Envy on Facebook: A Hidden Threat to Users’ Life Satisfaction?

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Consequences of Facebook Use

- Most discussions of negative outcomes of Facebook use revolve around PRIVACY

But is privacy the only cost of SNS participation?
Outcomes of Facebook GENERAL use ➔ Overall Activity, Time spent, login frequency

Positive Outcomes
- SNS Relationship Happiness (Utz and Beukeboom 2011)
- Life Satisfaction (Valenzuela et al. 2009)
- Well-Being (Steinfield et al. 2008)
- Satisfaction (Sheldon 2008)

Negative Outcomes
- Jealousy (Muise et al. 2009)
- Emotional Exhaustion on FB (Maier et al. 2012)
- Social Overload (Maier et al. 2012)
- Anxiety (Farahani et al. 2011)
- Stress (Farahani et al. 2011)
- Loneliness (n.s.) (Burke et al. 2010, Skues et al. 2012)
Participation on Facebook

General Participation

- Active Participation
- Passive Following
- Social Searching
- Social Browsing

Koroleva et al. (2011)
Outcomes of Facebook ACTIVE use

→ Directed Communication, Content Produced, Active Participation

Mainly Positive Outcomes

• Decreased Loneliness (Burke et al. 2010)
• Subjective Well-being (Kim and Lee 2011)
• Emotional Support (Koroleva et al. 2011)
• Participatory Social Capital (Koroleva et al. 2011)
• Networking Social Capital (Koroleva et al. 2011)
Outcomes of Facebook PASSIVE use

Content Consumption, Following, Passive Social Browsing

Positive Outcomes

• Emotional Affect / Pleasantness (Wise et al. 2010)

Negative Outcomes

• Loneliness (Burke et al. 2010)
• Information Overload (Koroleva et al. 2010)
• Negative Emotional State (Haferkamp and Kraemer 2011)

Is Envy the Reason?
Consequences of Envy

**Target-Directed**
- Hostility (Clanton 2006)
- Anger (Leach 2008)
- Aggression (Foster 1972)
- Schadenfreude (van Dijk et al. 2006)
- Rivalry (Lehmann 2001)
- Social Undermining (Tai et al. 2012)

**Self-Directed**
- Feeling of Inferiority (Vecchio 2000)
- Depressive State (Smith et al. 1994)
- Frustration (van de Ven et al. 2009)
- Cognitive Depletion (Hill et al. 2011)
- Mental Suffering (Smith and Kim 2007)
- Feeling of Injustice (Clanton 2006)
- Embarrassment (Leach 2008)
- Shame (Leach 2008)
- Emotional Pain (Smith and Kim 2007)
- Stress (Vecchio 2000)
Facebook creates all premises for envy

Unprecedented Information Sharing

Exaggerated Positivity

Similarity with “Friends”
Study Design

1. Exploratory Study (n=357)

2. Confirmatory Study (n=227)

3. Validation with other demographic groups (e.g. Russian users, teenagers)
Exploratory study

n=357, 90% German students, 66% female
Think about the last time you used Facebook...

What did you feel?

Global Emotional Outcomes (share of respondents, n=357)
Many users report feeling frustrated and exhausted after using Facebook.

What do you think causes these feelings?

36% report feeling frustrated sometimes or more often, when talking about themselves...
Think about the last time you envied someone. Where did you experience this feeling?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offline Setting</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
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<tr>
<td>71,5%</td>
<td>21,3%</td>
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What have you envied last time?

Trigger of the Most Recent Envy Incident

- Travel and Leisure: 56.3% (Facebook), 19.3% (Offline)
- Social Interaction: 14.1% (Facebook), 7.0% (Offline)
- Happiness: 7.0% (Facebook), 15.5% (Offline)
- Success in General: 5.6% (Facebook), 11.8% (Offline)
- Abilities: 2.8% (Facebook), 2.8% (Offline)
- Success in Studies: 2.8% (Facebook), 2.8% (Offline)
- Appearance: 2.8% (Facebook), 2.8% (Offline)
- Love / Family: 4.2% (Facebook), 1.4% (Offline)
- Money: 1.4% (Facebook), 1.4% (Offline)
- Job Success: 2.8% (Facebook), 56.3% (Offline)
- Personality: 1.4% (Facebook), 0.0% (Offline)

Facebook (n=71)  Offline (n=238)
Confirmatory Study

n=227, 86% German students, 68% female
Is envy the reason?
Is envy the reason?

Empirical Study with n=227 users, mainly students

Envy is a full mediator

Significance: * at 5%; ** at 1% or lower
n=227; Sobel Test p=0.000
THANK YOU!

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References and Acknowledgement

Paper Reference


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