

Electronic Communication and Well-Being

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Experiment

Our goal was to determine the relationship between time spent on different forms of electronic communication and well being of users. Surveys were given to 43 EMU students at the beginning of the Fall 2011 semester. Twenty-four students preparing to leave for the South Africa Cross Cultural took the same survey before leaving.

Survey:

- What are the benefits/costs of using social media?
- How do you currently feel about your relationships?
- How much time do you spend using social media?
- Ryff well-being scale^[1]

Results:

		Social Media Total	Facebook	Twitter	Instant Messaging	Skype
Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	.319	.166	.314	.125	.330
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.221	.019	.354	.012
	N	56	56	56	57	57
Positive Relationships with Others	Pearson Correlation	.091	-.132	.163	-.307	.155
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.508	.335	.235	.021	.254
	N	55	55	55	56	56

Statistically significant results are marked by green cells. These significant correlations fall within the range of a “moderate effect size” according to psychological standards set by Cohen.^[2]

Texting, blogs, and email were found to have no significant linear correlation with any of the Ryff sub-scales. Environmental mastery, purpose in life, and self acceptance scores were not significantly correlated with social media use or direct person electronic communication. These scales and electronic communication methods were not included in the above table.

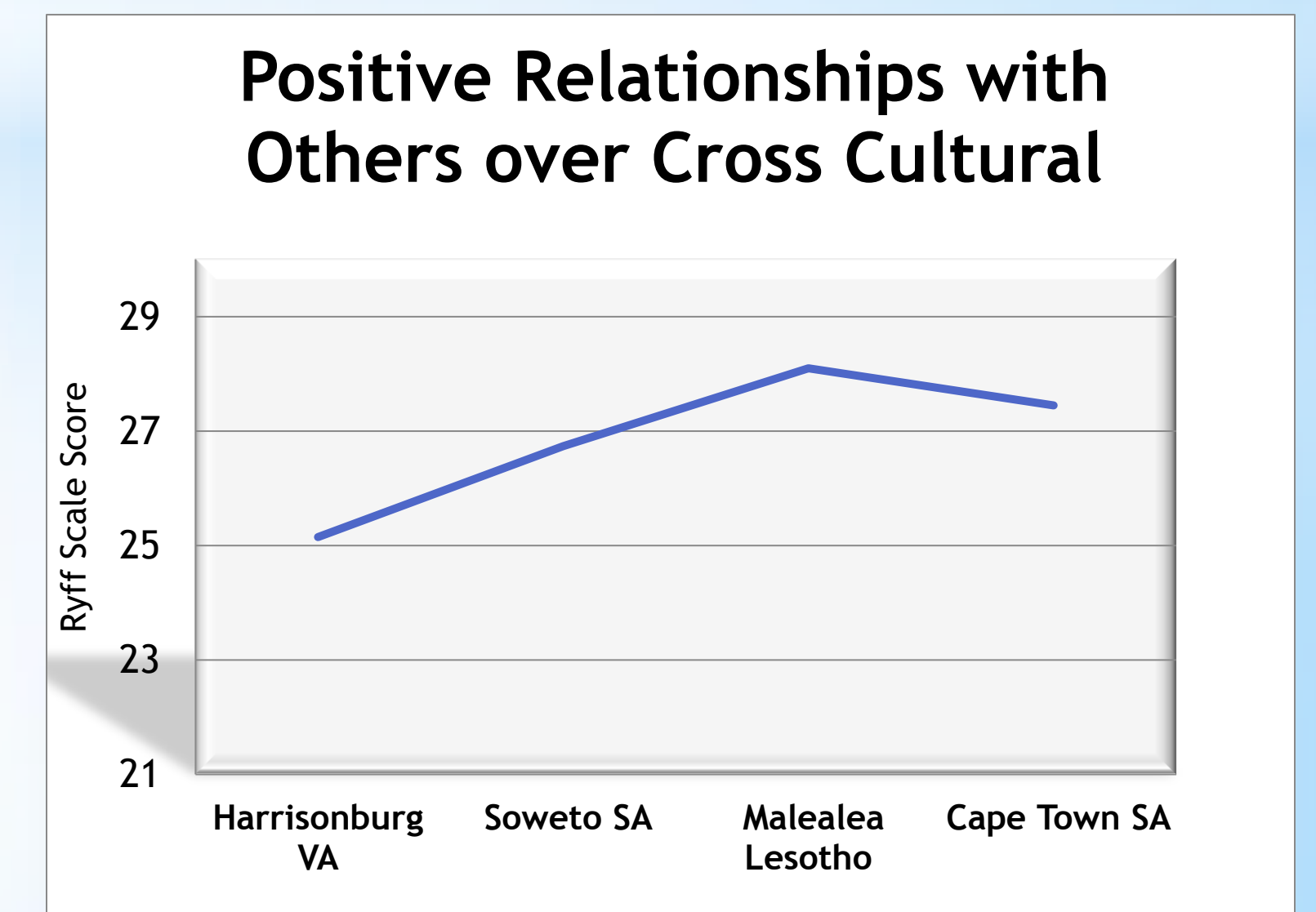
Does Social Media use affect social skills?

More than 1 in 5 people cited concern about degrading social skills as a result of social media use.

Our results indicate that there is no significant correlation between total time spent on social media and Positive Relationships score. ($r = .091$, $p = .508$)

Other Interesting Results

Privacy risks for users of social networks is currently a large research area in computer science^[3] yet only 1 student out of 63 cited “giving away personal information” as a concern. This disparity between researcher concern and user concern could be a topic for further examination.



References

1. Ryff, C. (1989). Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 57(6). 1069-1081.
2. Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd Ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum
3. Yabing Liu, Krishna P. Gummadi, Balachander Krishnamurthy, and Alan Mislove. 2011. Analyzing facebook privacy settings: user expectations vs. reality. In *Proceedings of the 2011 ACM SIGCOMM conference on Internet measurement conference (IMC '11)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 61-70. DOI=10.1145/2068816.2068823 <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2068816.2068823>