Social Media Interaction Based on Gender and Mutual Friendship

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Key Words

- Social Media
- Gender
- Mutual Friends
- College Students
- Privacy

Introduction

- Online interactions are a form of human communication
- Social media profiles encompass personal information
  - Gender, Age, College, Friends List, etc.
- The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of gender and mutual friendship on the likelihood to accept a friend request and the likelihood to interact with Facebook users.

Gender differences in privacy tendencies on social network sites: A meta-analysis.

- Researcher Sigal Tifferet (2019) reviewed 37 independent studies to distinguish gender differences in privacy behaviors on social media.
- Behaviors that were assessed: photo tagging, information disclosure, and use of privacy settings.
- Results: Even though gender differences were small, females displayed more privacy behaviors than males.
- More of a gender difference was found in the behaviors such as untagging photos and activating privacy settings.
- A smaller difference between genders was found for privacy concerns and disclosure of information.

"Don't be dumb—that's the rule I try to live by": A closer look at older teens' online privacy and safety attitudes

- Agosto & Abbas (2017)
- 98 high school seniors participated in a questionnaire that measured their basic demographic information and usage of the following materials:
  - Ownership of a laptop or desktop
  - Home internet access
  - Ownership of cell phone
  - Weekly frequence of social media engagement
- Several focus group were then ran to facilitate a discussion regarding teen attitudes on internet safety
- The findings of the study suggested that older teens tend to be worried with a breach in online privacy, while simultaneously feeling pressure to share information with friends
- Limitations: data collected reflects one point in time/emotion and may vary across time, the effects of groupthink, participant ages, inability to facilitate follow up questions

Why men and women continue to use social networking sites: The role of gender differences.

- Krasnova, Veltri, Eling, & Buxmann (2017).
- 488 social networking users were surveyed.
- The gender differences in social networking sites (SNS) based on user participation and what they get out of the use of SNS were studied.
- Results: female users stay on SNS to stay in contact with friends or family. Male users stay on SNS to have larger access to general information and social connections. Both users use SNS for their "ability to self-enhance" (Krasnova et al., 2017).
- Limitations: the researchers only used one SNS, Facebook, which they stated may have an effect on how people responded.

With whom do you feel most intimate?: Exploring the quality of Facebook friendships in relation to similarities and interaction behaviors

- Wee & Lee (2017)
- 75 total Facebook users participated; only 36 participants' data were complete for analysis
- Utilized two procedures: a survey and data crawling
  - Survey asked questions regarding intimacy with 27 real friends and 3 fake friends
  - Data crawl included all activity such as friend list, messages, photos, etc.
- Measured by Similarity, Interaction, and Intimacy
  - Most common forms of interaction were likes and comments
  - Messaging was the most frequent interaction
- No correlation found between similarity and intimacy
  - Graduate school and mutual friends were significant but had low correlations to intimacy
  - Comments from friends to participants showed significance to intimacy, but not vice versa
  - Messaging from friends to participants was significantly correlated to intimacy

Introduction (cont'd)

- Hypotheses
  - 1) Participants are more than likely to accept a female request than male requests or participants are more than likely to accept a request that have mutual friends.
  - 2) Profiles with mutual friends to have higher interaction than with profiles with no mutual friends
  - 3)There will be no interaction between mutual friends and gender.
- Design
  - 2x2 Factorial design
- Data analysis
  - 2x2 Factorial ANOVA

Methods: Participants

- 60 participants, 32 males and 28 females
- College students aged 18-24 (M= 20.45±1.55)
- Sample of convenience (classmates, friends, family)

Methods: Materials

- Each of the 60 participants were given a single piece of paper at random.

- Each paper had a description of one out of four possible scenarios followed by two questions. For example, one scenario listed was:

  ○ You are scrolling through Facebook and see a profile in a friend request from someone named Catherine. Their profile is generally new so they do not have a profile picture yet. As you check out their profile, you see they are attending the same university as you. You notice that their twentieth birthday was recently and they post/share pretty frequently. They have no mutual friends with you.

- The first question participants had to answer was "How likely are you to accept this friend request?"

- The second and final question given was "How likely are you to interact (i.e. like, comment, share, message) with this person?"

- Participants responded to both questions using a 4-point Likert scale (1= "Definitely Not" to 4= "Definitely Will")

Methods: Procedure

- 2x2 between subjects factorial design

- Each 4 varying scenarios used 3 times for each experimenter.

- Independent variables: gender (Catherine vs. Matt) and mutual friends (none vs. 7-8)

  ○ Operant definition: Measured on a Likert Scale rating 1 (definitely not) to 4 (definitely will)

- Dependent variable: the participant's likelihood to accept the request.

- Each participant must have been 18 years of age at the time the experiment was conducted.

Results: Question 1

- Average Answer lied between "Probably Not" and "Probably Will". (2.12 ±0.72)

- Average answer was greater for males than females. (2.17±0.75 and 2.07 ±0.69 respectively)

- Average answer was greater for 7-8 mutual friends as compared to none. (2.37±0.56 and 1.87±0..78 respectively)

- Main effect for # of mutual friends was found to be significant. $F(1,60)=8.00$, $p>0.006$

- Main effect for gender and the interaction were both insignificant

Results: Question 2

- Average answer was between "Definitely Not" and "Probably Not". (1.40 ±0.53)

- Average answer for males was greater than females. (1.43±0.5 and 1.37 ±0.56 respectively)

- Average answer was greater for 7-8 mutual friends as compared to none. (1.50±0.57 and 1.30±0.47 respectively)

- Main effect for gender and # of mutual friends, as well as the interaction, were all found to be insignificant

Table 1

Likelihood of accepting the request of the target profile

Profile gender	No mutual friends		7-8 mutual friends	
	n	M (SD)	n	M (SD)
male	15	1.93 (.88)	15	2.40 (.51)
female	15	1.80 (.68)	15	2.33 (.62)
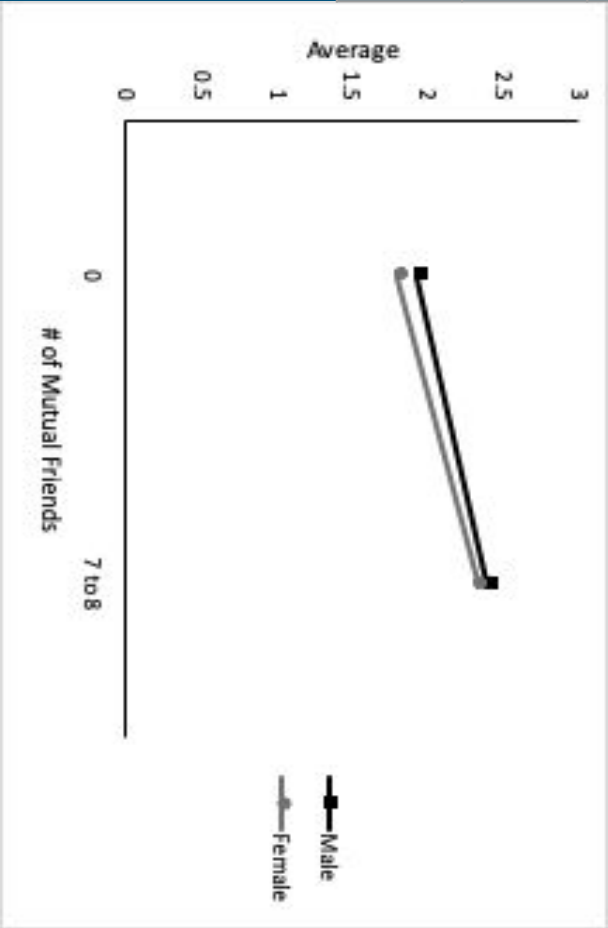
Table 2

Likelihood of interacting with the target profile

Profile gender		No mutual friends		7-8 mutual friends	
	n	M (SD)	n	M (SD)	
male	15	1.40 (.51)	15	1.47 (.52)	
female	15	1.20 (.14)	15	1.53 (.64)	
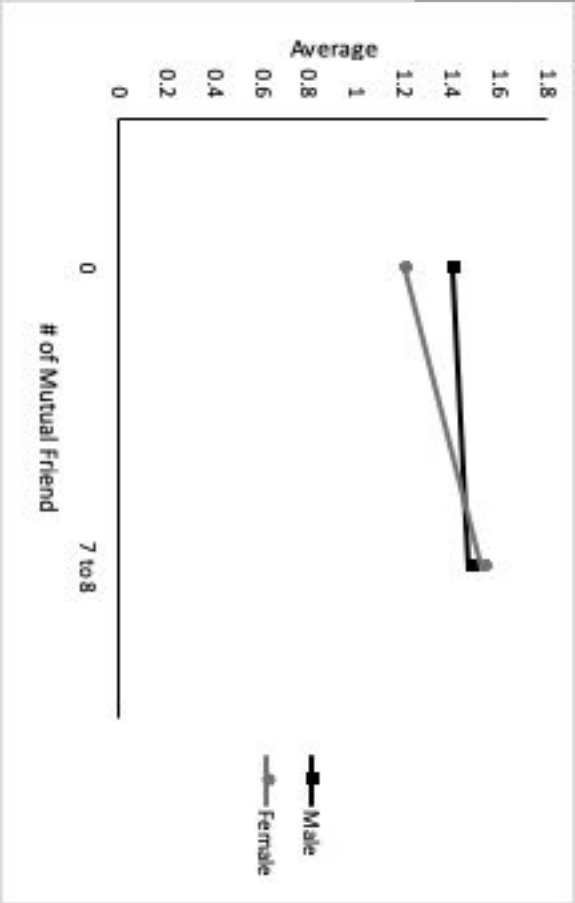
Discussion

We found that people will be significantly more likely to accept a friend request when the profile has 7-8 mutual friends with the person as compared to no mutual friends. The findings also show that there is no significant relationship between the two variables and actually interacting with the profile. Future research and replications could possibly see significance for this interaction. Krasanova et. al. also saw that the use of Facebook as the only social media site used in the research acted as a limitation to external validity.

Limitations and Future Research

- Age Group
  - Future Research - expanded to more than just the college demographic
- Social Networking Site
  - Future Research - include more social networks than just Facebook
- Number of Participants
  - Future Research - include more participants to increase power
- Profile Picture
  - Future Research - presence of profile picture attached to scenario
- Questions
  - Future Research - include questions such as why they accepted the friend request

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