The Relationship Between Finsta Usage and Personality Type

Social media has replaced outdated technologies as the modern generation's preferred mode of communicating, sharing information, and gathering knowledge. As the popularity of social media continues to rise exponentially, new appropriations of online platforms have emerged, such as Finsta accounts on Instagram. The overarching purpose of this study was to assess the personality types of individuals utilizing this emerging form of communication. Finstas encompass facets of social media usage prevalent in both extraversion and narcissism, which suggests a potential association between those personality types and an individual's likelihood to have a Finsta. As a result, the proposed research question for the study was:

In college students, what is the relationship between Finsta usage and the personality types of extraversion and narcissism?

The null hypothesis for the study was:

There is no relationship between Finsta usage and the personality types of extraversion and narcissism.

Methods

Design of study. To find a correlation between the pertaining variables, administering a survey was determined to be the most effective method of study. Specifically, an internet survey was conducted, as it is a convenient, realistic, and accessible form of collecting data for both the researchers and the subjects within the target sample. Furthermore, the study was cross-sectional, given that the data was collected at one specific point in time. The study was not concerned with observing changes between personality type and Finsta usage over a period of time, which made a cross-sectional survey – rather than a longitudinal study – more fitting.

Sample of study. The sample of the study was undergraduate college students because they are most relevant to the research topic. Younger demographics present higher frequency and variety of individualized social media usage compared to older ones, and college students embody feedback-seeking behavior often manifested in social media (Keating, Hendy, & Can, 2015; Wang, Cullen, Yao, & Li, 2013). Moreover, college students require a source of validation for their actions to find comfort in the relatively unknown circumstances they are in, and social media – as an instantaneous feedback-seeking channel – can provide people with validation through the mode of likes and comments for their content.

In total, the survey received 112 responses, which was below the target sample size of 150. Out of 112, 13 of the responses were rejected due to incompletion, so the actual sample size was 99. Of the 99 participants, 51.5% were seniors, while only 7.1% were freshmen. 37.4% of participants were male, and 61.6% were female, with 1% of participants identifying as non-binary. Lastly, the study was comprised of undergraduate students from a mix of various universities, and it was not limited to students within the College of Communication.

Measurements

Conceptual and operational definition of variables. To successfully examine the relationship between Finsta usage and personality types, two main variables were defined and measured. First, the presence of Finstas and its usage among college students was identified as the independent variable. The conceptual definition of a Finsta is a secondary, private Instagram profile with a small group of close followers featuring deeply personal and intimate content (Safronova, 2015). Operationally, Finsta usage is defined as a nominal variable; a person either does or does not have a Finsta account. This was determined by a close-ended yes-or-no

question in the survey, and later, it was coded empirically in SPSS on a one-point scale (0="No, I do not have Finsta account"; 1="Yes, I have Finsta account"). By assigning numerical values to the responses, the data collected for Finsta users in the sample could be directly compared with non-Finsta users.

Furthermore, the tendencies of Finsta users were measured, including frequency of usage and the type of content posted. To measure frequency as an interval variable, the survey used pre-determined measures from an existing study ranging from "Less than once a week" to "5 or more times a day" (Jasso-Medrano & Lopez-Rosales, 2018). Finsta usage was also measured as an interval variable through a series of statements (e.g. "I am likely to share a personal achievement on my Finsta.") rated with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely inaccurate) to 5 (extremely accurate). These statements were based on a study by Mcgregor & Li (2019) that measured the type of content Finsta users were prone to posting.

In addition, the personality types of extraversion and narcissism were defined and measured as the dependent variables. Conceptually, extraverts are sociable, optimistic, and energetic, and because of their need to enhance their social networks, they have generally higher levels of social media activity (Blackwell, Leaman, Tramposch, Osborne, & Liss, 2017; Seidman, 2013). On the other hand, narcissists are attracted to social media because it offers "a large network of shallow, impersonal relationships and give narcissists autonomy over how they choose to present themselves, often in self-enhancing ways" (Singh et al., 2018). Operationally, the prevalence of the personality traits in the sample were measured as interval variables, using scales taken directly from the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) and the Goldberg Personality Test.

To measure narcissism, eight pairs of statements were selected from the NPI (e.g. "I get upset when people do not notice how I look when I go out in public" vs. "I do not mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public", and participants were asked to choose the statement they identified with more (Raskin & Terry, 1988). For extraversion, the survey included seven statements from the Goldberg Personality Test (e.g. "I like being the center of attention.") for which respondents were asked to asked to rate how accurately it describes them (Goldberg, 1992). The answers were measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely accurate) to 5 (extremely inaccurate). Additionally, the survey introduced neuroticism as a third personality type in an attempt to distract participants from the true purpose of the study. For this variable, the survey included seven statements from the Goldberg Personality Test (e.g. "I get stressed out easily."), and participants were asked to rank the accuracy on a Likert scale, similar to extraversion (Goldberg, 1992). Empirically, these responses were later re-coded in SPSS and assigned a numerical value. A higher score insinuated a higher prevalence of the personality type in the subject. After running a reliability test of the re-coded personality questions, the Cronbach's alpha was .48 for narcissism, .71 for extraversion, and .85 for neuroticism.

Procedure

Before the survey began, subjects were presented with a general consent form provided by the university. Next, participants were given instructions on the length and requirements specific to the questionnaire. Subjects had to be at least 18 years old and an undergraduate student at an accredited university to participate. Every question on the survey was required, so participants could not skip ahead or disregard any questions.

Determining Instagram usage. The first part of the survey consisted of general demographic questions, including academic standing, gender, and age. No other questions regarding personal or identifying information were asked to protect the anonymity of the participant. The beginning of the survey also established the control variable, an Instagram account. Participants without an Instagram were directed to the end of the study, and their data was not used. For those with an Instagram account, questions were asked regarding frequency of usage, type of content posted/viewed, privacy setting, if the participant had ever completed a brand deal, and motivations for usage. The purpose of these Instagram-specific questions was to prevent bias from testing procedures by disguising the true focus of the study. Subsequently, subjects were asked whether or not they had a Finsta account, and those who responded yes were questioned on their usage tendencies using the aforementioned measurements.

Studying personality types. The second part of the survey focused on the prevalence of each studied personality type among the participants. Regardless of whether the participant had a Finsta or not, a score for all three personality types was measured and collected for every respondent. The personality type questions were randomized for each participant to combat order effects. Participants successfully completed the survey once they finished answering all the personality type questions.

Results

Among the 99 subjects, 53 individuals (53.5%) reported having a Finsta account, and 46 individuals (46.5%) reported not having a Finsta account. Of the 53 individuals with Finsta accounts, 83.0% reported logging in to their Finsta account at least once a week, and 50.9% reported logging in to their Finsta account at least once a day. Conversely, only 39.7% of Finsta

users reported posting content on their Finsta at least once a week, and 11.3% of individuals with Finsta accounts reported that they do not engage with other people's content on Finsta. Also, the mean level of narcissism exhibited by the sample was 2.80 out of 6.00. The mean level of extraversion was 3.03 out of 5.00, and the mean level of neuroticism was 3.27 out of 5.00.

Independent sample t-test analysis. To analyze the relationship between Finsta usage and personality types, independent sample t-tests were employed because the study involved a combination of nominal and interval variables. The nominal independent variable was Finsta usage, i.e. whether a subject had a Finsta account or not. The interval dependent variables were the level of personality types exhibited (i.e. how extraverted, narcissistic, and neurotic the subject was). Since the nominal variable only studied the difference between two categories (Finsta users and non-Finsta users), a t-test was the most applicable form of analysis.

Finsta usage and narcissism. First, an independent sample t-test was employed to test the relationship between Finsta usage and levels of narcissism. Findings indicated that individuals with a Finsta account (M = 3.11) and those without a Finsta account (M = 2.43) do not significantly differ in the level of narcissism exhibited in their personality, $t(97) = 1.97$, $p = .05$. Therefore, the results failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Finsta usage and extraversion. Next, an independent sample t-test was employed to test the relationship between Finsta usage and levels of extraversion. Findings indicated that individuals with a Finsta account (M = 3.17) and those without a Finsta account (M = 2.88) differ significantly in the level of extraversion exhibited in their personality, $t(97) = 2.32$, $p < .05$. Therefore, the results rejected the null hypothesis.

Finsta usage and neuroticism. Although neuroticism was not included in the original parameters of the research question, the methods and measurements used for this dependent variable made the data valid for consideration. Consequently, an independent sample t-test was employed to test the relationship between Finsta usage and levels of extraversion. Findings indicated that individuals with a Finsta account (M = 3.43) and those without a Finsta account (M = 3.09) differ significantly in the level of neuroticism exhibited in their personality, t (97) = 2.00, p < .05. Therefore, the results also rejected the null hypothesis.

Correlation test for frequency of Finsta usage and personality types. Within the survey, the nominal independent variable of Finsta usage was also studied at a higher level of measurement: frequency, i.e. how often the subject logged in to their Finsta. The interval variable of frequency can be compared to the interval variable of personality type through a correlation test, so a correlation was employed to test the relationship between frequency of Finsta usage and level of narcissism, extraversion, and neuroticism. Findings indicated that there is no significant association between frequency of Finsta usage and levels of narcissism (r = .23, p = .10), and the same was determined for extraversion (r = .067, p = .632) and neuroticism (r = .13, p = .37). However, the correlation did reveal a positive association between levels of narcissism and levels of extraversion (r = .522, p < .01). In other words, the more narcissistic one is, the more extraverted he or she will be (or vice versa). The association between these variables was strong, and while this does not directly correspond to the null hypothesis, it does show support for the methodology behind studying narcissism and extraversion together in a single study.

Discussion

Summary of results. Overall, the statistical analysis of the study resulted in a mixture of negating and accepting the null hypothesis. Based on the independent sample t-tests, it was determined that Finsta users and non-Finsta users do not significantly differ in the amount of narcissistic traits in their personalities. For extraversion and neuroticism, however, Finsta users and non-Finsta users significantly differ in the amount of extroverted and neurotic traits in their personalities. Therefore, the study can affirm the existence of a relationship between an individual's Finsta usage and an individual's personality type.

Practical and theoretical implications of study. In terms of practical implications, the results from the study make evident the way in which social media users manipulate the interface of a platform to satisfy the inherent needs and demands of their personality type. It begs the question of whether or not social media creators take personality types into account when developing services, and how they could capitalize on advertising certain features to certain types of people. Theoretically, the implications of the study build on the connection between social media usage and personality types discovered by prior literature (Azucar, Marengo, & Settanni, 2018; Singh, Farley & Donahue, 2018). Moreover, the results expand on this particular field of research by exploring a gap in an area of interest previously untouched.

In the case of extraversion, findings are indirectly consistent with existing literature that suggest individuals with higher levels of extraversion typically present higher levels of social media activity (Blackwell et al., 2017; Seidman, 2013). While an association could not be directly established between the frequency of Finsta usage and levels of extraversion through the correlation test, the mean level of extraversion of Finsta users was significantly higher than that of non-Finsta users. If an individual has a second account on top of a regular one, then it can be

assumed that the individual would spend more time on Instagram than a non-Finsta user because he or she manages more accounts. While such an assertion would require further investigation, the study remains within the scope of prior literature in this regard.

In contrast, the study negated other preceding research that characterized extraverted individuals as less likely to self-disclose personal information online than those who are introverted (Loiacono, Carey, Misch, Spencer, & Speranza, 2012). Finstas appeal to college students because of their focus on authentic self-disclosure, so given this, introverts would more likely be akin to using Finstas (Mcgregor & Li, 2019). However, findings did not show support for this, as Finsta users leaned towards high levels of extraversion, which provides an interesting deviation from previous literature. In hindsight, the divergence from prior studies can depict how personality types are far from a definitive predictor of social media usage because of the varying operational definitions for each personality type.

For narcissism, existing research predicted that narcissists would be more prone to using Finstas because they are frequently occupied by self-promotion and exhibitionism (Hawk, van den Eijnden, van Lissa, & ter Bogt, 2019). While the mean level of narcissism in Finsta users was higher than that of non-Finsta users, the study could not prove a significant relationship between narcissism and Finsta usage because the p-value was above .05. This could have been the result of not reaching the sample target or the social desirability factor. Narcissism is a much more negatively-perceived trait than extraversion, so respondents would be less likely to associate themselves with statements deeming themselves as narcissistic. Therefore, the study does not necessarily contradict prior academia in its entirety as a result of external errors and bias.

Methodology of study and its reliability and validity. There were various strengths and limitations to the methodology used for the study. While online surveys are easy and cheap to conduct, they are subject to the varying circumstances in which a person takes them under (e.g. location, time, mood, etc.). This decreased the test/retest reliability of the study because the researcher is unable to control or examine the state of or the environment around the subject. Also, the study had low internal and external validity because surveys generally cannot prove causation and the sample size obtained was too small

As for strengths, the study maintained high internal consistency and multiple item reliability because of its use of pre-existing and highly acknowledged measures of personality like the NPI and the Goldberg Personality Scale. This also indicated high face and criterion validity, though there are areas for improvements. Additionally, the study can be assumed to have high inter-coder reliability because it only measured the independent and dependent variables using close-ended questions.

Direction for future research. To improve the constructs of this study, future research should aim to increase the reliability of its methodology, especially for narcissism. Another possible reason the study failed to reject the null hypothesis for narcissism is that the criterion of measurement was insufficient. The study utilized the exact same dual-statement procedure as the NPI, in which subjects were asked to pick one of two statements they identified with more. While the NPI boasts high reliability as a standard of measurement, its application to the context of Finsta usage may have been limited, as the choices may be too polarizing. This can serve as an explanation for the low Cronbach's alpha, too. For the continuation of this study, narcissism would be better examined for this purpose using a Likert scale adapted from the statements in the

NPI. Streamlining the procedure for testing all of the personality types into a similar Likert scale would boost reliability and consistency.

In the future, the study should expand the criteria of its independent and dependent variables to further the scope and application of its findings. For example, future research should examine the frequency of usage more closely since it is the variable that can establish a stronger correlation between Finsta usage and personality types. Another fascinating expansion of the study would be the consideration of a wider population beyond college students. To continue exploring new facets of social media usage, researchers can also investigate other new digital concepts similar to Finstas, like the 'close friends' feature on Instagram and private Snapchat stories.

Conclusion

The study of Finsta usage and its potential relationship to personality types offered a digital native perspective on the future of social media research. Digital natives, born into and raised with the astronomical rise of social media, operate in existing fields with the acknowledgement of their own needs. The landscape of social media is constantly evolving to fit demands beyond its inherent purposes, and it is vital to continue analyzing the effect this has on society. Finstas were not developed by Instagram itself, but by the users looking to find new modes of meaningful interaction. The phenomenon of personality determining social media usage has only just seen its beginning, and future research should be keen to determine the cycle of causation behind this.