (Greengard, p. 19).” Social networking users have to be aware of possible implications of their use in order to make healthy choices about their investment in the digital world over their present world. Feelings of fulfillment and belonging are vital with psychological and social well-being, therefore users need to learn how they can personally leverage social networking opportunities to enhance and enrich their everyday social lives. This study served to provide a picture of how Millennial users are using social networking, and its impact on their social and psychological well-being.

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Appendix 1

Measure Development

Variable	Source	Definition
Social networking	Teske, 2002; Hampton, et al, 2011; Hughes, Rowe, Batey, Lee, 2012	Any online communication medium; an avenue for people to connect through “following” each other, sharing their thoughts through “status updates”, sending private messages, instant chatting, and receiving feedback from “friends” and “followers”. Can consist of Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and what is described as “other” (blogs, messenger/ online chatting, message boards, online self-help groups, and online match-making services); virtual collections of user profiles which can be shared with others
<i>Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES)</i>		
Social networking usage	Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2012	Hours spent weekly using social networking sites. “Frequent users” will be defined as those who use SNS at least once a day.
<p><i>Q1: To what extent have you used or currently use the following social networking platforms within the last six months? Please choose all that apply.</i></p> <p><i>Q2 How do you access your social networking sites throughout the day? (please check all that apply)</i></p> <p><i>Q3 Please identify your daily social networking usage within the last six months (this can include any of the above platforms).</i></p> <p><i>Q4 On average, how many days per week do you use social networking?</i></p>		
Psychological well-being	Lee, Lee, & Kwon, 2011; Teske, 2002	A “cognitive and affect evaluation of life as perceived by the user”. Feelings of connection with others, belonging, a sense of personal meaning, and the ability to effectively cope with daily life stressors.
<p><i>I feel people understand me and who I am.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking is a hobby for me.</i></p> <p><i>I am able to put my attention to other activities aside from social networking when I need to.</i></p> <p><i>I feel like I learn about myself through social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I could live without social networking.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking doesn't affect how I feel about myself.</i></p>		
Psychological	Teske, 2002; Turkle,	Feelings, thoughts, and symptoms of stress,

distress	1996; Kraut et. al, 2002; Sander, Field, Diego, & Kaplan, 2000; Hirai & Clum, 2005	depression, anxiety, paranoia, isolation, neuroticism, and addiction. Expression of social fragmentation, feelings of emptiness, absence of personal meaning, and personal fraudulence.
<p><i>I find social networking overwhelming.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking takes up too much of my time.</i></p> <p><i>Experiences I've had while social networking has made me feel bad about myself.</i></p> <p><i>I have become emotional about experiences or interactions I've had online.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking has made me feel discouraged about where I am in life.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking experiences have made me question others' motives.</i></p> <p><i>I consider decreasing my social networking usage for my own sanity.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking is an addiction for me.</i></p> <p><i>I've experienced significant distress as a result of social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I get depressed by social networking interactions.</i></p> <p><i>I get anxiety about social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I feel paranoid about my relationships with others because of social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I have experienced a broken heart as a result of social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I have found myself trying to look at someone's online posting and find what message they are really trying to say.</i></p> <p><i>Checking my social networking profiles has become more than a habit for me, it's a compulsion.</i></p> <p><i>I get anxiety and withdrawal when I'm away from social networking for any extended period of time.</i></p> <p><i>I've experienced rage as a result of social networking.</i></p>		
Loneliness/ social isolation	Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003	A user who becomes uninvolved, having a negative social bias, a minimal size of social support, is perceived as unfriendly, and is distant from others
<p><i>Social networking has made me feel like I'm missing out on important experiences.</i></p> <p><i>My online friends don't seem to care about the information and experiences I share.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking makes me feel discouraged about my relationships.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking has made me lose trust in others.</i></p> <p><i>I have gotten into an argument with a loved one because of social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I have experienced jealousy as a result of social networking.</i></p>		
Social well-being	Teske, 2002	Positive family connections and communication patterns, an appropriate size of one's social circle (real life versus online) as perceived by the user, positive self-efficacy, the presence of romantic relationships, appropriate boundaries, appropriate communication filtering, a sense of personal safety, and "the ability to be self-soothing, self-loving, and self-sufficient
<p><i>I receive the emotional support I need from online interactions.</i></p>		

<p><i>I can go a day without social networking.</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes, I have to take a break from social networking for my own well-being.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking has made me feel less lonely.</i></p> <p><i>I believe my online friends care about my well-being.</i></p> <p><i>I feel like my social skills online are better than in person.</i></p> <p><i>I feel that I have a good set of people around me.</i></p> <p><i>I find it easy to make friends wherever I go.</i></p>		
<p>Social involvement</p>	<p>Kraut et. al, 1998; Teske, 2002; Hughes et al., 2012</p>	<p>A tendency to enjoy conversation and being the center of attention. The presence of family communication, an adequate size of a user's local social network, adequate size of a user's distant social network, and the presence of social support. A user's self-report of resources that are made available due to their social networking. Social resources can consist of the accessibility of "tangible help, advice, emotional support, companionship, and a sense of belonging."</p>
<p><i>I find positive relationships obtainable and maintainable.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking has made me feel more connected to others.</i></p> <p><i>I have found out about something important via social networking before finding out face to face or over the phone.</i></p> <p><i>It is next to impossible to go a day without checking my social networking sites.</i></p> <p><i>I feel people are genuine online.</i></p> <p><i>I feel it's not only easier, but also better to talk online than in person.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking takes up the majority of my free time.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking is good for people.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking distracts me from responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>I feel I have a good, positive relationship with my family that gives me a feeling of support.</i></p>		
<p>Self-efficacy</p>	<p>Teske, 2002; Turkle, 1998; Smith & Betz, 2000</p>	<p>A sense of relationship and personhood, meaning, purpose, focus, an awareness of the responses of others, feeling of intimacy with others, a congruent presentation of self, individualism, having a feeling of belonging, self-understanding, a sense of personal integrity, and a sense of personal worth</p>
<p><i>My online interactions are very rewarding emotionally.</i></p> <p><i>I feel my life benefits from social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I feel I can control how often I use social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I care what people think of me online.</i></p> <p><i>Social networking has made me feel better about myself.</i></p> <p><i>My mood improves if I get the response I want while social networking.</i></p>		

Personal safety	Weiser, 2001; Teske, 2002; Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002; Bareket-Bojmel & Shahar, 2011; Altman & Taylor, 1973; Jourard, 1971	Anonymity, self-disclosure, deindividuation, weakened self-regulation, privacy, control of one's social world, vulnerability, emotional reactivity, helplessness, minimal boundary establishment, control of information reveal, gossip, attention to physical appearance, feelings of betrayal, and codependency
<p><i>I feel in control of what I share online.</i></p> <p><i>I worry what people will think of anything I post online.</i></p> <p><i>I feel paranoid about what I post online and what people will do with it.</i></p> <p><i>I find myself constantly checking others' profiles for something in order to make myself feel better.</i></p> <p><i>I feel like people are fake online.</i></p> <p><i>I fear I will get in trouble for things I post by someone or another.</i></p> <p><i>I worry about my safety with social networking.</i></p> <p><i>I feel that social networking is ruining this generation.</i></p> <p><i>I think about what I'm going to post online way before I actually do.</i></p>		

** Note: Aside from demographic questions, participants are asked to rate the degree with which they experience each of specific emotions described within the past six months. They were to select among the following four options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

Appendix 2

Social Networking Cognitive and Affective Experience Scale (SNCAES)

Q1 To what extent have you used or currently use the following social networking platforms within the last six months? Please choose all that apply.

	1- Not at all	2- Occasionally	3- Regularly	4- Often	5- Great extent
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Myspace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Google +	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogger/ Wordpress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Matchmaking services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tumblr	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Linked IN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pinterest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online Gaming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 How do you access your social networking sites throughout the day? (please check all that apply)

	Not at all	Occasionally	Regularly	Often	Great extent
Home computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mobile phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tablet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 Please identify your daily social networking usage within the last six months (this can include any of the above platforms).

- less than ½ hour daily
- 1/2 hour- 2 hours daily
- 2-4 hours daily
- 4+ hours daily

Q4 On average, how many days per week do you use social networking?

- 1-3
- 3-5
- 5-7

Q5 Please rate the degree with which you experience each of these emotions described below within the past six months. Please select among the following five options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My online interactions are very rewarding emotionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive the emotional support I need from online interactions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking has made me feel like I'm missing out on important experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My online friends don't seem to care about the information and experiences I share.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking gives me a break from reality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find social networking overwhelming.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel in control of what I share online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking takes up too much of my time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Experiences I've had while social networking has made me feel bad about myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have become emotional about experiences or interactions I've had online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking has made me lose trust in others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking has made me feel more connected to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking makes me feel discouraged about my relationships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel my life benefits from social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking has made me feel discouraged about where I am in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking experiences have made me question others' motives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have found out about something	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

important via social networking before finding out face to face or over the phone.				
I feel I can control how often I use social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking is a hobby for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry about what people will think of anything I post online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I've experienced significant distress as a result of social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel people are genuine online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get depressed by social networking interactions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to put my attention to other activities aside from social networking when I need to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get anxiety about social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find myself constantly checking others' profiles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes, I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

have to take a break from social networking for my own wellbeing.				
I have gotten into an argument with a significant person in my life because of social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I fear I will get in trouble for things I post by someone or another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I care what people think of me online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry about my safety with social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking has made me feel better about myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking has made me feel less lonely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like people are fake online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe my online friends care about my wellbeing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel it's not only easier, but better to talk online than in person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking takes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

up the majority of my free time.				
I use social networking to find people I have things in common with.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I learn about myself through social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced jealousy as a result of social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel uneasy about my relationships with others because of social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I have a good, positive relationship with my family that gives me a sense of support outside of social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking is good for people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could live without social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced a broken heart as a result of social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have found myself trying to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

look at someone's online posting and find what message they are really trying to say.				
My mood improves if I get the response I want while social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking is a great way to network.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that social networking is ruining this generation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking distracts me from responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use social networking because everyone uses social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking doesn't affect how I feel about myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like my social skills online are better than in person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networking has helped me have relationships I never would have.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>Checking my social networking profiles has become more than a habit for me, it's a compulsion.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I get anxiety and withdrawal when I'm away from social networking for any extended period of time.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I feel that I have a good set of people around me outside of social networking.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I only check social networking to pass the time.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I think about what I'm going to post online way before I actually do.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Social networking is a professional tool for me.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I've experienced rage as a result of social networking.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I find it easy to make friends on and offline.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Social networking is an addiction for me.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 Relationship Status

- Married
- Divorced
- Single
- Widowed
- Separated
- In a committed relationship
- Dating

Q10 Level of Education Completed

- Some high school
- High School or GED
- Some college
- Technical College
- College
- Some advanced schooling
- Graduate or Professional School

Q11 Are you currently employed or attending school full-time?

- Yes
- No

Q12 Are you currently employed or attending school part-time?

- Yes
- No

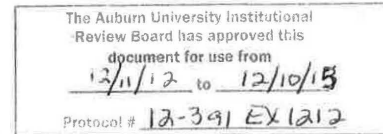
Q13 State of current residence

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this study.

Appendix 3



DEPARTMENT OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION,
REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING



(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMATION LETTER

for a Research Study entitled

“Social Networking, Its Influence on Social and Psychological Wellbeing, and Implications for Counseling”

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore and report trends of social networking use and its influence on one’s sense of social and psychological wellbeing. The purpose of this study is to gather data to investigate implications for counselors, as well as integrate into evidence-based clinical counseling practice. This study is being conducted by Jessica M. Tyler, a doctoral student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program, in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, under the direction of Dr. Jamie Carney. You were selected as a possible participant because of your use of social networking and meeting the study age requirement of 19- 33.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous survey. You will be asked to complete a 60- item survey and a demographic measure. Your total time commitment will be approximately 20 minutes. Your identity and individual responses will remain confidential to the extent provided by law. Your name will not be collected nor used in any report. Results will be combined for data analysis and reported in the form of group data. To protect anonymity, all aspects of the data collection and transmission process are safeguarded by the absence of any identifying information. There is a minimal risk that security of any data may be breached, since (1) no individually identifying information will be collected, and (2) all data will be kept in a secure electronic database and removed upon completion of the study. It is highly unlikely that a possible security breach of the data will result in any negative consequence for you as a participant.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risk associated with participating in this study is possibly experiencing some discomfort given the type of questions you’re asked to reflect personally on. If you choose to participate you will be asked to complete the measures provided by the researcher. If you choose not to participate, simply return the packet containing the measure incomplete to the researcher. Any responses will not be included in the study data if you choose to discontinue the survey. Demographic information will be reported as group data only. Information collected through your participation will be used for a doctoral dissertation requirement, and may be published in a professional journal and/or presented at a professional conference.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to gain awareness into perceived effects of your social networking use. You will also have contributed to a growing body of research and study on the long-term impact of social networking use. I cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Will you receive compensation for participating? No compensation will be offered to participants of this study.


Are there any costs? If you decide to participate, you will not incur any monetary costs.

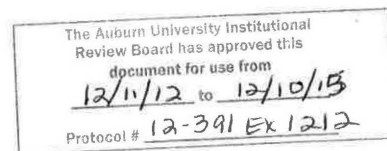
If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, simply return the packet containing the measure to the researcher incomplete. Any responses will not be included in the study data if you choose to discontinue the survey. Once the survey packet has been submitted, you will be unable to withdraw from the study because survey results are not individually identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with the researcher, Auburn University, nor the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. If you do wish to withdraw at any time, please do not contact the researcher and reveal your identity. If you wish to withdraw, please discontinue the survey and submit the unfinished packet to the researcher.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu

If you have questions about this study, *please ask them now* or contact Jessica Tyler at jim0001@tigermail.auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

 1/8/13
Investigator's Signature Date



Jessica M. Tyler

Printed Name

Page 2 of 2

Appendix 4



DEPARTMENT OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION,
REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
document for use from
12/11/12 to 12/10/15
Protocol # 12-391 Ex 1212

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMATION LETTER

for a Research Study entitled

“Social Networking, Its Influence on Social and Psychological Wellbeing, and Implications for Counseling”

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What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. You will be asked to complete a 60- item survey and a demographic measure. Your total time commitment will be approximately 20 minutes. Your identity and individual responses will remain confidential to the extent provided by law. Your name will not be collected nor used in any report. Results will be combined for data analysis and reported in the form of group data. All aspects of the data collection and transmission process are protected by security technology. There is a minimal risk that security of any online data may be breached, but since (1) no individually identifying information will be collected, (2) the online host uses layers of encryption, and (3) all data will be kept in a secure electronic database and removed upon completion of the study, it is highly unlikely that a possible security breach of the online data will result in any negative consequence for you as a participant. For further information on the security of your data please visit <https://www.qualtrics.com/security-statement>

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risk associated with participating in this study is possibly experiencing some discomfort given the type of questions you’re asked to reflect personally on. If you choose to participate you will be asked to complete the measures provided via the online survey link. If you choose not to participate, simply disregard the study invitation containing the survey link. Your responses will not be included in the study data if you choose to discontinue the survey. Once the survey has been submitted online, you will be unable to withdraw from the study because survey results are not individually identifiable. Demographic information will be reported as group data only. Information collected through your participation will be used for a doctoral dissertation requirement, and may be published in a professional journal and/or presented at a professional conference.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to gain awareness into perceived effects of your social networking use. You will also have contributed to a growing body of research and study on the long-term impact of social networking use. I cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Will you receive compensation for participating? No compensation will be offered to participants of this study.

Are there any costs? If you decide to participate, you will not incur any monetary costs.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, simply disregard the survey invitation containing the survey link. Your responses will not be included in the study data if you choose to discontinue the survey. Once the survey has been submitted online, you will be unable to withdraw from the study because survey results are not individually identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with the researcher, Auburn University, nor the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. If you do wish to withdraw at any time, please do not contact the researcher and reveal your identity. If you wish to withdraw, please discontinue the survey and close your browser window.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at hsubject@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu

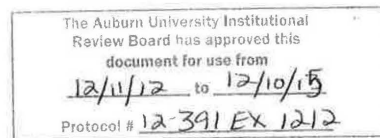
If you have questions about this study, please contact Jessica Tyler at jim0001@tigermail.auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW.

YOU MAY PRINT A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP.

Jessica M. Tyler

Investigator obtaining consent



The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from December 11, 2012 to December 10, 2015. Protocol #12-391 EX 1212.

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_b3GD6dB0Fg4Li4