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How self-perception of extroversion can increase with social media use

By Tiffany Williams

Abstract

The relationship between personality and its effect on social media usage has been prominently researched throughout psychological research and modern day. Extraversion being one of particular interest. This study looks at the relationship between social media use and levels of extraversion

Introduction

As proposed by many trait theories throughout psychological research, the traits in which make up our personality have a major impact on our attitudes and behaviours towards everyday situations. This can be prominent in modern day with the use of social media and how others use it specifically with extraversion.

This research report reveals the studies and findings on the relationship between extraversion and social media use.

Previous data and studies suggest that one's level of extraversion is directly linked to a person's behaviour surrounding social media usage. One study conducted in 2021 by the University of Trinidad and Tobago aimed to prove the hypothesis that extraversion "mediates the relationship" (Current Psychology 2023) between self-esteem and problematic Facebook usage as well as self-esteem. Results showed a significant impact that extraversion has on self-esteem.

The study I have conducted aims to answer questions about the impact social media has on a person's self-perception of extraversion. My hypothesis is that the study will show those who

score high on social media usage will be proportional to high levels of extraversion also. I believe previous studies support this.

Methods

This study used a between –subjects design across participants. The independent variable was the levels of extraversion. This independent variable contained two groups those with high levels of extraversion and those with low levels of extraversion. The dependent variable measured in this group was the usage of social media across participants.

Participants

In this study, a total of 34 participants were used to collect data. 13 identified as male, 19 as female and 2 identified as non-binary. Participants ranged from ages 18 to 69 years of age.

The modal age was 25 with 6 participants falling into this category.

Materials

The Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999) was used to assess levels of extraversion in participants (see appendix A). The full BFI includes 44 items, however only items related to the trait of extraversion were used in this study. A total of eight items, therefore, were used to measure extraversion levels. Participants were instructed to respond to each of the eight statements based on how they generally see themselves, and the anchor ‘I see myself as someone who...’ was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Responses to each statement, including “... generates a lot of enthusiasm”, were given on a 5-point Likert scales anchored from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with total scores on the scale subsequently ranging from eight to 40. Three items were negatively worded and required reverse scoring prior to analysis. Higher scores for this personality trait indicate a more outgoing and sociable person. Internal reliability for the extraversion scale in

this study was initiated to be .56 which is lower than that reported by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) (Cronbach's alpha = .83). To measure level of social media use, the Social Media Use Questionnaire (SMUQ; Xanidis & Brignell., 2016) was used. This questionnaire contained nine items that aimed to assess levels of dependence to social networking sites (SNS). Participants were asked to provide a response to statements, such as "I spend a large proportion of my day using social network sites", on a five-point scale anchored between zero (never) to five (always). Final scores ranged between zero and 36, with higher scores indicative of higher levels of dependence on SNS. Internal reliability for this scale was .90, which corresponds with previous research using this scale (e.g., Xanidis & Brignell, 2016)

Procedure

Participants were recruited through the university's experiment management system. A link was provided to give them access to the online study . Before engaging with the experiment, individuals were expected to read an information sheet about the experiment and then asked to sign a consent form and provide details on their age and gender . Participants were then asked to complete two questionnaires, one which measured their levels of extraversion and another on their social media usage. Once complete a debrief form was provided before the study concluded.

Results

The results shown will be the descriptives in levels of extraversion and social media use. This will give us reasoning to reject or accept the hypothesis that higher levels of extraversion will equate to higher levels of social media use.

Table 1 below shows the data collected for the total extraversion scores . This is important to give us the average score and the descriptives on variance and dispersion between the 34 participants

	Mean	Standard deviation
Total extraversion	24.38	4.46

An analysis of the group statistics were performed and an independent t-test was produced for total social media use . This gives us a clearer picture of the average between group high and low and tells us if we can accept or reject our hypothesis.

This is shown in Table 2 below

Table 2

Appendix A (group statistics)

	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Total social media usage	Low	12.61	6.28
	High	15.14	7.44

Appendix B (independent t-test)

	Sig.	t	df
Total social media use	0.206	-1.019	32

The significance of the independence t-test is non-significant since it is higher than the critical value of 0.05 . This means that we reject the hypothesis that higher extraversion levels equate for higher social media usage.

Discussion

As reported in the results section the hypothesis that higher levels of extraversion will mean higher levels of social media use has been rejected as concluded from the results of the independent t-test.

This can be surprising when looking at previous research . The Big Five Model (Costa & McCrae 1985) proposes the idea that high extraversion equates to a person desiring socialisation and personal connection to the outside world more than others. Previous studies have found that the Big Five has been influential in one's social media usage (Seidman, 2013). This previous study did show neuroticism and agreeableness to be the biggest indicators of social media usage . Perhaps, the technological factor here acts as a barrier in extraverts wanting to connect with others .

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