

**Life Satisfaction and Happiness Concepts: Frequent Facebook Use and
Infrequent Facebook Use**

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I have no known conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Abstract

When individuals conceptualize happiness, they have been indicated to select one of the few common aspects of life associated with life satisfaction. This study was aimed at establishing a relationship between Facebook use and happiness concepts. Secondly, this study was designed to examine differences between groups in life satisfaction levels. The outcomes of this study indicated a possible effect where Facebook use may have an impact on how individuals conceptualize happiness. Additionally, this study indicated a correlation between increased Facebook use and reduced life satisfaction levels.

Keywords: happiness, life, satisfaction, Facebook, concepts, scale

Chapter 1

Problem Statement

Recent research has drawn connections between Facebook use and human behaviors. Walker et al. (2015) studied connections between Facebook and human eating behaviors where the tendency for individuals to compare themselves to other individuals on Facebook led to intensified efforts to match perceived ideal body types online and increased the likelihood of people changing the way that they ate for the sake of being more attractive and well-liked. Similarly, research conducted by Lin and Utz (2015) indicated human self-concept and human self-worth is improved or harmed by repeated use of Facebook, also implying Facebook use can impact human emotion.

Sances (2018) established a connection between decision making behaviors and Facebook use in their research by focusing on the presentation of political ideals via Facebook. Specifically, Sances (2018) found Facebook use has the potential to influence how people conceptualize politicized points of discussion, further indicating Facebook use can have a statistically significant impact on human ideas and opinions. Additionally, Sances (2018) found that Facebook users often feel bullied or harassed when their political ideals did not match the popular presentation of a given political ideal or figure, indicating people who use Facebook feel dejected or attacked in response to their efforts to exchange ideas, values, thoughts, or opinions. These findings indicated Facebook use and interactions between individuals via Facebook can directly influence individual moods. Hutchinson (2020) reported 40% of Facebook users have reported Facebook as being their primary source of news, directly impacting the ideas and opinions of a

significant portion of Facebook users and sparking many daily conversations regarding current events.

In addition to social media use having increased significantly over the last 5 years (Gramplich, 2019), the field of psychology has developed significant insight into the area of life satisfaction. Throughout the literature, life satisfaction is synonymous with happiness (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Breida et al, 2017; Joshanloo, 2014) and there has been some research aimed at identifying specific areas in life such as money, work, relationships, which have been known to increase life satisfaction. Additionally, Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) have established correlations between specific aspects of life and higher levels of life satisfaction. The aforementioned studies have indicated Facebook often has an impact on human thought and emotion.

Facebook

Facebook is a social media platform where millions of people interact with other people daily; the uses of Facebook range from basic socializing to expression of political views (Harari & Gosling, 2016). Facebook is used worldwide (Hutchinson, 2020) and has permeated global society so significantly that the word “Facebook” is currently a part of the common vernacular. As Facebook has become the primary mode for such a significant portion of social interaction worldwide, Facebook has been the focal point of a significant amount of research over the last 20 years because Facebook has been indicated through research (Harari & Gosling, 2016; Hutchinson, 2020; Salmon, 2020) to interact with a variety of human experiences, ideas, behaviors, and moods.

Hutchinson (2020) reported Facebook has been the most commonly used social media platform with a count of 2.41 billion Facebook users monthly as of the year 2020.

According to Gramlich (2019), 69% of adults in the United States have currently identified as Facebook users. With such a significant portion of U.S. citizens using Facebook daily, Facebook has been indicated through research to play a significant role in the daily lives and routines of most U.S. adults. Despite extensive research in this area, the full extent of the role, which Facebook plays in daily routines remains largely unknown.

As of 2020, the population of the United States was 328 million (U.S. Census, 2020). Hutchinson (2020) reported there were 223 million Facebook users in the United States alone, indicating using Facebook is relevant to a significant portion of the U.S. population. With roughly 70% of adults in the United States using Facebook, it is important to understand interactions between Facebook use and the human experience.

Due to difficulty accessing Facebook users for the purposes of research, one primary modality by which research has historically been conducted on Facebook has been survey-based research through respondent driven sampling (RDS). RDS is a form of convenience/nonprobability sampling and research conducted by Gyarmathy et al. (2014) has provided validation of RDS sampling as a strategy for use when conducting research.

Life Satisfaction (Happiness Levels)

The concepts of life satisfaction and happiness have been used interchangeably throughout the literature (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Furnham & Crisoforou, 2007; Martinez-Marti & Ruch, 2016). Happiness has been studied extensively from the perspective of happiness levels in recent years and a review of literature has uncovered several contributing factors that have a significant impact on these levels. The research on happiness has led to the creation of a field of study commonly referred to as positive

psychology, which represents a field of study aimed at determining how to increase levels of happiness in individuals and groups (Ronen & Kerret, 2020). Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) contributed to the existing literature regarding self-reported happiness levels, finding that life satisfaction can be influenced significantly by the happiness concepts (e.g., money, relationships, work) reported by participants. Other researchers who have increased overall understanding of happiness levels include Phu and Gow (2019), who discovered that happiness levels are subjective to the experience of each individual and that happiness levels can be influenced. Additional happiness level research was conducted by Faranda and Roberts (2019), who conducted research studying the interaction between happiness levels and social comparisons, noting that social comparisons can have a significant impact on life satisfaction.

Other researchers have contributed to happiness level research by developing tools used to quantify happiness. Research has indicated life satisfaction inventories accurately measure happiness levels consistently over time and across various groups for use in various types of research with strong validity and reliability (Cruise & Lewis, 2006). Quantifying happiness has been well developed in recent decades using happiness inventories such as the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) developed by Hills and Argyle (Cruise & Lewis, 2006) and the Satisfaction-with-Life-Survey (SWLS) which was developed by Pavot in 1985 (Diener et al., 1985). Cruise and Lewis (2006) reported that happiness inventories operate by asking participants a series of questions involving happiness and coding their answers with numerical values, which can be scored upon completion of the survey.

Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) used a life satisfaction inventory called the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot, 1993) to discover clear associations between increased life satisfaction levels and happiness concepts related to relationships and found decreased life satisfaction with the happiness concepts associated with material wealth. Bearing in mind that researchers have indicated happiness can be influenced by the ways in which individuals conceptualize happiness, it is important to modernize this understanding by integrating this understanding of happiness with current and popular forms of communication.

Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) also investigated happiness from the perspectives of (a) what participants identify as primary sources of happiness (happiness concepts), finding that happiness concepts influence how much happiness a person reports having (happiness levels); and (b) levels of happiness as identified by self-report measures, finding that self-report measures remain consistent over time and across cultures (happiness inventories). Happiness levels have been studied extensively and life satisfaction levels have been identified and quantified using tools of measurement to represent life satisfaction with numerical values (Deiner et al., 1985; Pavot, 1993; Wright, 2008).

The aforementioned literature has also indicated it is possible to identify life satisfaction levels reliably and validly using life satisfaction inventories as well as the fact that several primary happiness concepts have been identified and correlated with changes on happiness levels. This understanding of historical happiness creates an opportunity to integrate current understanding of happiness concepts into modern society

by way of studying the interaction between happiness and social media (Cruise & Lewis, 2006; Deiner et al., 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993; Pavot et al., 1991).

Life Satisfaction (Happiness Concepts)

Within the field of positive psychology, happiness as a research topic has been divided into categories of happiness (i.e., happiness levels and happiness concepts). Happiness levels represent the amount of happiness an individual reports, and happiness concepts represent the specific stimuli associated with happiness (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016).

Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) established happiness concepts in the literature by having participants identify the aspects of life they associated with happiness and identifying the four most commonly endorsed or primary happiness concepts. These four primary happiness concepts include (a) health, (b) work, (c) material wealth, and finally, (d) relationships (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016).

Health as a happiness concept is oriented toward an individual being of sound mind and able body and thus capable of interacting with life in a meaningful way, free of significant impairment or difficulty (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). When individuals endorse the health happiness construct, these individuals associate the most life satisfaction with their ability to engage life mentally and physically due to the power and wellness of their mind and body. The work happiness concept refers to the particular set of responsibilities that an individual has as an occupation. If an individual endorses the work happiness construct, they are indicating their occupational responsibilities are particularly meaningful and inspiring for them and that they find the most life satisfaction in their responsibilities and factors associated with the roles which they play in their

respective workplaces (Bojanoska & Zalewska, 2016; see also Joshanloo, 2014). Material wealth as a happiness construct indicates the aspect of life, which has the largest impact on the individual's happiness levels is that of how much money an individual makes, such as whether they have an elaborate home or an expensive car. Research has shown individuals who endorse this happiness construct have lower levels of happiness (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). The last of the four primary happiness concepts is relationships. The relationship happiness concept is endorsed by individuals who associate bonds with people to be the most significant sources of life satisfaction. Individuals who endorse the relationships happiness construct consistently report higher life satisfaction levels than individuals who endorse any of the other happiness concepts (Bojanoska & Zalewska, 2016).

Joshanloo (2014) also conducted similar research to determine which aspects of life people associate most closely with life satisfaction, reducing Western happiness concepts down to subcategories of self-enhancement, hedonism, mastery, satisfaction and avoiding suffering. According to Joshanloo (2014), self-enhancement is described as understanding of self, enhancing independence, autonomy, and self-esteem. Individuals who historically endorse the self-Enhancement happiness construct gain the most life satisfaction from the process of learning, growing and improving themselves, fitting nicely with the work/productivity and mental and physical health category used by Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016).

Joshanloo (2014) described hedonism as romantic individualism, the presence of positive emotions, and the absence of negative emotions, as well as the indulgence in as much comfort and pleasure as possible while mitigating discomfort and pain as much as

possible, which could be related to the material wealth category Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) developed in their research.

Joshanloo (2014) described mastery as associated with analyzing, controlling, manipulating, and consuming elements of nature. Furthermore, mastery is a sense of winning or being successful in overcoming challenges posed by the world around an individual, matching closely with the work/productivity category described by Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016). The limited research specifically dedicated toward identifying and defining happiness concepts (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Joshanloo, 2014) has been effective in identifying happiness concepts down to the aforementioned happiness categories.

Facebook and Life Satisfaction

During the review of literature regarding Facebook and life satisfaction, several themes emerged. These themes were (a) increased Facebook use has been correlated with reduced life satisfaction (Brailovskaia et al., 2020), (b) Facebook use has been correlated with higher levels of negative social comparison resulting in lower life satisfaction levels (Feranda & Roberts, 2019; Harari & Gosling, 2016), (c) Facebook use has contributed to weaker tie strength between individuals, resulting in lower levels of life satisfaction (Lin & Utz, 2015), (d) Facebook users typically try to present themselves in socially desirable ways rather than realistic ways, contributing to lower life satisfaction levels (Hong & Na, 2018; Liu et al., 2018), (e) individuals who abstain from Facebook use generally report their reason for doing so is because they are aware that Facebook reduces their life satisfaction levels (Harari & Gosling, 2016), (f) increased Facebook use is correlated with increased levels of loneliness and lower levels of life satisfaction (Phu & Gow, 2019), (g)

increased Facebook use has been correlated with increased levels of anxiety and lower life satisfaction (Tobin & Graham, 2020), and lastly, (h) emotional expression via Facebook is an accurate reflection of the human emotional experience outside of Facebook use (Kross et al., 2019). The following section describes these themes in more detail.

Brailovskaia et al. (2020) conducted research to study the levels of happiness or life satisfaction between individuals who used Facebook frequently and individuals who used Facebook infrequently, and they indicated more Facebook use was correlated with lower life satisfaction levels. Additionally, Brailovskaia et al. (2020) discovered when individuals reduced their Facebook use by 20 minutes per day, they reported significantly higher life satisfaction levels.

Facebook and Social Comparison

The literature also indicated increased Facebook use increased the likelihood that interactions would be perceived as negative or hostile, where increased Facebook use was correlated with significantly more negative social comparison and a negative interpretation of neutral language (Faranda & Roberts, 2019). Considering higher levels of Facebook use are correlated with higher levels of malicious envy and lower levels of life satisfaction, this is one reason for which increased Facebook use is correlated with lower life satisfaction levels. Faranda and Roberts (2019) also found people have significantly higher rates of negative social comparison via Facebook than they do via in-person interactions and this negative social comparison also contributes to lower levels of life satisfaction.

Facebook and Tie Strength

Lin and Utz (2015) studied the connection between Facebook and the quality of relationships, or tie strength. Tie strength describes how well two individuals know one another where strong tie strength between two individuals represents a scenario where the two individuals know one another well and communicate regularly. Weak tie strength represents two individuals who do not know one another well and do not communicate regularly. Lin and Utz (2015) discovered people develop more malicious envy when reading Facebook posts by people with weak tie strength and more happiness when reading positive posts from individuals with strong tie strength. This means interactions between people who do not know one another well generally reduce happiness.

Additionally, Dunbar (2016) established Facebook users generally only know four to seven out of any given 150 of their Facebook friends well enough to constitute Lin and Utz's criteria of strong tie strength, which suggested that most interactions between people via Facebook are likely to reduce life satisfaction levels. Implications found in the research conducted by Lin and Utz (2015) and Dunbar (2016) suggested that most interactions between Facebook users occur between individuals who have weak tie strength and, therefore, are more likely to bring about lower happiness levels.

Facebook and Impression Management

Hong and Na (2018) examined the relationship between Facebook use and culture, indicating Facebook is used in culturally appropriate ways and Facebook users generally present themselves in socially acceptable or sought-after ways rather than presenting themselves in accurate ways, contributing to a reduction in their life satisfaction levels. Liu et al. (2018) also researched the implications of Facebook use and

cultural norms, finding the average Facebook user practices impression management (i.e., attempts to control how other people perceive them on Facebook) and found that this practice changes based on cultural norms. Liu et al. (2018) found Facebook users put a significant amount of effort into how they are perceived by others who see their Facebook profiles, further validating the previously made observation about Facebook users attempting to present themselves in accordance with what is socially desirable, rather than presenting themselves in a way that is genuine. This effort has been reportedly due to their desire to generate a more likable persona online, leading to lower levels of quality relationships between individuals via Facebook where many users perceive this misrepresentation of self as disingenuous, perceive impossibly high qualities of life, and develop malicious envy through social comparisons.

Facebook Users and Abstainers

Harari and Gosling (2016) conducted research specifically designed to establish a list of concerns that Facebook users frequently report and how these concerns interact with life satisfaction, reporting that the three primary concerns about Facebook include: (a) that many perceive Facebook as pointless, (b) many users feel that Facebook is a distraction, and lastly, (c) many Facebook users feel using Facebook makes it impossible for them to maintain a sense of privacy, all of which were cited by participants as reducing life satisfaction. Participants indicating these issues reportedly feel less satisfied with life when using Facebook due to the ever-present feeling that they are wasting time, their privacy is being invaded, and they also feel an obligation to continue using Facebook because it is so prevalent in modern society that Facebook has become a necessary means of participating socially.

Facebook and Loneliness

Similarly, Phu and Gow (2019) conducted research to determine how Facebook use interacted with human well-being and loneliness, finding people who care more intensely about what happens on Facebook are generally lonelier—and therefore less happy. This finding indicates investing significant time, emotion, and energy into Facebook is correlated with lower levels of life satisfaction. The findings from research conducted by Phu and Gow (2019) matched the research findings from Brailovskaia et al. (2020) where increased levels of Facebook use are correlated with lower levels of life satisfaction.

Facebook and Anxiety

Harari and Gosling (2016) also found increased Facebook use positively correlated with higher levels of neuroticism and anxious attachment, meaning individuals who use Facebook more often are more likely to be fearful and uncertain of their relationships. Harari and Gosling (2016) also found these individuals use Facebook as a means of satisfying a need for social connection, but that the social connection provided by Facebook use does not satisfy their need for social interaction on the same level as face-to-face interaction between two human beings.

Tobin and Graham (2020) studied Facebook as it interacts with anxiety and found that higher levels of attachment anxiety predicted higher levels of sensitivity to feedback via Facebook and, in turn, reducing life satisfaction through an increase in anxiety symptoms. Anxious attachments lead to increased Facebook use and more compulsive checking of feedback on Facebook. Implications of this research conducted by Tobin and

Graham (2020) are that increased Facebook use is correlated with an overall reduction in life satisfaction.

Facebook and Human Emotion

Inspection of the current research also exposed a study by Kross et al. (2019) about Facebook and emotion where researchers counted the number of emotion words used by Facebook users and compiled these emotion words to determine if Facebook messages could accurately assess human emotional states indicating that emotion is accurately communicated via Facebook. The implications of this for ongoing research about the intersection of human emotion and the use of Facebook is that research involving human emotion and Facebook is consistent and accurate in measuring human emotion (Kross et al., 2019).

Summary

Facebook has been studied to determine how it impacts happiness levels by Brailovskaia et al. (2020), Lin and Utz (2015), and Phu and Gow (2016). Facebook has also been studied from the perspective of how it interacts with mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness. These studies all implied there is a relationship between Facebook use and life satisfaction levels demonstrating a consistent pattern throughout the existing literature that increased Facebook use is correlated with a reduction in life satisfaction.

The literature indicates consistently that increased Facebook use is correlated with a reduction in life satisfaction for a variety of reasons. Additionally, research has consistently indicated individuals who associate happiness with relationships report

higher levels of life satisfaction than individuals who associate happiness with other things such as material wealth, money, or work.

The literature has indicated Facebook use has been shown to have significant impacts on a wide variety of human thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Phu & Gow, 2015) and users who intentionally reduced their Facebook use reported increased happiness and lower levels of negative emotion (Brailovskaia et al., 2020). The review of literature has also indicated that increased levels of Facebook use can lead to increased malicious envy and lower levels of life satisfaction (Phu & Gow, 2015), linking Facebook use to human emotion. As such, Facebook also uses algorithms designed to increase the user screen time (Orsolo, 2020).

Facebook literature indicated Facebook is used by a significant portion of the population in the United States (Hutchinson, 2020) and Facebook has been indicated as a valid tool for survey-based research (Gregori & Balter, 2013) and has been indicated to have a significant impact on human thought, behavior, and emotion (Phu & Gow, 2015).

The current literature about happiness suggests universal happiness can be broken down into four primary happiness concepts including (a) health, (b) work, (c) wealth, and (d) relationships (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016); and the current literature on happiness also indicates relationships has been identified as the happiness concept, which most influences happiness (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016).

Throughout the existing literature regarding the intersection between Facebook and happiness, research has indicated Facebook is capable of influencing human thought and emotion (Phu & Gow, 2015), and changing social dynamics and the interpretation of stimuli in communications between individuals via Facebook (Phu & Gow, 2015). The

current literature has also indicated there is a significant relationship between time spent on Facebook and life satisfaction levels (Brailovskaia et al., 2020).

However, limited research has been conducted on studying the interaction between specific happiness concepts and time spent on Facebook. Research specific to the area of happiness concepts is sparse and general; thus, awareness around happiness concepts may be developed and modernized by determining how time spent using Facebook interacts with historical happiness construct research.

Developing a more robust understanding regarding how time spent on social media influences individual happiness concepts is important due to the prevalence of social media use in modern society and the understanding that human relationships have been identified as the most important contributing factor in increasing life satisfaction. Understanding more about the intersection between Facebook and happiness concepts will enable modern society to use social media in the most effective and beneficial ways.

The question this study attempted to answer was whether there is a difference between high and low Facebook use groups in terms of how happiness is conceptualized. The primary hypothesis was that happiness concepts would be significantly different between high Facebook use and low Facebook use groups. Secondly, based on the themes present in previous studies, it was hypothesized that the life satisfaction levels would be significantly different between groups.

Chapter 2

Method

The reason for this study was to examine differences between happiness levels and concepts between a high Facebook use group (one standard deviation above the mean on a distribution of Facebook users) and a low Facebook use group (one standard deviation below the mean on a distribution of Facebook users). Happiness has been studied from many perspectives (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Brieda et al., 2017; Joshanloo, 2014) and there has been some research specific to the relationship between Facebook and happiness levels. The aim of this particular study was to determine how happiness levels and happiness concepts differ between low Facebook use and high Facebook use.

Instrumentation

This section explores the characteristics of the instrumentation required, participant characteristics, the research design, and the analytic strategy I used during this study, and a detailed walkthrough of the procedures I used during this study. Participants were self-selected by following a link I provided to them in the initial invitation to participate (see Appendix A). All participants were asked to complete the informed consent page (see Appendix B), the happiness concept question (see Appendix C), the SWLS (see Appendix D) followed by the Facebook use frequency question (see Appendix E), and finally, the demographics questionnaire (see Appendix F).

The initial invitation (see Appendix A) was developed as a means of contacting potential participants and informing these individuals about the study. The informed consent page (see Appendix B) was developed to provide resources for participants in the

event that they experienced any distress while answering any of the questions in the survey. The informed consent page also included contact information for myself as the primary researcher and my dissertation chair in the event of questions, comments, or concerns.

The happiness concept question (see Appendix C) was one of the two items I used to collect data during this study. The happiness concept question (see Appendix C) was designed in response to happiness concept questions previously used in happiness concept study by Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016). The happiness concept questions was a single item, “Which of these categories increases your happiness the most? (Please select one)” offering the option to choose one of the following: (a) mental and physical health, (b) work, (c) material wealth, and (d) relationships.

I used the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) to collect analytical data; the SWLS was originally developed by Ed Diener in 1985 with the purpose of identifying and quantifying overall life satisfaction levels, measured through self-reports (Diener, 1985; Diener & Pavot, 2008). The SWLS is a five-item, 7-point Likert style response scale. Scores can range from 5 points to 35 points, where 5 points indicates the lowest possible overall life satisfaction level and 35 represents the highest possible overall life satisfaction level. The SWLS has been heavily researched (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Diener, 1985; Pavot et al., 1991; Pavot & Diener, 1993, 2008). The average coefficient alpha for the scale was .83 (Pavot et al., 1991), indicating that the scale has high internal consistency. The scale was also found to have good test-retest correlations (.83, .93 over a 1-week interval).

Some examples of items from the SWLS are statements such as “In most ways, my life is close to ideal,” and “The conditions of my life are excellent.” The score of the SWLS is calculated by totaling all the points the participant selects on the Likert scale. The highest possible score is 35 points and the lowest possible score is 5 points (Pavot & Deiner, 1985).

Participants were also given a short demographics questionnaire to identify their age, education level, gender assigned at birth, and ethnicity, to briefly assess composition of the sample collected. There was also a one-item COVID-19 global pandemic impact question used to briefly assess the level of impact that COVID-19 global pandemic (and the various restrictions associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic) had on participants’ lives. There was also one question to determine if the participants currently resided inside the United States to verify they were valid participants for the target population of this research. Age ranges and specifications of the demographics survey were designed to parallel the age ranges used in previous studies (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016) and the other ranges were based on mainstream standards and compliances for survey based demographic information (DeFranzo, 2021). The demographic questionnaire was designed to develop an understanding of sample population’s composition. All together the survey took participants roughly 2 minutes to complete.

Participants

Participant inclusion criteria mandated an individual must be at least 18 years of age, have a Facebook account, and have access to Facebook to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria excluded any participants under the age of 18 or participants who did

not currently reside inside the United States. The age requirements were specified in the informed consent page (see Appendix B) and any participants who did not click the “I Agree” button under the informed consent page were unable to progress forward through the survey and their data were not collected or recorded.

Participant data were collected for each of the participants who completed every question in the survey. Data were removed from the study in the event that a participant opted out of participating or in the event that a participant only completed a portion of the survey. Power analysis mandated a sample size must be a minimum of 78 participants with 39 completed surveys for the high Facebook use group and 39 completed surveys for the low Facebook use group) per research standards, to achieve a statistical power of .8.

Participants were recruited via Facebook using the initial invitation (see Appendix A). The initial invitation was distributed via Facebook and participants expressed their interest in participating by way of clicking the link, which rerouted participants to Qualtrics. Upon entering Qualtrics, the informed consent page (see Appendix B) was displayed. Participant data were stored in the Qualtrics database as completed surveys and then converted into IBM SPSS data files for interpretation. Participant data remained anonymous throughout the study by way of neglecting to include any identifying information at any point throughout the study. The survey and the data were removed from the online Qualtrics platform, per IRB standards upon completion of data collection and data analysis phases and data were stored in accordance with IRB privacy standards and requirements.

Previous studies regarding happiness concepts and life satisfaction levels have taken note of the demographics of the samples studied to develop an understanding for the level of generalizability that the study holds for specific groups within samples studied. This study tracked the demographics of the participants for the same reason and to indicate possible directions for future research to strengthen the results and apply the results to various groups moving forward.

Overall, 271 surveys were completed and results for 11 participants were removed from the data set as they reported they were from outside the United States, which removed them from eligibility as valid participants in this particular study due to exclusion criteria, leaving 260 valid participants. Out of the 260 valid participant data, 29 participants identified as Latino/Hispanic, 155 individuals identified as European/White, 9 identified as Black/African American, 22 identified as Asian, 23 participants identified as American Indian/Native American, 18 identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 15 participants identified as other. Additionally, 11 of the 260 valid participants identified more than one racial identity.

Education history composition of the sample included 35 participants who reported high school was their highest level of education, 43 reported some college, no degree, 17 participants reported having a technical degree or vocational training, 39 participants reported having an associate's degree, 69 participants identified having a bachelor's degree, 39 participants reported having a master's degree, and 22 participants reported having a doctoral degree.

Age ranges were distributed as follows: 24 participants reported being between 18 and 23 years of age, 40 reported being between 24 and 29 years of age, 71 participants

reported being between 30 and 35 years of age, 44 reported being between 36 and 41 years of age, 22 reported being between 42 and 47 years of age, 31 participants reported being between 48 and 53 years of age, and 28 participants reported being 54 years of age or older. The gender distribution of the sample was slightly uneven, as 119 participants identified as male, 139 participants identified as female, and two participants reported they preferred not to say.

Out of the 260 valid surveys completed, 40 were one standard deviation above mean Facebook use (high Facebook use group) and 43 were one standard deviation below mean Facebook use (low Facebook use group), for a total of 83 participant results analyzed to test the hypothesis.

Research Design

Specific differences I observed between groups focus on the happiness concepts participants identified between groups and the self-report happiness levels between groups. The study was designed to determine the difference between Group 1 (high Facebook use group) and Group 2 (low Facebook use group) in the different specific areas of happiness concepts and overall life satisfaction levels. This study was a cross-sectional research design, which used respondent-driven-sampling and survey-based research on online platforms including Facebook and Qualtrics, and data were analyzed in SPSS.

Analytic Strategy

This study made use of survey methodology and a cross-sectional design. This research used a quantitative method to measure associations between self-reported life satisfaction levels and the various happiness concept between high Facebook use groups

and low Facebook use groups. As of 2020, current literature identified a person's average daily Facebook use at 40 minutes per day (Salman, 2020). Data collected in the current study indicated a person's average daily Facebook use has increased from 40 minutes daily per Salmon's (2020) research, to between 50 and 60 minutes per day currently in 2022. The low Facebook use group was composed of all participants whose data were one standard deviation below the mean on the distribution, and the high Facebook use group was defined as participants whose data scores were one standard deviation above the mean on the distribution of the sample collected.

Tests 1 and 2

Test 1 was designed to explore the primary hypothesis that high Facebook use and low Facebook use groups would conceptualize happiness in significantly different ways. Data from the completed surveys were exported from Qualtrics into IBM SPSS for statistical analysis. From IBM SPSS, completed data for participants within one standard deviation of the mean were not analyzed. For Test 1, a Chi-square of independence was performed to determine if there are any significant differences between the two groups in the responses to the happiness concept question (see Appendix C).

The Bonferroni correction was applied to mitigate the possibility that the significance occurred as a result of a type one error and none of the significant values were powerful enough to overcome the Bonferroni correction. This means the primary researcher was unable to eliminate the possibility that the significance occurred as a result of a Type I error, indicating trends but no true significance.

Test 2 was used to determine the outcome of the secondary hypothesis that life satisfaction levels would be significantly different between high Facebook and low

Facebook use groups. For Test 2, an independent samples *t* test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference in mean life satisfaction scores between the low Facebook use group and the high Facebook use group. Results of this test indicated significance ($F = 3.447, df = 81, p = .012$).

Procedure

Stivala et al. (2016) conducted research to determine if respondent driven sampling (RDS) was a valid and reliable means of collecting data and determined that data collected using this methodology are mathematically valid and reliable. Participants in this study were recruited through RDS using the initial invitation (see Appendix A) to promote and launch the study.

Individuals who participated entered Qualtrics (i.e., an anonymous, online, research oriented, survey-based data collection system) via a hyperlink (i.e., a blue highlighted line of code that users can click on to be redirected to another location via the internet) included in the initial invitation. This link rerouted participants directly to the survey's informed consent page (see Appendix B). By clicking the "I Agree" button at the bottom of the consent form, participants endorsed their consent and their desire to participate in the study, and were granted access to the remainder of the survey.

The measures were presented to participants in the following order: (a) the initial invitation (see Appendix A), (b) the Informed Consent Page (see Appendix B), (c) the Happiness concepts questions (see Appendix C), (d) Satisfaction with Life Scale (see Appendix D), (e) the Facebook Use Frequency Question (see Appendix E), and lastly, (f) the demographics questionnaire (see Appendix F). The demographics questionnaire included one question about the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on the

participant due to the potential impact that the COVID-19 global pandemic may have had on overall life satisfaction (Greyling et al., 2021). The reasons for having the measures presented in this particular order were to avoid the happiness concept question being influenced by the SWLS questions, and to avoid the possibility of allowing the demographics questions to influence how an individual answered the other questions in the survey.

There were 13 questions total in the survey with one item for the happiness concept questionnaire (see Appendix C), five items for the SWLS (see Appendix D), one item for the Facebook use frequency question (see Appendix E), and six items in the demographics questionnaire (see Appendix F). All together participants took roughly 2 minutes to complete the survey. All responses remained anonymous, and I did not offer any incentives for participation.

Participants were self-assigned into groups (high group and low group) upon how they answered the Facebook use frequency question (see Appendix E). Hutchinson (2020) reported that the average Facebook user spent 40 minutes per day on Facebook in 2020. Additionally, Brailovskaia et al. (2020) and Tosun and Kasdarma (2019) reported that when Facebook use was reduced by 20 minutes per day, this significantly reduced depressive symptoms and increased life satisfaction. For these reasons, groups were defined by the average time spent on Facebook, where the low frequency users group was composed of users who reported spending time on Facebook equal to (or more than) one standard deviation below the mean (i.e., low Facebook use). The high frequency users group was composed of individuals who used Facebook one standard deviation (or more) above the mean ($M = 5.88$). Participants who reported they used Facebook an amount that

was within one standard deviation of the mean were not analyzed when testing the hypotheses.

All participants remained anonymous throughout the study and all institutional review board standards were observed and maintained. All participant responses were recorded by their responses to anonymous survey questions, where the participants were not asked to identify themselves.

Chapter 3

Results

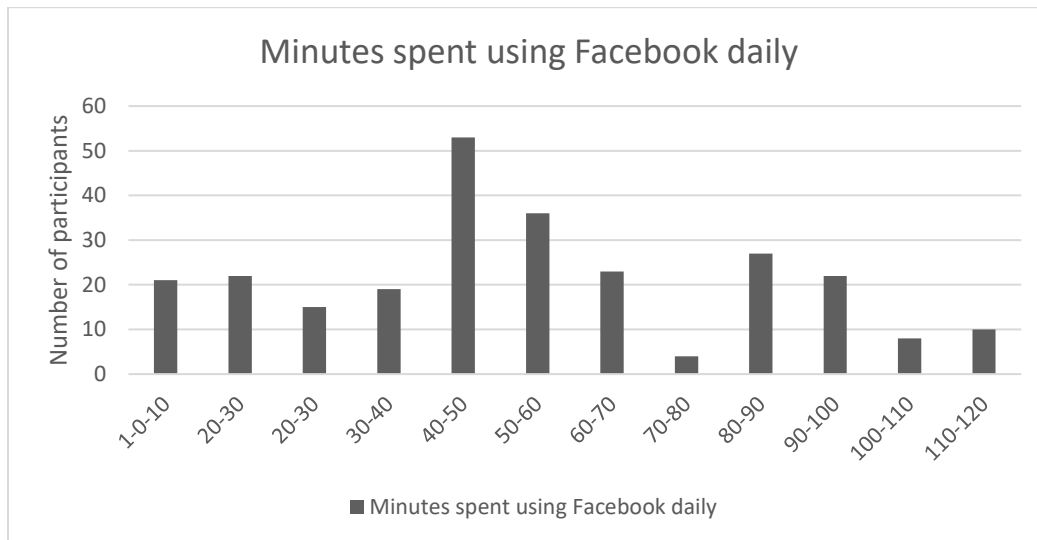
The outcomes of this study indicated possible effects between Facebook use and happiness concepts as well as further validation for previous literature indicating significant differences between groups in terms of happiness levels. The primary hypothesis was that responses to the happiness concept question would be significantly different between high Facebook use and low Facebook use groups. The second hypothesis was that life satisfaction levels would also be significantly different between high Facebook use and low Facebook use groups.

Descriptive Statistics

Facebook use per participant was recorded in 10-minute intervals ranging from 0 to 10 minutes per day up to 120 minutes per day for a total of 12 possible responses (see Figure 1). The average Facebook use was indicated to be between 50 minutes and 60 minutes per day, indicating an overall increase in average time spent on Facebook per day as similar data collected by Salmon (2020) indicated the average Facebook user spent an average of 40 minutes per day on Facebook in the year 2020.

Figure 1

Distribution of Sample in Response to the Facebook Use Frequency Question



Note. This figure demonstrates the number of participants who endorsed each amount of time spent on Facebook per day in minutes. There are a total of 260 valid completed survey responses and the number of minutes spent using Facebook daily is indicated in this figure per participant.

A total of 271 surveys were completed and the exclusion criteria excluded 11 surveys as these surveys were completed by participants who did not reside inside the United States where the total valid sample ($n = 260$, $M = 5.88$, $SD = 2.995$) was collected. Out of the total sample of 260 participants, 83 participant results were analyzed where the low Facebook use group was composed of 43 participants and the high Facebook use group was composed of 40 participants satisfying a statistical power of .8.

Chi Square Analysis

When testing the primary hypothesis that participants would respond to the happiness concept question in significantly different ways, results indicated a possible mild effect. To test Hypothesis 1, I conducted a Chi-square analysis to determine if there

were any significant differences between groups in response to the happiness concept question. During the omnibus calculation, the initial Chi-square was found to be significant ($df = 14.965, p = .002$).

Significance did occur in the initial Chi-square calculation and post hoc analysis was conducted to determine where the statistical significance occurred. Post hoc analysis indicated the significant differences occurred between groups in response to the relationships happiness concept with significantly more participants from the low Facebook use group endorsing the relationships happiness concept than the high Facebook use group ($p = .05$). Post hoc analysis also revealed significant difference between groups in response to the material wealth happiness concept with the low Facebook use group endorsing the material wealth happiness concept significantly less frequently than the high Facebook use group ($p = .04$).

Consistent with the existing literature, participants in this study endorsed the happiness concepts in a similar distribution as those in previous happiness concept research (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). Thirty of the analyzed participants endorsed the physical and mental health happiness concept (at 36.1% of the analyzed sample), 27 of the participants analyzed endorsed the relationships happiness concept (representing 32.5% of the analyzed sample), 23 participants endorsed the material wealth happiness concept (27.7% of the analyzed sample). The least commonly endorsed happiness concept was work where three participants identified work as a happiness concept (at only 3.6% of the analyzed sample; see Table 1).

Table 1*Responses to Happiness Concept Question*

Facebook use	Low	High
Mental and physical health	17 (56.7%)	13 (43.3%)
Relationships	20 (74.1%)	7 (25.9%)
Material wealth	6 (26.1%)	17 (73.9%)
Work	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Totals	43	40

Note. This table represents the number and percentage of participants who endorsed the various happiness concepts between groups. Percentage refers to the percentage of the 83 participants in Groups 1 and 2, analyzed during the omnibus analysis when testing Hypothesis 1.

The fact that post hoc analysis indicated significant values occurred between groups in the response to the material wealth and the relationships happiness concepts, indicated a possible effect between groups where a smaller percentage of participants from the low Facebook use group endorsed the material wealth happiness concepts than the percentage of participants in the high Facebook use group. Post hoc analysis also indicated a trend where more participants from the low Facebook use group endorsed the relationships happiness concept although none of the initial significance was powerful enough to overcome the Bonferroni correction. This possible effect between groups indicated that individuals who use Facebook more are more likely to identify material wealth than individuals who use Facebook less and individuals who use Facebook less endorse the relationships happiness concept more frequently than individuals who use Facebook more than average.

The Bonferroni correction was applied to compensate for the inflation of Type I error when running the post hoc analysis. Initial analysis indicated significance, but

unfortunately, none of the values produced during post hoc analysis were powerful enough to overcome the Bonferroni correction. Failing to overcome the Bonferroni Correction indicated that the significance which occurred during the initial chi square analysis was possibly due to type one error.

Overall, results of the analysis indicated it is possible there is an effect present but I was unable to eliminate the possibility that this effect could be attributed to the inflation of Type I error. The null hypothesis was accepted for the primary hypothesis.

Mean Comparison

The secondary hypothesis was that there would be a significant difference between groups in life satisfaction levels as indicated by mean scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The low Facebook use group had a mean SWLS score of 26.49, indicating above average life satisfaction. The high Facebook use group had a mean life satisfaction score of 25.1, indicating a slightly lower mean level of life satisfaction than the low Facebook use group. The secondary hypothesis was tested by using an independent samples t-test with a confidence interval set at 95% and significance was found ($F = 3.447$, $df = 81$, $p = .012$), indicating that mean SWLS scores were significantly different between groups, where individuals who use Facebook less frequently (low Facebook use group) indicated higher life satisfaction levels than individuals who use Facebook more frequently (high Facebook use group).

Chapter 4

Discussion

The significance found in the initial Chi-square analysis indicated one of the key findings rendered in this study is the possible correlation between Facebook use and the human conceptualization of human happiness. This possible relationship between Facebook use and happiness concepts indicated there is a possibility that the amount of time spent on Facebook changes the ways individuals conceptualize happiness. The other significant finding was that there were significant differences between groups in happiness levels as indicated by Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) scores, further contributing to the existing literature that also indicated the presence of such an effect (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Brieda et al., 2017; Joshanloo, 2014; Youseff et al., 2020).

The indication of significant difference between groups in levels of life satisfaction as indicated by the mean scores of the SWLS is relevant to the field of study. Individuals who reported using Facebook more than average (i.e., one standard deviation or more above mean Facebook use) endorsed significantly lower life satisfaction levels than participants who reported using Facebook less than average (i.e., one standard deviation or more below mean Facebook use). Youseff et al. (2020) found when an individual reduced their Facebook use by 20 minutes per day, they endorsed increased happiness levels after 1 month, which is further validated by my research where less Facebook use is associated with more life satisfaction. Additionally, Phu and Gow (2019) conducted research resulting in the indication that increased Facebook use is correlated with increased levels of loneliness and reduced life satisfaction. Considering that the

relationships category was one of the most commonly endorsed happiness concepts, Phu and Gow's research in 2019 illustrated a correlation between increased Facebook use and a perceived reduction in access to relationships resulting in lower life satisfaction levels.

Furthermore, the current study resulted in the most commonly endorsed happiness concept being the mental and physical health happiness concept. With 36.1% of the analyzed sample selecting the mental and physical health happiness concept, and consistent with the existing literature regarding happiness concepts (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016), this further indicated that a large percentage of participants can identify their health as the most impactful aspect of life that influences their happiness in positive ways. The sample from the study conducted by Bojanowska and Zalewska in 2016 resulted in 34.3% of participants endorsing the mental and physical health happiness concept. The sample in the current study was composed of participants who exclusively resided inside the United States and the Bojanowska and Zalewska study from 2016 contained a Russian sample, a German sample, and a Chinese sample. Due to this observation, it has been established through the research that the most common items associated with human happiness (in multiple countries including, Russia, China, Germany, and the United States) is either health or interpersonal relationships.

According to Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016), 42.4% of participants endorsed the relationships happiness concept. With the current study resulting in 32.5% of participants endorsing the relationships happiness concept, this is similar when studying different populations from two different studies spanning a period of 8 years. This indicates that the concept of mental and physical wellness is securely and consistently

one of the most common pillars associated with human happiness across culture and over time.

Interpretation

The results of this study indicated there was a possible relationship between the amount of time which an individual spends using Facebook and the aspects of life that they most specifically associated with happiness as indicated by the significance in the initial chi-square analysis. Unfortunately, the level of significance found during the initial chi square analysis was not powerful enough to overcome the Bonferroni correction, meaning I was unable to eliminate the possibility that the significance rendered initially could be accredited to type one error. Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) found 7.1% of participants endorsed material wealth, and 5.4% of participants endorsed the work happiness concept. In the current study, 3.6% of participants endorsed work and 27.7% of participants endorsed the material wealth category. The number of participants who associated work with happiness remained similar across studies. Although still the third most commonly endorsed happiness concept, material wealth was endorsed by a much larger percentage of participants in the current study than it was in Bojanowska and Zalwesak's (2016) previous research (27.7% in the current study compared to 7.1% in Bojanowska and Zalewska's research). Primary differences between these two samples include the fact that the current study exclusively involved participants inside the United States, indicating a possible cultural trend where material wealth is associated with happiness more in the United States than in other countries. Additionally, this study was conducted during a time when the COVID-19 global pandemic was occurring (resulting in widespread government shutdowns and mass terminations), which resulted in a loss of

income and significant financial difficulties for billions of people worldwide (Greyling et al., 2021) and may have increased people's beliefs that material wealth is necessary to achieve happiness.

In the current study, the sample distribution indicated the average Facebook user used Facebook for an average of between 50 and 60 minutes per day in 2022. This represents an increase in average daily Facebook use as similar data were collected 2 years prior to this study by Salmon (2020) where it was determined that the average Facebook user spends roughly 40 minutes per day using Facebook. During the current process of developing and commencing the current study, lockdowns due to the COVID-19 global pandemic were in effect, which intentionally restricted in-person contact and required people to work from home en masse and avoid going outdoors. This almost certainly lead to an increase in time spent using Facebook as rules, regulations, and policies mandated staying indoors and communicating through digital platforms rather than interacting with people directly (Greyling et al., 2021), although the specific level of increased time has not yet been established through formal research.

The SWLS has been used several times in research aimed at measuring the life satisfaction levels of individuals, and the results of this study have validated the SWLS as a tool of measurement when quantifying happiness and life satisfaction levels in modern survey-based research designs. Gragori and Baltar (2012) established that Facebook was a viable option for survey-based research, and Pavot et al. (1991) conducted research that continued to validate the SWLS as a relevant tool for use in research. Pavot and Diener (2008) supplemented the literature on the SLWS by applying it specifically to the principle of life satisfaction and found it to be valid and reliable when used to measure

life satisfaction. Bojanowska and Zalewska (2016) used the SWLS in research regarding happiness concepts and the current study applied the SWLS to happiness concept research on Facebook and indicated good validity when applied to Facebook use. Through the aforementioned studies, the SWLS has been established as a long-standing useful tool in research and has been indicated to be useful in a variety of mediums including Facebook survey based research.

Overall, this study indicates despite the prevalence of the social media platform Facebook and the role Facebook plays in modern daily communication (Salmon, 2020), the ways in which human beings conceptualize happiness remain largely the same as they did previously. Most participants endorsed either the mental and physical health happiness concept (36.1%) or the relationships happiness concept (32.5%). This is relevant as it indicated people in general value the connections they have with the people around them and their level of comfort (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Brieda et. al., 2017). According to Brieda et al. (2017), universal concepts of happiness include interpersonal relationships and wellness as universal components of human happiness. This study further supports this notion due to the high percentage of participants who endorsed the relationships and mental and physical health happiness concepts. This outcome of the present study lends increased credibility to the idea of universal happiness where regardless of the myriad of potential factors and cultural influences, human beings generally value interpersonal relationships and the minimization of suffering (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Brieda et al., 2017).

Implications for Future Research and Clinical Implications

Implications for future research due to the outcomes of this study include a need to (a) develop research with the goal of understanding more deeply why and how health and relationships are the most commonly endorsed happiness concepts; (b) develop research aimed at determining Facebook use, life satisfaction levels, and happiness concepts within more specific groups; and lastly (c) to design research that compares happiness concepts and life satisfaction levels between average Facebook users and non-Facebook users.

Implications for Future Facebook Research

Brailovskaia et al. (2020) conducted research that indicated individuals who reduced their Facebook use each day reported increased happiness levels and the results of the current study have also provided further support for this assertion. The difference between high and low Facebook use groups indicates a significant difference between groups where individuals who use Facebook less reported higher levels of life satisfaction, which is consistent with the previously existing literature. Faranda and Roberts (2019) conducted research indicating Facebook use leads to significantly increased social comparisons which are correlated with increased levels of depression and lower levels of life satisfaction. Beyond the general implications of Facebook use on mental health, Hussain et al. (2020) developed research around what is known as social media use disorder defining problematic patterns of social media use (such as Facebook) and outlining the negative impacts that this has on life satisfaction.

This study was similar in outcome, where the results of this study indicated Facebook users one standard deviation (or more) above the mean endorsed significantly

lower levels of life satisfaction than Facebook users who used Facebook one standard deviation (or more) below mean Facebook use. Youseff et al. (2020) conducted research studying the relationship between social media use disorder and loneliness indicating that above average Facebook use is correlated with increased levels of loneliness, diametrically opposed to the commonly endorsed happiness concept of relationships.

Implications for Non-Facebook Users

Non-Facebook users were not included in this study and had already been studied to determine how they endorsed happiness concepts (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). Non-Facebook users as a population may be studied using a similar methodology as this study used with paper copies of the surveys instead of being distributed via Facebook to determine similarities and differences between Facebook user samples and non-Facebook user samples.

Implications for Diverse Populations

The sample collected reported being majority White/European, indicating there is a need to study Facebook users as a population outside of the United States and with an intentional focus on non-White majority samples to further develop insight into the generalizability of the results as they apply to ethnic groups other than those of European descent.

Implications for Age and Gender

The average age of the participants in this study was reported between 30 and 35 years of age. The age range between 30 and 35 years of age was also the most commonly reported age range in this study indicating a strong presence of persons in this particular age bracket as Facebook users. Future research is indicated where similar methodology is

used with a narrower focus on age groups to develop an understanding of the reasons why this specific age bracket is represented so highly among Facebook users.

Most participants reported they were female when assigned gender at birth. Focusing the research to develop a deeper understanding of Facebook use and happiness concepts as they apply specifically to males or specifically to females may enable researchers to strengthen the clinical implications of this study when working respectively with male or female patients. Determining if the results are generalizable evenly within a male sample or within female samples could enable researchers to further increase understanding of how specific genders interact with happiness concepts and life satisfaction levels.

Implications for Average Facebook Users

This study has indicated a contrast between above average and below average Facebook users. This study compared the poles to one another to have a clean contrast between groups. Future research may develop understanding by comparing the high-average Facebook users to the low average Facebook users as this would allow researchers to determine the implications of the average Facebook user as the average Facebook user represents most of the Facebook user population. Comparing average Facebook users to non-Facebook users would enable researchers and clinicians to develop a more evolved understanding of the mental health implications of Facebook use in general, where the focus of this study was designed to analyze the within groups implications of specifically Facebook users.

Clinical Implications

Developing an awareness of what specific items increase human happiness is useful for a variety of professions and general life satisfaction applications. Particularly as clinicians and researchers, psychologists can use this information to improve the human experience and help individuals identify, recognize, and pursue the established universal human happiness concepts to achieve mental wellness.

The clinical implications for the current study are that relationships and mental and physical health were the two most commonly endorsed happiness concepts, indicating most individuals find joy in their health and their relationships as primary driving forces for their life satisfaction. Increasing societal awareness that human life satisfaction is driven by relationships and good health (through research) enables clinicians to have default therapeutic issues aimed at increasing happiness, simplifying the process of achieving therapeutic outcomes when working with clients. This study also supports the notion that increasing Facebook use is correlated with a reduction in life satisfaction, enabling clinicians to investigate social Facebook use patterns of their clients and explore the life satisfaction implications therein when conducting clinical work.

Limitations

This study indicated a possible relationship between the amount of time that individuals spend using Facebook and their conceptualization of happiness. The significance was debatable given that the significance found was not able to overcome the necessary corrections to firmly establish significance.

The COVID-19 global pandemic had an impact on the happiness of most participants and is consistent with the assertions made in research conducted by

Borgonovi et al. (2021) where most individuals endorsed at least a moderate level of having been affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic, a pandemic which has had some level of impact on the vast majority of persons worldwide. One specific aspect of the COVID-19 global pandemic that has made it increasingly impactful for many individuals is the fact that many governments required lockdowns during this time, resulting in prolonged isolation and a loss of income, both of which are directly related to three of the four primary happiness concepts (Greyling et al., 2021), namely work, material wealth, and relationships. The specific impacts on life satisfaction levels as a direct result of lockdowns during the COVID-19 global pandemic are unknown as they were not the focus of this study.

Although relationships was the second most commonly endorsed happiness concept in this study and the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions applied by several governments and organizations served as a direct complicating factor for participating actively in relationships, there are undoubtedly some implications for happiness and life satisfaction as life satisfaction pertains to the relationships happiness concept. This, however, was not the focus of this study and can only be inferred without further research.

The COVID-19 global pandemic was, itself, an ailment which directly impacted the mental and physical health happiness concept. This study resulted in the mental and physical health category being the most commonly endorsed happiness concept, implying some relationship between the COVID-19 global pandemic and life satisfaction, although this potential interaction was not the focus of this study either.

Respondent driven sampling is not a truly random sampling strategy and, therefore, cannot provide the same mathematical validity that true random sampling procedures can. Developing a more random strategy for finding out how individuals identify happiness concepts may increase the validity of the results regarding research about what happiness concepts individuals endorse.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study indicated a possible relationship between Facebook use and happiness concepts, but I was unable to provide a definitive relationship between Facebook use and happiness concepts. There is a possibility that increasing the number of participants would render more powerful significance in the relationship between time spent using Facebook and a clearer understanding of this possible relationship. Potential significance occurred between groups regarding the relationships and material wealth concepts of happiness; and therefore, future research may establish a more powerful effect in the event that future research is more specifically focused on these two happiness concepts between groups, which would also potentially reduce the amount of Type I error inflation when conducting post hoc analysis.

Although this study indicated there was a relationship between life satisfaction levels and Facebook use, it was organized around a sample of persons residing currently inside the United States. Facebook is a global social networking platform and there may be value in conducting similar studies in other countries targeting different nationalities to determine the level of generalizability of these results to various cultural norms (Gramlich, 2020; Salman, 2021).

Faranda and Roberts (2019) studied patterns of social comparison on Facebook and found Facebook users generally present themselves in culturally acceptable ways when using Facebook, but there is currently no literature studying happiness conceptualizations and Facebook use across culture. A study that examines the relationship between happiness concepts and Facebook use could prove useful when applied to a multinational Facebook user sample. This study was conducted specifically with individuals who currently reside inside the United States. In effort to know the depth and the true generalizability of the results, it would be necessary to duplicate this study when working with populations specific to other countries as well. Where the research indicates social comparisons online are correlated with lower levels of life satisfaction (Faranda & Roberts, 2019), it may be useful to identify the amount of social comparison that occurs between high and low Facebook use groups in effort to determine more specifically the reason for the consistently lower life satisfaction levels endorsed by high use Facebook users (Brailovskaia et al., 2020; Lin & Utz, 2015; Tobin & Graham 2020).

These results cannot definitively tell researchers the reasons why participant's chosen happiness concepts contribute to their life satisfaction. Research examining specific reasons for why chosen specific aspects of life afford individuals more life satisfaction may be warranted. Narrowing the focus of study to determine to specifically what it is about relationships and health that makes individuals happy may be beneficial in the further development of society's understanding of human happiness.

This study was consistent with previous research in that the relationships happiness concept was one of the most commonly endorsed happiness concepts, but this research project did not provide any insight as to why relationships increase life

satisfaction. Developing an improved understanding of the specifics as to why relationships increase life satisfaction levels may potentially be achieved by developing qualitative research aimed at adding clarity to what it is specifically about relationships that increase human life satisfaction.

In conclusion, this study has contributed a few items, including validation for the idea that human happiness is consistently associated most commonly with health and interpersonal relationships (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). The outcome of this study indicated that the average amount of time spent on Facebook daily has increased roughly 30% between 2020 and 2022 (Salman, 2020). Lastly, this research project further validated the indication found in the literature where individuals who use Facebook more endorse lower levels of life satisfaction than individuals who use Facebook less. Finally, there is a possible relationship between the amount of Facebook use and the conceptualization of happiness, consistent with the existing literature on social comparisons (Faranda & Roberts, 2019) and the literature on happiness concepts (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016; Brieda et al., 2017; Joshanloo, 2014).

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Appendix A

Initial Invitation to Participate

You have been invited to participate in a dissertation project by Daniel Stover, Psy.D Student! I am a student at Northwest University in Kirkland in the Psy.D program. This study involves completing a survey which includes questions about happiness as well as some questions about demographics and the use of Facebook. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the interaction between Facebook use and life satisfaction. This survey will take approximately six minutes to complete. Should you choose to participate, all your information will remain completely anonymous throughout the duration of the study.

Please forward this invitation to other Facebook users who may be interested in participating in this study. Only individuals who are over the age of 18 and have a Facebook account are eligible to participate in this research study.

If you have comments, questions or concerns you may contact the primary researcher, Daniel Stover at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED].

To access the study please follow this link:

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your time consideration,

Daniel Stover, Psy.D Student.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Page and Consent Form

*Dissertation: Northwest University
Daniel Stover, Psy.D Student*

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Daniel Stover, a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at Northwest University. The study is being conducted as a means of satisfying the dissertation requirement of the Psy.D program at Northwest University. If you agree to participate in this study, you will complete a questionnaire about life satisfaction, questions about your conceptualization of happiness, you will be asked to complete a short demographics questionnaire and you will be asked to answer questions about your use of Facebook. The purpose of the study is to improve the current understanding of human happiness as it relates to the use of Facebook. This survey should take approximately six minutes to complete.

There are minimal risks associated with participation. You may choose not to participate in this research study. The benefit of taking part in this study is the opportunity to participate in the research process as a research subject. There is a risk of mild distress due to the contemplation of questions regarding happiness. In the event that you feel distressed by any of the questions asked, please utilize the resources below. Crisis Call Center: **Website:** Crisiscallcenter.org, **Phone:** 1-800-273-8255
Crisis Text Line: **Website:** www.crisistextline.org **Text:** Text "HOME" to 741741

There will not be any negative consequences for you if you refuse to participate. All data collected will be deidentified prior to the primary researcher accessing the data. All data will be stored in encrypted files on a password protected computer which will be stored in a secure locked location at all times during the research study. Results from the study will be reported in a dissertation project for the PsyD program at Northwest University. The Study will be published upon completion. No identifying information about you will be linked with the data or the final results. The Northwest University Institutional Review Board has approved this study. By proceeding from this consent form to the survey, you are attesting that you are over the age of 18 and you are giving permission to use your responses in this research study. If you have any questions about this study, or the rights of participants, have any comments or concerns, you may contact: The principal researcher Daniel Stover by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. If you have further questions, please contact my faculty advisor Dr. Campbell at [REDACTED] or the Chair of the Northwest University Institutional Review Board, Professor Cheri Goit at [REDACTED]. Email: [REDACTED]. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Daniel Stover	Robert Campbell, Psy.D.; Associate
Doctoral Student in Counseling Psychology	Professor
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Social and Behavioral Sciences

[REDACTED]

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, have a Facebook account and freely consent to participate in the study, click on the "I Agree" button to begin the survey.

Appendix C

Happiness Concept Question

Which of these categories increases your happiness the most? (Please select one)

(a) mental and physical health

(b) work

(c) material wealth

(e) relationships

Appendix D**Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)**

_____ In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

_____ The conditions of my life are excellent.

_____ I am satisfied with my life.

_____ So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.

_____ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Items are answered on a Likert scale ranging from one to seven, where one is the “strongly Disagree” option and seven represents the “Strongly Agree” option.

31 - 35 Extremely satisfied

26 - 30 Satisfied

21 - 25 Slightly satisfied

20 Neutral

15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied

10 - 14 Dissatisfied

5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied

Appendix E

Facebook Use Frequency Question

How much time do you spend per day using Facebook?

(0-10 Minutes) (10-20 Minutes) (20-30 Minutes) (30-40 Minutes) (40-50 Minutes) (50-60 Minutes) (60-70 Minutes) (70-80 Minutes) (80-90 Minutes) (90-100 Minutes) (100-110 minutes) (110-120 Minutes)

Appendix F**Demographics Questionnaire**

Please answer the following questions.

What is your current age? Categorical response: (18-23) (24-29) (30-35) (36-41) (42-47) (48-53) (54 years or older)

What is the highest level of school you have completed? (No school completed) (Nursery school to 8th grade) (Some high school, no diploma) (High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent) (Some college credit, no degree) (Trade/technical/vocational training) (Associate's degree) (Bachelor's degree) (Master's degree) (Professional degree) (Doctorate degree)

What is your assigned gender at birth? (Male) (Female) (Prefer Not to Answer)

How would you describe your racial identity? Check all that apply:
(Ethnically of Hispanic/Latino origin) (White/European American) (Black/African American)
(Asian) (American Indian/Alaska Native) (Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) (Aboriginal) (Other: _____)

Do you currently reside inside the United States? (Yes) (No)

How significantly have you been impacted by COVID-19? (1 being the least and 10 being the most significant impact) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10)