



#TrendingNow:

Social Media Use and its Effect on First Year Millennial Students Interpersonal Relationships during College Transition

Meghan Mettling, University of Dayton
Advisor: Nasser Razek

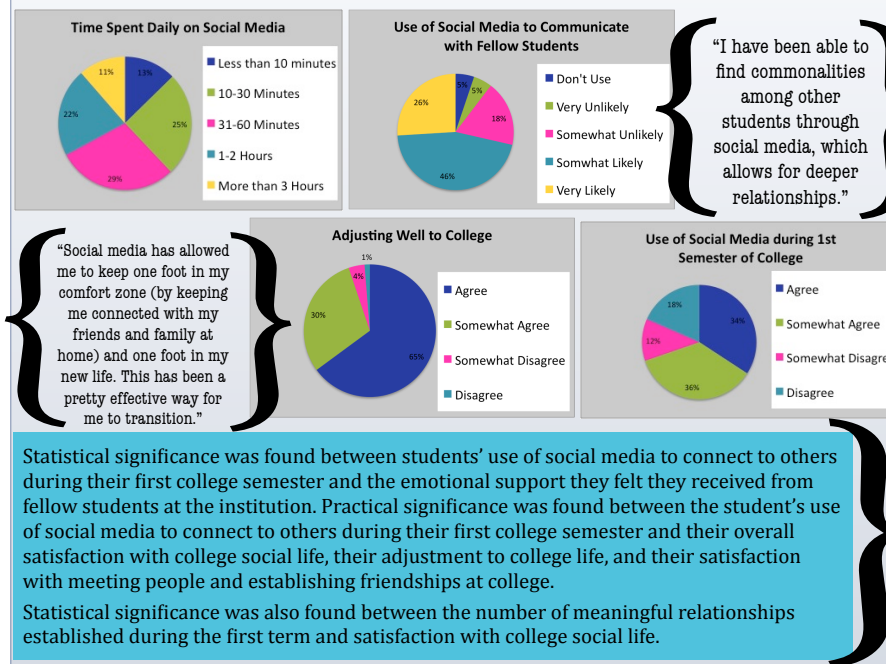
Abstract

The Millennial generation of students is changing the landscape of higher education. Constantly connected to one another via various forms of technology, these students interact with one another in new ways, which represents a challenge and an opportunity for higher education professionals to reach out to students and help them to connect to campus and to one another. The purpose of this quantitative research study is to find out how first year Millennial students at a mid-size private institution used social media during their first semester on campus to connect and form relationships with peers, faculty, and staff in the campus community. Data was collected via a survey sent to a random sample of first-year residential students. This research contributes to a larger body of research that shows that institutions who utilize social media outlets to reach out and connect to students during their first semester can positively impact the transition experience of students and increase second year retention rates.

Research Questions

- In what ways does the use of social media affect the establishment of interpersonal relationships within the campus community for first year Millennial students?
- Are students who use social media to connect to others on campus during their first semester of college adjusting better to the campus environment than those who do not?
- Is there a relationship between the amount of time first year Millennial students spend using social media sites per day and their adjustment to a campus community?

Results



Participants

80 First-Year Millennial college students between the ages of 17 and 19 who are currently enrolled in their second semester at the same institution where they began.

Research Purpose

- To aid in the development of best practices for helping Millennial students during the college transition process.
- To determine if social media outlets provide a productive outlet for higher education professionals to reach first year Millennial students and help them connect to campus.

Future Directions

- Because technology is constantly growing and evolving, future research should look at how students are utilizing new social media platforms to connect to others on campus.
- Future research should examine the role that gender and personality traits play in the use of social media to form interpersonal relationships with others on campus.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Nasser, Molly, and Michele, my graduate school professors and advisors who have taught me what it is to be a higher education professional. Thank you to my friends and family for the constant support and to Ellie for kicking me through my last year.

Methods

This research was compiled using a 33-question survey distributed electronically to a random selection of first year students. The survey used a combination of Likert-style questions and open-ended questions to measure the amount of time students use social media sites and their level of satisfaction with their college experience after completing one semester of college.

Selected Literature

- Students often use social capital as an indicator of social success.
- The first year of college is a time of social adjustment when students are navigating a new environment, building new social networks, and adjusting to the freedoms that come with college.
- The greatest majority of students who leave college do so in the first year. Successful college transition is key.
- Social media has been proven to improve students' abilities to connect to a college campus and build relationships with others on campus.
- There is a positive correlation between students' formation of relationships during their first semester of college and their likelihood to persist at an institution.
- Social media platforms present an opportunity for institutions to reach out and help students to connect to one another as well as to the institution

References

- DeAndrea, D.C., Ellison, N.B., LaRose, R., Steinfield, C. & Fiore, A. (2012). Serious social media: On the use of social media for improving students' adjustment to college. *Internet and Higher Education*, 15, 15-23.
- Gray, R., Vitak, J., Easton, E.W., & Ellison, N.B. (2013). Examining social adjustment to college in the age of social media: Factors influencing successful transitions and persistence. *Computers and Education*, 67, 193-207.
- Heiberger, G. & Harper, R. (2008). Have you Facebooked Asian lady? Using technology to increase student involvement. *New Directions for Student Services*, 124, 19-35.
- Lowery, J.W. (2004). Student affairs for a new generation. *New Directions for Student Services*, 106, 87-99.
- Spies Shapiro, L.A. & Margolin, G. (2014). Growing up wired: Social networking sites and adolescent psychological development. *Child and Family Psychology Review*, 17(1), 1-18.
- Stephenson-Aheltz, J. & Holman, A. (2012). Home is where the heart is: Facebook and the negotiation of "old" and "new" during the transition to college. *Western Journal of Communication*, 76(2), 175-193.



Study
Go to

© 2013 Poster
2117 Fourth St
Berkeley CA 94
posterpress