

Abstract

This study examined the influences on young people's interpersonal skills after using Facebook. 50 college students were invited and the study aimed to explore their experiences of interpersonal skills after using Facebook. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were employed for data collection. Questionnaires comprised three sections, the first part is participants' personal information; the second part is mainly center on how users use Facebook to interact with others; the final part concentrate on the interpersonal skills in real life. Findings suggest that Facebook provides the online social space for people to chat with each other. People feel a sense of belonging after using this social space. Moreover, people are more likely to chat with strangers or acquaintance in virtual than in real life. However, unlike the result of previous study, students do not consider that it is easier for them to make a self- disclosure on Facebook. This study is limited in research methods and participants. Future researchers could use both methods and invite more participants from different colleges.

Key words: college students, Facebook, interpersonal skills, social space.

The Influence of Facebook on Young People's

Interpersonal Skills

INTRODUCTION

Internet has become a vital element in our everyday life. The growing popularity and convenience of using Internet allows more and more people to do multiple things such as watching videos, shopping online, searching for information and playing online games through Internet. What is more, people use the Internet to communicate with friends on a daily basis. The platform on the Internet which allows us to connect with friends is called social networking. Murray and Waller argued that social networking sites (SNSs) are real communicates which allow people to interact with each other in a specific theme or to just get along with others online (2007, cited in Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2011). According to *eBizMBA Rank*, a constantly updated average of each website's, Alexa Global Traffic Rank which is a measure of the website popularity, Facebook ranks number one among other SNSs, Twitter and Instagram, etc., who using SNSs. Facebook does influence our lives in numerous aspects (Liu, Yin, &Huang, p. 335, 2013).

It could be argued that Facebook is the most dominant and influential SNSs for young adults. Many people have experienced that whenever they are hanging out with friends, taking the public transportation, or enjoying the meal with families, there is always someone who is glued to his or her smartphone. At a closer look, we may discover that most of the “screen slaves” are looking at and sliding their Facebook. Mark (2013), the founder of Facebook, once asserted that what Facebook is trying to do is to make people connect with each other more effortlessly. Indeed, Facebook provides us an extremely convenient platform to communicate with our friends and do other things. However, there are still some side effects when using Facebook, such as

the addiction and associated disadvantages of using Facebook, in particular, for young adults. Young adults use Facebook for contacting with their good friends online. Hunt, Atkin, and Krishnan (2012, p.188) illustrated that “Facebook embraces the interactivity of the Internet by allowing users to utilize various features designed for interpersonal communication.” This research seeks to explore the issues relating to the use of Facebook and its influence on young people, especially on how Facebook affect young people’s interpersonal skills.

LITERTURE REVIEW

Past research has largely examined the effects of the relationship between Facebook and the users and also the motivation for people to employ Facebook. The previous research concluded that Facebook creates an online social space where college students can maintain the relationship with others (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Lytras & Garcia, 2008; Lytras & Ordonez de Pablos, 2007, cited in Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011). Other studies also have supported the notion that online SNSs which can implement self- enhancement and self- expression are an efficient approach to communicate with one’s personality (Gosling, Gaddis, &Vazire, 2007).

Features of SNSs: Facebook

Nielsen (2011) stated that as a consequence of SNSs’ popularity, users spend approximately a quarter of their time using SNSs (Cited in Hunt, Atkin, & Krishnan, 2012). SNSs was defined as “Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections” (2007, boyd & Ellison, p.211). SNSs such as MySpace, Google+, Twitter, Flickr, Plurk, and Facebook have become intensely popular. SNSs provide users interact with people over the Internet.

Due to the popularity of SNSs, Facebook has become the leading SNSs. According to Facebook.com, Facebook's aim is "to give people the power to share and make the world more opened and connected" (Facebook, 2012). Facebook has attracted four billion signed-in users worldwide (Yan, 2010). In Taiwan, Facebook appeals to approximately 14,000,000 users; moreover, 60% of users use Facebook every month (Ho, 2013). According to Yen (2010), there are two key reasons why Facebook can be extremely successful; (1) Facebook contains a strong net for users to find or invite their friends without effort. (2) Facebook provides numerous online games which users can interact with others easily and delightfully. Because containing numerous functions, Facebook has become one of the well-known SNSs in the whole world.

Interpersonal skills on Facebook

As the creation of the virtual world, people have a diverse way to interact with others. The booming popularity of Facebook has raised some concern about the impact on people's interpersonal relations and social interactions. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, he stated that all human process these five dimensions of needs including physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization as well when we were born (1943). Moreover, the needs of safety and belonging fully expounded that humans get along with each other in the purpose of fulfilling the social needs (Chen & Kuo, 2012). Liu, Yin and Huang asserted (2013, p.335) that "interpersonal relationships are a network in which people share themselves and trust the value of mutual interaction." They also contended that Facebook can expand young adults' interpersonal relationships on real-life and virtual relationships. Less interaction in person can reduce the embarrassment and uncomfortable feeling compared with face-to-face interaction. (Mckenna, Green, & Gleason 2002, p.10),

interacting with people in virtual world is far more comfortable than in real world. Furthermore, comparing to situation in a real life, people are more willing to open their mind and make a self-disclosure in the virtual world (Mckenna et al., 2002). For example, acquaintances tend to share ups and downs with their new friends on their wall posts (Chang, 2010). Nonetheless, more research is needed in the area of how SNSs affect people's interpersonal skills. The two research questions are as follows:

1. What are the influences of using Facebook on young people?
2. What are the impacts of using Facebook on young people's interpersonal skills?

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study is to uncover how Facebook affect young people's daily lives and interpersonal skills. Quantitative methods will be employed in this study. Fifty students aged 18 to 25, from university in Taiwan who used SNSs and will be invited to take part in this study. Participants will fill in the questionnaire related to how often users use Facebook. The questionnaire is conducted to three parts, including (1) personal information, (2) how users use Facebook to interact with others, and (3) interpersonal relationship in users' real life. Participants need to answer these questions according to their life experience. All the data will be keyed in by SPSS for Windows to analyze the credibility of the questionnaire. Furthermore, one by one in-deep interview is also applied in this study. The interviewers are invited to answer some questions related to (1) in Facebook, how users build their friendship with others (2) how Facebook users maintain their relationship via Facebook, and (3) which platform that Facebook provides is conducive to develop a relationship. In the process of interviewing, the participants will be notified that our following conversation will be recorded.

FINDINGS

This section reports students' experiences in using SNSs, Facebook, drawing upon questionnaire responses. Students' questionnaires contained three parts: personal information, how users use Facebook to interact with others, and interpersonal relationship after using the Facebook. The first contained questions, for instances, regarding how much time they spend on surfing the Internet. The second section demonstrates users' experiences in using Facebook. For example, I try to conceal my feelings and emotions on Facebook. The third section concentrate on users' interpersonal relationship on both Facebook and life experience, including what in users' mind after using Facebook to socialize with others and users' interpersonal relationship in their everyday life.

Experiences on using Facebook

As can be seen in Table 1, when students were asked how much time they spent on looking through the websites, most students (males 75%; females 79%) spent more than 2.5 hours a day. More than 40 percent of the male students (42%) spend more than 4 hours. Almost half of the female students (47%) spend 2.5 to 4 hours surfing the Internet on a daily basis.

Table 1: Different genders spend on surfing the Internet

	<1 hour	1~2.5 hours	2.5~4 hours	>4hours	Total (n=50)
Male	8%	17%	33%	42%	100% (n=12)
Female	0%	21%	47%	32%	100% (n=38)

As shown in Table 2, when participants were asked the average time they spent on using Facebook, less than 40 per cent of the students (38%) just spent 1 to 2.5 hours on Facebook whilst 16 per cent of them spent more than 4 hours on the Facebook. On the contrast, less than 20 per cent (18%) students spend less than an hour using Facebook per day.

Table 2: The average time on using the Facebook

	<1 hour	1~2.5 hours	2.5~4 hours	>4hours	Total
Amount	9	19	14	8	50
Percentage	18%	38%	28%	16%	100%

As indicated in Table 3 below, when students were asked about the merits of using Facebook, most students (42%) reported “killing time.” While, only 17 per cent students use Facebook for “knowing more people.” Contrarily, from Table 4 when students were asked the demerits of using Facebook, 40 per cent reported “ruining family relationship.” Moreover, almost one-third of students (30%) reported “lacking of privacy.” Less than 10 per cent of students (6%) reported Facebook “affecting schoolwork performance.”

Table 3: Merits for using Facebook

Advantages	Percentage
Enhancing friendship	21%
Killing time	42%
Mind relaxation	20%
Knowing more people	17%

Table 4: Demerits for using Facebook

Disadvantages	Percentage
Affecting schoolwork performance	6%
Lacking of privacy	30%
Addiction on Internet	24%
Ruining family relationship	40%

In Table 5, when students were asked about their experiences on using Facebook, more than 40 per cent of students (44%, including strongly agree and agree) think that they feel closer to each other after using Facebook. Almost half of the students (48%) think that they are not really afraid of missing friends' newest updates. Only 14% of students will hide their feelings on Facebook. In other words, more than half of them (52%) are willing to express their feelings on Facebook. Over 40 per cent of the students (42%) have the experience about chatting with acquaintances on Facebook. Contrarily, nearly half of students (44%) have not experienced this before.

Table 5: Users' experiences on using Facebook

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total(n=50)
I feel closer to my friends after using Facebook.	44%	40%	16%	100%
Because being afraid of missing friends' latest updates, I will check my Facebook regularly.	26%	26%	48%	100%
I tend to conceal my real feelings on Facebook.	14%	34%	52%	100%
The reason I use Facebook is because my friends are using it. I do not think Facebook affect my life a lot.	34%	28%	38%	100%
I used to chat with acquaintances cheerfully on Facebook.	42%	14%	44%	100%

Interpersonal relationship after using Facebook

As illustrated in Table 6, when participants were asked the influences of using Facebook, 36 per cent of the students do not think Facebook can foster them to make new friends. 44 per cent of them dispute that it is easier for them to express their internal feelings after using Facebook. More than half of them (60%) do not add strangers as friends in the virtual world. More than half (56%) of the students feel getting involved with others. 54 per cent of students think they can know more about their friends. Almost 40% (38%) of students think Facebook can improve their sense of trust with their friends.

Table 6: The influences after using Facebook

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total(n=50)
It is easier for me to make new friends.	36%	34%	30%	100%
It is easier for me to express my inner feeling	22%	34%	44%	100%
Even though I do know him/ her, I may still add him/ her as my friend.	28%	22%	60%	100%
I feel getting involved with each other.	56%	28%	16%	100%
I can know more about my friends.	54%	34%	12%	100%
Facebook can enhance my sense of trust with friends.	38%	36%	28%	100%

As can be seen in Table 7, when students were asked how their interpersonal relationship in their real life, most of the students (92%) feel relaxed when getting alone with their friends. More than 80% of students (82%) feel calm and relaxed when interacting with group of people. Students (38%) do not think it is an embarrassing thing to talk to strangers. 44 per cent of them express their feelings effortlessly. 42 per cent of students does not deem that only a little percentage of people can understand them.

Table 7: The interpersonal relationship in real life

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total(n=50)
I interact with my friends with ease.	92%	6%	2%	100%
I interact with groups of people with ease.	82%	12%	6%	100%
I feel uncomfortable when talking with strangers.	34%	24%	38%	100%
It is easy for me to express my feelings.	44%	24%	32%	100%
I always feel only a little people can truly understand me.	30%	28%	42%	100%

DISSCUSSION

The influences of using Facebook

With the multitude of technological advances, people have a wide varieties ways to communicate with others. SNSs, for example Facebook, change our way of interacting with others. As is discussed in the literature review, Facebook creates a social platform for people to keep the friendship with others (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Lytras & Garcia, 2008; Lytras & Ordonez de Pablos, 2007, cited in Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011). As can be seen Table 6, there are more than half of the participants feeling getting involved with others after using Facebook. It means that after using Facebook, people can feel a sense of belongings. Moreover, some functions in Facebook provide people the space to interact with others, such as chat room, community and wall. For example, one of the participants, Wenda stated that;

“The functions that I use frequently are wall and chat room. I always make comments on my friends and click the ‘like’ button...If my friend or I want to share ups and downs with each other, we would start to use chat room to chat.”
(Interview, Feb. 26)

Moreover, another participant, Vivian, who shares a common experience in using chat rooms commented that *“I always comments on my friends posts. If we want to know each other more, we will use chat room.”* Nonetheless, there are some side effects on using Facebook, such as addiction on Internet (Yen, 2010). From Table 4, there are some negative effects of using Facebook. Half of the students deem that Facebook has the tendency to ruin the family relationship. Others think lacking of privacy is one of the problems of using Facebook. One of the participants, Vivian, asserted;

“Facebook may ruin the family relationship if I add one of my parents in my friends’ list. Then they will easily monitor my every single track. I guess it will be terrible...luckily, my parents do not use Facebook. Regarding lacking of privacy, before tagging me in photos, I think my friends should ask me for the permission whether I want to be tagged or not. Or I will feel offended and lack of privacy.”
(Interview, Apr. 15)

Impacts on interpersonal relationship

Liu, Yin and Huang (2013) claimed that people who are high frequency of using Facebook build stronger real-life and virtual interpersonal relationships than those who with relatively low frequency ones. In other word, Facebook can somehow enhance our interpersonal relationships. As shown on Table 4, more than half of the participants see eye to eye with the previous study maintaining that they can know more about their friends. For example one of the participants, Vivian argued;

“I lost track of one of my friends for several years...A day I found her on Facebook and we started to chat though our life are totally different. From then on, I feel connected with her even though I did not see her in person.”
(Interview, Apr. 15)

Furthermore, Mckenna, Green, & Gleason (2002) maintained that people will feel more comfortable when interacting with others in the virtual world than interacting face-to-face. As Table 5 indicates, more than 40 per cent of students chat with acquaintances or strangers cheerfully in Facebook. From Table 7, in the real-life, 34 per cent of students feel uncomfortable when talking to strangers. In other words, people tend to talk to acquaintances in the virtual world.

Besides, it is easier for people to open their mind in the virtual world than in the real world (Mckenna et al., 2002). Nonetheless, our findings regarding self-disclosure in both virtual and real-life are inconsistent with the previous studies. From Table 5, more than half of the participants do not think they will conceal their feelings on

Facebook. That is to say, people will not hide their real feelings. As indicated in Table 6, nearly half of students do not think it is easier for them to express their feelings after using Facebook. From Table 7, more percentage of students thinks it is easier for them to express their feelings in real life. In other words, people will not conceal their feelings but they will not reveal their real feelings, either. This is to say, people will not uncover everything in their mind; nonetheless, the person whom they are talking to is a main reasons for whether they are going to make a self- disclosure or not. As one of the participants, Wenda, expounded;

“Sometimes, I will not hide my inside feelings in Facebook; however, I will not express my every single feelings. Because I do not want all my inner feelings being seen or known from other acquaintances or someone I do not like...my friends and I will create communities in Facebook then share everything we want but just for those who I would like to share with. Then, we can feel sense of involvement.” (Interview, Feb. 26)

Facebook does build stronger interpersonal relationship in virtual world. Even though people will not veil their real feelings in Facebook, they will not express their real feelings, either.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the view of Wenzao Ursuline College students’ interpersonal relationship on Facebook. It investigated how Facebook affect college students’ daily lives and interpersonal relationship. Findings revealed that students’ viewpoints on using Facebook are various. Obviously, students feel closer to their friends after using some functions of Facebook. Others think Facebook is like a bridge which can help us to connect with the old friends who have not seen for a while. However, people think Facebook had a tendency to ruing family relationship. Finally, most students do not seem eye to eye with the previous study that people are easier to make a self-

disclosure in virtual world. It is different from the previous study that it is easier for people to make self- disclosure when using Facebook. Instead, they think Facebook impede them to express their feelings since they do not want everything is known by everyone.

Nowadays, with the development of the technology, more SNSs have been arisen and the way which people interact with others is changed from the traditional way to the more digital way. People are more inclined to chat with others via smart phones and Internet, especially for young generation. It ties up the relationship among people. The study indicated that people utilize SNSs, Facebook, to keep in touch with their loved ones, friends and family members. Moreover, people can get a sense of belongings after using Facebook chatting with others. This study wish to suggest that Facebook users should pay more attentiveness to Internet addiction. Furthermore, this study is limited in participants and literature review. Further researchers could invite more than one college students and have detailed literature review then the results could be more feasible.

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APPENDIX

親愛的受訪者：

此問卷旨在了解台灣大學生對 Facebook 使用之現況、對人際關係之影響，以作為本研究之相關參考資料。此份問卷僅做研究之用，所有回答以及個人資料於以保密，請放心作答。本研究非常需要您的協助，懇請您在百忙中撥冗填寫。再次感謝您的協助。

文藻外語大學英國語文系

學生：林永沛

指導教授：林文川

第一部分：個人基本資料

1. 請問您的性別 男性 女性
2. 請問您的所就讀的學校為 _____ [科技] 大學，_____ 年級
3. 請問你每天上網的時間為 1 小時內 1~2.5 小時內 2.5~4 小時 4 小時以上
4. 是否使用過 Facebook 有 無 [若無則跳至 **第三部分** 【Part 3】]

第二部分：使用 Facebook 之經驗

【Part 1】

1. 請問您當初加入 Facebook 的原因為何(可複選)?
 打發時間 朋友都在用 很多遊戲和心理測驗
 可找到許久不見的朋友 抒發心情
2. 請問您登入 Facebook 的頻率為何?
 每天 一個禮拜 3 次以內 一個月 3 次左右 一個月不到一次
3. 請問您平均一天總共使用多久的 Facebook?
 1 小時內 1~2.5 小時內 2.5~4 小時 4 小時以上
4. 請問您最常使用臉書何種功能(可複選)?
 遊戲 塗鴉牆 網誌 相簿 聊天室 心理測驗 其他 _____
5. 請問您使用上述您所勾選的功能原因為何?

6. 請問您每天使用臉書和朋友互動的時間約多久?
 1 小時內 1~2.5 小時內 2.5~4 小時 4 小時以上
7. 您覺得使用 Facebook 帶來甚麼好處(可複選)?
 提升友誼 消磨時間 心情放鬆 可認識更多人 其他 _____

8. 您覺得使用 Facebook 帶來甚麼壞處？

影響課業 缺乏隱私 網路成癮 破壞家庭關係 其他_____

【Part 2】

請根據左邊的描述，依照自己使用臉書之經驗，就下列各項敘述，於右欄進行圈選。

	非 常 不 同 意	沒 有 同 意	沒 有 同 意	同 意	非 常 同 意
1. 我每天都會不定期使用 Facebook 瀏覽最新消息	1	2	3	4	5
2. 我覺得 Facebook 明顯拉近我與朋友間的關係	1	2	3	4	5
3. 我會定期使用 Facebook，因為我害怕錯過朋友所發布的消息	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我認為 Facebook 上一個人好友人數的多寡，與他(她)受歡迎的程度呈正比	1	2	3	4	5
5. 我認為若 Facebook 上的好友人數不及其他人，是件令人感到尷尬或有點難堪的事	1	2	3	4	5
6. 我認為 Facebook 缺乏隱私	1	2	3	4	5
7. 我會在 Facebook 上隱藏真實的情感或感受	1	2	3	4	5
8. 我會使用 Facebook 是因為大家都在用，其實我認為它對我的生活並沒有那麼大的影響	1	2	3	4	5
9. 總而言之，我認為 Facebook 的優點多於缺點	1	2	3	4	5

第三部分：使用 Facebook 之人際關係影響

【Part 1】

1. 請問在你生活中，摯友約有幾位？

沒有 1~5 位 5~10 位 超過 10 位

2. 請問您 Facebook 上的好友人數為200 人內 200~400 人 400~600 人

600 人以上

3. 請問您認為您 Facebook 上的好友人數數量過少 剛好 過多

【Part 2】

請根據左邊的描述，依照自己使用臉書之影響，就下列各項敘述，於右欄進行圈選。

	非 常 不 同 意	沒 有 同 意	沒 有 同 意	同 意	非 常 同 意
1. 使用 Facebook 後，我比較容易認識新朋友	1	2	3	4	5
2. 使用 Facebook 後，我更容易表達我內心的想法	1	2	3	4	5
3. 使用 Facebook 後，我感到有被尊重的感覺	1	2	3	4	5

4. 使用 Facebook 後，我感受到我是被關心的	1	2	3	4	5
5. 使用 Facebook 後，即使是不認識的朋友我也會願意加他(她)為好友	1	2	3	4	5
6. 使用 Facebook 與朋友互動後，我感到更容易融入大家	1	2	3	4	5
7. 使用 Facebook 與朋友互動後，我對朋友更深入的瞭解	1	2	3	4	5
8. 使用 Facebook 與朋友互動後，可以增進我與朋友間的信任關係	1	2	3	4	5
9. 使用 Facebook 後，我認為徒增了更多的煩惱以及虛幻的友情	1	2	3	4	5
10. 使用 Facebook 後，對我的人際關係有所改善	1	2	3	4	5

【Part 3】

請根據左邊的描述，依照自己生活中的交友經驗，就下列各項敘述，於右欄進行圈選。

	非常 不 同 意	不 同 意	沒 有 意 見	同 意	非常 同 意
1. 我喜歡與朋友互動來往	1	2	3	4	5
2. 與朋友來往時，我感到很自在	1	2	3	4	5
3. 我在團體生活中，與他人互動時感到自在	1	2	3	4	5
4. 團體裡的某些人，我會盡量避開與他們互動	1	2	3	4	5
5. 在生活中，我覺得與陌生人講話會令我不自在	1	2	3	4	5
6. 在生活中，我很容易表達自己的情感	1	2	3	4	5
7. 我很容易對人失去信心	1	2	3	4	5
8. 我覺得很少人可以真正了解我	1	2	3	4	5
9. 即使和朋友在一起，我仍感到孤單	1	2	3	4	5
10. 我認為人與人之間都須保持戒心，這樣對我是安全的	1	2	3	4	5

問卷到此結束，非常感謝您的協助！

若您對 Facebook 與人際關係進一步訪談有興趣，請留下您的基本資料，謝謝！

姓名：_____

E-mail:_____