

Social Media and Self-Talk: Exploring Self-Talk Related Motives for Social Media Use
and Links Between Social Media Usage and Self-Talk Frequency

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ABSTRACT

Research into social media usage and its correlations to adverse individual and social qualities have shined a light on possible effects it may have on its consumers. The motivations for why we use these platforms is a question many researchers have asked. Previous studies have documented through qualitative and quantitative means that some motives for using social media include: self-expression, entertainment, peer comparison, and ego validation. The present study investigated motivations for social media usage by modifying a measure intended to quantify self-talk frequency. In addition, correlations between self-talk frequency, using the Self-Talk Scale (STS), and social media usage were studied. Findings suggest a relationship between self-reinforcing related motives and social media usage as well as between frequency of self-managing and social-assessing self-talk and social media use. Further research into why these correlations exist and into using scales in unintended ways is needed.

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INTRODUCTION

The Nature of Social Media

Social media is a modern form of entertainment that allows users to interact with others and present themselves in scrupulous ways via posts (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Social media can be used in a private or public fashion allowing both limited and unlimited audiences to view content posted by an individual or organization. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, X (formally Twitter), and Snapchat are among the most widely used mediums for content sharing. These sites allow users to upload photos or videos with captions as well as like, comment on, and share posts by other individuals. The popularity of these apps has risen greatly, especially Instagram which has been considered one of the most popular platforms for individuals to generate content on with 1.3 billion monthly users (Insider Intelligence, 2022). The widespread use of social media has led many to look at the motivations for using it and the effects it might have on its users.

Motivation and its Relation to Social Media Usage

A major theory of motivation that incorporates a variety of factors is the self-determination theory (SDT). The self-determination theory centers around kinds of motivation that influence performance, well-being, and relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Key factors in self-determination are intrinsic motivations, or innate proclivities to challenge oneself to expand potential, and extrinsic motivations, or acting in a particular fashion to receive a desired outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Many have researched how intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affect well-being in different contexts. For instance, intrinsic motives and extrinsic motives are associated with overall well-being in a work

environment (Gagné & Deci, 2005). SDT's mini-theory of basic psychological needs examines three intrinsic needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and how they often predict levels of psychological wellness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2020).

The implementation of social media into our daily lives has sparked a variety of research studies on the motivations of users. The relation between these innate needs and social media usage has been investigated. A recent study showed that certain motivations for social media use have an influence on feelings of relatedness (Garibaldi et al., 2022). It was noted in another study that the connection between social media usage and subjective wellbeing is based on individual factors (Sheldon & Titova, 2023). Individual differences in motivation play a role in the initial reason for using social media and, consequently, these motivators act as a part of the development of wellbeing. Therefore, looking at social media's influence on wellbeing without the motivations for doing so would exclude the existence of individual differences.

Through the process of in depth interviews with young adults, one study found that motivations for Instagram use included: self-expression, curiosity, documenting, entertainment, and connection (Saletti et al., 2022). Specific usage patterns were documented as well: urge and craving, passive use, anxious posting, social approval, and social comparison.

Urge and craving referred to the addictive potential of social media as participants reported a continuous urge to interact with social media and scroll mindlessly. This compulsion came with the feeling of being burdened due to the difficulty of regulating the intake of content. The second usage pattern was passive use and those who

demonstrated this usage pattern did not have the compulsion to get on social media. These users typically refrain from posting, commenting, or liking posts as well. The third usage pattern, anxious posting, is explained as an anxious reaction to one's own posts in relation to what others might think about the posts. These anxious feelings included fears of being judged, exposed, and that some may not like the content being shared.

The fourth usage pattern found was social approval. Saletti et al. (2022) equated participants' pursuit of likes on posts to a need to have a sense of belonging. Participants discussed how they craft their posts meticulously and are disappointed when the expected feedback is not received. Finally, a pattern of social comparison, or the act of watching others and comparing qualities to oneself, was observed. Participants explained that they experience compulsive comparison and that it may make them feel better or worse about themselves.

A second study set out to find the motivational processes for social media use in the adolescent population and six themes emerged from the qualitative focus groups, one of which being peer comparison and ego validation (Throuvala et al., 2019). Within this theme, the most notable subthemes were peer comparison and the fear of being judged. The participants revealed they judged and criticized other's posts but also feared they would be judged or criticized.

The social comparison findings in relation to social media use in both qualitative studies have also been found via quantitative means (Weeks, 2023). Along with these discoveries, the viewing of Instagram posts displaying sexualized and non-sexualized content from the same account has shown that appearance comparison is prevalent as

well as greater negative mood, body dissatisfaction, and self-objectification in young adult women (Prichard et al., 2023).

In a similar study, male body image was shown to somewhat be negatively influenced by the viewing of muscularized men on Instagram (Sumter et al., 2022). No body image decrease was observed when viewing sexualized men, however. This implies that the content being viewed and individual or gender differences play a role in the relation of social media use and body image.

In a qualitative survey, 88% of a group of 25 interviewees expressed that their main reason for using social media was for social interaction (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Statements such as “social media gives me a social life” and “[I] have more contact with people via social media than face to face” were recorded. Individuals may use social media for social interaction, however communication through social media occupies only 2% of total daily social interaction (Hall, 2016). Considering the disproportionate amount of daily social interaction through social media and the seemingly negative effects it has on its users, more research into why these platforms are utilized and why these negative correlations exist is needed.

The Functions and Content of Self-Talk

The topic of intrapersonal communication, or how we communicate with ourselves, has gained traction in recent years as researchers have begun to identify its forms and the effects it has on behavior and cognition. Vygotsky’s (1943/1962) theory of private speech (talking aloud to oneself) and inner speech (thinking to oneself) explains the communication people have with themselves when not conversing socially. The Dialogical Self Theory expands on the complex phenomena regarding the multiple

perspectives our mind can take and how an inner dialogue can be formed with an internal group of voices (Hermans, 1996). A specific form of intrapersonal communication known as self-talk has been defined as “dialogue [through which] the individual interprets feelings and perceptions, regulates and changes evaluations and convictions, and gives him/herself instructions and reinforcement” (Hackfort & Scwenkmezger, 1993, p. 355). This definition suggests discussion with oneself, thus it has been stated that there is a “generative component and an auditory or perceptual component” to self-talk (Hardy, 2006, p. 83).

A few aspects of self-talk discussed in prior research include: overtness, valence, and frequency (Hardy, 2006). Overtness of self-talk can be generalized as internal or external, meaning some may use private speech and/or inner speech (Vygotsky, 1943/1962; Hardy et al., 2001). Valences for self-talk refer to the dialogue being positive or negative in nature and frequency refers to how often one might engage in self-talk (Hardy, 2006). According to Brinthaup et al. (2009), frequency of specific functions served by self-talk can be measured for four distinct types: Social-Assessment, Self-Reinforcement, Self-Criticism, and Self-Management.

Self-critical and social-assessing self-talk have been categorized as inherently negative, while in contrast, self-reinforcement and self-management are inherently positive. This study hopes to utilize these types of self-talk to help gain an understanding of possible ties between self-talk and social media usage.

Frequency of self-talk and its correlations with cognition and behavior have been prevalent in the field of intrapersonal communication (e.g., Kittani & Brinthaup, 2022; Grzybowski & Brinthaup, 2022). Investigations regarding self-talk and cognition have

found that people who report higher levels of self-talk have a higher need for cognition (Brinthaupt et al., 2009). Brinthaupt et al. also discussed that self-talk serves a self-regulatory function and has a correlation to our behaviors. Self-talk serves as a self-regulator because the act of communicating with oneself can help to create a plan of action, motivate people to carry out actions, and regulate actions taking place (FERNYHOUGH, 2016, p. 107).

Self-talk and its relation to motivation has mostly been researched in the field of sport psychology. Motivational self-talk is a kind of self-talk that helps to increase performance, confidence, and energy (Theodorakis et al., 2000). Latinjak et al. (2014) proposed the idea that we use goal-directed self-talk to solve problems and make progress on various tasks. Another study found that self-talk influenced the intrinsic motivational factors such as effort value and fun and interest in athletes (Park et al., 2020).

These studies mostly have looked at how self-talk impacts performance, whereas this study attempts to use a pre-existing measure of self-talk to quantify possible self-talk related motivations for social media use.

Social Media and Self-Talk

The explicit connection between self-talk and social media usage has not yet been investigated. Though this may be the case, findings suggest that adolescents who hold materialistic goals and values, such as fortune and fame, ruminate about social media more often than those who are not materialistic (Hynes et al., 2022). Those who are materialistic prioritize goals and values related to social status, purchases, and media consumption. Examples of the statements of rumination by those who prioritize these qualities are: “I worry about what my social media posts say about who I am,” “I worry

about how people will react to my social media posts,” and “Seeing what others post on social media makes me self-conscious.” This shows that experiences with social media can trigger a series of internal ruminations in certain groups, meaning that self-talk statements may also be present in those who use social networking.

One study investigated how mental fatigue induced by social media could be overridden by using motivational self-talk (Cabral et al., 2023). They found that participants who experienced social media induced mental fatigue performed better doing endurance exercises when motivational self-talk was used. Findings regarding how self-talk could motivate individuals to use social media and how social media usage impacts the frequency of self-talk have not been observed. However, research surrounding the harmful nature of social media has been vastly explored.

For instance, use of social media has been associated with increased risk of self-harm, depressive symptoms, and lower self-esteem in young women (Barthorpe et al., 2020). Adolescent males did not show any adverse mental health symptoms correlated to using social media. In addition, relationships between social media use and depression among young adults have been reported (Lin et al., 2016). This finding, along with the association between depression and higher frequencies of self-critical self-talk (Brinthaup et al., 2009), leads to one goal of this current study: to observe any possible correlations between social media use and self-talk frequency.

There is also association between social isolation and increased self-talk frequency (Reichl, et al., 2013; Brinthaup, 2019). Bonsaksen et al. (2023) found correlations between loneliness and increased social media usage during the COVID-19 pandemic and that those who used social media to maintain relationships felt more

isolated from others. In another study, problematic social media usage was found to be associated with depression, anxiety, and social isolation (Meshi & Ellithorpe, 2021).

Considering the wealth of research on the negative effects correlated to social media usage and that those who experience anxiety and sadness tend to be more frequent self-talkers (Kittani & Brinthaupt, 2022), these findings and their possible intersection justify a thorough investigation into social media and its relation to self-talk. This study aims to provide deeper insight into self-talk related motivations for social media use as well as the associations between usage and the frequency of the different types of self-talk.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Some questions this research hopes to answer are: (1) Is self-talk associated with social media use? (2) Do individuals who use social media more than the average talk to themselves with lower or higher frequencies? (3) If so, with what types of self-talk is social media usage associated? (4) Are there gender differences within these relationships?

Based on these research questions, there are five hypotheses. The first two are largely exploratory: (H1) Self-critical and social-assessing motives for social media use will be stronger than self-reinforcing and self-managing motives. (H2) If social media usage is more, then users will report talking to themselves in higher frequencies than those who use social media less often.

This study explores social media's relation to internal dialogue based on prior research surrounding social media usage's linkage to depression and anxiety (Labrague, 2014; Wright et al., 2013) and the relation of higher frequencies of self-critical self-talk

to depression and anxiety (Kittani & Brinthaup, 2022). Faelens and colleagues (2021) showed through following 98 individuals' interactions with Facebook and Instagram that social media use predicted reduced wellbeing with self-esteem as well as repetitive negative thinking being mediators for the reduction of wellbeing. Based on these findings it is expected that: (H3) Higher levels of social media usage will be positively associated with self-critical self-talk. (H4) Higher levels of social media usage will be negatively associated with self-reinforcing self-talk.

The abundance of research on social media's relation to poor psychological health has shown gender differences (Barthorpe et al., 2020; Twenge & Martin, 2020). Prior research has also noted that women tend to display higher levels of negative self-talk as compared to men (Devore & Pritchard, 2013). It is expected that gender differences of some kind will be seen in this study, thus the following hypothesis is stated: (H5) Women will exhibit higher levels of self-critical self-talk in relation to social media use than men.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 126 Middle Tennessee State University students recruited through the Psychology Department Research Pool in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. There were 83 female, 39 male, and 4 non-binary participants, with an average age of 20.02 ($SD = 3.281$; 18-38). Mean completion duration was 9.13 minutes ($SD = 7.07$), with the exclusion of three outliers.

Materials

Self-Talk Scale (STS). Using a 16-item scale, the STS measures frequency and types of self-talk one engages in (Brinthaup et al., 2009; Appendix A). A 5-point Likert scale is used to measure frequency (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*) of the four types of self-talk. Each item starts with the phrase “I talk to myself when...” Sample items for social-assessing self-talk include “I’m imagining how other people respond to things I’ve said” and “I try to anticipate what someone will say and how I’ll respond to him or her” ($\alpha = 0.85$). Sample items for self-reinforcing self-talk include “Something good has happened to me” and “I am really happy for myself” ($\alpha = 0.87$). Sample items for self-critical self-talk include “I should have done something differently” and “I feel ashamed of something I’ve done” ($\alpha = 0.86$). Sample items for self-managing self-talk include “I need to figure out what I should do or say” and “I want to remind myself of what I need to do” ($\alpha = 0.78$). Subscales are summed to provide total scores for each type of self-talk and an overall self-talk score is calculated by summing the responses to all 16 items. Higher scores indicate more frequent self-talk within these situations. Internal consistency for the total scale was also acceptable ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Social Media Self-Talk Scale (STS-R). The standard 16-item STS was modified to measure motives to use social media. One modification involved the instructions. The starting phrase “I Talk to Myself When...” was modified to “I Feel the Urge to Get on Social Media When...” The 5-point Likert scale was modified to ask how strongly the participants agree with the statements (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) and in item 16 the word “replay” was changed to “revisit” (see Appendix B). The scale measures four types of self-talk related motives; social-assessment ($\alpha = 0.83$), self-reinforcement ($\alpha = 0.83$), self-critical ($\alpha = 0.78$), self-management ($\alpha = 0.76$). Modifying the self-talk scale to measure motives for social media use will give more insight into specified urges based on a verified measure of self-talk. The use of this scale is different from other social media motivation measures due to the statements’ relation to the four types of self-talk. Internal consistency for the total scale was $\alpha = 0.87$.

Social Media Intensity Scale. Based off the Facebook Intensity Scale created by Ellison et al. (2007), the Social Media Intensity scale (see Appendix C) measures social media usage and the extent to which one engages in social media. This scale has been modified to include all social media. The first two items are open ended questions regarding followers and number of minutes per day spent on social media. Open ended questions regarding average screen time and how many social media apps participants regularly use were also added. Participants also shared their most frequently used social media platform. The remaining six statements are 5-point Likert-scale questions (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) measuring attitudes toward social media. Total minutes spent on social media and the six statements were used to measure social media usage. Internal consistency for these measures was $\alpha = 0.80$.

Demographics. Basic demographics such as age, ethnicity, gender, education level, and income level were collected at the end of the survey.

Procedure

Participants first completed a consent form before proceeding to the survey, which was administered through Qualtrics. If participants consented then they were presented with the Self-Talk Scale, the revised Self-Talk Scale that refers to specific urges for using social media, and the Social Media Intensity Scale in a randomized order. Basic demographics such as age, ethnicity, gender, education level, and income level were collected at the end of the survey. Participants were debriefed upon completing the survey. The study received IRB approval (see Appendix D).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows means of screen time, social media usage, friends and apps used. Participants reported spending an average of 23.37 hours ($SD = 21.68$) on their personal device a week. Social media usage averaged 3.84 hours ($SD = 4.17$) a day. Gender breakdown for screen time per week were 24.64 hours ($n = 39$, $SD = 22.29$) for male participants, 23.09 hours ($n = 83$, $SD = 21.74$) for female participants, and 16.75 hours for non-binary participants (see Table 2). Analysis of difference between male and female screen time and social media usage show no significant difference ($t(119) = 1.66$, $p = .10$; $t(120) = .36$, $p = .42$). Average social media use per day was 3 hours ($n = 39$, $SD = 2.38$) for male, 4.35 hours ($n = 82$, $SD = 4.80$) for female, and 1.85 hours ($n = 4$, $SD = 1.56$) for non-binary participants. Participants reported an average of using 3 social media applications ($SD = 1.67$). Participants also reported having an average of 632 friends on social media ($SD = 1389$). Table 3 shows that TikTok ($n = 50$), Instagram ($n = 39$), and Snapchat ($n = 25$) were the most used social media platforms reported.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Screen Time	126	2	98	23.37	21.68
Social Media Use	125	0.83	35	3.84	4.17
Friends	110	1	13600	632.19	1389.36
Number of Apps	126	1	13	3.48	1.67

Note. *N* ranges from 110-126 due to missing data.

Table 2
Gender Descriptive Statistics

Gender		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	Screen Time	39	3	91	24.64	22.29
	Social Media Use	39	0.30	10	3.00	2.38
Female	Screen Time	83	2	98	23.09	21.74
	Social Media Use	82	0.08	35	4.35	4.80
Non-binary	Screen Time	4	6	42	16.75	16.92
	Social Media Use	4	0.63	4	1.85	1.56

Note. *n* for Social Media Use female group was 82 due to missing data.

Table 3
Social Media Apps Descriptive

App	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	4	3.2	3.2	3.2
Instagram	39	31.0	31.0	34.1
TikTok	50	39.7	39.7	73.8
Snapchat	25	19.8	19.8	93.7
X (Twitter)	8	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Test of Hypotheses

Self-Talk Related Motivations. For testing Hypothesis 1, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted to compare means of positive self-talk related motives for social media use (self-reinforcing and self-management) to negative ones (self-critical and social-assessing). Table 4 shows means for each sample. It was found that there was a significant difference between positive ($M = 24.52$, $SD = 5.73$) and negative ($M = 23.06$, $SD = 6.63$) motives for getting on social media; $t(125) = 2.64$, $p = 0.05$, $d = 6.17$. Mean negative motives for social media were lower than positive motives, thus Hypothesis 1 is not supported by these findings.

Table 4
Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
STSR Positive	24.52	126	5.73	.51
STSR Negative	23.06	126	6.63	.59

Correlational Analyses. To test Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4, a bivariate correlational analysis was conducted to examine relationships between all variables studied (see Table 5). Social media usage was positively correlated with total self-talk scores, supporting Hypothesis 2. Figure 1 shows this correlation. No significant positive correlations between self-critical or self-reinforcing self-talk and social media use were observed, thus Hypothesis 3 and 4 are not supported.

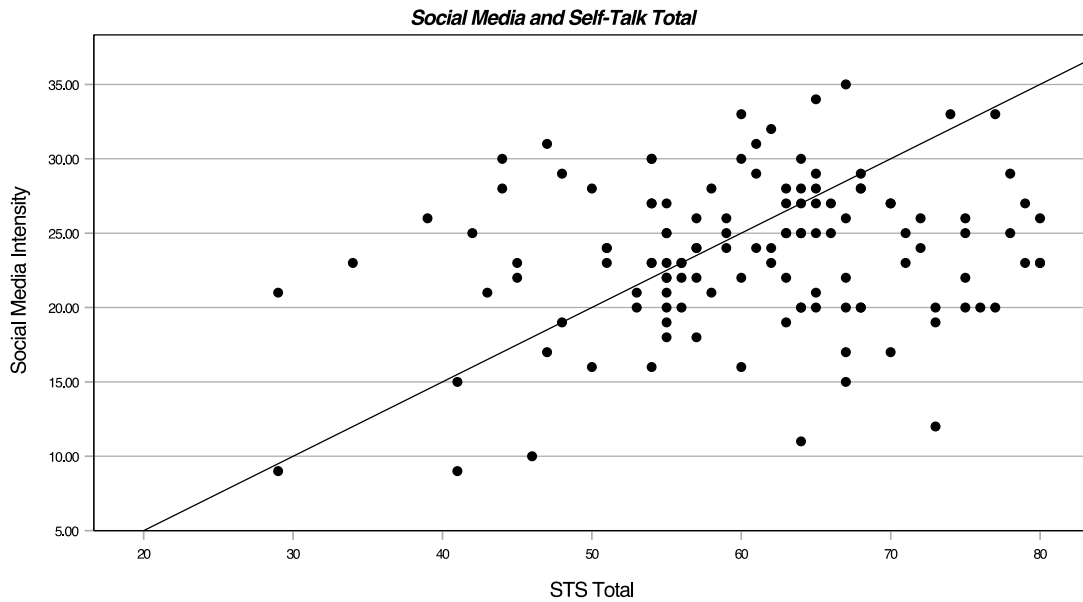
Table 5
Correlations Among Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. STS Critical	-										
2. STS Reinforce	.376**	-									
3. STS Manage	.610**	.367**	-								
4. STS Assessment	.623**	.243**	.609**	-							
5. STS Total	.849**	.655**	.802**	.795**	-						
6. STSR Critical	.251**	.020	.174	.148	.185*	-					
7. STSR Reinforce	.075	.166	.056	-.004	.097	.045	-				
8. STSR Manage	.185*	.165	.121	.143	.201*	.377**	.368**	-			
9. STSR Assessment	.259**	.184*	.124	.175	.245**	.550**	.353**	.696**	-		
10. STSR Total	.263**	.179*	.161	.158	.247**	.678**	.580**	.820**	.884**	-	
11. SMIS	.155	.096	.192*	.223*	.210*	.079	.331**	.138	.171	.240**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 1
Social Media and Self-Talk Frequency



Gender Differences. To investigate gender differences in relationship to social media usage and self-critical self-talk, two Pearson’s correlations were calculated for male and female groups, non-binary participants were not included due to a small sample size. Table 6 shows these correlations. There was a small positive correlation between self-critical self-talk and social media usage among female participants and no significant correlations among male participants. Difference between independent correlations were calculated using Fisher r-to-z transformation according to Eid et al. (2011, p. 547). There was no significant difference between the male and female samples’ correlations ($z = 0.35, p = 0.36$), thus Hypothesis 5 is not supported.

Table 6
Self-Critical and Social Media Usage Correlations

Gender		SMIS
Male ($n = 38$)	STS Critical	.152
Female ($n = 82$)	STS Critical	.220*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Supplementary Findings

Multiple relationships that were not included in the primary hypotheses showed multiple relationships (see Table 5). Total social media self-talk scale scores were positively correlated with social media usage. Self-reinforcing self-talk related motives were also correlated with social media usage. When looking at relationships between self-talk subscale scores and social media intensity scores, self-management and social-assessment scores were both positively correlated with social media intensity scores.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was first to discover if a self-talk scale could measure factors related the urge to use social media. Secondly, this study had the goal of finding correlations between social media usage and total self-talk frequency. Lastly, correlations between the four subscales of self-talk and social media intensity were explored.

Prior research has explored various motivations for social media use. The present study found a correlation between self-reinforcing self-talk related motives, and overall connectedness to social media. One study found that positive and negative reinforcement lead to a feeling of urge to interact compulsively with social media, thus showing a similarity to the present findings (Wang & Lee, 2020). Individuals who use social media seem to be doing so as a form of reinforcement.

Positive self-talk related motives for social media use were stronger than negative ones as well. This research's disconnect to the correlation between self-assessing self-talk and social media use furthers other findings in the field of social media research. The current study's findings suggest that self-reinforcing motives are strongest for those who use social networks intensely, however social-assessing self-talk, a naturally negative form of self-talk, are also related. Matikainen (2015) discussed how motivations for social media use are generally positive in nature, however, the related behaviors which occur can be negative. Due to no significant correlations between self-reinforcing self-talk and connections to social media, it can be inferred that some may have the urge to use social media for reinforcement, but may not be related to self-reinforcing self-talk in general contexts. Relationships discovered in this research confirm a possible disconnect between intended motives for social media use and outcomes.

The correlation between social-assessing self-talk and increased social media use lends to the vast amount of research on social media usage's relation to social comparison and popularity (Nesi & Prinstein, 2015; Vogel et al., 2014; Yang, 2016). Social-assessing self-talk is typically present when someone examines how people have responded to them, they try to anticipate something being said to them, or replay something said to them. The forms of communication used within social media platforms, such as likes, comments, direct messaging, and more, may be a factor influencing types of self-talk.

Self-management's relationship to increased social media connection shows that those who have a deeper connection to social media may also talk to themselves more frequently in a managing capacity. Individuals could be trying to find something to do or say while on these platforms, or these networks could be causing more managing self-talk when not using them. Further research into why this correlation exists is needed.

Limitations

One major limitation of this study was the scale used to measure social media connection. Participants seemed to be confused about the wording "friends" in question two of the scale. The intended meaning was "followers" and due to this confusion, this item on the scale was excluded from total scoring of personal connection to social media.

There may also be a lack of generalizability of these results due to participants being from a Southeastern university in the U.S. ranging from age 18 to 38.

This study only measured connection to social media and did not directly monitor what participants do on social media. If participants were observed while using social media, then specific usage and self-talk patterns could arise.

Implications

Future research could investigate correlations between this modified measure of self-talk to measure motives for using social media and existing ones. This approach would allow this new measure to show similarities and/or differences to past scales used and further the research surrounding motivations for using social media. As far as we know, other researchers have not adapted existing scales to measure something other than intended as I did in this study.

Determining directionality could also be an avenue for further research. It would be helpful to find a way to measure self-talk before using social media and after using social media. This could help to determine if individuals use social media more often because they talk to themselves more frequently or their social media use is affecting their frequency of self-talk.

Additionally, looking at correlations between social media use and anxiety with self-talk as a mediator would expand the knowledge of social media's effects on mental health. Further research into relationships between anxiety and anticipation of reactions on social media with social assessing self-talk as a mediator would add to our knowledge of the cognitive processes which may spark the negative effects of social media use. This research aimed to possibly open a door into future research surrounding self-talk and social media use.

Conclusion

In summary, these findings add to the literature surrounding social media motivations and usages. It was found that correlations between connection to social media and self-talk frequency exist. All other hypotheses were not supported. However,

relationships between social media use and social-assessing and self-managing self-talk, total self-talk motivators, and self-reinforcing motivators were found. These relationships deepen the knowledge on motivations and relationships associated to social media use while providing a foundation for future investigations.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: SELF-TALK SCALE

1= never, 2= seldom, 3= sometimes, 4= often, 5= very often

I TALK TO MYSELF WHEN...

1. I should have done something differently [**self-criticism**]
2. Something good has happened to me [**self-reinforcement**]
3. I need to figure out what I should do or say [**self-management**]
4. I'm imagining how other people respond to things I've said [**social-assessment**]
5. I am really happy for myself [**self-reinforcement**]
6. I want to analyze something that someone recently said to me [**social-assessment**]
7. I feel ashamed of something I've done [**self-criticism**]
8. I'm proud of something I've done [**self-reinforcement**]
9. I'm mentally exploring a possible course of action [**self-management**]
10. I'm really upset with myself [**self-criticism**]
11. I try to anticipate what someone will say and how I'll respond to him or her [**social-assessment**]
12. I'm giving myself instructions or directions about what I should do or say [**self-management**]
13. I want to reinforce myself for doing well [**self-reinforcement**]
14. Something bad has happened to me [**self-criticism**]
15. I want to remind myself of what I need to do [**self-management**]
16. I want to replay something that I've said to another person [**social-assessment**]

APPENDIX B: SOCIAL MEDIA SELF-TALK SCALE

1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

I FEEL THE URGE TO GET ON SOCIAL MEDIA WHEN...

1. I should have done something differently [**self-criticism**]
2. Something good has happened to me [**self-reinforcement**]
3. I need to figure out what I should do or say [**self-management**]
4. I'm imagining how other people respond to things I've said [**social-assessment**]
5. I am really happy for myself [**self-reinforcement**]
6. I want to analyze something that someone recently said to me [**social-assessment**]
7. I feel ashamed of something I've done [**self-criticism**]
8. I'm proud of something I've done [**self-reinforcement**]
9. I'm mentally exploring a possible course of action [**self-management**]
10. I'm really upset with myself [**self-criticism**]
11. I try to anticipate what someone will say and how I'll respond to him or her [**social-assessment**]
12. I'm giving myself instructions or directions about what I should do or say [**self-management**]
13. I want to reinforce myself for doing well [**self-reinforcement**]
14. Something bad has happened to me [**self-criticism**]
15. I want to remind myself of what I need to do [**self-management**]
16. I want to revisit something that I've said to another person [**social-assessment**]

APPENDIX C: SOCIAL MEDIA INTENSITY SCALE

1. About how many total friends do you have on social media? [**Open ended**]
2. In the past week, on average, approximately how many minutes per day have you spent on social media? [**Open ended**]
3. In the past week, approximately how many hours have you spent on your phone?
[**Open ended**]
4. How many social media sites or applications do you use on a regular basis?
[**Open ended**]
5. What social media application do you use most frequently?
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
 - c. Tik-Tok
 - d. Snapchat
 - e. X (Twitter)

(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

6. Social media is part of my everyday activity
7. I am proud to tell people I'm on social media
8. Social media has become part of my daily routine
9. I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto social media for a while
10. I feel I am part of the social media community
11. I would be sorry if social media shut down

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

[EXTERNAL] IRB-FY2024-85 - Initial: Initial Exempt Protocol Approval Letter

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>

Tue 10/24/2023 1:24 PM

To: Justin Ritter <jdr9m@mtmail.mtsu.edu>; Tom Brinthaupt

<Tom.Brinthaupt@mtsu.edu>

Date: October 24, 2023

PI: Justin Ritter

Department: Middle Tennessee State University, Psychology

Re: Initial - IRB-FY2024-85

Self-Talk and Social Media

The Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for the above referenced study.

Decision: Exempt

Category: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through

identifiers linked to the subjects;

Findings:

Research Notes:

Please note that even though your proposed study is deemed exempt from further IRB review, the following apply to your approved study:

1. In accordance with 45 CFR 46.110, expiration dates do not apply to research eligible for Exempt Review under the Common Rule, and continuing review is not required by the IRB.
2. Any unanticipated harm to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance.
3. All modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB for approval before their implementation. Adding new researchers constitutes a modification to the protocol. Per MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who handles the data or interacts with participants. Everyone meeting this definition for this project must have completed the required CITI training and received IRB approval prior to becoming actively involved in the project.
4. Closure of the study must be submitted within Cayuse when the study ends or when personal identifiers are removed from the data and all codes and keys are destroyed.

5. All research materials must be retained by the PI for at least three (3) years after study completion and then destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Sincerely,

The Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board