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Examining Snapchat: Narcissistic Tendencies of Core Users

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Abstract

This study aims to establish current levels of narcissistic tendencies among the major Snapchat demographic, 18 to 34-year-olds in the United States. Like the Raskin and Terry 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory, commonly referred to as NPI-40, the present survey utilized a smaller variant with 16 items, known as NPI-16, for participants. This study may provide indications for further research and advertising techniques using social media, specifically Snapchat.

Introduction

As communication and documentation have been revolutionized by the advent of digital and mobile technology, so has the realm of advertising. Consumers now have the ability to create, save, share, and document memories like never before through social media and digital storage. Advertisers recognized early on the potential that digital marketing possessed along with the new factors and information gathering methods that could be utilized to better serve consumers.

However, the effects of a digital era on society are not always as warmly received. For some, the hold that digital platforms have over users raises questions about why the tools are so popular and whether they are actually serving a fulfilling purpose.

"Never before has a generation so diligently recorded themselves accomplishing so little."

This generic phrase has circulated on the internet as a joke or conversation piece. While such a statement raises points that are outside of the scope of this study, this illuminates the fact that much of today's actions are recorded and shared digitally, whether it is monumental or mundane in nature. Technology and its seemingly limitless possibilities for sharing and recording provides a digital era where users are so enamored with the products that many incorporate technology into their daily routines. One of the most popular options on the market is social media, which ranges from Facebook to Snapchat to old-fashioned emails.

With such a high level of importance placed on social media, advertisers are constantly looking for ways to cater to consumers' needs and desires. Social media and other digital sources allow users to document their lives and consequently the brands and services that users encounter. By enhancing user experience with products and making the products more easily

incorporated into a user's recorded life, advertisers reach a broader audience with new types of connections that go beyond traditional advertising tactics. Essentially, advertisers are able to step beyond the detached billboard ads or television commercials and are now able to deliver personalized content to users on devices that are almost always close at hand.

Returning back to the aforementioned excerpt, the tongue-in-cheek style of it tends to overlap with another debated topic regarding much of today's digital users. Specifically, some call into question whether younger generations are falling prone to an overabundance of self-focus, or an increase in levels of narcissism.

As social media and its presence has increased, research has started following behavioral patterns and tendencies of users. What has not been heavily vetted is a specific category of social media known as ephemeral media. One of the most widely used ephemeral media services is Snapchat, where users can send and receive content that seemingly vanishes after a short period of time. The leading demographic for Snapchat just happens to be 18 to 34-year-olds, who hold a majority of upcoming spending potential and are sometimes criticized for possessing narcissistic tendencies. Since advertisers are looking to better understand and subsequently serve consumers, data collection and demographics acquisition are at an all-time high.

Snapchat is the leading choice for social media among one of the largest demographics that possesses a large portion of spending potential, i.e. Millennials, so gaining as substantial of an understanding of what these consumers want is necessary for advertisers to maintain an experience that Millennials and adjacent generations will want to join.

This study aims to lay a foundation to fill in a specific aspect of user behavior, namely the presence, if any, of narcissistic tendencies in the ideal Snapchat users. However, this study will not compare the narcissistic tendencies between generations.

Review of Literature

But First, Let Me Take a Selfie

One of the most common social activities that is associated with Millennials and their technological dependence is taking a selfie. While narcissistic tendencies and Snapchat can involve a multitude of elements, the selfie plays a major role in digital expression and is a key term to keep in mind when evaluating both areas.

According to Alblooshi (2015), a selfie is an image of the self, rendered without any other person's assistance, usually taken with a cellphone or camera (Alblooshi, 2015). So long as it includes the person taking the photo, a selfie can have other people in the image (Sorokowski, Sorokowska, Oleszkiewicz, Frackowiak, Huk, & Pisanski, 2015).

As to the motivations and goals of posting selfies, Alblooshi notes that a selfie can be posted for simple amusement, to show off, to satiate narcissistic desires, and for a multitude of other motives (Alblooshi, 2015).

While millions of selfies are taken each day, the term had humble beginnings, starting in 2002 when Steven Wrighter used the term in a forum (Alblooshi, 2015). After almost a decade, the term reached mainstream usage around 2012, making it into Oxford Dictionaries just a year later.

Selfies, Narcissism, and Gender

Modern society has its own ideas and guesses about how gender, narcissism, and selfies are interrelated through stereotypes and personal experiences, but research has yet to be as thoroughly conducted on how these affect each other as compared to each individual topic.

A European study found that narcissism scores more significantly indicate selfie posting behavior among men than among women on social media (Sorokowski et al., 2015). No matter

what type of selfie, men's tendencies to post selfies are significantly and positively associated with their narcissism score from Raskin and Terry's Narcissistic Personality Inventory. Certain narcissism subscales can also be used to predict the frequency and the type of selfie that men may post. Women, on the other hand, have a weak correlation when compared to men (Sorokowski et al., 2015).

At least among men, narcissism scores can significantly aid in predicting selfie behaviors, which in turn, sets the stage for further study into how social media and its platform create needs for strategic self-presentation by users. Initially starting out in chatrooms, users on social media could create fictitious personas, but many social platforms, like Facebook and Snapchat, encourage users to create realistic and somewhat accurate profiles. According to Herring and Kapidzic (2015), social media allows people to have another place to create a filtered and curated persona in addition to their real life one (Herring & Kapidzic, 2015). Further elaboration on social media, selfies, narcissism, and how they are all used in social media to create a curated persona will be discussed in the narcissism section below.

Narcissism

Narcissism, as a whole, is rarely defined by a single facet or set idea; it is instead a topic that has multiple definitions and points of debate. One of the most notable figures in narcissism-centered literature is Sigmund Freud, introducing the basis for modern narcissism discussions in his piece, "On Narcissism" (Zuern, 1998). Freud characterizes narcissism as a sexually rooted human aspect that partly helps in human survival and interaction; further reading shows that narcissism has several classifications that can be present in different ratios in individuals. However, an imbalance or pronounced presence of some of these classifications can leave an individual with what Freud indicates to be a mental illness (Zuern, 1998; Dubin, 2017).

Freud ties the development and management of one's ego, self-esteem, and sexuality to narcissism. Narcissism is broken into primary and secondary narcissism to better illustrate Freud's interpretation of these aspects and the self. Primary narcissism is what Freud considers to be the portion that all humans have an innate amount of, where they use libidinal investment in the self early on, and then on to others as they develop, to function in society and to understand themselves. Secondary narcissism is when this outward object libido is turned back on the self, creating an unhealthy, and often problematic, strain of narcissistic tendencies (SigmundFreud.net, 2015; L., 2015; Dubin, 2017). Due to the extremely technical nature of the work and different interpretations of Freud's points, a newer extension of this foundation is needed.

Building partly from what Freud established, Otto Kernberg asserts that narcissism, essentially, is defined as how self-esteem is regulated, where there are normal amounts of narcissistic tendencies needed to function as a stable adult. There is also the scenario of an imbalance in self-esteem, where the main focus is on the self but needs to be heavily validated by others to remotely stabilize. Normal infantile narcissism and regression to infantile narcissism, which we will not focus on, are other variations that Kernberg touches on (L., 2015). With this definition and Freud's foundation, an individual will possess normal amounts of narcissistic tendencies so that he or she can have enough confidence and self-respect to function in society while showing the levels of support needed for others to have the affects reciprocated.

Since this study is considering the average user and not someone clinically labeled as having serious imbalances of libidinal investment, a subclinical version of narcissism based on Kernberg's idea is used. According to Davenport, Bergman, Bergman, and Fearrington (2014), narcissists are characterized by acting entitled, possessing high self-esteem and large egos, and

can be socially competitive and domineering, yet they need or seek constant praise and support from others and have relatively unstable self-esteem, relationships, and expectations of self and others. Narcissists also tend to be limited in their abilities to show and process empathy (Davenport, Bergman, Bergman, & Fearrington, 2014).

Using this as the working definition of narcissism and what defines a narcissist, narcissistic tendencies are instances of these actions and how likely someone displays them. Just as Kernberg notes that certain levels of these tendencies are part of a healthy existence, high or detrimentally low levels of narcissistic tendencies can indicate that someone has an abnormal level of narcissism, which will partly be analyzed in this study's sample.

Narcissism in Social Networking Sites

Taking the working definition of narcissism, the roles of narcissism in social media and current research following these themes can now be more easily elucidated. Within the past decade, two of the largest social media outlets were Facebook and Twitter. Thanks to the curated content and general push towards realistic profiles, researchers have been able to thoroughly cover narcissistic tendencies and correlates in these two media giants. A recent study in 2015 also contributed to modern analysis of narcissism by debunking the long-held public misconception that the usage of first-person pronouns indicates narcissism when in higher abundance; by conducting the study with a diverse and large population and utilizing different methods, the investigation showed that there is no correlation between the two factors (Carey, Küfner, Deters, Donnellan, Brucks, Holtzman, Back, & Pennebaker, 2015).

When analyzing these two social networking sites (SNS), Twitter's mechanics differ substantially from that of Facebook. Twitter is solely posting content, known as tweets, and following others. Facebook, however, provides a more robust toolset for users to channel

narcissistic tendencies (Davenport et al., 2014). Davenport and company's study found that Twitter usage correlates with narcissism in the college demographic, but Facebook had no measurable correlation. Twitter usage more accurately indicate narcissism in college students, but Facebook tends to predict narcissism in adults more strongly (Davenport et al., 2014).

One caveat in Davenport's review is the issue of establishing and measuring passive and active usage within platforms. Active usage is when a user creates content and passive usage is when a user simply views or interacts with content (Davenport et al., 2014). Generally speaking, narcissists will usually attempt to satisfy their needs through active usage, whether it is through bragging, seeking out approval, or whatever means proves effective. While Davenport and company mention that narcissist tendencies can be identified, the complexities of motives for any kind of SNS usage can be difficult to articulate, especially on a site that has numerous types of users and features, like Facebook (Davenport et al., 2014).

Mehdizadeh obtained similar findings in that narcissists are more apt to take to active usage rather than passive—more specifically, narcissists will post a visual that meets their needs rather than typing and posting solely text to assert their superiority (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Narcissists are also more likely to engage with and check Facebook more frequently than the average user, especially among college students.

The study also reinforces how useful social media is to those exhibiting higher narcissistic tendencies. By providing customizable profiles and features, Facebook and similar SNS allow narcissists to regulate content and amass large numbers of shallow or trivial relations (Mehdizadeh, 2010). This newer mentioning of large shallow relationships ties into a narcissist's desire to appear successful, which social popularity can commonly be considered. Facebook

allows users to gain as many relationships, or friends, as they like without having to build intimate relations, mainly doing this to feed their own desires.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Narcissism may feed a person's drive to seek out attention and praise but how they select the platforms and methods to meet their needs is grounded in uses and gratifications theory.

As cited in Alblooshi, 2015, Elihu Katz defined the uses and gratifications theory as seeing what users do with media rather than what media outlets offer or do for the users (Alblooshi, 2015). Uses and gratifications is further broken down into four steps, where users figure out what their specific goals are. Users then pick the tool that they believe best suits their gratification needs. Once these are established, media outlets compete for the user's attention until the tool finally satisfies one or all of the gratification goals.

A narcissist needs a range of previously discussed traits where they are praised, can boast, feel successful, and manipulate resources to balance out any number of securities. Once they figure out what needs are present, a narcissist can then browse through all of the different social media tools until several seem promising. A narcissist then uses the features to meet these needs, or gratifications.

What is Snapchat?

Known primarily for its main premise—the utilization of ephemeral content—Snapchat is an instant messaging (IM) app. Ephemeral social media is defined as content that is erased, or expires, after a set period of time or action sequence (Bayer, Ellison, Schoenebeck, & Falk, 2015). While many apps are incorporating ephemeral features, the idea of ephemeral communication shows up in older methods, like face-to-face conversations and phone calls where no record is kept by default (Bayer et al., 2015). However, since Snapchat does not require

users to interact with many of its features simultaneously, it differs from the aforementioned methods because Snapchat is asynchronous; users can send a message or image and the recipient can view it at any time, whereas a phone call between two people happens in a synchronized process.

Initially created by two college students in 2011, Snapchat now has over 150 million users sending 1 billion snaps every day (Snap Inc., 2017). The original focus of Snapchat was to be able to send short videos and photos to other mobile device users that would expire after a maximum of 10 seconds and would be deleted from users' devices. A picture shared on Snapchat is simply known as a Snap. Users can also send short videos, captions, instant messages, and even digital currency to other users.

As the app grew, new features were added. 2013 provided users with the Stories feature where content is not highly curated; rather, it is a collection of snaps in chronological order and expires within 24 hours. Snapchat finished 2014 by offering users Snapcash, where users can send each other money from a linked account by simply typing an amount, e.g. $12.50, and hitting a specified button. January 2015 saw the addition of the Discover feature where publishers, like National Geographic, can reach users with editorial content designed specifically for the app. Early 2016 introduced the novelty of on-demand geofilters, where users can pay to have a certain geographic location trigger a customized filter that can be used on Snaps. Since the collection of this study's data, newer features have been released for the app but will not be analyzed due to their unavailability at the time of the survey release (Snap Inc., 2017). This is not a comprehensive list of all of Snapchat's features.

Unlike the majority of other social media services, Snapchat can only be used on a mobile device. Snapchat is solely an IM app. Other social media tools, like Facebook, have IM

applications and aspects incorporated into their services but also exist in web browsers, making them fall under social networking sites (SNS) as well (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). IM is more of an intimate and private experience where the content shared is not usually displayed to the public by default. SNS are more like public forums where what you post is shared with larger groups and sometimes provides more robust content options (Piwek & Joinson, 2016).

In relation to the higher intimacy, Piwek and Joinson found that Snapchat is better suited to bonding rather than bridging socially, where bonding is creating a smaller circle of contacts with deeper bonds and bridging is connecting on a lower level with a higher number of contacts (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). By example, Snapchat users are usually connecting with each other on a more intimate subject matter, more frequently, with those that they know fairly well. An example of bridging is where someone is friends with all of their high school classmates that they have not seen often or even for decades; they simply have friended other users on Facebook to increase their friend count or for other smaller reasons.

With the intimate nature, vanishing content, and variety of features, it may seem like an app designed for those seeking higher security measures. In actuality, Snapchat is more often used because it is fun and enjoyable for users and feeds the bonding experience (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). Snapchat is associated with positive emotional responses in addition to user enjoyment, being presented not as a photography sharing app but as a way to have spontaneous interactions (Bayer et al., 2015). While Snapchat does not offer strong social support, the ability to share life's small moments with close ties helps to bolster positive moods and interactions. Snapchat guides users into this usage pattern partly by its design where users have to share content close to the event and then it is deleted after it is viewed. While major events can be

shared, users are more apt to send and discard pictures of small and unimportant content (Bayer et al., 2015).

Why focus on Snapchat?

To fully highlight the importance of Snapchat to the advertising community, understanding the role that advertising plays in Snapchat and with its main audience, young adults that are usually 18-34 years old, is key.

One point of interest is that consumers tend to associate themselves with what they consume to create an identity. Up until the advent of digital technology, people were often recognized by the objects and places attached to them (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Digital platforms now offer new ways for people to create digital selves and choose how they present themselves. This has created a new space for advertisers to not only market, but to offer intangible items, articles, images, and ideas for consumers to attach their digital personas to.

Developing this identity is an important process for each individual. For Snapchat's core users, this search for identity and relationships, both digitally and physically, can be at its peak due to the high level of transition and self-discovery in young adults' lives. A study observing Chinese college students found that the time and energy young adults spend creating content on SNS and responding to others during this transition is actually worth the effort; while finding a balance is important, building this social network when starting on this new step of life is crucial to expedite a healthy adjustment (Liu & Brown, 2014).

Aiding this growth is the perk that young adults can access entertainment and social media on the same device. They select their channels of media and devices due to what suits their needs and aids in meeting their goals, following the ideas laid out in the uses and gratifications theory. Since technology, especially Snapchat, offers new opportunities for

bonding, "Young adults spend more time with technology than any other daily activity," with roughly 85 percent of young adults owning smartphones that can cater to these needs (Vaterlaus, Barnett, Roche, & Young, 2016). Considering this and the fact that Snapchat reaches 41 percent of 18 to 34-year-olds in the United States every day along with acquiring a five times higher swipe-up rate on ads than click-through rates on other social media sites, Snapchat is a prime resource for advertisers and content creators to reach this demographic (Snap Inc., 2017).

Narcissism has been thoroughly studied in SNS but few studies have ventured into the intimate environment that an IM provides. On SNS, narcissists use features, like selfie posting, to assert their supposed superiority, but the smaller IM network and its intimacies creates a gap where selfies and certain actions that are narcissistic on SNS may now be used for social bonding instead of comparison (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). Since Snapchat is solely an IM app and is so heavily used by young adults who are shaping their tendencies and identities, this prompts a shift for research to start looking into narcissism in IM users. With narcissistic tendencies and their involvement in maintaining a healthy social standing, the need for understanding the young adult demographic, their needs, and their roles as consumers in building identities, is becoming apparent.

Prospects of Advertising on Snapchat

The final considerations when evaluating the importance in having an understanding of young adults' needs and tendencies is the buying power they possess and how to appeal to them. Consisting of over 21 million Americans, 18 to 34-year-olds, commonly referred to as part of the Millennial generation, possess roughly $412 billion in spending power. With the spending potential practically the size of Austria's GDP, this offers a prime target to advertisers (Sashittal,

DeMar, & Jassawalla, 2016). Currently standing as the top choice of social media by Millennials, Snapchat provides an opportunity to reach Millennials.

Snapchat keeps its audience by embracing change, constantly evolving while being designed partly by Millennials who empathize with the need to stay connected to their devices and peers (Sashittal et al., 2016). Sashittal and company suggest that brands are benefiting from investing media dollars in Snapchat by appearing "more inclusive, effortless, and relatable" (Sashittal et al., 2016). To meet these goals and continue to lead the forefront of social media, Snapchat is changing how advertising works on their platform and how users can interact while also making it quite clear that advertisers are the ones that need to change and conform to the app (Sashittal et al., 2016).

What draws many users to Snapchat is its effortless features and minimal commitment to content creation paired with minimal consequences. Snapchat also provides brands with an opportunity to connect with users the same way that users can with their friends and acquaintances. If users do not want to engage, they are not obligated to. If something or someone is fighting for their attention, being pushy, judgmental, or demanding a response, they can ignore it. If content and features can remain open, useful, casual, and available, like stories with friends, then users are more inclined to interact with an ad and make it an accepted part of their experience, thus bringing a brand into a more intimate part of a user's life. After all, users are not on Snapchat to shop; they are there to interact socially and feel positive about interactions (Sashittal et al., 2016).

Advertising Content Creation on Snapchat

As social media continues to evolve from Facebook, chat forums, and blogging to mobile applications that have instant gratification, quick tools, and centralized features, younger adults

being raised in the age of digital communication are looking for highly interactive forms of

social media that allow them to express themselves amongst peers. Advertisers, coupled with

new opportunities for personalized advertisements, are working with social media to bring their

ideas, services, and markets to users in seamless content found within sites and apps, like

Snapchat. What helps Snapchat to stand out from other platforms is its relatively unique take on

advertising within its app and how it is made.

 While websites and other forms of social media use traditional ads that can appear as a

user scrolls, embedded in pages, or as a standard, multiplatform ad, Snapchat requires that any

and all of its advertising content is created from scratch to meet the natural orientation of the

phone, where a user holds it vertically (Sashittal et al., 2016). Snap ads use branded video

advertising and direct responses that allow Snapchatters to swipe up and interact with

advertisers' websites and content, right in the app itself (Snap Inc., 2017). Snapchat uses the

same teams that design consumer content to create the advertisements so that an ad inserted into

your friends' stories is just as welcome and seamless as if your friend had posted the content. By

creating the content solely for Snapchat and its formats, quality is usually boosted and presented

to users in ways that help to create more of the needed intimate relation that Millennials expect

in the app (Sashittal et al., 2016). This also translates into users being five times more likely to

swipe up on content than if they had been presented a similar ad on a website where they would

have to click on it (Snap Inc., 2017).

 Advertisements can even feature tools within the app, such as filters, to make it a better

experience for the user. The ability to create custom geofilters and Snapcodes, a symbol that can

be scanned to find and unlock unique content in the app, affords advertisers even more ways to

help bridge the gap between a user's digital and physical presence when interacting with Snapchat (Snap Inc., 2017).

In addition to the potential to reach a massive and valuable audience, advertisers can work with Snapchat and its partners to gather statistics and data on its very own consumers. Snapchat allows advertisers to identify and target users by age, gender, geographic location, mobile device type, operating system, mobile carrier, interests, and other factors (Snap Inc., 2017).

Parameters

With the focus turned towards the audience and consumers, the purpose of this study is to provide insights into core users and their narcissistic tendencies to better help understand and serve these users through their interactions with personalized advertising. By revealing information about the narcissistic tendencies of users (or lack of), we hope to establish a foundation that advertising groups can use to see how tailored and user-focused content should evolve to meet users' desires, be it about themselves or otherwise. Data will also be collected and analyzed to see if gender plays a role in narcissistic tendencies and their manifestation through Snapchat.

However, this study will not cover certain Freudian aspects of narcissism including, but not limited to, id, ego, sexuality, and aggression. Other limitations placed on this study are not redefining narcissism, not creating or modifying any narcissism inventory, not analyzing the different parts of narcissism, and not evaluating Snapchat's design or methods directly.

Research Questions

Moving forward with the study, there are four research questions that we are addressing.

RQ1: Do Snapchat users have narcissistic tendencies?

This will create an opportunity to see how the leading ephemeral social media app's users

rank their needs and if narcissistic tendencies are as pronounced as they are in SNS.

H1: Based on the literature review and needs of Millennials, we expect users will exhibit

moderate levels of narcissistic tendencies but will not view it as such. (While the selfie is

prominent and social media provides instant gratification and opportunities to serve

users' needs, the self-focus that users possess will not be of an extreme level or reported

as such, partly due to the self-reporting nature of the study).

RQ2: When disclosing information on Snapchat, is there a difference between males and

females in their narcissistic tendencies?

This could allow further insight into how narcissism manifests itself in Millennial males and

females and whether or not gender has any factor on narcissistic tendencies in ephemeral

media.

H2: We expect that there will be a difference, with females interacting more frequently

and exhibiting slightly higher narcissistic tendencies than men.

RQ3: Which Snapchat features are most frequently used?

While this is not the main focus of the survey, the potential feedback could allow valuable

information for marketers to better direct their advertising strategies on the platform. Since

college students are one of the largest targets for advertisements in general, reaching that

audience and the next target group early on is essential to marketers. Returning to narcissism,

understanding the top features could also indicate trends in narcissistic tendencies and a

general advancement in understanding users.

H3: Snapping pictures and video, followed by Lenses, browsing Discovery content, and

instant messaging are expected to be the top features ranked beginning with the highest.

This is due to Snapchat being designed as a photo app that has added content and

messaging later on as tools.

RQ4: In general, what is the preferred method of communication by college students?

This could allow a glimpse into what users want and where the market could be headed.

Understanding what the users are enamored with could allow for stronger predictions

regarding features and upcoming shifts in what tools users will gravitate towards, at least for

personal social interaction.

H4: From most to least used, we expect the top social media platforms that Millennials

use to be text messaging followed by Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Since

Millennials stay in touch and plan via digital platforms, texting seems like the most likely

candidate, as older and younger generations are often using it together. The other social

media platforms are ranked based on the projected needs that they may satisfy for

Millennials.

Methods

Since newer generations are taught to follow individualistic tendencies and to live with technology as second nature, working to gain a better understanding of how narcissism presents itself may help to indicate new trends and shifts in social media, user tendencies, and potentially redefine what is accepted as low, normal, and high rates of narcissistic tendencies.

Using the Raskin and Terry 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (commonly referred to as NPI-40) is essential in maintaining the validity of the survey, with demographics and the remaining questions providing insight into Snapchat users, their narcissistic tendencies, and any potential shifts in casual communication. There is a variation of NPI-40 known as the NPI-16 that we used as a shorter version to boost response rates. There are several additional demographic questions included in the survey. The university's IRB approved the present survey.

The survey included a notification that all information collected will remain confidential and that all participants will remain anonymous. There was no form of payment or compensation for this research. The survey was distributed via an official East Tennessee State University email to current students and, while the survey focused on Snapchat, it did not actually utilize the app itself. The survey was created and managed through Qualtrics Survey Software. Participants had the ability to stop or request further information at any time.

NPI 40

One of the original modern inventories for measuring different areas of non-clinical narcissism, the Raskin and Terry 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory has become a staple in determining the level of narcissism that a person possesses via a quick and simple questionnaire. Participants are given a series of 40 items, each one consisting of two sentences.

Participants select the one that they most closely identify with. The survey administrator can then use a key to determine a general level of narcissism and other distinctions (Raskin & Terry, 1988).

NPI 16

When confronted with the need for an inventory that could be used in research while being sensitive to time and respondent stamina restrictions, the NPI-16 variant of the NPI-40 was created. While there were other attempts at shorter narcissism scales, the NPI-16 evenly distributed the different narcissistic components. Certain settings do not allow for much time to work with patients or patients may not have the stamina to go through a full 40-item inventory and properly complete it (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2005). The layout of the forced-choice inventory offers valid insight into multiple aspects of narcissistic personalities (Mehdizadeh, 2010).

Due to the low likelihood of college respondents completing a 40-item inventory with additional questions without any form of compensation, our survey used the NPI-16 to meet the time constraints imposed by surveying college students via email.

The survey provided a section that had 16 out of the 32 NPI-16 statements where participants could select how closely they identified with the sentence via the choices Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree. The inventory Statements were adapted to appropriately fall into context of how users felt about themselves on Snapchat. If a respondent chose Strongly Disagree or Disagree, this would represent, by default, the user choosing the unlisted statement from that inventory item. Choosing Agree or Strongly Agree would represent the participant choosing the listed statement. These statement selections could then be utilized to

tally up a score for the NPI-16 while giving insight into how strongly participants felt regarding each listed statement from the inventory.

Demographics

Utilizing the student population of East Tennessee State University, students 18 years old and up were contacted via their institutionally provided email, inviting them to participate in the anonymous survey. This sample provided a potential pool of over 10,000 students, whose gender, age, and usage habits varied. One limitation to note is that this population only incorporates a portion of the ideal Snapchat demographic based on both age and geographic location. A total of 299 respondents completed the survey.

Results, Discussion, Conclusion

Since the use of SPSS and using advanced statistics (i.e., MANOVA) is beyond the scope of an undergraduate thesis requirement, Dr. Waters will complete the results, discussion, and conclusion of this study with the intent of future publication.

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Appendices

Student Survey

Informed Consent Letter for a Research Study entitled, "Examining Snapchat: Narcissistic tendencies of core users"

You are invited to participate in a research study to learn about the narcissistic tendencies of core Snapchat users. This study is being conducted by Austin Philpott under the direction of Dr. Susan Waters in the East Tennessee State University Department of Media and Communication. You were selected as a possible participant because you are age 18 or older and an ETSU student. Taking part in this study involves completing a web survey that will take about 5-10 minutes. This survey contains questions about your opinions and perceptions about narcissism and behaviors when using Snapchat.

The information you provide will be kept completely confidential. Only the principal investigator, his advisor and the ETSU IRB will have access to the data. The data will be password protected. Only summarized data will be presented at meetings or in publications.

There will be no direct benefits to you, but the findings will be useful to the mass communication profession and educators for understanding narcissistic tendencies of core users of Snapchat and ephemeral media. The chief risk is that possibly some of the questions may make you uncomfortable. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Austin Philpott at philpotta@etsu.edu or Dr. Susan Waters at watersse@etsu.edu. A copy of this document can be printed for you to keep.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you cannot reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. You are free not to participate or you may stop participating any time before you submit your answers.

If you understand the statements above, are at least 18 years old, and freely consent to be in this study, click on the survey link to begin.

Thank you!

Austin Philpott

○ Begin the survey

Please answer each question below with the answer that reflects who you are.

How old are you?

❍ a. Under 18 years of age
❍ b. 18-20 years of age
❍ c. 21-23 years of age
❍ d. 24-26 years of age
❍ e. 27 years of age and up

Do you most closely identify as male, female or other?

❍ a. Male
❍ b. Female
❍ c. Other

How often, on average, do you use Snapchat per day?

❍ a. Not at all
❍ b. one minute-3 hours
❍ c. 4-6 hours
❍ d. More than 6 hours

What features do you use the most on Snapchat?

❍ a. Instant messaging
❍ b. Video chatting
❍ c. SnapCash
❍ d. Browsing stories and posted content
❍ e. Posting content
❍ f. Other (please define) _____

Approximately how many selfies a day do you take?

❍ a. 0
❍ b. 1-5
❍ c. 6-10
❍ d. More than 10

Do you find others viewing your Snaps or you viewing others' Snaps more exciting?

❍ a. Getting views of my Snaps from others
❍ b. Looking at others' Snaps
❍ c. Indifferent

What overall effect does Snapchat have on your self-esteem?

○ a. Boosts my self-esteem
○ b. Lowers my self-esteem
○ c. No effect on my self-esteem

Please rank social interactive methods from most used to least used.

_____ a. Instant messaging
_____ b. Video messaging
_____ c. Ephemeral media (vanishing media, like Snapchat, where the content is only available for a set duration of time)
_____ d. In person
_____ e. Phone call
_____ f. Other (Please define)

Please rank the following social media methods from most used to least used.

_____ a. Snapchat
_____ b. Facebook
_____ c. Messenger
_____ d. Twitter
_____ e. Instagram
_____ f. Other (please list)

Read each statement below and select strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree based on which one comes closest to describing your feelings and beliefs about yourself on Snapchat.

I really like to be the center of attention on Snapchat

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

I think I am a special person on Snapchat

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

Everybody likes to see my stories on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

I insist upon getting the respect that is due me on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

I like having authority over people on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

I hope I am going to be successful on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

I can make anybody believe anything I want them to on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

I like to do things for other people on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

I prefer to blend in with the crowd on Snapchat

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

I am much like everybody else on Snapchat

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing on Snapchat

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

I find it easy to manipulate people on Snapchat

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

Being an authority on Snapchat doesn't mean that much to me

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

When people compliment me on Snapchat I sometimes get embarrassed

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

I try not to be a show off on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

I am more capable than other people on Snapchat

- ○ Strongly agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree