Befriending One’s Parents Online
and the Influence of
Popularity and Self-Esteem
on Facebook Behaviour

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Abstract

This study investigated the self-esteem on time spent on Facebook and activity on others pages. Popularity and activity on other people’s pages was also investigated. Communication with parents was investigated between future and past decisions to accept parent/friend requests. Eighty-five undergraduates from an Irish university with a mean age of 24 were employed. Questionnaires were utilised. Self esteem was found to be significant in relation to time spent on Facebook but not for activity on other users’ pages. Popularity was significantly correlated to activity on others pages. Self esteem had no effect on this Facebook activity while popularity has. Parent-son/daughter communication had no bearing on parent request decisions. Extroversion, rather than self esteem, should be examined as predictor of activity.
Introduction

Social network sites are one of the most pervasive tools of communication that have impacted on society both psychologically and socially. According to Edelman (as cited in Mc Carra, 2011) a large, independent PR company found almost 44% of the Irish population have a Facebook account and the majority of users are based in Dublin. Through their research, they have found the largest age group fall into the 25-34 age bracket followed by the second largest group of 18-24 year olds). Together these two groups compose more than half of the country’s Facebook population (Mc Carra, 2011). Social network sites provide an opportunity for social interaction which can enhance the quality of friendships and promote connectedness to others. A desire for an enhanced connectedness with one’s fellow peers is arguably one of the major reasons for joining a social network site like Facebook (Lenhart & Madden 2007; Reich et al. 2008).

Facebook and Self Esteem

Ellison et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal analysis over a two year period to investigate whether a relationship between Facebook use and social capital differs for people with varying levels of self-esteem. Their sample consisted of 286 university students of a mean age of 20 and the medium used for measurement were online surveys. They found that significantly more Facebook use was reported between the participants and the people whom they shared an offline connection with. The notion of a Facebook ‘friend’ is ambiguous. It can be attached to anyone who a person shares a connection with, whether it is strong or very weak. Their finding suggests that Facebook social interactions are likely to strengthen or enhance all offline connections which in turn are bound to effect the users self esteem and consequently motivate the desire to engage with the network site.
Ellison and her authors use the term “social capital” to refer to the benefits that arise from social relationships (Ellison et al. 2008). It seems necessary to become a little familiar with this concept as it’s attached psychological effects can potentially shape a person’s self esteem. Although it is recognised that social capital can sometimes give rise to negative outcomes, such as anti-social behaviour, only the positive outcome of self esteem is considered for the purpose of this study. Social capital can be subdivided at the individual level into bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding capital fosters tightly-knit, intimate relationships while bridging capital is based on weak social ties which foster superficial relationships that are of some practical benefit to the person’s self esteem.

They investigated if the influence of intense Facebook use on bridging social capital was regulated by self-esteem (Ellison et al. 2008). They performed a median split and a cross-lagged correlational analysis on upper and lower self-esteem subscales. The median for self-esteem was high (median=4.29, on a 5 point Rosenberg Scale) but the the difference between low self-esteem (mean for low self-esteem=3.81) and high self-esteem (mean for high self-esteem=4.70) was rather small. However, the results revealed the relationship between intense Facebook use and social capital was higher for the low self-esteem group (r=.57) than the higher self-esteem group (r=.43).

Similarly, Mehdizadeh (2010) Mehdizadeh also explored time spent on Facebook with self-esteem and found similar results. She randomly recruited 100 college students (50 males and 50 females) to explore Facebook use among university students. The mean student age was 22. Using a Pearson Correlation, a significant weak negative relationship between self-esteem and time spent on Facebook per session was detected (r= -0.46, p< .01) She reported that low self-esteem was correlated to greater time spent on Facebook. However, she used a sample of Canadian study students for the purpose of her research.
The first hypothesis will investigate time spent on Facebook and self-esteem. After considering Ellison et al.’s finding, the current author has decided to exclude the measurement of bridging social capital that is included in Ellison et al.’s consideration of intense Facebook use with the intention of directing the main focus and attention to self-esteem per se rather than it’s associative factors within the first hypothesis (Ellison et al. 2008). It will share more similarity to Mehdizadeh’s hypothesis in so far as she placed much emphasis on self-esteem itself without including the social element of social capital (Mehdizadeh, 2010). However, it will not include the ‘number of logins on Facebook’ that Mehdizadeh considered in her hypothesis. The amount of time spent immersing oneself in Facebook seem more accurate in determining psychological effects of the social network site, unlike the amount of logins. It can be argued that the brief momentary actions of ‘logins’ are insufficient in determining any psychological effect (Mehdizadeh, 2010). The correlation is non directional and will predict a positive between time spent on Facebook and self-esteem. H1: A positive correlation will be observed between time spent on Facebook and self-esteem.

Gonzales and Hancock (2010) explored the relationship between Facebook use and self-esteem with consideration of ‘objective self-awareness.’ According to this theory, the self can be experienced as both a subject and an object. When a person’s attention focuses on the self as an object, positive effects such as altruistic behaviours might occur when self-evaluations are set against social standards. However, if harsh ‘upward social comparisons’ arise as the by-products of a person’s stringent social standards, the psychological effects attached to these comparisons are potentially detrimental to the persons self esteem. Breckler (2006) ‘Upward comparisons’ are understood as the tendency to compare the self to others perceived to be better off. On the other hand, downward comparisons involve comparing oneself to someone perceived as worse off.
These two types of comparisons can be observed in the context of Facebook if a person harshly evaluates their own profile-presentation against another person’s which ‘appears to have it all’. Such a criticism would reduce the person's sense of self-worth. On the other hand, if a person believes their profile fares better in its presentation compared to other Facebook friends, for example by being more attractive or interesting in some way, positive feelings might arise. These comparisons can shape the students self esteem. Such comparisons, whether positive or negative, seem likely to be a driving force for the orientation of one’s Facebook activity.

Mehdizadeh (2010) Mehdizadeh employed Pearson Correlation analyses to examine a relationship between self-esteem and self-promotional content on one’s own Facebook page. She found a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and self-promotional Facebook activity on one’s own page regarding the management of photos (r=-0.37, p<.01). She detected a correlation between low self-esteem and a tendency to engage more in a greater amount of self-promotional activity. She contended that those with low self esteem would be pay particular attention to their uploading of photos; they would select photos or enhance them to cover up what they perceived as undesirable aesthetically.

Mehdizadeh (2010) She also detected a significant, positive correlation between narcissism and self promotional activity on one’s profile. The self-promotional activity on the narcissists Facebook page was intended to re-affirm an exaggerated sense of worth or glorify the personal traits that he/she perceived as desirable. The self-promotional content consisted of the narcissistic choice of photos included in the first 20 pictures displayed on the ‘view photos of me’ section and status updates aimed at obtaining glorification from peers. It also included a narcissistic portrayal in the notes section which referred to written text and a narcissistic portrayal of personal traits in visual information such as ‘My Celebrity Lookalikes’.
Gonzales & Hancock (2010) also investigated the orientation of the student’s choice of Facebook activity in relation to self-esteem. Their sample consisted of students from a large American university. Forty-seven women took part while only a handful of men, 16, participated. Participants were assigned to three conditions which examined self esteem in relation to the viewing their own Facebook site, their image in the mirror and a control condition where there was no treatment given to Facebook use. In one of the conditions, the researchers used a one-tailed ordinary least squares analysis, to determine if students who exclusively examine their own profiles will report higher self esteem than those who view other profiles as well as their own. A significant relationship was detected. Insightfully, they reported that participants who viewed their own profile as well as others reported lower self-esteem than those who exclusively viewed their own profiles.

Gonzales and Hancock (2010) Gonzales and Hancock also further explored the tendency to engage in one’s own profile with an additional consideration of the act of editing ones profile. Using an Ordinary Least Squares Analysis, Gonzales and Hancock found that those who made changes to their own profile by editing it, as part of the experiment, reported higher self-esteem than participants who did not make changes (b=-0.53, p=0.01). Taking their two findings into consideration, is it possible that there is also a significant relationship between self-esteem and injecting one’s energy into activity on other people’s pages by contrast?

Gonzales, Hancock and Mehdizadeh confined their view of self-promotional activity to a behaviour which only occurs on one’s own Facebook page (Gonzales and Hancock 2010; Mehdizadeh 2010). It did not seem to occur to them that engagement in other people’s profiles has the capacity to be treated as another type of self-promotional activity. Self-promotional behaviour on others people’s pages involve commenting on people’s positively or clicking ‘like’ on some of the persons features to win their approval rather than for the
pleasure of Facebook activity per se. Why would anybody want to win over someone’s approval? One of the underlying reasons must surely be rooted in self-esteem. Perhaps the upward comparisons which seemed likely to have lead to self-promotional activity in the three researchers student samples can also be viewed as indirectly responsible for promotional activity on other people’s pages. If one promotes oneself by leaving comments or ‘likes’ on other people’s pages, not for pleasure, but for the desire for positive feedback their behaviour must be rooted in self esteem.

The second hypothesis will consider self-promotional activity and its link to self-esteem which was considered by Gonzales, Hancock and Mehdizadeh (Gonzales and Hancock 2010; Mehdizadeh 2010). However, the difference in its contribution to research will be based upon an alternative view of self-promotional behaviour as something with a capacity to occur on other people’s pages. The hypothesis will be bi-directional.

H2: A positive correlation will be observed between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in Facebook activity on other people’s pages.

*The Need for Popularity and Facebook activity on other people’s pages*

Utz et al. (2011) Although self-esteem influences a person’s self-potrayal online, Utz and her researchers found that a need for popularity can be an even stronger predictor of Facebook behaviour than self-esteem itself. A need for popularity is a strong motivation to create a popular or conforming impression directed at one’s peer group. Christofides et al. (2010) Young people have a greater need for popularity than older people. They are likely to disclose much personal information on Facebook if a striking profile will attract attention from one’s peers who would subsequently more likely to provide feedback to enhance their web page.
Utz et al. (2011) The popularity behaviours identified by Utz and her co-authors vary. To begin with, social grooming is an online behaviour which involves browsing friends’ profiles along with leaving them messages. Strategic self-presentation is a tendency to alter one’s self image so that socially desirable aspects of the person’s character reach the wider audience regardless of whether these character are personal attributes that promote self esteem. A popular presentation focuses on winning favour from others rather than oneself. Profile enhancement involves editing profiles and uploading pictures that leave a favourable impression on one’s peers. (Utz et al. 2011) The need for popularity can also be manifested by regular use of the social network site and can be indicated when a person’s friend list is mainly composed of social acquaintances or people who they barely know personally.

Behaviours driven by the desire for popularity do not stem from a desire to fit in or ‘belong’ amongst one’s peers although it is understandable that one would initially be inclined to link the two. A need to belong is a desire which can be satisfied by a few intimate relationships whereas a desire for popularity can only be met by having many relationships which are primarily superficial (Utz et al. 2011). Thus, popularity is based on quantity rather than quality i.e. many ‘friends’ as opposed to a select few meaningful friendships.

Danowski and Zywica thoroughly researched the meaning of popularity on Facebook via an online survey, using a generous sample of 614 participants from a large university in America (Danowski and Zywica, 2008). They ranged from first year college students to college alumni. The vast majority of the samples were women (71% females and 28.2% males). Most participants were born between 1982 and 1988.

Danowski and Zywica (2008) When asked about the meaning of popularity, all of them mentioned the word “friends”, regardless of how popular or unpopular they were online. A minority of them admitted engaging in the self-promotional profile activity behaviour which Utz and her co-authors referred to (Utz et al. 2008). Ironically, those who were popular
admitted engaging in Facebook profile enhancement behaviours more than their unpopular counter-parts. Approximately, 2/3 of this large sample claimed they knew a person who strives for popularity on Facebook while 67.4% were firmly adamant that they never did anything to deliberately win other’s approval. Danowski and Zywika (2008) Both groups linked popularity behaviour with adding more friends to ones contact list in order to look popular. Those who were considered popular had different ideas about what motivates popularity behaviour on Facebook. Popular participants regarded those who tried to look popular as bored or lonely while unpopular participants considered those who make attempts to win approval as insecure, immature and lacking in self esteem. A high amount of people with low self esteem (27.9%) regarded online popularity as ‘somewhat important’ compared to those with high self-esteem (20.2%, z=1.6, p<.05). Of those considered popular online, most of them, 73.9%, were extroverted and had high self esteem while 72.1% of the sample who were considered unpopular were introverted with low self-esteem.

The need for popularity is arguably manifested by regular use of the social network site and can becomes evident when one’s friend list is largely composed of superficial acquaintances who the person met once or barely knows. Utz et al. (2011) Utz and her co-authors investigated a relationship between popularity and a variety of self promoting behaviours. They employed a large sample of 343 students from a Dutch university with women being highly over represented in comparison to men. Using hierarchical regression analyses, the need for popularity was found to significantly predict self-promotional behaviours which included grooming (leaving messages or browsing around friends profiles), strategic self-presentation (a person uses the internet to manipulate how they desire to be portrayed to others), profile enhancement (editing one’s profile or uploading pictures), the likelihood of the disclosure of feelings online and one’s routine social network site use. The only variable it could not predict was interestingly the number of friends. Utz and her co-
authors mainly confine self-promotional activity to a person’s profile page, similar to the other studies discussed.

The third hypothesis will be bi-directional. It will recognise self-promotional behaviour in the context of engaging in other people’s pages something which Utz and her co-authors barely took into consideration (Utz et al. 2011). It will explore the frequency of the aforementioned grooming behaviour featured in Utz and her co-authors’ study, while taking heed of other popularity behaviours directed at others pages such as clicking ‘like’ on other people’s quotes and commenting on others’ status updates.

H3: There will be a positive correlation observed between the need for popularity and the tendency to engage in Facebook activity on other people’s pages.

Communication and Issues of Accepting a Parent Facebook Friend Request

When Facebook emerged as new medium of communication, the bulk of its members were younger people, particularly students. Many older people, especially parents, who desired to join the site were highly discouraged as young people were territorial in their view of Facebook as an outlet for the younger generation. Anti-parent groups such as “Don’t let my parents onto Facebook” were formed by many young people to firmly communicate the message that Facebook was not an outlet for parents (Aranti, 2008; Krieger 2009). At one point a group called “For the Love of God-Don’t let my parents join Facebook” was reported to have 5,819 members (Davis, 2009).

Where did such apparent discrimination stem from? West et al. (2009) West and her co-authors conducted interviews to explore attitudes towards the inclusion of parents on Facebook. Their sample consisted of 16 students of a mean age of 22, who were living in London and in their final year of a degree programme. Their reactions in relation to a prospective friend request varied, some reactions were lighter hearted while others suggested
anguish towards the prospect of including their mother or father as a Facebook friend. The light hearted responses were mainly based on the notion that mothers were not technologically advanced to use the applications of the network site while one person claimed that their parents might not be interested, so they would not have to be concerned about the future prospect.

West et al. (2009) Concerns of a more serious nature were based on the notion of a parent crossing a boundary in their role from parent to Facebook friend, which would subsequently provide an intimate insight into the student’s social life. A firm belief that family life should be kept separate from social life echoed throughout the interview. One of the interviewees commented ‘I wouldn’t expect her to be my friend because that’s just weird...She’s my mum, she’s not someone I know’. The notion of Facebook providing an opportunity for parents to witness a disclosure of information and photos of their son/daughter on college nights out aroused embarrassment among some students.

Livingstone (2008) Livingstone also addressed the matter of parent Facebook friend request similarly by conducting interviews among a sample of young English people. One of the interviewees stressed the notion of a parent viewing his profile, as highly invasive by comparing it to “looking through your bedroom and reading your diary” (Livingstone, 2008, p.10).

Other students whom West and her colleagues interviewed revealed concerns that were orientated towards the potential for a parent to communicate on their Facebook page by leaving messages or commenting on photos. However, these messages of concern were not solely based on a parent trying to act as ‘one of the son/daughters peers’ as one might speculate but could also arise in the form of caring practical questions, such as the application for a student loan, in which were deemed as inappropriate for a Facebook page.

Although students with relaxed attitudes on the issue formed a minority, their responses
have implicitly suggested that relationships fostering open communication could influence
the decision to accept the parent. One male student commented ‘I don’t really mind what my
mum would see...if I did have something I wanted to keep secret from my mum then I
wouldn’t have it on my Facebook profile’ while one female student believed it would be nice
to be able to chat to her mother online.

By contrast to the two British samples, Christofides and her co-authors found there was a
general acceptance of having a parent on Facebook in their sample (Christofides et al. 2010).
Christofides sample consisted of Canadian teenagers who seemed quite open to the prospect
of a parent joining their Facebook. Christofides et al. (2010) Most of the youth in the sample,
69.1 %, had at least one of their parents as a friend on Facebook. It was striking that only a
small minority reported not wanting to befriend their parents on Facebook. Younger
adolescents aged 14 and younger were a little more likely to include their parents as friends
on Facebook compared to older adolescents (72.5 % versus 65.1% respectively) but this
difference was not significant statistically. Of those who did not include their mother or
father as a Facebook friend, the most common reason was based on the fact that their parents
did not own a Facebook account (17.2% of the sample). This samples general openness
towards the inclusion of a parent differs greatly to Livingstone and West and her co-authors
sample (Livingstone 2008; West et al. 2009). No anguish or concern for social privacy was
manifested. The same laid-back attitude towards a parents request is also seen in Karl and
Peluchettes research of friend requests from important people.

Karl and Peluchette (2011) Karl and Peluchette investigated students’ decisions towards
the acceptance of friend requests from authoritative figures. They distributed surveys to a
total of 208 undergraduate students. The majority of them were male business students and
the mean age of the total student was 22.

Karl and Peluchette hypothesised that students would be more likely to accept a friend
request from their mother as opposed to their employer or lecturer (Karl and Peluchette, 2011). The relationship was found to be significant. They conducted a repeated-measures Analysis Of Variance test and found students were most likely to accept the mothers request \((m=1.45, SD=0.73)\) followed by an employer \((m=1.65, SD=0.76)\) and an unknown lecturer \((m=2.35, SD=1.09)\). They were least likely to accept who they perceived to be the “worst” lecturer \((m=2.81, SD=1.02)\). An Anova test was also employed to test the impact of these requests. Interestingly, students tended to show positive reactions towards a mothers request. Notably, the majority were reported to be “delighted, flattered or calm”. Their attitudes differ greatly to the two previous British student samples that would generally seem likely to view such a request with disapproval or uncertainty (Karl and Peluchette, 2011).

All the researchers who dealt with parent Facebook requests did not consider the quality of communication as a driving force in the decision to accept or reject a request from one’s parents. If an open communicative style is typical of the cultures pertaining to the two samples who responded positively, than perhaps variances of culture and communication are the underlying factors responsible for the general and negative attitudes which dominated the sample. Karl and Peluchette were too simplistic in their treatment of friend request decisions from the significant people in one’s life.

Leaving the parent request aside for a moment, Karl and Peluchettes’ complete neglect of any exploration of communication was surprising in light of the fact that the employers request was held in almost the same favourable status as a mothers request, a person who someone shares a highly emotional connection with (Karl and Peluchette, 2011). This observation arguably justifies how one might feel the need to explore communication further as it is essential to any strong, functioning relationship. It would seem that the level of communication a person shares with their parents plays a partial role in ones handling of a parental Facebook request. Berger (2005) Parents who take an authoritarian approach to their
children discourage interactive communication where the child feels comfortable enough to elaborate on their emotions towards the things which affect them psychologically. Their child as a teenager can sometimes rebel or become depressed. Christofides et al. (2010) Many people strive for autonomy so it would seem that they might fear excess monitoring which inhibits their self-expression if their relationship with their parents is poor. On the other hand, parents who use a permissive style are nurturing and understanding. Their child feels valued when they are discussing feelings and are often “generous with others” when they are older (Berger, 2005, p.247). These developmental tendencies give rise to the question of whether a person who perceives the parental relationship as “good” would be willing to extend the aforementioned generosity to the inclusion of his/her mother or father as a Facebook friend. Would someone who perceives their relationship positively be likely to accept a Facebook parent request? A relationship based on clear communication and a general openness would suggest that the person feels they have nothing to hide that would “shock”.

The fourth and fifth hypotheses are bi-directional. They will elaborate on Karl and Peluchettes research of ‘significant others’ by considering communication and the parent-son/daughter relationship but will exclude the consideration of employers and lecturers which Karl and Peluchettes examined (Karl and Peluchette, 2011). None of the parental studies referred to Irish university students so this study will examine the significance of a Facebook parent friend request in an Irish context. The fifth hypothesis will also consider the influence of communication on a past Facebook friend request decision regarding ones parents.

H4: A significant relationship will be observed between the communication that the student shares with his/her parents and a future decision to accept a parent Facebook friend request.

H5: A significant relationship will be observed between the communication that the student shares with his/her parents and a past decision to accept a parent Facebook friend request.
Method

Materials

Cover Letter

A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire. The cover letter informed the participants of who the author was and of the current studies theme, described as “self-esteem and the need for popularity in relation to Facebook use along with the quality of one’s relationship with their parents’ and the acceptance of a friend request”. It acknowledged that while a person’s participation in the study was greatly welcomed, all participation is voluntary. It requested the participants to respond as honestly as possible but also reassured them that all information would be anonymous and confidential. It also notified participants that they could withdraw anytime and were not to feel bad by doing so. It stated that any withdrawals would be safely discarded to maintain the participant’s privacy.

Questionnaire

Although Facebook has gained an overwhelming popularity, to the point where it has become part of the daily routine of so many people; as a research topic it is still relatively new and is constantly evolving. While some psychological issues have been recognised and addressed others issues are emerging with changes in its use. In light of these points, some scales needed to be adapted to address the factors of research which other traditional scales do not seem to be adequately able to do. All were ensured to have external validity and were internally consistent.

However, the Facebook Intensity Scale, taken from two studies (Ellison et al. 2007; Steinfield et al. 2008). The scale has shown a high reliability for its robust measurement of the construct. It was one of the minority measures used within the current study which needed absolutely no alteration in its content as statements were a sufficiently fitted the social context of Facebook. The measure contains 8 items in total in which 4 of them featured in the
questionnaire. Sample statements in the 8 item response measure include “I am proud to tell people I’m on Facebook”, “Facebook has become part of my daily routine” and “I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.” One of these four items assessed time spent on Facebook and was used in one of the self-esteem hypotheses. The scale aims to subtly gain a sense of the subjective quality of the direction of one’s Facebook use. It assesses Facebook use on a 5-point Likert scale with labelled endpoints of 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) with the inclusion of the midpoint (3) neither agree nor disagree.

A ‘Parent Facebook Friend Request Decisions’ scale was an adaption of the ‘Co-Worker Friend Request Decisions’ scale utilised by Frampton (2010). The original scale contained 13 items and 11 of these were used in the current studies questionnaire with the intention of providing the author with plenty of scope in the assembling of her hypotheses. Two of these 11 items were the focus of attention in the current study.

The original scale used a mixture of ordinal and nominal responses. Much of the measurement responses used ordinal and nominal scales for responding. The scales which were not nominal tended to be 3-point or 4-point scales with the exception of one unipolar 7-point scale. The original scale used questions such as: ‘Consider your co-workers who have requested to be your Facebook friend. In general, do you make modifications to your privacy settings during the decision making process?’ and ‘Consider your co-workers who have requested to be your Facebook friend. In general, do you make any deletions to your profile during the decision-making process?’

The ‘Modified Co-worker Communication Satisfactory Inventory’ scale employed by Frampton (2010) was adapted to suit the current studies questionnaire assessment of parental communication. The original scale assessed communication on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree with a neutral midpoint response of ‘neither agree nor disagree’. Statements in the original scale included ‘He/she lets me know that I am
communicating effectively’ and ‘very dissatisfied with our conversations’. The opening words “colleagues” and “co-workers” originally used in the opening sentence ‘when communicating with my colleagues or co-workers I feel...’ for each statement were omitted in favour of the word “parents”. The original scale consisted of 13 items and all of them were used in the hypotheses assessment of parent-son/daughter communication.

The need for popularity was measured using an adaptation of the ‘Popularity Items’ featured in an adolescent study of Santor and Masservey (2000). There were twelve items in the original scale, 3 of which were used in the hypothesis concerning popularity in the current study. Although the measure is aimed at adolescents to assess how important they feel it is to appear popular among their peers, the particular statements selected for the current study seemed appropriate for an older age group. Santor and Masservey (2000) Santor and Masservey did not state what response scale they used. After some necessary contemplation, the author of the current study employed a 5-point bi-polar type Likert scale with labelled end points of (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree including the midpoint of (3) neither agree or disagree.

Statements in the original scale included ‘It's important that people think I'm popular’, ‘I've been friends with some people because others liked them’ and ‘I'd do almost anything to avoid being seen as a loser’.

The word ‘Facebook’ was inserted within the original statements selected in order to ‘fit’ popularity within the social network site context.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was employed to assess each individual’s self-esteem, due to its reliability and the quality of internal validity that it possesses. The scale contains 10 items. The author of this study selected 4 of these items to assess self-esteem on the basis that the feedback to these particular responses, of such forthright tone, would arguably act as a strong indicator of a person’s sense of self-worth.
Items in the original scale included ‘At times I think I am no good at all’ and ‘I wish I could have more respect for myself’. The Roseburg scale is measured on a Likert scale with labelled end points of 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) with a midpoint of 3 (neither agree nor disagree).

Participants

The sample consisted of 85 undergraduate students from Dublin Business School and was composed of 46 females and 38 males. Only students with a Facebook account participated in the research. It was easy finding participants who use Facebook within a university setting. Wiley and Sisson (as cited in Pempek et al. 2009) More than 90% of colleges use Facebook. Psychology students took part. The mean age of students was 24.64. The sample was condensed into 5 categories of age: students in their Pre-20s formed 27.16% of the sample, students aged between 21-25 formed 29.63 % of the sample; students aged between 26-29 formed 14.81 % of the sample, students who fell between the ages of 30-35 formed 11.11% of the sample while students aged 36-46 formed a minority of 9.88% of the sample.

Design

The study employed a non experimental, correlational approach to investigate the relationship between engaging in Facebook activity on other people’s profile pages with the need for popularity. Self esteem was explored in relation to time spent on Facebook and the tendency to engage with other people’s profiles. The study also investigated the relationship between the students’ perceptions of the communication shared with their parents and the rejection or acceptance of both past and future Facebook parent ‘friend’ requests.
**Administration**

All the students were 18 years old or over, so none of them needed a parental consent form. Questionnaires were distributed to students prior to the commencement of class with permission of the lecturer. Before distributing questionnaires to those who wished to participate, the author of the current study informed participants of the general theme of the research and of her hope to gain as much data as possible from those who currently possess a Facebook account. She informed the students that the study was based on the effects of self-esteem, popularity and communication on Facebook behaviour. She communicated to them, that although all participation is greatly welcomed, there is no pressure to comply as participation is voluntary. The author requested them to answer as honestly as possible while also reassuring that their identity would be anonymous as the questionnaire does not request the names of people. They were informed that they could withdraw any time they wished. They were gently told to not feel bad about any such withdrawal and that the information they had provided would be discarded safely.

The questionnaires were gathered after approximately 15 minutes and respondents were thanked for their participation. The same process was reiterated in another psychology class in order to increase the size of the sample with the hope that a large sample would increase the likelihood of producing findings that were as accurate and reliable as possible. The author outlined the general theme of her research, the anonymous, voluntary nature of responding and the respect for privacy aforementioned. These students were mainly undergraduate students of psychology and arts. Given that a relaxed atmosphere is more prevalent in a canteen setting than a classroom setting, the students casually handed the questionnaires back to the author upon completion rather when they were ready which seemed to be a little under 15 minutes for most people. Once again the researcher thanked the students who took a little time to fill them out.
Results

Self-Esteem and Time Spent on Facebook

It was of a particular interest to explore whether there was a link between self-esteem and the level of time a person spends on Facebook. Is it possible that a greater absorption or brief indulgences can enhance or deflate a person’s self image? Time spent on Facebook was measured in minutes to hours, employing a 5-point scale. The participant had the opportunity to select from responses ranging from (1) “less than 10 minutes” (2) “10-30 minutes” (3) “31-60 minutes” (4) “1-2 hours” (5) “more than 2 hours”. The majority of students, 32.9 %, spend “10 to 30 minutes” on Facebook daily. This percentage figure was followed quite closely by 24.7 % (21 people) who navigate the network site “31-60 minutes” daily. Only a tiny minority reported spending ‘less that 10 minutes’ per day on the social network site.

The mean amount of time spent on Facebook, $m=3.08$, informs one that the second highest response selected was also the average amount of time estimated by the sample of the 85 participants. Other participants disclosures of time, who did not fall into this category, tended to fall close to the mean, $SD=1.26$, $Mode=2$ (10-30 minutes). Out of the 85 participants measured, a minority of 6 people (7.1%) spent the lowest amount of time on Facebook ‘Less than 10 minutes’. By contrast, 20 % of people (17 participants); admit that they spend on average ‘more than 2 hours’ per day on Facebook. The differences in these extremes reinforced one to speculate that self-esteem and time spent on Facebook are possibly linked to each other.

Self-esteem was measured on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” (2) “disagree” (3) “neither agree nor disagree” and (4) “strongly agree”. Five particular statements were selected for assessment with the intention of suggesting an overall indication of each student’s attitude towards themselves (See Table I). The total for self-esteem was computed at the value of 20.
Table 1

*Overall self-esteem of students employing the Rosenberg Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Self-Esteem</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>8.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>7.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

A standard deviation of 1.80 revealed that many of the scores obtained fell close to the mean value of 8.56. The values of 7 and 9 had the highest percentages of frequency. Together they both accounted for 49.4% of the sample (42 people) exclusively. The mean and median of 9 were larger than the mode of 7. Thus, the distribution of scores was positively skewed at a value of 0.29 and a positive kurtosis value of .327 was obtained. The minimum score for lower self-esteem was reported at the value of 4 and accounted for only 1 person. At the other extreme end of self-esteem, a maximum score was recorded the value of 14 and once again only accounted for 1 person. The mean of 1.41 statement for ‘All in all I am inclined to think I am a failure’, *(See Table II)*, implies a higher level of self-esteem prevailed throughout the sample. Those who selected either of the ‘disagree’ responses accounted for 92.9% of participants collectively. Only 6 people agreed with this statement.

However, a value of 3 was obtained for the mode of ‘At times I think I am no good at all’. A little over half the sample, 50.6 %, ‘agreed’ with this statement and which was reported by the majority of the sample. Those who circled the ‘disagree’ response formed a minute majority of 8.3 % of the sample. Although the mean (m=2.08) for this particular statement favours a regular occurrence of the ‘disagree’ response, a further observation of the
scores reveals that they are actually quite divided to the contrary. The majority of the sample, 36.5% of the participants represents those who ‘agree’, are followed quite closely by those who ‘strongly disagree’ consisting of 32.9% of the sample.

The mean obtained for the statement ‘I feel I do not have much to be proud of’ (See Table II below) was 1.76 ($SD=0.87$). The majority of the sample selected one of the ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ responses. Those who ‘strongly agreed’ were in the minority and merely formed 4.7% of the sample.

The mean for the last statement (See Table II below) ‘All in all I am inclined to think that I am a failure was 1.41 ($SD=0.73$). Fifty-nine participants, 69.4% of them, selected the ‘strongly disagree’ response. By contrast, only 3.5% of the sample, 3 people, responded with ‘agree’.

Table 2

Aspects of Self-Esteem employing the Rosenberg Scale

| Central Tendency Measures and Standard Deviation for Self-Esteem |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------|-------|-----|
|                               | Mean          | Mode   | SD    | N   |
| I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | 3.31          | 3       | 0.69 | 85  |
| At times, I think I am no good at all.           | 2.08          | 3       | 0.89 | 85  |
| I feel I do not have much to be proud of.        | 1.76          | 1       | 0.87 | 85  |
| All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure. | 1.41          | 1       | 0.73 | 85  |

*Note: SD = standard deviation, N = total number of participants*

The two-tailed significance or probability level of .001 was used. The mean scores for the average amount of time spent on Facebook per day was 3.08 ($SD=1.26$) and for overall self-esteem was 8.56 ($SD=1.80$). A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was conducted. A two-tailed
significance or probability level of .001 was employed. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient found that there was a positive, weak significant relationship between the average time spent on Facebook per day and participants’ overall self-esteem \((r=0.31, df=83, p<.01)\). Therefore the research hypothesis was supported and the null hypothesis was rejected.

*The tendency to engage in Facebook Activity on other people’s profiles and Self-Esteem*

Given that viewing one’s own profile exclusively tends to have a significant effect on a person’s self-esteem (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011), would it be possible that a greater tendency to engage on other people’s pages also has a significant effect on self esteem?

A total score for Facebook activity on another person’s profile page was computed at the value of 25. The minimum value recorded was 5 and only accounted for 4 people in the sample. Those who score at the other extreme end \((maximum=23)\) also accounted for a minute minority consisting of 3 people within the sample. The most frequently reported scores \((m=15.67, sd=4.63)\) were 17, 18 and 19. They accounted for 27 people collectively \((22\% \text{ of the sample})\). A small amount of scores were observed at 10 or below, 14.2\% of the sample although. The standard deviation score implies that many of the scores are spread quite far from the mean.

Different aspects of Facebook activity were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from (1) “hardly ever”, (2) “occasionally”, (3) “regularly”, (4) “frequently” and (5) “very often”. Participants showed a tendency to engage in each of the listed behaviours regularly \((See Table III, below)\). The third statement assessed the most direct form of social interactive behaviour online, which echoes natural communication in the offline world. Participants responded closely to the mean, 3.42 for this particular statement. Most people within the sample are responsive to what others say on status updates, 32.9 \% respond ‘frequently’ and 16.5\% of participants respond ‘very often’.
The mean scores for the Tendency to Engage in Facebook Activity on Other People’s Profiles

The mean for the tendency to engage in others pages was 15.67 (SD= 4.63) and for self-esteem was 8.56 (SD=1.80). A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was conducted. The two-tailed significance of probability level of .001 was employed. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient found that there was a weak positive insignificant relationship between the tendency to engage in Facebook Activity on Other People’s Pages and self-esteem (r= 0.20, df=82, p <.01). Therefore, the research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is supported.

Table 3

Facebook Activity On Other People’s Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook Activity</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you view other people’s profiles</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you click ‘like’ on videos that other people have uploaded</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you click ‘like’ or comment on your Facebook friends status updates</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you click ‘like’ or comment on a quote uploaded by another person</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: SD=standard deviation, FB=Facebook

While quotes of a light hearted nature can convey humour, those of a more introspective nature might promote a sense of social belonging within a person who previously felt alone with regard to the issue that the quote referred to. A divide among the responses was observed. The majority, 35.3 %, respond to quotes on another page ‘regularly’, although the
second highest response ‘occasionally’ was selected by 27.1% of the sample. The participants who ‘regularly’ visit other people’s profiles account for 35.3% of the sample while notably, a relatively high amount visit other pages ‘very often’, 22.4% of the sample.

Table 4

A Tendency to Engage In Facebook Activity on Other People’s Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Activity on other people’s profiles</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: SD=Standard Deviation, N= Number of Participants

The mean scores of the scores for overall self-esteem was 8.56 (SD= 1.80) and for Facebook activity on other people’s profile was 15.67 (SD= 4.63). A two-tailed test was conducted.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient found that there was a weak insignificant relationship between overall self-esteem and Facebook activity on people’s profile pages (r=0.21, df=82, p>.061). Therefore, the research hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis was supported.

Communication and the Decision to Accept or Reject a Future Request from Parents

Facebook use was originally associated with older adolescents and those in their 20s when it first emerged. It has acquired many social benefits which no longer seem restricted to a younger generation. Therefore, a friend request from one’s parents seems less likely to be such a rarity in 2012. If a student has a positive relationship with their mother or father, would they not be inhibited in accepting a parental friend request?
Out of total of 84 participants (one questionnaire was invalid), fifty-five of them affirmed that they would accept their parents request, 64.7% of the sample, while 29 of them revealed they would reject such a request, 34.1% of the sample.

Communication was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree using 13 statements with some a little more forthright in their assessment of communication than others. *(See Table V)* A total score of 65 was calculated for this assessment. The mean score for parental communication for 36.46 *(SD=5.87)*. Analysis of the responses revealed that the majority of participants strongly agreed with the statement ‘nothing is accomplished’, accounting for 42 % of the total of participants within the sample although 16.5 % showed uncertainty, they ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’. Only 11% of participants disagreed with this statement. A mean value of 3.36 was obtained.

The majority of participants affirmed that they were comfortable enough to speak their mind, 65.9% collectively selected either one of the ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ responses for the statement ‘I can talk about anything with them’. The majority of participants, 34.1 % of the sample affirmed that their parents ‘want to get to know them’. The mean was 3.81 with a tiny standard deviation of 1.13. Only a 3.5 % or 3 people ‘strongly disagreed’ with this statement.

Parents may be keen to learn more about their son/daughter but the conversations shared have not consistently portrayed this. A mean of 3.09 was obtained and therefore indicating much uncertainty on the son/daughters part. An identical percentage of participants selected ‘agreed’ and ‘disagreed’, both 29.4 % respectively.

The vast majority of participants ‘strongly agreed’ that conversations are a strain, 42.4% of the sample selected ‘strongly agree’ for the statement ‘I do not enjoy our conversations’. The mean value obtained was 4.04 while the mode was 5. Similarly, the majority of participants ‘strongly agreed’ that conversations were highly dissatisfying, 34.1 % of the
sample or 29 people. Many also selected ‘agreed’ 22 people of 25.9% of the sample. The mean was recorded at 3.54 and the standard deviation was 1.16 so scores did not vary drastically outside the ‘agree’ response.

However, it was also observed that while conversations are often not perceived positively, the majority of participants still feel that they both manage to express what they want. These accounted for 38 participants, 44.7% of the sample who ‘agreed’. The mean and the mode both give strength to this particular response, 3.52 and 4, respectively. Eighteen people, 21.2 % of the total sample ‘disagree’ with merely 3 people who selected the ‘strongly disagree’ response.

**Table 5**

*Aspects of Communication relevant to the son/daughter-parent relationship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Tendency Measures and Standard Deviation for Communication</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They let me know that I am communicating effectively.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing is ever accomplished.</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They want to get to know me.</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very dissatisfied with our conversations.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to present myself as I want my parents to view me.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They show me that they understand what I have to say.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They express a lot of interest in what I have to say.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I DO NOT enjoy our conversations.</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They DO NOT provide support for what they say.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can talk about anything with my Mum or Dad.</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Central Tendency Measures and Standard Deviation for Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We each get to say what we want.</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our conversations flow smoothly</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We often talk about things I’m not interested in.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

$SD =$ Standard Deviation, $N =$ number of participants

The mean scores for those who affirm that they would accept a future Facebook request from their mum or dad was 36.89 ($SD=4.91$) and the mean for those who would reject a request was 36.61 ($SD=7.47$). An Independent Samples T-test for Equal Variances was conducted. It indicated that there was an insignificant difference between parental-son/daughter communication for students who affirm that they would accept their parents future Facebook friend request and those who reject a future Facebook friend request from their mother or father ($t=-1.26$, $df=81$, two-tailed $p=.213$). Therefore the research hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Communication and its Relationship to Receiving a Past ‘Friend’ Request from Parents**

The majority of the total sample, sixty-four people, 75.3%, received a friend request from their parents. Twenty-one people, 24.7% of the sample, did not receive a request.

The mean for those who received a Facebook ‘friend’ request from their mother or father was 47.41 ($SD=9.75$) and the mean for those who did not receive a Facebook friend request from parents was 44.86 ($SD=17.35$).

An Independent Samples T Test for Equal Variances did not indicate a significant difference in the communication shared between parents and students who received a
Facebook friend request from their mother or father and those who did not receive a Facebook friend request from their mother or father ($t=.64$, $df=24.7$, two-tailed $p=.528$). Therefore, the research hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis was supported.

*The Need for Popularity and the Tendency to Engage in Facebook Activity on Other People’s Pages*

If Facebook use is typically motivated by a person’s desire to socially interact with others, does his/her motivation stem from the pleasure of online social interactions per se or can other factors be the underlying motive? This hypothesis explores the role of a possible need for popularity as a driving force for engaging with other people on their profile pages.

The current study demonstrates that people regularly engage with their Facebook friends’ pages (See Table IV above). The mean for Facebook activity on other people’s pages was 15.67 with a standard deviation of 4.63. The scores were negatively skewed at -0.73 and a negative kurtosis value of -0.11 depicted a flat distribution of scores.

The need for popularity was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree with ‘-9’ denoting invalid scores. Three compact statements were utilised (See Table VII below) and assessed popularity in a predominantly ‘non ambiguous’ manner. The total score for the statements collectively was 15. The distribution of scores was negatively skewed at -1.59. The minimum score was -9, which implied that 2 of the participants score from the sample used were invalid.

The maximum score was 14, which accounted merely for one person. The most frequent occurring score value was ‘3 (neither agree nor disagree)’ representing 16 people or 18.8% of the sample. A cluster of scores appeared to lie between 8 to 10, consisting of 29 people or 34.2% of the sample. The scores appeared quite far away from the mean, 6.48, which is reflective in the standard deviation value of 3.68.
The mean for ‘I’ve done things to look more popular on Facebook even when it meant doing something I would not usually do’ was 1.92 (SD=0.99). The majority of people, 40 %, ‘strongly disagreed’ while those who ‘strongly agree’ formed an extreme minority of just 2 people. The mode was observed at the value of 1, signifying ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

The mean for ‘It’s important that people think I’m popular, especially on my Facebook profile page’ was 2.40 (SD=1.36). Thirty-two people, 37.6 % of the sample ‘strongly disagreed’ while those at the other extreme end of the spectrum who ‘strongly agreed’ accounted for only 5 people; 5.9 % of the sample. The mode was obtained at the value of 1, signifying ‘strongly disagree’.

The mean for ‘I’ve befriended some people on Facebook, just because others liked them’ was 2.57 (SD=1.32) A relatively close divide was observed between those who selected either of the two ‘disagree’ responses and the two ‘agree’ responses. They accounted for 51.7 % and 35.3 % of the sample, respectively, although the mode was observed at the value of 4 signifying ‘agree’.

Table 6

The Need for Popularity on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Tendency Measures and Standard Deviation for the Need for Popularity on Facebook</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve done things to look more popular on Facebook, even when it meant doing something I would not usually do.</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s important that people think I look popular especially on my Facebook profile page.</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve befriended some people on Facebook, just because others liked them.</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note : SD= standard deviation, N= total number of participants
The mean scores for the need for popularity was 6.48 ($SD=3.68$) and for Facebook activity on other people’s profile pages was 15.67 ($SD=4.63$).

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient found that there was a strong positive significant relationship between the need for popularity and Facebook activity on another person’s profile page ($r=0.55$, $df=81$, $p<.01$, two-tailed test). Therefore, the research hypothesis was supported and the null hypothesis was rejected.
Discussion

This study was designed to investigate Facebook behaviour in relation to self-esteem and popularity. It also investigated a relationship between the communication that students share with their parents and both a past and future decision to accept their parents as friends on Facebook. The first and third hypotheses were supported while the rest were not.

The majority of participants (32.9%) reported spending up to 30 minutes per day on Facebook with many spending up to one hour or more on the social network site. The mean score for self-esteem was 8.56 and the maximum score was recorded at the value of 14.0. Collectively, 92.9% of the sample disagreed with the harsh self-criticism ‘All in all I am inclined to think that I am a failure’ although over half of the participants felt at times that ‘they were no good at all’. The students seemed to have an average level of self-esteem overall. It was pleasing to know that none of the vast majority classified themselves as failures. Perhaps the high amount of agreement with ‘feeling no good at all’ was related to increasing pressures of exams and trying to juggle their social life with their academic life successfully.

The first hypothesis was supported. A positive significant relationship was identified between self-esteem and time spent on Facebook. Similarly, Mehdizadeh also found a weak significant relationship between time spent on Facebook and self-esteem with Canadian students (Mehdizadeh, 2010). These two correlations reinforce the idea that the relationship between self-esteem and time spent on Facebook are universal to all Westernised countries which use social network sites such as Facebook. Taking into consideration that the first hypothesis is bi-directional, the author can only speculate that the more self-esteem people have, the more time they spend on Facebook. It seems likely that time spent on Facebook is pleasurable for those with higher self-esteem. Zywica and Danowski (2008) as Zywica and Danowski contended, people with high self-esteem engage in much profile enhancement.
behaviour, to the contrary assumption that only those with low self esteem engage in it out of insecurity. For a person with high self-esteem Facebook is a fun attraction offering to express one’s interests and the values that one is proud of.

The second hypothesis examined Facebook activity on other people’s profile pages, a topic which previous researchers paid little attention to. An alternative view endorsed a capacity for self-promotional behaviour on other people’s pages which researchers previously confined to activity on one’s own profile. (Mehdizadeh 2010; Gonzales and Hancock 2010; Utz. et al 2010; Christofides et al. 2010). On average, people typically engaged ‘regularly’ in each of the activities outlined while it was also observed that the majority, 32.9%, were particularly responsive (claiming they responded ‘frequently’) to what other people expressed in their status updates. All of the scores deviated close to the mean scores for the particular responses recorded. However, no significant relationship was found between Facebook activity on another person’s page and self-esteem. The result is only partially interpretable. A shift from attention to the self to another person’s page could arguably deter a person from inwardly focusing on the self to solely noticing the attributes of other people.

By contrast, Facebook activity on another person’s page was correlated strongly, positively and significantly to the need for popularity. This finding and the previously discussed insignificant relationship between self esteem and Facebook activity supports Utz and her co-authors finding that popularity is a stronger predictor of one’s own Facebook use than self-esteem (Utz et al. 2008).

The total score for popularity was 15 with a maximum score of 14 obtained by one person. The mean score for an overall need to be popular was 6.48 with a cluster of scores falling between the values of 8 to 10. While the majority strongly disagreed that it was important to look popular on Facebook. However, interestingly, 35.3 % of the sample chose one of the agree type responses for befriending people on Facebook because they were liked
by others. The result of the relationship identified, suggests that people who engage with other people’s profiles have a greater need for popularity. Since there was no correlation previously found in the current study between self-esteem and activity on others profiles, it cannot be argued that problematic self-esteem issues are the underlying factor responsible for the desire to make a ‘popular’ appearance or impact on another person’s page.

Danowski and Zywica (2008) It is striking that most of the participants in Danowski and Zywicas’ sample who were deemed as popular online, regardless of their self esteem levels were extroverted while those who were considered unpopular online, 72.1 %, had an introverted personality. Ong et al. (2011) Ong et al. investigated introversion in relation to adolescents’ use of Facebook and acknowledged it as one of the major personality traits in predicting social network site use. “Adding friends” on Facebook to one’s contact list is recognised by all Facebook users as a popularity seeking behaviour when it involves people who one barely knows in order to “have as many friends as possible” (Danowski and Zywica, 2008, p.13) Ong et al. found that extroversion was a stronger predictor of having more friends on Facebook over narcissism. If one regards narcissism as an extreme form of self-esteem, it is plausible to speculate that extroversion could be responsible for popularity seeking behaviours on other people’s pages. It is recommended for future research to investigate extroversion as the mediator which drives popularity seeking behaviour on other people’s pages in light of the fact that self-esteem has not successfully been correlated with this type of activity.

Parental communication was investigated to assess if the quality of students’ relationships with their parents were a major contributing factor to the decision of accepting their mother and father as a Facebook friend. The mean score for parental communication was 37.46. The statements utilised in the questionnaire provided some insightful knowledge regarding their views on communication. The majority of the students implied that their
communication with their parents caused irritation at times; 42% of them agreed with the statement ‘nothing is accomplished.’ Many of the students felt that their parents are interested in learning more about them (34.4%). A substantial 65.9% agreed that they could ‘talk about anything’, in other words share their concerns with their parents. However, while most of them felt comfortable to share their inner feelings, it was implied that the majority don’t necessarily enjoy “bonding sessions” as a substantial 42.4% agreed with the statement “I do not enjoy our conversations.”

The mixture of attitudes conveyed suggest that parent-son/daughter relationships experienced by participants in the sample were full of intricacies which might be rooted in the developmental stage of emerging adulthood as the mean age of students was 24.64. Despite the apparent difficulties experienced, it was revealed the majority of students, 64.7%, would accept a parent friend request. However, the relationship between communication and the acceptance of a future friend request was insignificant ($t=-1.26, df=81, two-tailed p=.213$). Similarly, 64 people in the sample revealed they had received a past request from their parents but there was no significant relationship observed between parental communication and a past decision to accept a friend request received from one’s parents ($t=.64, df=24.7, two-tailed p=.528$).

The results of these future request hypotheses are in stark contrast to Karl and Peluchette sample of students who were delighted, flattered and calm towards such a request. The majority viewed a mother request favourably. Although, many the students in the current sample felt they could talk about anything, it seems likely that when it comes to Facebook are simply not interested in communicating with their parents. Their reluctance to not include a parent supports some of the views of students who were interviewed by West and her colleagues (West et al. 2009). The desire to keep family life separate seemed to prevail throughout the interviews. To include the two is generally not desirable. Young people do not
want their parents viewing their photos from a social setting or seeing their comments, not because there is an estrangement in the relationship but mainly because there is a social autonomy connected with Facebook which they like to maintain (West et al. 2009). This argument is strongly reflected by one of Livingstone’s interviewees: “it’s your parents, you don’t really want your parents seeing it, because I don’t really like my parents sort of looking through my room and stuff, because that’s like my private space.”

Limitations

The participants chosen for this study were psychology students. If a researcher is interested in re-examining self-esteem again in relation to Facebook activity on other people’s pages, it would be recommended that they use students from a non psychology undergraduate course to investigate the relationship. It would seem likely that psychology students have higher self-esteem. Their awareness and knowledge of human behaviour and cognition would seem likely to contribute to a greater self-understanding. A greater self-understanding would suggest that they are less self-crititical and higher in self-esteem that non-psychology students.

The mean age of the students was 24. Significant results might have been obtained with an adolescent sample, given that it is a stage where autonomy is particularly sought after. Adolescents test their parents’ values not out of spite but through a desire to make sense of the ‘grown-up world’ which awaits them later on. Finding one’s place in society and a greater level of autonomy desired for self-growth can be a source of conflict. When parents try to accommodate their childrens’ needs, it is plausible to suspect that the great desire for freedom associated with adolescence is bound to create some tension in the household.

When testing for popularity, only three items were used within the questionnaire. When the researcher was assembling it, three seemed sufficient at the time on the basis that their
direct, forthright nature would encourage one to be as ‘real’ and direct in response. However, the less direct and more subtle statement about ‘befriending others because they were liked’ triggered more insightful feedback as many agreed to it. Therefore, an inclusion of more varied popularity items would be recommended in the future when testing this hypothesis.

Conclusions

As previously suggested, extroversion rather than self esteem could be the force behind popularity-promotional seeking behaviours on other people’s pages. Future correlational research should re-test popularity and Facebook activity with the additional variable of extroversion as a mediating factor between the two, on the basis that it has been acknowledged as a stronger predictor than the need for popularity on one’s Facebook use. An extensive extroversion scale should be used.
References


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Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenburg, 1965)- York University


Appendices

Rosenburg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenburg, 1965)

Responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
I am able to do things as well as most other people.
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
I take a positive attitude toward myself.
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
I wish I could have more respect for myself.
I certainly feel useless at times.
At times I think I am no good at all.

The Need for Popularity Items (Santor and Messervey, 2000)

Responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

1. I have done things to make me more popular, even when it meant doing something I would not usually do
2. I've neglected some friends because of what other people might think.
3. At times, I’ve ignored some people in order to be more popular with others.
4. I’d do almost anything to avoid being seen as a ‘loser’.
5. It’s important that people think I’m popular.
6. At times, I’ve gone out with people, just because they were popular.

7. I’ve bought things, because they were the “in” things to have.

8. At times, I’ve changed the way I dress in order to be more popular.

9. I’ve been friends with some people, just because others liked them.

10. I’ve gone to parties, just to be part of the crowd.

11. I often do things just to be popular with people at school.

12. At times, I’ve hung out with some people, so others wouldn’t think I was unpopular.

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**Modified Coworker Communication Satisfaction Inventory (Frampton, 2010)**

*Directions:* The following statements concern communicating at work. In responding, think of the communication relationship you have with your colleagues or coworkers. Choose the number that best describes how you feel.

1 = Strongly Disagree/ 5 = Strongly Agree

When communicating with my colleagues or coworkers, I feel . . .

1. he or she lets me know that I am communicating effectively.

2. nothing is ever accomplished.

3. I would like to continue having conversations like ours.

4. she or he genuinely wants to get to know me.

5. very dissatisfied with our conversations.

6. like I have something else to do.

7. I am able to present myself as I want him or her to view me.

8. he or she shows me that he or she understands what I say.
9. very satisfied with our conversations.
10. she or he expresses a lot of interest in what I have to say.
11. I do NOT enjoy our conversations.
12. he or she does NOT provide support for what she or he says.
13. that I can talk about anything with my colleagues or coworkers.
14. that we each get to say what we want.
15. that we can laugh easily together.
16. conversations flow smoothly.
17. she or he changes the topic when his or her feelings are brought into the conversation.
18. he or she frequently said things that add little to the conversation.
19. we often talk about things that I am NOT interested in.

**Modified Facebook Privacy Management Measure (Frampton, 2010)**

*Directions:* Please consider how you handle private information on Facebook. Each statement below describes potential habits and patterns. Answer each question by indicating how well the following statements describe your current Facebook activities.

1= Strongly Disagree/ 7= Strongly Agree

1. When I face challenges in my life, I feel comfortable talking about them on Facebook.
2. I like my Facebook profile to be long and detailed.
3. I like to discuss work concerns on Facebook.
4. I often tell intimate, personal things on Facebook without hesitation.
5. I share information with people whom I don’t know in my day-to-day life.
6. I update my Facebook status or content frequently.
7. I have limited the personal information posted on Facebook.

8. I use shorthand (e.g. pseudonyms or limited details) when discussing sensitive information so others have limited access to know my personal information.

9. If I think that information I posted really looks too private, I might delete it.

10. I usually am slow to talk about recent events on Facebook because people might talk.

11. I don’t post certain topics on Facebook because I worry who has access.

12. Seeing intimate details about someone else on Facebook, makes me feel I should keep their information private.

13. I use Facebook so that others can link to me with similar interests.

14. I try to let people know my best interest on Facebook so I can find friends.

15. I allow people with a profile or picture I like to access my Facebook profile.

16. I comment on Facebook profiles to have others check out my Facebook profile.

17. I allow access of my Facebook profiles through any of these: directories or key word searches.

18. I regularly link to interesting websites or fan pages to increase traffic on my Facebook profile.

**Coworker Facebook Friend Request Decisions (Frampton, 2010)**

1. Have you received a coworker Facebook friend request? Yes No

2. Think about the times that you have received coworker Facebook friend requests. In general, how do you handle such requests and what do you think about in handling coworker Facebook friend requests. Describe in detail any thoughts, reservations, or information related to understanding your decision-making
processes.

a. For what reasons will you NOT accept a Facebook friend request?

b. For what reasons will you accept a Facebook friend request?

3. Consider your coworkers who have requested to be your Facebook friend. In general, how have you handled such requests?

a. I accept coworker Facebook friend requests.

b. I reject coworker Facebook friend requests.

c. I do not respond to coworker Facebook friend requests, allowing the request to go unanswered.

4. Consider your coworkers who have requested to be your Facebook friend. In general, do you make any modifications to your privacy settings during the decision-making process? Yes No

5. Consider your coworkers who have requested to be your Facebook friend. In general, do you make any deletions to your profile content during the decision-making process? Yes No

6. Consider your coworkers who have requested to be your Facebook friend. How often have you utilized Facebook privacy settings to restrict or limit coworker access to your Facebook in the following areas (Never= 1/ Always= 7):

a. Profile?

b. Basic info?

c. Personal info?

d. status updates and links?

e. Photo tagged of you?
f. Videos tagged of you?
g. Friends?
h. Posts by friends?
i. Education info?
j. Work in

7. Consider your coworkers who have requested to be your Facebook friend.

Respond to how accurately statements describe your coworker Facebook friend requests decision making processes (1= none of the time/ 7= all of the time):
a. In general, I quickly respond to coworker Facebook friend requests.
b. In general, I do not respond to coworker Facebook friend requests.
c. In general, I spend a lot of time contemplating the possible consequences of accepting coworker Facebook friend requests.
d. In general, I spend a lot of time contemplating the possible benefits of accepting coworker Facebook friend requests.

8. In general, how much time do you spend contemplating your decision regarding a coworker Facebook friend request?

___ minutes
___ hours
___ days
___ months

9. Consider your total number of Facebook friends and respond to what percentages each group represents of the whole:

Family ____%
Face-to-face friends ____%
Casual face-to-face acquaintances ____%  
Colleagues/Coworkers ____%  
Friends or acquaintances developed through online interactions ____%  
Other individuals ____%

10. How often do you make changes to Facebook your privacy settings?  
   None of the time  
   Very rarely  
   A little of the time  
   Some of the time  
   A good part of the time  
   Most of the time  
   All of the time

11. Do you place certain Facebook friends into privacy categories? Yes No  
a. If so, please list some examples of the categories that you place Facebook friends into.

12. Do work colleagues or coworkers talk about Facebook at work? Yes No  
a. If so, what topics are brought up?

13. Has anyone from work ever talked to you about information you posted on Facebook.com?  
a. If so, what topics are brought up?

*Note: Those answering ‘no’ to Question 1 will get the same questions addressing how they would handle coworker Facebook friend requests. These individuals will be examined further in comparative analysis not directly tied to this thesis. In addition, some questions within this measure will be used for subsequent analysis.*
Facebook Intensity Scale (Steinfeld et al., 2008)

Directions: The following statements concern your Facebook account and activity.

Choose the number that best describes how you feel.

1= Strongly Disagree/ 5= Strongly Agree

1. Facebook is a part of my everyday activity.
2. I am proud to tell people I’m on Facebook.
3. Facebook has become a part of my daily routine.
4. I feel out of touch when I haven’t logged onto Facebook for a while.
5. I feel I am part of the Facebook community.
6. I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.
7. In the past week, on average, approximately how many minutes per day have you spent on Facebook?
   - Less than 10 minutes
   - 10-30 minutes
   - 31-60 minutes
   - 1-2 hours
   - 2-3 hours
   - More than 3 hours