GREEN WITH ENVY: HOW ENVY EVOKED THROUGH SELF-DISCLOSURE ON FACEBOOK INFLUENCES LIFE SATISFACTION, SELF-ESTEEM, TIME SPENT ON FACEBOOK AND COPING STRATEGIES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts

Fiona Hughes

May, 2016
GREEN WITH ENVY: HOW ENVY EVOKED THROUGH SELF-DISCLOSURE ON FACEBOOK INFLUENCES LIFE SATISFACTION, SELF-ESTEEM, TIME SPENT ON FACEBOOK AND COPING STRATEGIES

Fiona Hughes

Thesis

Approved:

Advisor
Dr. Elizabeth Graham

Accepted:

Interim Dean of the College
John Green

Faculty Reader
Dr. Tang Tang

Dean of the Graduate School
Dr. Chand Midha

Faculty Reader
Dr. Andrew Rancer

Date

Interim School Director
Dr. Thomas Dukes
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between positive self-disclosure posts on Facebook, episodic envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem and time spent on Facebook. In addition this study examined if feelings of envy, level of life satisfaction self-esteem and time spent on Facebook predict the use of coping strategies used on Facebook. Participants viewed a Facebook page, developed for the study, then completed a survey with a series of questions regarding episodic envy, life satisfaction, coping with envy, self-esteem and demographic information. Overall, this study found that when individuals are faced with feelings of envy as a result of positive self-disclosure posts on Facebook, he or she also feels less satisfied with life. Envy was also found to be a predictor of deactivating ones’ Facebook profile to eliminate the stressor.

Keywords: Self-Disclosure, Envy, Facebook, Life Satisfaction, Coping Strategies
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
<th>vi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Comparison Theory</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Spent on Facebook</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Disclosure on Facebook</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with Envy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHOD</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic Envy</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Life Satisfaction Scale...........................................30
Self-Esteem............................................................30
Coping with Envy.....................................................31
Statistical Analysis...................................................32

IV. RESULTS..................................................................34

V. DISCUSSION..........................................................39

Limitations and Future Research.................................45

END NOTES............................................................48

REFERENCES..........................................................49

APPENDICES..........................................................59

APPENDIX A. FACEBOOK PROFILE............................60

APPENDIX B. EPISODIC ENVY SCALE.........................64

APPENDIX C. LIFE SATISFACTION SCALE......................65

APPENDIX D. COPING WITH ENVY...............................66
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Demographic Information</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics for envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Correlations between envy, life satisfaction and other factors</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Summary of Regressions analysis of envy (feeling component) as a predictor of deactivating coping strategy</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Summary of Regression analysis of self-esteem as a predictor of hiding coping strategy</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Summary of Regression analysis of envy as a predictor of coping strategies combined</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Envy is one of the seven deadly sins. However, few people know exactly what envy is or how it is experienced. In fact, envy is often confused with jealousy (DelPriore, Hill & Buss, 2012; Okholm, 2008; Parrott & Smith, 1993). Envy involves at least two people and is characterized by an unpleasant emotion that happens when one person wants an advantage that another individual possesses (Smith, Parrott, Diener, Hoyle & Kim, 1999). Envy often occurs when an individual compares him or herself to another individual they view as superior (Debbané, 2011; Maijala, Munnukka, & Nikkonen, 2000). Unlike envy, jealousy involves at least three people or objects, the jealous individual, the individual he or she fears losing, and the individual or object they fear losing said person to (Smith et al., 1999). Consequently, jealousy is characterized as an emotional reaction to the thought of losing someone or something (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). Envy concerns wanting something another possesses.

Envy is described as an emotional and behavioral response to a social comparison (Duffy, Scott, Shaw, Tepper, & Aquino, 2012). Tai, Narayanan, and McAllister (2012) suggest that feelings of envy upset an individual’s psychological balance. An individual cannot be envious of someone they do not know (Okholm,
In the past, prior to the prevalence of social media, one could only truly be envious of close friends, family, and coworkers. However, due to social media sites, such as Facebook, individuals now have the ability to make social comparisons with acquaintances and strangers. The possibility for social comparisons to occur has increased dramatically.

Since Facebook's release in 2004 (Bumgarner, 2007) it has become a part of many individuals' daily routine. In fact, 70 percent of Facebook users log into their account everyday (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart & Madden, 2015) and spend an average of 20-145 minutes per day on Facebook (Junco, 2012, 2013). Denti et al. (2012) found that spending time on Facebook allows individuals to maintain their existing social contacts. Research reveals that individuals are more likely to disclose personal information in a computer-mediated communication setting than in a face-to-face setting (Trepte & Reinecke, 2013). Trepte and Reinecke (2013) found that disclosure through social networking sites, such as Facebook, offers users social capital such as the ability to share thoughts and ideas with many people at any time.

One of the reasons users enjoy Facebook is that it provides the choice to share or restrict the viewing of personal information (Wang, 2012). Therefore, online self-disclosures are being reinforced by the rewards Facebook users receive through online social interactions. However, individuals who frequent social networking sites such as Facebook may have more opportunities to be involved in social comparisons that could ultimately lead to feelings of envy.

Much of the past envy research has been theoretically driven by social comparison theory. Based on the idea that individuals often make social self-
comparisons with those around them, Duffy et al. (2012) conceptualized envy in three ways: situational, dispositional and episodic. Situational envy is a feeling of envy toward a larger environment, typically in a group setting where there are many social comparisons happening at once. For example, situational envy often occurs at work or school, especially in the context of group projects. This could be due to the nature of a group providing easier access to information about the other individuals, therefore, providing chances for more social comparisons. However, feeling envy towards a whole group often redirects the energy away from the work task and may lead to a decrease of group effectiveness (Duffy & Shaw, 2000).

Dispositional envy is a trait, a predisposition to respond in a consistent fashion, regardless of the situation. Finally, Duffy et al. (2012) characterized episodic envy as feelings of envy towards one particular individual or event due to one specific social comparison. Researchers, van de Ven, Zeelenberg and Pieters (2012) examined envy applying social comparison theory and found that the appraisal of deservingness, or how deserving an individual is perceived to be of a given outcome, was an important influence on the emotional experience of envy. For example, if a student studied hard and got a good grade one may see he or she as more deserving than a student who cheated and got a good grade (van de Ven et al., 2012).

Envy is an important emotion to understand, as researchers believe feelings of envy could be a result of low self-esteem or depression (Krizan & Johar, 2012; Smith et al., 1999). Smith et al. (1999) revealed that repeated social comparisons, with individuals, perceived as superior, ultimately diminish the individual’s self-esteem or self-perceptions. The sense of inferiority associated with envy can cause
individuals to focus on social comparisons and put a spotlight on what one lacks compared to other individuals (Smith et al., 1999), which could then in turn lead to a decrease in life satisfaction (Krasnova, Wenninger, Widjaja, & Buxmann, 2013).

Therefore, the literature suggests that social comparisons can result in envious thoughts and diminished life satisfaction, which may prompt Facebook users to employ coping strategies to manage these unpleasant feelings (Krasnova et al., 2013). Possible coping strategies include: deactivate ones’ own Facebook page, unfriend a specific individual, hide an individual’s Facebook page, and engage in self-presentation (Krasnova et al., 2013). Self-presentation refers to the act of developing posts that make him or herself look better (Krasnova et al., 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between positive self-disclosure posts on Facebook, episodic envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem and time spent on Facebook. In addition, this study will examine if feelings of envy, level of life satisfaction self-esteem and time spent on Facebook predict the use of coping strategies used on Facebook.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

_Social Comparison Theory_

Social comparison theory will serve as a framework to study how positive self-disclosure posts on Facebook evoke envy, the relationship between envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem, time spent on Facebook and coping strategies used to manage envy. Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) suggests that, in order to determine their progress and placement in life, people will compare themselves to others (Argo, White, & Dahl, 2006; Hoorens & Van Damme, 2012; Lubbers, Kuyper, & Van Der Werf, 2009; Nabi & Keblusek, 2014) This theory can be broken down into two different types of comparison, upward social comparison and downward social comparison. Upward social comparison is when an individual compares himself or herself to someone they perceive as better than them (Buunk, Groothof, & Siero, 2007; Myers & Crowther, 2009; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). Whereas, downward social comparison is when an individual compares himself or herself to someone they perceive as less fortunate (Buunk et al., 2007).

Researchers believe that upward social comparisons are likely to result in negative feelings such as envy (Denti et al., 2012; Krasnova et al., 2013; Nabi & Keblusek, 2014). Smith et al., (1999) state that envy as a result of an upward
comparison suggests that the envious individual is inferior. Understanding how upward social comparisons may evoke envy is important because social comparisons are present in almost every interaction (Johnson, 2012). Today one of the most common places for interactions with others is on the Internet (Lee, 2014) and social networking sites such as Facebook.

Research on social comparison has found that individuals may engage in different kind of comparisons with a friend versus a non-friend. Lubbers et al. (2009) examined social comparison processes and how they differ based on the individuals relationship with the comparison target. The research revealed that 50% of the 9000 students that participated in the study made comparisons with his or her friends, 42% of the students made comparisons with classmates they liked, and 8% of the students made comparisons with students who were non-friends. When applying the findings of Lubbers et al. (2009) to the context of Facebook it is important to remember that even if someone is a “friend” on Facebook that does not automatically mean he or she is a friend in the face-to-face context.

Facebook comparisons can be problematic due to the fact that many social comparisons on Facebook that evoke envy are based on incomplete or inaccurate information (Fox, 2013). Information received through an individual's Facebook page may be inaccurate or incomplete due to the ability for Facebook users to be selective about the information shared on this social media platform (Wang, 2012). Envy has rarely been studied through the communication platform of Facebook (Krasnova et al., 2013), despite the fact that there are more than 860 million active
users (Marcial, 2015). Therefore, first it is important to understand the history and function of Facebook and how it is used.

**Facebook**

Facebook, created by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, began as a social networking site at Harvard University (Bumgarner, 2007). After one month at Harvard, Facebook was so popular that it was opened up for use at other universities. Today, Facebook is part of many individual’s daily routine. Research found that 70% of users log onto their Facebook account every day (Duggan et al., 2015). Since Facebook’s release in 2004 it has proven to be one of the world’s most recognizable social networking sites, making it a leader in computer-mediated communication (Elphinston & Noller, 2011; Hampton, Goulet, Marlow & Rainie, 2012; Kim & Lee, 2011; Ledbetter, Mazer, DeGroot, Meyer, Mao, & Swafford, 2011; Stewart, Dainton, & Goodboy, 2014).

Joseph Walther (1992) has been studying computer-mediated communication long before Facebook was developed. Much of his research is guided by social information processing theory, which explains and predicts the differences between computer-mediated communication and communication that takes place offline (Walther, 2011). When Walther (1992) began his research on computer-mediated communication he found that due to the lack of nonverbal cues offered in an online setting it might be unsuitable for many communication purposes. Walther (1992) suggests that because of the impersonal communication qualities associated with computer-mediated communication that it is not suitable for relational development. Research reveals that people use the information that is provided to
them online by other individuals to make judgments about that individual (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008). Facebook provides users with many features, including friend functions, access to personal and practical information, regulatory functions, groups, events and other miscellaneous features (Special & Li-Barber, 2012). Friend function includes, accepting new friends, browsing friend’s profiles, and seeing whom our friends are friends with. Personal information includes, reading the information friends choose to disclose, looking at photos and reading others’ walls. Practical information includes the ability to access friend’s contact information. Regulatory functions include, editing your profile, updating photos and managing the privacy settings. The group feature allows users to view, create or join a Facebook group. The event feature allows users to find, create, or join an event on Facebook. Finally miscellaneous features include the ability to “poke” another user, or “like” content that another user has posted. “Poking” on Facebook refers to the ability to click a button on a friend’s Facebook page, which will then alert that person that you have “poked” them. It is important to understand that the term friend is broadly defined. Ledbetter et al. (2011) state that in past research the term friend is used to describe “nonfamilial platonic ties” (p. 29). However, on Facebook the term friend is used to describe any connection on the site. Walther et al. (2008) found that out of 150 online friends, only 10-20 of them are close relationships.

Despite the many features of Facebook the most valued is the ability to share personal life updates (Al-Saggaf & Nielsen, 2014). Additionally, users are given the ability to choose personal information they wish to post, essentially constructing a
desired online identity (Bevan, Gomez, & Sparks, 2014; Bond, 2009; Special & Li-Barber, 2012; Wang, 2012). Wang (2012) looked at social media from a young consumer perspective and developed a framework to understand the types of posts users make on Facebook. This framework was developed through observation and various informal conversations and discussions with young consumers about how they and their peers utilize social media.

Wang (2012) found that there are five main types of posts individuals make on Facebook: expression posts, informational posts, impression posts, intimacy indicators and reciprocity posts. Expression posts express certain feelings or current situation in the user’s life. Informational posts are created with the intention of sharing or spreading various types of information. Impression posts are meant to impress other users, and tend to be created in an effort to improve perceived popularity or social status. Intimacy indicators are posts developed to show the level of intimacy or friendship between users. Finally, reciprocity posts tend to be viewed as showing mutual support (e.g., liking a post on a user’s page because they have done so in the past for you). These five types of posts are emblematic of self-disclosure. In addition to examining the types of posts an individual creates on Facebook, researchers examined the amount of time an individual spends on Facebook and the reasons for using Facebook (Denti et al., 2012).

*Time Spent on Facebook*

Denti et al. (2012) found that the primary reason individuals spend time on Facebook was to maintain their existing social contacts and stay updated on the lives of family and friends (old and new). In a study completed by Denti et al. (2012)
in Sweden, it was found that the average Internet user self-reported he or she spent a total of 75.2 minutes per day logged into Facebook. In general, research about Facebook reports a wide range of average time spent on Facebook, Junco (2012) states that participants self-reported an average of 101.9 minutes on Facebook per day, and Orr et al. (2009) states that participants self-reported an average of 30 minutes on Facebook per day. However, in another study by Junco (2013) it was found that when the participants self-reported their daily Facebook usage the average was 145 minutes per day on Facebook, but when monitoring software was put on their internet devices it was found that the participants actually spent only 26 minutes per day on Facebook. More recent research on Facebook found that the average user in America spends an average of 40 minutes per day on the social media platform (D’Onfro, 2015). Regardless of the average time individuals spend on Facebook, researchers agree that Facebook allows the user to pick and choose the information one may self-disclose to his or her Facebook friends (Chou & Edge, 2012; Orr et al., 2009).

**Self-Disclosure on Facebook**

Self-disclosure was previously considered intimate and private (Waters & Ackerman, 2011), meaning that it was reserved for a dyad or small group and happened in a face-to-face setting. However, researchers believe computer-mediated-communication changed the intimate nature of self-disclosure (Bazarova & Choi, 2014; Fogel, 2011; Livingstone, 2008; Trepte & Reinecke, 2013). Waters & Ackerman (2011) define self-disclosure as “the telling of the previously unknown so that it becomes shared knowledge” (p. 105). Hollenbaugh and Ferris (2014) state
that, “Facebook is characterized by high amounts of self-disclosure because it is well established that self-disclosure is a crucial element in relationship development” (p. 50).

Facebook provides users with the ability to develop an online identity through the self-disclosure of personal information (Taddicken, 2014), including, basic information (e.g., name, sex, birthday, relationship status), personal information (i.e., favorite activities, interests, hobbies), contact information and work/educational information. Disclosures made on Facebook may be offered to construct a specific or ideal image the user wants to present to their followers (Bevan et al., 2014; Kim & Lee, 2011). However, it is important to note that not everything one posts on Facebook is always a meaningful positive self-disclosure. Valence is a term that refers to the positiveness versus negativeness contrast of a message (Hill, Ah Yun, & Lindsey, 2008). Positive self-disclosures include affirming statements, happy statements, or agreeing statements; whereas negative self-disclosures include disagreeing statements or statements that are critical (Walton & Rice, 2013). Research states that it is positive self-disclosure posts that evoke envy on Facebook (Krasnova et al., 2013).

Computer-mediated-communication produces more self-disclosure than face-to-face communication (Jiang, Bazarova, Hancock, 2013; Tian, 2011) because there is a lack of nonverbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, which can help reduce the risks associated with self-disclosure. Additionally, Tian (2011) found that there is a positive relationship between social anxiety and self-disclosure, meaning that the more anxious one is in a social setting, the more likely
they are to choose to self-disclose online. The literature suggests that the Internet will facilitate self-disclosure (Tian, 2011).

Research on self-disclosure through social media sites, such as Facebook, have found that women self-disclose online more often than men (Bond, 2006). These self-disclosures include both visual (pictures) and written (status updates) posts relating to friends, family, and other significant relationships. However, regardless of gender, researchers found that some individuals self-disclose in order to seek help or gain social support, while others felt that self-disclosure is an obligation that comes with relationships (Derlega, Winstead, Mathews, & Braitman, 2008). Therefore, when studying self-disclosure on Facebook it is important to understand the motivational factors behind voluntary online disclosure.

Lee, Im, and Taylor (2008) reported that there are seven main motivations to disclose personal information online. These motivational factors reflect Facebook users willingness to post private thoughts and information (Hollenbaugh & Ferris, 2014). The first motivational factor, self-presentation, concerns individuals purposeful presentation of themselves (Lee, et al., 2008; Waters & Ackerman, 2011). The second factor, relationship management, is when people voluntarily disclose information online to people they are close to in order to develop or maintain relationships. The third motivation, keeping up with trends, refers to an individual’s desire to stay up-to-date with current topics. The fourth motivation, information storage, is when people are motivated to disclose online as a method of recording personal information. Information sharing is the fifth motivational factor; it refers to the motivation to share personal information with others. Entertainment is the sixth
motivation for disclosing online and can offer personal pleasure. Finally, showing off is the seventh motivation for disclosing information online.

Waters and Ackerman (2011) used the motivational factors from Lee et al. (2008) to create a qualitative survey in which individuals were asked about their motivations for voluntary self-disclosure on social media. While all of the motivations for disclosure are important, their study found that showing off was the primary motivation for online self-disclosure (Waters & Ackerman, 2011). Self-disclosure is complex as it fulfills the need for belonging in society, however it requires being vulnerable and releasing control over private information (Bazarova & Choi, 2014). Past research has found that positive self-disclosure posts allow the user to construct an ideal image the user wants to present to Facebook followers (Kim & Lee, 2011), which could result in upward social comparisons. When Facebook users make upward social comparisons it may result in negative feelings such as envy and a decrease in self-esteem.

Envy

Envy is a painful emotion that often occurs when an individual compares him or herself to someone they view as superior in terms of possessions, characteristics or achievements (Cohen-Charash, 2007; Crusius & Lange, 2014; Debbané, 2011; Duffy et al., 2012; Kahn, Quratulain, & Bell, 2014; Klein, 2001). More specifically, envy is defined by Smith and Kim (2007) as, “an unpleasant, often painful emotion characterized by feelings of inferiority, hostility and resentment” (p. 47). These feelings of envy are often a result of another person having a possession (object, social status, attribute or quality) that one desires for him or herself. Individuals are
typically envious of others who are similarly positioned in society (Krizan & Johar, 2012). An important characteristic of envy is that it involves at least two people, the envious individual and the envied individual (Smith et al., 1999). There is limited research that examines envy evoked through social networking sites, even though the nature of social networking sites are fraught with many envy-evoking situations (Krasnova et al., 2013). It is important to understand the role of envy in Facebook communication because researchers believe that envy is a universal psychological trait (Hughes, 2007; Klein, 2001; Krizan & Johar, 2012) and social networking sites are ubiquitous.

Envy is historically recognized as a sinful emotion (Hughes, 2007; Okholm, 2008; Quintanilla & Jensen de Lopez, 2012; Smith & Kim, 2007; Stenstrom & Curtis, 2012). Research found that even though envy is considered one of the seven deadly sins it is found to be the least “deadly” (Capps & Haupt, 2011). Capps and Haupt (2011) believe envy is the least deadly because it does not cause pain or discomfort for the individual of whom one is envious, but instead only for the individual who feels envious. There are two main types of envy, benign envy and malicious envy.

Benign envy is viewed as positive envy (Tai et al., 2012). Benign envy can motivate one to improve in an effort to reduce the gap between a person and those they envy (Milovic & Dingus, 2014; Tai et al., 2012; van de Ven et al., 2012). Benign envy is characterized by a positive attitude toward the other person (Crusius & Lange, 2014). In fact, an individual who is feeling benign envy might be more willing to openly state that he or she feels envious (Quintanilla & Jensen de Lopez, 2012).
Therefore, some researchers believe that benign envy is not real envy (Hughes, 2007; Quintanilla & Jensen de Lopez, 2012).

The second type of envy, malicious envy, is viewed as more destructive and is aimed at undermining the envied person (Crusius & Lange, 2014; Milovic & Dingus, 2014; van de Ven et al., 2012). For example, you may want something another has, malicious envy would suggest that in addition to wanting the envied item for yourself, you also want that individual to no longer have the item that evoked envy. Crusius and Lange (2014) state that malicious envy often happens when the envious individual views the envied as undeserving of good fortune. Feelings of malicious envy can lead to lower self-esteem and counterproductive personal behavior (Milovic & Dingus, 2014). Despite the differences between each type of envy, both involve pain for the individual who feels envious (Tai et al., 2012).

While envy and jealousy provoke similar emotions they are two separate terms that should not be used interchangeably. While this study is focusing specifically on envy, it is important to understand how jealousy has been studied in order to show how it differs from envy. Jealousy relates to fear of losing an important relationship to another individual or circumstance (Smith & Kim, 2007). For example, one could fear losing a significant other to another individual, or even to a job, or a hobby. Therefore, jealousy involves at least three components: the jealous individual, the individual he or she fears losing, and the individual/object they fear losing said person to (Smith et al., 1999). The study of jealousy is often applied in the context of romantic relationships because jealousy occurs when there is a threat of losing someone important to another individual (Cayanus & Booth-
Butterfield, 2004; Guerrero & Afifi, 1998; Parrott & Smith, 1993; Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). However, jealousy in any form of relationship has been found to result in counterproductive behaviors such as surveillance, negative communication, and conflict (Deutz, Lansu, & Gillessen, 2015).

Research on jealousy states that individuals with low self-esteem experience more relationship jealousy as a result of viewing social networking sites, such as Facebook, compared to individuals with higher self-esteem (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). Additionally, Utz and Beukeboom hypothesized that relationship satisfaction is negatively related to jealousy on social networking sites. Researchers believe this is due to the ability for public demonstrations of affection and relationship commitment (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). Additionally, research suggests that the more time an individual spends engaged in “surveillance” or observation type behavior on Facebook, the lower their relationship satisfaction will be (Elphinston & Noller, 2011). Researchers have examined jealousy from a friendship perspective and found that jealousy in friends predicted negative outcomes regarding conflict, balance of power, quality of interactions, and disconnectedness (Deutz et al., 2015).

Research on jealousy tends to focus on the psychological experiences such as feelings and emotions rather than the communicative responses (Guerrero, Hannawa, & Babin, 2011; Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). However, Guerrero and Afifi (1998) state that there are eleven main types of communication responses to feelings of jealousy, ranging from trying to improve/fix the relationship to trying to get revenge on the partner. Guerrero et al. (2011) state that avoidance coping is a common way jealousy is dealt with. When feeling jealous it is natural to withdraw or
remain silent while processing the feelings and deciding the best way to react to the situation that evoked the jealousy.

As stated previously, envy and jealousy are often terms that people use interchangeably, however, the literature shows that while envy and jealousy may result in similar emotional responses they are different concepts. It is important to keep in mind that feelings of envy and jealousy can happen at the same time (Quintanilla & Jensen de Lopez, 2012). For example, a couple, Jack and Jane, could go to a karaoke bar with their close friend Mark, who has an amazing voice. Jack could become jealous of Mark because he sings so well, and that causes Jane to be attracted to Mark, which makes Jack worry that he will lose Jane to Mark. Jack could also be envious of Mark’s singing ability, wishing he had such a good voice. Despite the fact that the feelings of envy and jealousy may happen at the same time they are separate emotions. Ultimately, envy is an emotional response that occurs when an individual wants something, such as a possession, characteristic or achievement, that another individual has (Cohen-Charash, 2007) while jealousy is an emotional response to fear of losing an important relationship to another individual or circumstance (Smith & Kim, 2007). This study questions if positive posts on Facebook evoke envy and if so, how do those feelings of envy relate to life satisfaction, self-esteem and time spent on Facebook. Then from there this study examines if any of these variables prompt the use of coping strategies.

The study of Facebook and envy is not without precedent. Krasnova et al. (2013) examined Facebook to discover what types of posts trigger envy on Facebook. By asking a series of closed and open-ended questions, Krasnova et al.
(2013) found that posts about travel, social interactions and happiness were the three most common envy-evoking topics on Facebook. Krasnova et al. (2013) then developed a 9-item scale to measure the effects of envy in the context of Facebook and life satisfaction. They found that envy evoked through Facebook decreases the level of life satisfaction one feels about his or her own life (Krasnova et al., 2013). It was important to replicate Krasnova et al. findings as they completed their study in Germany and communication styles can differ greatly between countries. Second, their study is almost four years old now and it was important to make sure that the findings remained valid in the ever-changing landscape of social networking websites.

Therefore, the following research question and hypothesis are offered:

RQ1: Does exposure to others’ positive self-disclosure posts on Facebook evoke feelings of envy for the Facebook user?

H1: Envy is negatively correlated with life satisfaction.

Additionally, Krasnova et al. (2013) suggests that individuals with higher levels of self-esteem will react less negatively when faced with feelings of envy when compared to those individuals with low levels of self-esteem.

**Self-Esteem**

Research on self-esteem suggests that social networking sites, such as Facebook, could help individuals with low self-esteem develop more fulfilling social lives (Forest & Wood, 2012; Pettijohn, LaPiene, Pettijohn, & Horting, 2012). Forest and Wood (2012) believe that the opportunity for self-disclosure on Facebook helps aid in the development of intimacy in a relationship. However, studies have shown
that, based on the valence of and individual’s self-disclosure, Facebook can have either a positive and negative effect on self-esteem (Forest & Wood, 2012; Skues, Williams, Wise, 2012). Forest and Wood (2013) suggest that individuals with low self-esteem will be more likely to engage in negative disclosure behaviors on Facebook, which as a result, hinders the development of intimacy in the online relationship. However, Skues, Williams and Wise (2012) believe the opposite will actually happen. Meaning, that individuals with low self-esteem will be able to pick and choose what to disclose on Facebook, and in turn will develop more intimate relationships. The increase in positive interactions on Facebook could potentially increase his or her self-esteem.

In a study conducted by Denti et al. (2012) it was found that there is a negative correlation between Facebook usage and self-esteem. Therefore, individual’s who spend more time on Facebook are likely to have lower self-esteem. Researchers believe that time spent on Facebook leads to engaging in more social comparisons with other facebook users (Denti et al., 2012), and as a result a lower level of life satisfaction and self-esteem (Denti et al., 2012; de Vries & Kuhne, 2015; Krasnova et al., 2013). It is important to recognize that much of the current research surrounding self-esteem and Facebook examine how individuals posting habits impact self-esteem (Denti et al., 2012; de Vries & Kuhne, 2015; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Forest & Wood, 2012; Pettijohn et al., 2012; Skues, Williams and Wise, 2012; Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). This study seeks to gain insight on the effects of viewing positive Facebook posts and the subsequent
impact on self-esteem, life satisfaction, and the coping strategies used to maintain life satisfaction.

Life Satisfaction

Facebook can have an effect on two major components of overall well-being. First, Facebook influences feeling about one's own life and second Facebook influences how satisfied one is with life (Ellison et al., 2007; Kross et al., 2013; Park & Lee, 2014). Kross et al. (2013) performed a lagged analysis of data, collected over a 14-day period from 82 different participants, and found that over time participant's life satisfaction decreased with Facebook use. Life satisfaction relates to happiness and personal contentment (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009) and relies heavily on one's own judgment (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985).

Research states that the relationship between Facebook and life satisfaction is complex and influenced by multiple factors such as, coping style (Liu & Larose, 2006) number of Facebook friends, supportiveness of online network, loneliness, depressive symptoms, and self-esteem (Ellison et al., 2007; Kross et al., 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2009). When Facebook users receive adequate support from their social network it can help increase their life satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2011). However, in a study conducted by Krasnova et al. (2013) in Germany, it was found that envy evoked through Facebook posts decreased life satisfaction.

Using the knowledge that unfavorable social comparisons lead to feelings of envy, and that feelings of envy can lead to negative emotions, Krasnova et al. (2013) found that envy on Facebook is negatively associated with life satisfaction. Krasnova et al. (2013) conducted this study in Germany using a combination of
open-ended questions, a 9-item envy scale and a life satisfaction scale. Envy is pervasive and central to the human condition suggesting that more research is needed to confirm Krasnova et al. (2013) results. It is important to question whether American Facebook users experience envy the same way that German subjects do and whether they are subject to a decrease in life satisfaction as a result of envy evoked through Facebook. Therefore, this study seeks to replicate Krasnova et al. (2013) research with an American sample. Another purpose of this study is to determine if people engage in coping strategies to deal with the feelings of envy evoked by positive posts on Facebook.

Coping with Envy

Life satisfaction is an important outcome variable in many studies because it can predict a range of consequential behaviors (Kross et al., 2013). Such behaviors could include various coping strategies used to deal with envy. Coping is defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as, “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 178). Much of the research on coping styles is rooted in the field of psychology, and is described as a behavioral response to a specific situation (Anshel, Kang, & Miesner, 2010; Clark, Michel, Early, & Baltes, 2014; Hassan, 2014; Roth & Cohen, 1986). Coping behaviors are important because they can potentially serve as a mediator between a stressful event, in this case feeling envious, and the outcome, in this case, life satisfaction (Clark et al., 2014).
Coping provides two main functions, managing or altering the problem with the environment causing the distress and regulating the emotional response to the distress (Kassing, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick, Hastall, & Rossmann, 2009). Additionally, in the context of social media, there are three main types of coping: approach, avoidance, and self-presentation (Kim & Lee, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009; Krasnova et al., 2013). Approach coping refers to strategies in which the main goal is to reduce or eliminate the stressor (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009). Avoidance coping is when the goal is to just ignore the stressor (Wright, 1999). Self-presentation refers to selectively revealing posts and photos that are high in social desirability; these posts are generally in response to other’s posts that evoke envy (Kim & Lee, 2011).

The approach coping style suggests that the individual will attempt to deal with the situation by approaching the stressor head on (Finset, Steine, Haugli, Steen, & Laerum, 2002; Hassan, 2014). Approach coping includes, seeking social support, planning ahead, or attempting to solve or eliminate the problem. Individuals who use an approach coping style have an overt action in response to the stressor (Anshel et al., 2010). In the context of Facebook, approach coping styles could include deactivating ones Facebook account and unfriending the envied individual. Deactivating is when an individual removes themselves completely from Facebook, meaning that if searched for they will not show up and any activity or posts on others Facebook profile will also be removed. Unfriending is when you remove an individual from your “friend list,” thus, removing that individual’s ability to view your profile. It is important to note that when an individual deactivates a Facebook
account all of the information from that account will be stored by Facebook incase he or she decides to reactivate the Facebook account.

The avoidance coping style has two dimensions, first it is a passive or disengaged way to deal with stressful events, and second it is an active move away from the stressor, such as denial or diversion (Finset et al., 2002). Individuals who use avoiding as a coping style make a conscious decision to filter out information or turn away from stress inducing situations (Anshel et al., 2010). In the context of Facebook, Krasnova et al. (2013) suggest that a possible avoidance coping style would be hiding the envied individuals profile. Hiding is when you choose to “unfollow” or no longer receive notifications about another individuals Facebook activity.

Finally, self-presentation is a coping strategy that suggests individuals will react to feelings of envy on Facebook by developing posts to make him or herself look better. Krasnova et al. (2013) states that, “overstatement of personal accomplishment is a common reaction to envy feelings” (p. 12). Self-presentation involves not only posting positive posts for others to see, but research has shown that when an individual self-presents it can actually alter how they view themselves (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011). Park and Lee (2014) suggest that self-presentation allows users to feel more competent when expressing themselves to others online. Facebook is a platform that is mainly about self-presentation (Walther et al., 2008). However, this could cause a problem labeled as the “self-promotion – envy spiral”, a term that suggests that Facebook users may react to the self-presentation of others, with even more self-presentation (Krasnova et al., 2013). When individuals engage
in self-presentation to cope with feelings of envy it could result in the production of even more envy evoking situations instead of facing or eliminating the original stressor.

Researchers suggest the best way to cope with a stressful situation both on or offline is to eliminate, or remove completely from one’s life, the stressor itself (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009). However, it may be easier to eliminate a stressor from an online situation, such as Facebook due to the level of anonymity provided. Litman and Lunsford (2009) examined how individuals coped with past stressful situations and how the strategy used impacted well-being. The researchers found that when individuals used avoidance coping strategies there was a higher level of psychological distress present when compared to individuals who use approach coping. However, more research is needed to understand how people choose to cope with envy evoking situations online. This study will rely on the research on coping strategies (Kim & Lee, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009) and apply it to the context of social media to examine the relationship between envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem, time spent on Facebook, and the four coping strategies discussed.

Therefore,

RQ2: What is the relationship between feelings of envy and the likelihood an individual will deactivate his or her Facebook, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individual’s Facebook profile, or engage in self-presentation?
RQ3: What is the relationship between life-satisfaction and the likelihood an individual will deactivate his or her Facebook, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individual’s Facebook profile, or engage in self-presentation?

RQ4: What is the relationship between self-esteem and the likelihood an individual will deactivate his or her Facebook, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individual’s Facebook profile, or engage in self-presentation?

RQ5: What is the relationship between time spent on Facebook and the likelihood an individual will deactivate his or her Facebook, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individual’s Facebook profile, or engage in self-presentation?
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Overview

Social comparison theory serves as the framework to examine if feelings of envy are evoked when an individual engages in social comparisons with those on Facebook. Duffy et al. (2012) conceptualized envy in three ways: situational, dispositional and episodic. This study examined the average amount of episodic envy experienced when viewing positive self-disclosure posts on Facebook and confirms prior research conducted by Krasnova et al. (2013) in Germany by asking what is the relationship between episodic envy and life satisfaction. Then, this study examines if feelings of envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem and time spent on Facebook predict the use of the deactivating, unfriending, hiding and self-presenting coping strategies.

Participants

The participants include students enrolled at a large public Midwestern University located in a metropolitan area. Participants were recruited from Introduction to Public Speaking, Argumentation and Interpersonal Communication courses, which are comprised of communication majors and non-communication majors. There were a total of 130 participants, and after removing participants that
that did not complete the survey properly (n=22) there was a total of 108 participants (47 men, 56 women, 5 no answer). Many of the surveys completed incorrectly were due to the fact that the participant began the survey without first reading the explanation of the study stating that participants must be a Facebook user. Among the 108 participants, thirty-nine participants (30%) identified as freshman, 17 (13.1%) identified as sophomore, 24 (18.5%) identified as junior, 24 (18.5%) identified as senior, and 3 (2.3%) identified as being at the graduate level. Participant’s age ranged from 18 to 56 years (M = 22.2, SD = 7.3, Median = 20) and the majority (56.9%) of participants reported their ethnicity as white, 2.3% reported their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino, 16.2% reported their ethnicity as African American, 3.1% reported their ethnicity as Asian or Pacific Islander and 3.1% reported their ethnicity as other. Additionally, 17.7% of participants reported a household income of less than $20,000 per year, 5.4% reported $20,000-$34,999, 14.6% reported $35,000-$49,999, 16.2% reported $50,000-$74,999, 13.1% reported $75,000-$99,999 and 12.3% reported $100,000 or higher, 20.8% did not provide an answer for household income. The data was reviewed to better understand why 20.8% of the participants did not report a household income and it could be a result of the high number of participants that identified as freshman. A traditional college freshman lives in a dorm room and perhaps unemployed, therefore, there would be no actual household income. Participants reported a range of .25 hours to 18 hours per day spent looking at Facebook. However the participant reporting 18 hours per day was removed due to the likelihood that it was a response error. With that participant removed from the data the range of time
spent on Facebook became .25 hours to 8 hours per day (M = 1.21, SD = 1.4) (See Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20,000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000-34,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35,000-49,999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000-74,999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75,000-99,999</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 or higher</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position at the University</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedures

With the permission of the Institutional Review Board and with the permission of course instructors, students were recruited to participate in this study via email. The email included a link to a secure survey through Qualtrics and a statement introducing myself as a graduate student conducting research for a thesis project. The statement also stated that to participate in this study they needed to be a Facebook user. Upon qualifying to participate in the study, participants were asked to follow a link, which would take them to view a Facebook page created for the purpose of this study. This research did not prompt individuals to imagine that the Facebook page belonged to someone with a specific type of relationship to the participant. Based on Krasnova et al. (2013) research, which found that posts about travel, social interactions and happiness evoked the most envy, the Facebook page featured luxurious vacations, fun times with friends and family, a loving relationship, expensive purchases, a dream home and overall extreme happiness with life (See Appendix A). After viewing the Facebook page participants answered a series of questions regarding episodic envy, life satisfaction, coping with envy, self-esteem and demographic information. On the final page of the survey was a sheet that students could print out and submit to receive extra credit for completing the survey.

Episodic Envy

Episodic envy is defined as the feeling of negative emotions resulting from a specific social comparison (Cohen-Charash, 2009). Episodic envy evoked through a Facebook page was measured by a scale developed by Cohen-Charash (2009). This
9-item Likert scale was chosen because it is two-dimensional with both a feeling component and a comparison component. The feeling component has a reported reliability of .86 and the comparison component has a reported reliability of .65, and when the components are combined they have a reliability of .79 (Cohen-Charash, 2009). The items that comprise the feeling component include statements such as, “I feel envious towards X,” “I feel bitter,” “I have a resentment against X,” “I feel annoyed,” I feel some hatred toward X,” and “I feel rancor (ill will) toward X.” The items that comprise the comparison component include statements such as, “I lack some of the things that X has,” “I want to have what X has,” and “X has things going better for him/her than I do.” The response options range from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). (See Appendix B for copy of scale)

Life Satisfaction Scale

To measure life satisfaction, this study used the Life Satisfaction Scale. This 5-item Likert scale was created and tested by Diener et al. (1985) and has a reliability of .87. The Life Satisfaction Scale is a unidimensional scale that measures overall satisfaction with life. Johnson (2012) found that individuals life satisfaction is often developed based on various social comparisons. The Life Satisfaction Scale features questions such as, “I have a good life,” “I like the way things are going for me,” and “my life is better than most of my peers.” The response options range from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). (See Appendix C for copy of scale)

Self Esteem

To measure self-esteem this study used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. This 10-item Likert scale was created by Rosenberg (1965) and measures an
individuals overall feeling of self-worth. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is uni-dimensional with a reliability of .91. This scale is widely used as a self-report instrument to measure self-esteem (Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Davies, 2007; Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997; Rosenberg, 1965). This scale features questions such as, “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”, “At times I think I am no good at all”, “I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others” and “I feel I do not have much to be proud of.” The rating scale ranged from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). (See Appendix D for copy of scale)

*Coping with Envy*

To measure coping strategies used as a result of envy evoked through Facebook, participants were asked to rate on a Likert-type scale of one to five, one being not likely and 5 being likely, the likelihood he or she will: deactivate his or her own Facebook account, unfriend individuals he or she is particularly envious of, hide a profile of an individual he or she is particularly envious of, or increase the amount of positive posts one makes on his or her own Facebook profile. This scale was constructed for this study using the coping strategies that emerged from the review of literature (Kim & Lee, 2011; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009; Krasnova et al., 2013).

Research articles relating to coping strategies and computer-mediated-communication were examined to uncover themes and communalities between the studies. It was found that approach and avoidance were the two main categories of coping strategies (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009). Approach suggests the individual will deal with the problem head on and eliminate it, whereas avoidance
suggests the individual will try to create a diversion and not deal with the issue. When you apply these concepts to functions of Facebook the four coping strategies emerged, deactivate (approach category), unfriend (approach category), hide individual (avoidance category) and self-present (avoidance category).

Statistical Analysis

The data was examined using the statistical analysis program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS #23). To analyze RQ1, which asks about the amount of envy one experiences when exposed to positive posts on Facebook, frequency data was used to determine the average amount of envy reported. To analyze H1, which hypothesizes about the relationship between episodic envy and life satisfaction, Pearson Correlation was conducted.

To analyze RQ2, which asks about the relationship between envy and the coping strategies (deactivate ones own Facebook profile, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individuals Facebook profile and self-presentation), logistic regression with forward model analysis was used. To analyze RQ3, which asks about the relationship between life satisfaction and the coping strategies (deactivate ones own Facebook profile, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individuals Facebook profile and self-presentation), logistic regression with forward model analysis was used. To analyze RQ4, which asks about the relationship between self-esteem and the coping strategies (deactivate ones own Facebook profile, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individuals Facebook profile and self-presentation), logistic regression with forward model analysis was used. Finally, to answer RQ5, which asks about the relationship
between the amount of time spent on Facebook and the coping strategies
(deactivate ones own Facebook profile, unfriend the envied individual, hide the
envied individuals Facebook profile and self-presentation), logistic regression with
forward model analysis was used.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics for the participant’s level of envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem, time spent on Facebook and the coping strategies. Before the main analysis the data was inspected for outliers. Overall, 104 participants completed the episodic envy scale (M = 2.26, SD = .70, Range = 25). The episodic envy scale is two dimensional with a feeling component (Cronbach’s alpha = .80) and a comparison component (Cronbach’s alpha = .90). The Life Satisfaction Scale was completed by 107 participants (M = 3.5, SD = .80, Range = 20), this scale is unidimensional (Cronbach’s alpha = .85). The self-esteem scale was completed by 106 participants (M = 3.7, SD = .76, Range = 40), this scale is uni-dimensional (Cronbach’s alpha = .91). The coping strategies scale was completed by 106 participants; for the coping strategies scale participants were asked the likelihood he or she would deactivate their Facebook page (M=1.82, SD = .95, Range = 4), unfriend the envied individual (M = 2.14, SD = 1.2, Range = 4), hide the envied individual’s Facebook profile (M = 2.25, SD = 1.16, Range = 4), and self-present (M = 2.56, SD = 1.25, Range = 4).
Table 2: Descriptive statistics for envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Spent on Facebook</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deactivate</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfriend</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiding</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Presentation</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ1 one asks if exposure to Facebook profiles with positive self-disclosure posts evokes envy. Participants viewed a Facebook page constructed for the study and answered questions related to envy. Results revealed that participants reported moderate levels of envy (M = 2.26, SD = .70). H1 predicted that envy would be negatively related to life satisfaction. Results of the Pearson Correlations provide support for H1. Envy was negatively correlated with life satisfaction (r = -.21, p < .05). These findings are consistent with the research by Krasnova et al. (2013), which replicates the association between envy and life satisfaction (See Table 3). Pearson correlations also reveal that envy was negatively correlated with self-esteem (r = -.53, p < .01) and hours spent on Facebook per day (r = -.20, p < .05) and positively correlated with deactivating ones Facebook page (r = .26, p < .01), hiding the Facebook profile of the envied individual (r = .25, p < .05) and self-presenting (r = .19, p < .05). Pearson Correlations also showed that life satisfaction was positively correlated with self-esteem (r = .55, p < .01) and negatively correlated with time spent on Facebook (r = -.25, p < .01). Finally, results
revealed that self-esteem was positively correlated with the hide coping strategy ($r = .24, p < .05$). (See Table 3)

Table 3: Correlations between envy, life satisfaction and other factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Envy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-6**</td>
<td>- .21*</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Time on Facebook</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Deactivate</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Unfriend</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hide</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.68**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Self-Present</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Two-tailed Tests
*p < .05, ** p < .01

RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5 were analyzed using forward regression analysis to determine if feelings of envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem and time spent on Facebook predict the likelihood that, when feelings of envy were evoked by positive posts on Facebook, an individual would deactivate one’s own Facebook profile, unfriend the individual he or she is envious of on Facebook, hide the Facebook profile of the envied individual, and finally engage in self-presentation.

RQ2 asked about the relationship between envy and the likelihood an individual will engage in any of the four coping strategies, deactivate one’s own Facebook profile, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individual’s Facebook profile and self-present. The results reveal that the feeling component of envy was a significant predictor ($R^2 = .06, F = 6.7, p = .01**, β = .25$) that an individual will deactivate one’s own Facebook profile (See Table 4).
Table 4: Summary of Regression analysis of envy (feeling component) as a significant predictor of the deactivate coping strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F(1,100)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Envy (Feeling Component)</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>.01**</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ3 asked about the relationship between life satisfaction and the likelihood an individual will engage in any of the four coping strategies, deactivating own’s own Facebook profile, unfriending the envied individual, hiding the envied individual’s Facebook profile and self-present. The results showed that life satisfaction was not a significant predictor of any of the four coping strategies.

RQ4 questions the relationship between self-esteem and the likelihood an individual will engage in any of the four coping strategies, deactivate ones’ own Facebook profile, unfriend the envied individual, hide the envied individual’s Facebook profile and self-present. The results reveal that self-esteem was a significant predictor (R² = .06, F = 6.9, p = .01**, β = .26) that an individual will hide the Facebook profile of the envied individual (See Table 5).

Table 5: Summary of Regression analysis of self-esteem as a predictor of the hiding coping strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F(1,100)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>.01**</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ5 asked about the relationship between the amount of time an individual spends on Facebook and the likelihood an individual will engage in the four coping
strategies, deactivate owns’ own Facebook profile, unfriending the envied individual, hiding the envied individual’s Facebook profile and self-present. The results showed that the amount of time spent on Facebook was not a significant predictor that an individual would use any of the four coping strategies.

Additionally, a forward regression analysis was done to see if any of the variables (envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem and time spent on Facebook) would predict the likelihood of coping when all four of the coping strategies were grouped. The results reveal that when coping strategies are used as one variable, envy is a significant predictor ($R^2 = .07, F = 7.52, p = .01^{**}, \beta = .27$) of coping (See Table 6).

Table 6: Summary of Regression analysis for envy as a predictor of coping strategies combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F(1,100)$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>.01**</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p < .05^*, p < .01^{**}$
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

This study utilized social comparison theory to examine the associations between envy evoked through self-disclosure on Facebook, life satisfaction, self-esteem, time spent on Facebook and coping strategies. This study asked participants to view a Facebook page that was constructed for this study. The page was gender neutral and, based on the findings of Krasnova et al. (2013), the Facebook profile contained posts about travel, social interactions and general happiness with life. When viewing the Facebook profile, the participant was not prompted to imagine that the Facebook profile belonged to a specific person or specific type of relationship. After viewing the Facebook page participants were asked to complete a survey. The survey included measures of episodic envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem, coping strategies and amount of time spent on Facebook as well as demographic variables (i.e. gender, age, income, and ethnicity).

The first question (RQ1) sought to determine if positive self-disclosure on Facebook evokes envy. The results revealed that participants were envious. H1 concerns whether envy would be negatively correlated with life satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported and replicated Krasnova et al. (2013) findings. Results confirmed that higher levels of envy are associated with lower
levels of life satisfaction. It was important to replicate Krasnova et al. findings as they completed their study in Germany and communication styles can differ greatly between countries. Envy was negatively correlated with self-esteem and time spent on Facebook. This research suggests that self-esteem is associated with less envy and the more time and spent on Facebook is also associated with less envy. However, the findings regarding time spent on Facebook are a bit more surprising. Initial thoughts were that due to the high levels of envy, an individual would choose to limit Facebook usage. Perhaps time spent on Facebook desensitizes one to the positive self-disclosure posts and subsequently one experiences less envy. Regardless, more research needs to be done to examine exactly why time spent on Facebook is negatively correlated with envy.

Next, this study examined the relationship between feelings of envy (RQ2), life satisfaction (RQ3), self-esteem (RQ4), time spent on Facebook (RQ5) and the four coping strategies (deactivate ones’ own Facebook page, unfriend the envied individual, hide he envied individuals Facebook profile, and self-presentation). For RQ2 it is important to note that the episodic envy scale has two components to it, a feeling component and a comparison component. The findings show that feeling component of envy predicted deactivation of a Facebook profile. This finding is important to the study of social comparison, envy and Facebook because it shows that when an individual is envious as a result of their Facebook use they may choose to leave the social media platform. This is troubling as many people use Facebook for the purpose of sharing information with their social circle (Al-Saggaf & Nielsen, 2014). However, if this sharing function is also causing people to feel the desire to
leave the website it could cause issues for Facebook. More research is needed to examine the exact habits of those who deactivate their Facebook page.

Research question three, which concerned the relationship among life satisfaction and the four coping strategies, did not yield any significant findings, however these results can be explained by Kross et al. (2013). Kross et al. recognized that Facebook had revolutionized how people interact online, but wanted to understand how Facebook use would effect life satisfaction over time. To examine the effects of Facebook on life satisfaction over time the researchers used a lagged analysis over a 14-day period. When Kross et al. (2013) examined if affect well-being/life satisfaction predicted Facebook use it was found that people do not use Facebook more or less based on life satisfaction. Therefore, an individual who may be less satisfied with his or her life will generally not change how he or she uses Facebook based on level of life satisfaction alone. The findings of Kross et al. (2012) help explain the findings of RQ3 as perhaps life satisfaction alone is not enough to influence individuals’ decision to engage in one of the four coping strategies discussed in this research (Deactivate one’s own Facebook profile, unfriend envied individual, hide envied individual’s Facebook profile, and self-present).

Research question four examined the relationship between self-esteem and the likelihood an individual will engage in any of the four coping strategies. The results revealed that self-esteem was a predictor of hiding an individual on Facebook. These results are consistent with research concerning self-esteem and social comparisons. Lee (2014) suggests that social comparisons with individuals viewed on Facebook as desirable lead to a decrease in self-esteem. Social
comparisons are present in almost every interaction (Johnson, 2012) and Facebook has made it easier to interact more frequently, with more people (Lee, 2012). The finding from RQ3 support the literature on social comparisons and self-esteem, as it would benefit an individual to try to eliminate the situations in which they are comparing themselves with individuals they perceive as “better” or more desirable. In the context of Facebook a simple way to eliminate those social comparisons would be to hide the Facebook profile of that envied individual.

Research question five examined the relationship between time spent on Facebook and the likelihood an individual will engage in any of the four coping strategies. Results revealed that the amount of time spent on Facebook does not predict any of the four coping strategies. This could be due to social desirability and the self-report nature of how many hours an individual spends on Facebook. Social desirability states that a person will deliberately manipulate their public persona in order to hide faults and exaggerate positive qualities (Helmes & Holden, 2003). The issue of social desirability is tricky, as research has found that people may report inaccurate information without being aware of its inaccuracy (DeAndrea, Tong, Liang, Levine, & Walther, 2012; Miller, 2012). Therefore, in the context of this research, participants were asked to identify how many hours per day they spent on Facebook, and perhaps participants altered the number of hours reported because they wanted to look better. It is also possible that participants simply reported inaccurate information due to recall error. This study also looked at what variable or variables would be a predictor of the coping strategies if all four of the strategies were combined and examined collectively as one variable. When all of the coping
strategies are grouped together it was found that envy was the only predictor of coping strategies. This result confirmed that envy is a strong predictor of coping strategies.

Although past research has examined self-disclosure, social comparison, envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem and the amount of time spent on Facebook, this research is unique for a couple reasons. First, this study is examining these variables in the context of Facebook and not in face-to-face interactions. Looking at these variables in the context of Facebook is important because the social networking platform has become one of the most common places for individuals to interact with others (Lee, 2014). Second all of these variables have not been studied collectively to fully understand the relationship they share with each other.

Using the foundation that Krasnova et al. (2013) provided, this study contributes to the literature by examining how envy and self-esteem contribute to individuals’ decision to use one of the four coping strategies. The results of this study are important to the field of communication as this study confirmed, for an American sample, that feelings of envy evoked as a result of viewing others’ positive posts on Facebook is associated with a decrease in life satisfaction. This finding is important because prior to this study the knowledge surrounding envy on Facebook and life satisfaction was from a study conducted in Germany (Krasnova et al., 2013). However, due to cultural differences, we cannot assume that individuals in Germany feel the same way as individuals in America. By confirming that an American sample also experiences a decrease in life satisfaction it provides a foundation for this study and any future research completed on the topic of envy and Facebook.
This study fills a few gaps in the current research on envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem, time spent on Facebook and coping strategies. While there has been research on coping strategies in the field of communication there was a gap in the research of how people coped with the stressors of Facebook, specifically envy. Therefore, this study examined specific coping strategies that an individual may choose to use when dealing with negative feelings, such as envy, as a result of using Facebook. Overall, four coping strategies were identified and studied for the first time as outcome variables.

Second, this study used the lens of social comparison theory to examine the relationship between envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem and time spent on Facebook. Understanding how these variables are related to each other will help researchers better understand the issues that underlie how individuals choose to use Facebook. The results for this study are important for developers and editors of social media platforms. The knowledge of how people react to social media informs us about how far individuals are willing to go to eliminate those negative feelings from his or her life. Deactivating Facebook may been viewed as drastic, however, this study shows that people are willing to go to these drastic steps to alleviate the stress that envy can cause.

Overall, this study found that when individuals are faced with feelings of envy as a result of positive self-disclosure posts on Facebook, he or she also feels less satisfied with life. Envy was found to be a predictor of deactivating ones’ Facebook profile to eliminate the stressor. Additionally it was found that envy was also negatively correlated with self-esteem. Further, self-esteem proved to be a
predictor that an individual is likely to hide the Facebook profile of the envied individual. Therefore, avoiding the stressor. Together, the findings highlight the importance of examining the effect envy evoked by social media can have on individuals and how he or she copes in order to maintain life satisfaction and self-esteem.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any research study, in addition to the strengths there are also some limitations. First, this study sampled mostly undergraduate students in introductory Communication courses. While Facebook is an important tool for college students, Facebook users are comprised of all ages. Therefore, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with a sample that better represents the general population of Facebook users. Also, this sample was collected from a convenient sample of students at the same university and it would be helpful to examine these variables with a random sample across different universities. This study could have been improved by gathering a larger sample to produce findings that are more generalizable.

Second, this study examines the relationship between envy, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and time spent using the social networking platform of Facebook. However, there are many social networking sites that could also evoke envy (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, etc.). Therefore, while this study answers some questions it also raises the question of generalizability to other social networking platforms. Therefore, future research could use this study as a guideline to examine if the findings are similar on other social media platforms. This study
utilized a Facebook page developed for the purpose of this study and was gender neutral to control for gender differences. However, future research could benefit from an experiment that incorporates gender. In addition to not identifying gender, this study does not identify if the Facebook profile viewed belonged to a close friend, family member, lover, acquaintance, or stranger. Future research should seek to determine if there is differences in how envy is experienced online relating to the various categories of relationships.

Additionally, this study relied on the self-report responses of the participants. Self-reporting has been a limitation in many research studies, however, there is often no alternative way to gain the information other than simply asking the participant. For research on Facebook using self-report can be particularly problematic as imprecise measurement can skew how Facebook use is related to the outcomes (Junco, 2013). Specifically when examining how the amount of time spent on Facebook it is important to collect the most precise information possible. In a study by Junco (2013) it was shown exactly how different the information can be based on self-report and actual monitoring. Students were given a survey in which they were asked their average amount of time spent on Facebook daily. Participants reported an average Facebook usage of 145 minutes daily, however, after the survey Junco installed monitoring software on all of their Internet devices and found that participants spent only 26 minutes per day on Facebook. While participants could have changed their behavior due to social desirability, or the knowledge they were being monitored, these results still show that there is a discrepancy between self-report measures and actual data. Therefore,
in an experimental version of this study steps should be taken to eliminate self-reporting, this could be done with monitoring software or other observation techniques.

Finally, this study only focuses on episodic envy, which is described as a feeling of envy towards one particular individual or event due to one specific social comparison. However envy can also be dispositional. Dispositional envy is described as a trait, or a predisposition to respond in a consistent fashion, regardless of the situation (Duffy et al., 2012). Therefore, future research should look at how trait envy could potentially influence feelings of envy that are evoked from Facebook. Additionally, this raises the question, “do individuals who experience episodic envy as a result of positive Facebook posts engages in a similar style of coping compared to individuals who experience dispositional envy and utilize social media platforms such as Facebook?” Future research should examine the similarities and differences between envy evoked from social media and the coping strategies of individuals who experience episodic envy versus dispositional envy.
END NOTES

1. Original use of the episodic envy scale used rating scales that ranged from “not characteristic at all” to “extremely characteristic” (Johar, 2011; Khan et al., 2014).

2. Original use of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale used a 4-point rating scale that ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (Rosenberg, 1965).
REFERENCES


Bumgarner, B. A. (2007). You have been poked: Exploring the uses and gratifications of Facebook among emerging adults. *First Monday, 12*.


APPENDIX A

FACEBOOK PROFILE
Reminiscing about the England countryside... I had so much fun on my trip to Europe. I have been to many countries but I finally got to check England off my bucket list. #TakeMeBack

Looking forward to seeing my best friends later. It's great knowing they always have my back and that no matter what we are doing we have fun! #Friends
Out running errands on this sunny day.

I am happy to announce that I have accepted my dream job within a great company. I will be Head of Communication. The salary is amazing, full benefits, 401k, and tons of vacation time!

Sneak peak of my France trip. The view from the villa was awesome!
I had such an amazing summer with my friends and family! I got to backpack around Europe and meet so many nice people. France was the most fun place I have ever been to. Cannot wait to go back!
APPENDIX B

EPISODIC ENVY SCALE

Using the scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), please indicate how you feel toward the individual in the statement above that you just read.

1. I lack some of the things that individual has.

2. I feel bitter.

3. I feel envious.

4. I have a grudge (resentment, bitterness) against that individual.

5. I want to have what that individual has.

6. That individual has things going better for him/her than I do.

7. I feel annoyed.

8. I feel some hatred toward that individual.

9. I feel rancor (ill will) toward that individual.
APPENDIX C

LIFE SATISFACTION SCALE

Below are 5 statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) indicate your agreement with each of the following items.

1. In most ways my life is close to ideal.
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life.
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.
APPENDIX D
COPING WITH ENVY

When faced with feelings of envy on Facebook evoked from viewing positive posts please indicated using the scale 1 (not likely) to 5 (very likely), the likelihood that you will:

1. Deactivate your Facebook account.
2. Unfriend the individual on Facebook.
3. Hide the Facebook profile of the individual sharing the positive posts.
4. Increase the amount of positive posts you make on your own Facebook profile.
5. Other, please explain ________________________________________________