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FACEBOOK AND HAPPINESS: LIFE IN A FRAME

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the
Master of Arts degree in Communication**

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FACEBOOK AND HAPPINESS: LIFE IN A FRAME

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To my dad, Antonio, who taught me to never give up, and always finish everything that I've started.

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“The reward of a thing well done, is having done it.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

FACEBOOK AND HAPPINESS: LIFE IN A FRAME

An abstract of the Thesis by
Valquiria Vita

“If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” This thought, stated during one of the interviews of this research, sums up the findings of this study.

Facebook is part of more than 890 million users’ daily routines, and the majority of what is posted everyday can be considered a happy, or a positive post, which is a post related to positive emotional outcomes. This research intends to show the close relationship between Facebook and happiness. The goal is to explain what benefits people get from posting a positive event of their lives on Facebook, and also how Facebook friends feel when they see these happy posts. The study, supported by Uses and Gratifications theory, consists in a thematic analysis of positive Facebook posts, followed by interviews with 10 Pittsburg State University students. Findings from the thematic analysis showed eight categories emerging among the positive posts on Facebook: engagements, parties, relaxation, trips, shopping, grades, thanks and blessings, and selfies.

Findings from the interviews supported that after being exposed to the happy posts, participants developed feelings of jealousy, dissatisfaction, anxiety, competition, and the feeling that “everybody else is doing better”. Nine in 10 interviewees answered that they need to post when something really important happens to them, like graduation, for example. According to the interviews’ findings, in the majority of time, people need to show only the happy side of their lives on Facebook, and an important event doesn’t have

the same impact if it is not posted on Facebook (which explains the comparison with tree that falls in the forest without anybody there to hear it).

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Introduction

A short film created by the director Shaun Higton in 2014, with almost 12 million views by January 2015, expresses the phenomenon that will be explained in this thesis. The video “What Is in Your Mind,” shows a guy who starts to embellish his life using Facebook posts to get people’s attention.

He starts the video looking really bored, while checking his Facebook feed at home. Throughout the pictures, he sees his friends at paradisiac beaches, skiing in the mountains, and eating marvelous meals at restaurants, while all he has been doing is watching TV and eating a frozen lasagna. He sees a picture of a happy couple at the beach, and he looks at his girlfriend, equally bored on the couch next to him watching TV. He decides to post: “Sushi with my girl tonight.” After seeing he actually got likes for that (nobody had to know the truth anyway), he decides to create more of these posts.

The rest of the video the guy faces equally boring real life situations, while posting exciting comments on Facebook about it, just for the good feeling of getting the likes for them. “Meeting went great,” he posts, even though his coworkers fell asleep while he was speaking. “Finally single,” he posts, after seeing his girlfriend with another man. “Quit my job. #followyourdreams,” he writes after getting fired.

At the end, when he finally gets sick of it, he decides to be honest once it for all and posts: “My life sucks.” His friends, with that, decide to unfollow him (Higton, 2013). This embellishment of life that people might notice (or not notice, and that is the biggest problem) can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction. By seeing happy events of others on Facebook news feeds, people might not always realize that what is posted is only *part* of their friends’ lives, and not their *entire* lives. After all, real life is made by happy and sad events. What intrigues me, is that on Facebook, what is happy quickly becomes a public announcement, while the majority of what is sad stays private. For example, we see engagement photos posted online all the time, but how often do we see breakup announcements? Of course there are negative posts on Facebook too, but what we notice, and what it was well demonstrated at the end of the video, is that people don’t want to see the ugly posts. They don’t want a news feed filled with complaints and bad event announcements.

I take part of this blame, too. Even on my own timeline, I show myself as a girl who is always having fun. My posts only demonstrate how satisfying my living abroad experience is. They never show all the difficulties that an international student faces when living on her own, far away from home and family.

Because of a strong personal interest on this “embellishment of life” that we experience on our Facebook news feeds, I decided to focus this research on the relationship between Facebook and happiness, since both themes seem to be related. It’s like if it weren’t for the happy cheerful moments of their users, Facebook wouldn’t survive, or at least wouldn’t have that many active users.

When Mark Zuckerberg, CEO and cofounder of the social media, and his Harvard colleagues created Facebook in 2004, they probably didn't imagine they were starting a social media revolution. Facebook started as a simple website for defining "hot and non-hot" students of Harvard (Rudin, Brunetti, De Luca, Chaffin & Fincher, 2010). After several changes that made Facebook what it is now, the silly creation of those Harvard boys became the most famous social media of all time.

Since not every single being knows what Facebook is, it's important to briefly get familiar with some of the common terms of Facebook. For that, I will use information based on GCFlearnfree.org, a website with tutorials about different online programs.

The first important term regarding Facebook is the *timeline*, which is also known as your profile page. The *timeline* is where you will share some basic information about yourself on Facebook, such as your profile picture. The *timeline* is different from the news feed. The things you share on Facebook will appear on your *timeline*, as well as your friends' *news feeds*, which is basically a stream of updates from your friends and any Facebook pages you *follow*. You can choose to *follow* which Facebook friends you would like to see on your news feed. If you don't want to see what a friend is posting, you can just *unfollow* him (like the example of the video of the guy who posted "My life sucks").

Your *Facebook friends* are people who you added on your Facebook account, and the ironic part is that you guys don't actually need to be friends in real life. The simple act of clicking on "add as a friend" on somebody else profile page, is enough to make you guys being considered Facebook friends. After you are connected throughout this "friendship", you can see what your friends post, and they can see what you post. What you post is considered a *status update*. You can choose to create text-based posts, photos,

videos, or links. Finally, your friends can give you *likes* if they enjoyed your posts, by clicking on the like option under the photo or the text (“Facebook 101,” n.d.)

Another concept that is important to be understood, is what is considered a happy post. Lee (2014), explains that positive updates have a few similarities: exclamation points; positive language and words; bright, cheerful images, or pics of happy, smiling people. A positive post, as explained on Krasnova et. al. (2013), is related to positive emotional outcomes, like posts that show joy and fun, satisfaction, excitement, and relaxation. On the other hand, a post is considered negative when is related to negative emotional outcomes, like boredom, anger, frustration, guilt, sadness, loneliness, envy, and tiredness.

Studies, as the one conducted by James Fowler (2014), have shown that positive posts are more influential and contagious than the negative ones. Besides, a study has concluded that positive news feeds led to positive statuses (Kramer et. al., 2013). These are a few of the reasons why I chose to focus on the positive posts of Facebook, and ignore the negative posts, even though they exist.

The reason why I chose to study Facebook in general was because of the greatness of its numbers, as well as how deeply the social media is rooted in our daily routines. In December 2014, Facebook had 890 million daily active users on average, and 1.39 billion monthly active users (“Newsroom”, 2014). The social media expanded so much that the majority of its users are not even in America, where it was created: approximately 81.7% of the daily active users are outside the US and Canada, as Facebook institutional page shows (“Newsroom,” 2014).

The 1.39 billion users are not enough for Mark Zuckerberg. The December 2014 edition of *Time* magazine presents Zuckerberg on the cover, with the headline “Half of the World Is Not Enough: Mark Zuckerberg’s Plan to Get Every Human Online” explaining his crusade to bring the Internet, and of course, Facebook, to every single being on this planet.

“The man who wired the world,” as *Time* magazine called Zuckerberg, made Facebook achieve remarkable growth, becoming the most popular social networking site, especially among college students (Chou & Edge, 2012).

The biggest group of users (18-25 years old), as reported by Kim & Lee (2011), dedicates approximately 28 minutes per day to Facebook, which means they integrate it closely into their everyday lives.

It had been found that Facebook is the favorite choice among young adults, according to Kim, LaRose & Peng (2009): on a survey developed by Youth Trend, young adults were asked to name three favorite sites, and Facebook was the first one (with 69%), followed by MySpace (38%) and YouTube (22%).

In June 2014, five years after this research, another study, conducted by ComScore research, showed that the leading social media apps among 18-34 years old are: Facebook (75.6%), Instagram (43.1%), Snapchat (32.9%), Twitter (23.8%), and Pinterest (17.8%). That shows that even though some preferences changed (MySpace is not so frequently used anymore, for example), Facebook remained on top. It’s also interesting to notice that the second one on the list of preferences is Instagram, which is a photo app that was bought by Facebook in 2012 for \$1 billion (NYT, 2012).

The popularity of Facebook might be explained by the mission of Facebook, which is written at the institutional page of the website: “To give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what’s going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them,” (Facebook, 2015).

The reason why people use Facebook seems to be a lot broader than “stay connected,” which is exactly what this study intends to find out.

Literature Review

The self-representation trap

People tend to create the images of themselves that they want to show on the internet. This is called self-representation, and once this concept is grasped, it's a lot easier to understand what happens on Facebook.

Rudiger (2002) says that on virtual space, people divide each other into several characters, fictionalize the real, and, in general, do not lose control of the situation. It's an exposure of the self as a product, according to Rudiger, "on internet, you are your only limit," he writes.

The author says people need to build a coherent identity for themselves, besides projecting an attractive image, and be aware that they live under the constant examination of their friends and strangers, and that makes them "prisoners of themselves." Rudiger stated, "People show themselves in a positive way, and they use this to develop strategies and abilities to actively keep away the lack of meaning and the repression existent in daily life," (2002, p. 131).

Bauman (2009) also analyzed this self-representation idea. He states that in this individualized society, we are all artists of life, whether we know it or not, like it or not.

He states that there was a time where people worried about how the world was ruled. Today, this concern has changed, and people are worried about how to rule the images of themselves. Bauman writes that Christopher Lasch, an American critic, was one of the first to observe the results of transforming public complaints in personal issues, susceptible to therapeutic intervention. “The new narcissists, as they named the ones who are able to notice and evaluate the planet’s condition uniquely through the prism of personal issues are haunted not by guilt, but by anxiety” (Bauman, 2009, p. 58). This group of people, according to Bauman, do not give a full report of reality. Instead, “they seduce the other to give his attention, applause and sympathy, in order to support his insecure sense of self,” (p. 58).

The biggest issue, and what we frequently see on social media, is that what is applauded today, is no longer applauded tomorrow. According to Bauman (2009), what is approved and cheered today, can be considered ridiculous tomorrow. The author believes that this need for recognition overwhelms the society, as Jean Claude Kaufmann, the French sociologist, says, “Everyone eagerly searches for approval, admiration or love through the eyes of others. And we observe that the grounds for self-esteem provided by admiral and approval of others are noticeably fragile,” (p. 58).

The others, obviously, have a pretty important role on self-presentation, as Chou & Edge (2012) agree. They say that social media, such as Facebook, provides an important platform for people to manage others’ impressions of them, and, therefore, people always tend to present themselves in a favorable way on their profiles, not in a negative one.

Self-presentation strategies are also the center of the study conducted by Kim & Lee (2011), who investigated how Facebook increases college-age users' subjective well-being. The authors did that by focusing on the number of users' Facebook friends and on their self-presentation strategies, which they considered positive versus honest strategies.

Facebook, in particular, according to the authors, is a social media that offers ample opportunities for its users to engage in self-presentation with their profile construction, status updates, photo management, messages posted, and so on. By doing that, "some users may be more inclined to present themselves in a selective manner, highlining the favorable and appropriate images of themselves" (Kim & Lee, 2011, p. 360). This positive self-representation was very clear in this study, with participants' statements such as "I post photos that only show the happy side of me" or "I avoid writing about negative things that happened to me when I update my status".

This is not necessarily bad. The study says some scholars note that Facebook users can emotionally benefit from self-affirmation, a psychological process through which one acquires a buffer against information or events that are threatening to the self through construction of their Facebook profiles (Kim & Lee, 2011). What the study suggests, though, is that the number of Facebook friends and positive self-presentation may enhance users' subjective well-being, but this portion of happiness may not be grounded in perceived social support. Kim & Lee state, "On the other hand, honest self-presentation may enhance happiness rooted in social support provided by Facebook friends", (2011, p. 359).

Emotions triggered by Facebook use

This positive image that people try to present on the internet, though, doesn't necessarily match with what they might be feeling, which some studies have suggested. For example, Kross (2014) found out that spending too much time online (and being exposed to these images that others create to themselves) can make them unhappy.

The researcher text-messaged the participants five times a day for two-weeks to examine how Facebook influences the two components of subjective well-being: how people feel moment-to-moment and how satisfied they are with their lives.

The results indicate that Facebook use predicts negative shifts on both of these variables over time. Kross (2014) found out that the more people used Facebook at one time point, the worse they felt the next time the researchers text-messaged them. The more they used Facebook over two-weeks, the more their life satisfaction levels declined over time. Kross (2014) states, "On the surface, Facebook provides an invaluable resource for fulfilling the basic human need for social connection. Rather than enhancing well-being, however, these findings suggest that Facebook may undermine it," (p. 2).

Kim, LaRose and Peng (2009) had already written a few years earlier that the social use of the Internet can be more problematic than entertaining. They agree that the relationship between psychological well-being and Internet usage is an enduring question whenever we are talking about computer-mediated communication research. Kim et al. (2009) said, "Research on excessive forms of internet usage has shown that uncontrolled or compulsive Internet use has been known to have negative effects on psychological well-being, such as depression and loneliness" (p. 452).

Negative effects like these, along with feelings of unhappiness and low self-esteem, are results of spending too much time browsing Facebook. That is what a study conducted by Jordan (2011) also discovered. The habit of spending too much time reading what others' are doing can leave users feeling empty once they log off Facebook and find themselves back in their real lives. Jordan (2011) states, "There is potential hazard when people log online at times they are already feeling sad, if they don't recognize that the portrait of peers lives they are receiving online can be as heavily edited as a television programme."

One of the issues, despite the long time spent online, is that some users might not recognize what is real and what is edited to look better. Chou & Edge (2012), agree with Jordan's findings, when they analyzed the impact of using Facebook. The authors found out that the social media users tend to attribute the positive content presented on Facebook to others' personality, and don't always realize that they are actually results of situational factors (Chou & Edge, 2012).

Their analysis indicated that those who have used Facebook longer agreed more that others were happier, and agreed less that life is fair. And those spending more time on Facebook agreed more that others were happier and had better lives (Chou & Edge, 2012). Furthermore, those that included more people whom they did not personally know as their Facebook "friends" agreed more that others had better lives. Most people, according to the researchers, are concerned about other's impressions of them, and because of that, they try to manage these impressions in a favorable way. On computer-mediated communication many of the subtle cues that people use to form their impressions of others are eliminated. Without these subtle cues, the impressions we form

online of other people are different from the ones we would form with face-to-face interaction, (Chou and Edge, 2012).

The users of computer mediated communication can employ several techniques to optimize their self-presentation and promote desired relationships, the researchers say, such as “carefully selecting photographs, highlighting their positive attributes, presenting an ideal self, having a deeper self-disclosure, or providing a set of links to other sites associating themselves with certain people, symbols and material objects” (Chou & Edge, 2012, p. 117). This means that all of these actions intend to leave a better impression on others: people are motivated to make positive self-presentations, where everything needs to be socially desirable.

The issue on Facebook is not only that people “promote” themselves, but also that their users tend to employ some heuristics when they form impressions of others, especially those whom they don’t know personally, according to the same study. Facebook users are constantly reading others’ reported positive life events, or then seeing their pictures of happy moments, and that can give them the impression that others are happier and have good lives. Chou & Edge (2012) said that “In contrast to their own life events, which might not always be happy and positive, frequent Facebook users might perceive that life is not fair. They are vulnerable to a disorder perception,” (p. 118).

It’s a consequence then, that when users see others’ happy pictures posted on Facebook, they conclude that others are always happy, and they ignore the circumstances or situations that made others happy. Chou and Edge (2012) say these users assume that happiness is a stable characteristic of their temperament, and that they are constantly enjoying good lives. That comes as a contrast to their own lives, because the experiences

of real life events are not always positive. The research showed that the more time people spend going out with their friends (which means more time offline), the less they agree that others are happier, because on offline interactions they get to know stories about other people's lives (which is made by positive and negative sides), (Chou and Edge, 2012).

Besides feeling unhappy while browsing Facebook, users might also feel they are losing something, that they are not enjoying life as much as their friends seem to be enjoying it. Gillespie (2012) says that Facebook can be a contest ("Which parts of your life do you broadcast? How honest are you? How envious are you of your friends' accounts of their lives?"). Gillespie (2012) writes that "Facebook is a competitive world. It can make lonely people feel lonelier and more isolated because they are not getting up to what everyone else is doing on Facebook. They see people going on a holiday, and feel that they should go there as well — even if they can't afford it," (p. 2).

Envy is also common on Facebook, according to Krasnova et al. (2013). The researchers found out that 20% of all recent envy incidents of the participants of their study was triggered by Facebook use. Krasnova et al. (2013) said that "The subjects of envy are contingent on the content users provide on these platforms with 'travel and leisure', 'social interaction' of others, and 'happiness' landing on the top of the list," (p. 11).

The authors explained that as part of an envy-coping plan some users may engage in even greater self-promotion and impression management (Krasnova et al., 2013, p. 11). According to Krasnova et al. (2013) "This behavior can trigger the phenomenon we denoted as the self-promotion envy spiral, with users reacting with even more self-

promotional content to the self-promotion of others,” (p.11). One of the ways researchers found out that users found to deal with this envy, is hiding posts from Facebook friends they tend to be jealous of.

Tandoc Jr., Ferrucci and Duffy found out in 2014 that Facebook can be depressing if it triggers feelings of envy. Facebook envy, according to them, is a possible link between Facebook surveillance use and depression among college students. They state “We found that the effect of surveillance use of Facebook on depression is mediated by Facebook envy. However, when Facebook envy is controlled for, Facebook use actually lessens depression,” (Tandoc Jr. et al, 2014). The authors wrote that heavy Facebook users have higher levels of Facebook envy than lighter users. Tandoc Jr. et al. (2014) said, “The more an individual uses Facebook, the more likely they are to engage in certain behaviors that lead them to consume others’ personal information. In doing so, they are confronted with more instances when they are prone to comparing themselves with others, (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2014).

More than comparing to others, Facebook can make you want to express the same emotions as others do, according to Kramer, Guillory and Hancock (2013). They showed that emotions expressed by users can actually be contagious through social media. The results of this specific study caused a lot of noise when presented, not because of the content, but because of the method. Some people called the study a “manipulation experiment,” since Facebook didn’t let their users know that they were being studied. Facebook COO, Sheryl Sandberg, even had to apologize after that, (Time, 2014).

The goal of the study was finding out if seeing friend's positive content makes users sad. The authors used an algorithm that filtered content based on the emotional content of the post to define if the post was considered positive or negative. They removed positive posts from the news feed of more than 680,000 users, and doing that, they noticed that those users made fewer positive posts and more negative ones. The opposite occurred when they removed the negative posts. So while more negative news feeds led to more negative status messages, positive news feeds led to positive statuses (Kramer et al, 2013). "These results indicate that emotions expressed by others on Facebook influence our own emotions", (Kramer et al, 2013).

Research conducted by Fowler (2014) also showed that Facebook positive posts create more positive posts, and negative posts create more negative ones. The difference of these findings, though, is that they noticed that positive posts are more contagious, or more influential. According to the study, which analysed over a billion status updates of U.S. Facebook users, positive posts can spread happiness. Fowler (2014) said, "We have enough power in this data set to show that emotional expressions spread online and also that positive expressions spread more than negative."

Positive expressions, related to positive emotions, also get more likes than the negative ones, (Help for Depression, 2011). The situation is different when it comes to comments. Negative emotional updates receive more comments than the positive ones. The infographic on Help for Depression (2011) also lists the posts that generally get more likes: social processes, positive emotions, positive feelings, and religious words. The posts that usually get less likes contain: sleeping, negative emotions, body states, and job or work.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Since likes are one of the gratification achieved with Facebook posts, as a way for people to feel they are getting attention, the theory chosen to this research was the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The theory will help to understand Facebook and its users behaviors, especially why they post what they post.

Uses and gratifications theory suggests we select the bits of communication we wish to hear, ignore that ones we do not want, and use communication to satisfy our own needs. “It shifts power away from the sender to the receiver in a fairly dramatic way,” (Uses and gratifications theory, 2006, n.p.)

The theory is different from many other theories because it doesn’t focus on the question “what does media do to people?”, instead, it focuses on “what do people do with media?”. “Unlike many theories that describe the audience as passive receivers who are easily manipulated, here we find that audiences use communication for their own purposes and seek gratifications from that use,” (Credo Reference, 2006).

The theory started to be discussed around the 70’s, when researchers expressed concerns that the existent research was focusing on unintended negative effects of media, and ignoring the positives uses of it, (Baran & Davis, 2012).

Baran and Davis (2012) explain that after that, communication researchers realized they had to start explaining how media can actually be positive, and how the audience can get gratifications from it. Jay G. Blumler, was one of these researchers, who

found out that media have some uses for people, and that these uses might reflect some existing interests and preferences. Blumler identified that the consumption of the content of media can be directed by people's prior motivation, and, more than this, the audience members avoid certain types of media influence (they might not want to be controlled by anything), (Baran & Davis, 2012).

Other researchers after him focused on the manner which people impose meaning to what they receive, according to Baran and Davis (2012), and a good example of that can be the successful movie *Avatar*. While conservatives said the film encouraged viewers to be against the American soldiers, liberal critics said it was a racist and imperialist theme, since it's about Black people saved by White people. The fact is that *Avatar* is the most successful movie ever made, and that means people found gratifications while watching it. But the audience has autonomy to decide which gratifications to get from the film - it can be the conservative view, the liberal view, or even a third option, which would be just the pleasure of having a couple of hours of entertainment, (Baran and Davis, 2012) . That is called activeness, and "The activeness varies from one person to the next. Some audience members are more active, and some are more passive," (p. 253)

Still in the 70's, Jay Blumler, along with researchers Elihu Katz and Michael Gurevitch, described the five elements of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, as explained by Baran and Davis (2012). The first one is that the audience is active and its media use is goal-oriented. The second says that the initiative in linking need gratification to a specific media choice belongs to the audience member. The third element says that media compete with other sources of need satisfaction, and the fourth says that people are

aware of their own media use, interests, and motives, and for that, are able to provide this to researchers. Finally, the last element they described is that value judgements regarding the audience's linking its needs to specific media should be suspended.

Berger (2012) says it's obvious that people use media in varying ways, and he describes a number of possible gratifications the media offers, along with and some needs they may help to fill. Berger believes that those are a few of the reasons why people use the media: to be amused, to see authority figures exalted or deflated, to experience the beautiful, to share experiences with others, to satisfy curiosity, to find distraction and diversion, to experience guilt-free and extreme emotions, to find models to imitate, to gain identity, to see others make mistakes, to be purged of unpleased emotions, to explore taboo subjects, and others (p. 132).

Berger concludes that even though one of the issues with the Uses and Gratifications approach is that different critics often see a particular event (in a film, for instance) as being used in different ways or as providing different gratifications (since the uses to which people put the media can be ambiguous), "The uses and gratifications approach, however, helps us understand the power the mass media have." (p. 132)

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, like any other, has its strengths and weaknesses. According to Baran and Davis (2012), among the strengths are the fact that the theory focuses attention on individuals in the mass communication process, respect the intellect of media consumer, provide good analysis of how people experience media content, differentiates actives from passive uses, and studies the use of media as a part of every-day social interaction.

Whiting and William (2013) also state that there are other uses of social media, such as information seeking, pass time, relaxation, entertainment, and communicatory and convenience utility. After conducting a study based on interviews, the researchers found out that “the ten (most common) uses and gratifications are social interaction (88 percent), information seeking (80 percent), pass time (76 percent), entertainment (64 percent), relaxation (60 percent), communicatory utility (56 percent), expression of opinions (56 percent), convenience utility (52 percent), information sharing (40 percent), and surveillance and watching of others (20 percent),” (2013).

Quan-Haase and Alyson L. Young (2010) studied what motivates people to join Facebook and what are the gratifications received from its use. When examining what motivates college students to use Facebook, six factors were identified in their study: entertainment, a way to express concern and friendship toward others, fashion (helps its users appear fashionable and stylish to others), sharing problems, sociability (meet new people and overcome social inhibitions), and social information (feel involved with what is going on with others). “The high mean suggests that for students, being in the ‘social know’ is important because social information is key to being part of the peer network. Social information includes information about what activities and events peers are involved in, who is dating whom, what their friends’ current status is, and what general news is important in the community (including gossip)”, (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010).

In terms of gratifications obtained, participants of the study gave two main reasons for using Facebook, according to Quan-Haase and Young (2010): social connectivity (desire to keep in touch with friends and peers located near and far), and

social information (Facebook acts as a space for users to obtain information about the activities and events peers are involved, and also to learn about users' relationship status).

Based on the gratifications people can get from media (especially social media, focusing on Facebook), and also based on the self-presentation analysis, and the emotions that are triggered when it comes to Facebook (all of this explained during this Literature Review), this proposed thesis is designed to gain a better understanding of two issues regarding Facebook. The first one is to explain why people post positive events on social media, and which kind of gratifications they get from these posts. The second issue is to study the reception of these posts: finding how these happy events that we are exposed every day are making people feel about their own lives.

Although there is an understanding about what is a positive and a negative post, there is a lack of studies that focused on the positive posts only. So that is why a thematic analysis of some positive posts is going to be conducted as part of the method of this study.

The research questions proposed for this study are the following:

RQ1: What are some of the themes that are emerging among positive posts on Facebook?

The goal is not to classify all Facebook posts in positive or negatives, but to put some previous chosen positive posts (collected of my own Facebook feed) in categories. Besides this analysis, this first research question will be answered with the participants' opinions about which posts they see the most on their Facebook newsfeed: positive or negative.

The second research question is regarding the gratifications, with the goal of understanding why Facebook users make happy events of their lives public.

RQ2: Why do people post news of happy events of their lives on Facebook?

Research question number 3 was developed to find out what is the meaning behind one of the gratifications people get when using Facebook: likes. So the question is the following:

RQ3: What does a like represent?

After that, the next research question intends to find out if participants believe that what they are seeing on their Facebook shows real life as it is:

RQ4: How do participants believe Facebook portrays real life?

Since the purpose of this study is not only to understand the side of who is posting, but also the side of who is being exposed to the positive posts, the fourth question is:

RQ5: How do Facebook friends respond after seeing these happy posts?

Finally, to have a better and more specific idea of how Facebook friends feel after seeing different kinds of positive posts, the fifth and last research question is:

RQ6: What feelings do people have after being exposed to different types of positive Facebook posts? (Engagements, parties, relaxation, trips, shopping, grades, thanks and blessings, and selfies).

Methods

Two methods were chosen to develop this qualitative study: a thematic analysis and interviews.

First, a preliminary study using a thematic analysis of positive posts that were published by the author's Facebook friends was conducted. This convenience sampling was collected periodically between November 2014 and February 2015.

Not all of the friends' positive posts were collected during this time, because that would be impracticable. First, because there are more than 1,200 Facebook friends on the researcher's Facebook, and second, because Facebook does not show posts of all of them on the newsfeed. So the author selected the positive posts that appeared on the newsfeed on this period, during the several times of the day the researcher connected to Facebook (there was no specific time of the day for that). Positive posts that presented a few similarities were selected. Since the focus of the study is the embellishment of life, only posts related to positive emotions were selected.

The criteria for choosing the publications was based on what's considered a positive post: posts related to positive emotional outcomes, usually showing joy, fun, satisfaction, excitement, and relaxation, according to Krasnova et al (2013).

Another criteria for choosing the posts was the frequency that positive similar posts from different friends (from different parts of the world) appeared on the newsfeed. For example: the author started by seeing one engagement post. After a while, more and more engagements were seen, and they were all very popular among Facebook friends

(with hundreds of likes and comments). So engagement was the first category. In all of those selected posts, there were a significant amount of likes, which demonstrates they got some relevance at the eyes of Facebook friends (according to the infographic Help for Depression, 2011, happy posts usually get more likes than negative ones).

So if the post was relevantly positive, the procedure chosen was taking a screenshot to save the post, which could be a text or a picture. The confidentiality of the people exposed in the post was assured with the use of yellow smiley faces covering her faces. Also, every time there was a name on the text of the post, this name was erased. A basic photo program, Paint, was used to edit the posts. Some of the posts were in Portuguese, since the researcher has many Facebook friends from her home country, Brazil. In these cases, the text was kept in Portuguese, and a translation in English was created.

After all the posts were collected, they were organized into categories, according to their similarities. In total, 37 posts were selected and grouped in eight categories: engagements, thanks and blessings (with Facebook friends saying thanks for something good in their lives), grades, parties, relaxation (like the typical photos of the feet in front of the ocean), selfies, shopping (posts showing new cars and new phones), and trips (see Appendix I).

The initial idea of methods of this study was only the interviews with Pittsburg State students. The decision of using the thematic analysis prior to the interviews was made with the purpose of gathering a richer data. That way, it was easier to visualize what are some of the common positive posts, and what are their similarities, even though it was a convenience sampling. The thematic analysis was conducted with the intention of

answering Research Question number 1, which was: “What are some of the themes that are emerging among positive posts on Facebook?”.

After choosing eight themes, based on what was frequently published during this period, the second part of the study was conducted: the interviews. Participants for the interviews were selected among Pittsburg State University students. Only students with active Facebook accounts were selected. Ten students were interviewed individually. Each of the interviews lasted around 20 minutes, and all of them were conducted at the first floor of the Pittsburg State library. The interviews happened in different times of the day, and in different days of the month of March, 2015. The conversations were recorded with an Iphone, and confidentiality was maintained (and will be maintained) during the whole study and after it is completed. Participants signed an informed consent form authorizing the use of their answers (see Appendix II). Four men and six women were interviewed, from freshmen to graduate students. Five of them were international students, and five were domestic students. The youngest of the participants was 20 years old, and the oldest was 26. I created fictitious names for each of the participants: Janet, Jill, Kim, Malcom, Wendy, Carol, Robert, Logan, Zach, and Mary.

The questions prepared for the interviews were defined with the goal of answering all the other Research Questions. The interview was divided in two sections. The first part intended to answer the Research Question: “Why do people post news of happy events of their lives on Facebook?”. So the questions of this section were created to try to understand why people post what they post (why they need to post a picture that shows that they are at the beach, instead of just enjoying the beach, for example). This section of

the interview also focused on personal experiences of the participants, like stories about their own happy posts they remember about, and the explanation of why they posted that.

The second part of the interview had the goal of answering the last research question: “How do Facebook followers respond after seeing these happy posts?”. Instead of just asking the participants “how would you feel if you would see an engagement post?”, the subjects were exposed to a printed version of the positive posts selected during the thematic analysis. After seeing each category, they had to answer with kind of feeling were evoked by seeing these posts. The interviews were all transcribed to a computer file.

After that, the researcher used coding to separate the topics that emerged on the interviews. Six colors to identify the six topics were selected. Yellow was used when a participant talked about how she or he felt after seeing a post. Red was used when they talked about how they believe Facebook portrays real life. Gray was used when participants explained about likes. Pink for the explanations of why they think people post the happy events on Facebook. Blue was used to identify each time they said how they felt after being exposed to each of the categories. With the use of the colors, it was easier to group the similar answers and write the results section.

Those were the most appropriate methods found for this study. And the two methods were chosen because of the intent of finding out why people post happy events and also the other side: how does that make them feel when they see the posts. The thematic analysis, as well as its categories, helped the process of the interviews. And the data gathered from the interviews brought different opinions and point of views about the same posts.

The results were analyzed based on the findings of the thematic analysis of the Facebook posts categories and also based on what the participants said during the interviews. The idea was that each approach could contribute to enrich the results of one another.

Results

In order to answer research question number 1, “**What are some of the themes that are emerging among positive posts on Facebook?**,” I conducted a thematic analysis of my Facebook newsfeed. Based on frequency and similarities, eight categories of posts were selected (see Appendix 3).

The first one is “engagements,” with four posts. In four of the posts, posted by women, the focus of the post is on the hand of the bride proudly showing the engagement ring. The other post, created by a man, is a photo of the proposal moment. The ring is definitely the most obvious similarity among these engagement posts (one of the posts is only the close up shot of the ring, nothing else). The text that comes with the posts are also very similar: two of them saying that now they have the chance to spend the rest of their lives with their best friends.

The second category is “trips,” with four posts, all of them with pictures. Four of the pictures are showing people at the beach (or then only the beach), and the other three posts are photos in big cities: New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas.

The third category is “shopping,” with four posts. This name was chosen for this category because it consists of people showing what they bought, which turned out to be only cars and phones. Three posts show new cars, and in two of them, people who posted are happily standing right next to the car, holding the new keys. The similarity also appears on the text that comes with the photos in two of the cars posts, people are saying

thanks for the new car. Not thanks to the person who actually bought the car, though; one is saying thanks to Santa Claus, and the other is saying thanks to God. There is no photo in the last post, only a text with the man saying that he loves his Christmas gift, a Samsung Galaxy.

The fourth category is called “parties,” with six posts of people posing for pictures during parties. In all of them, there are more than two people in the picture, and they are all smiling (many are hugging). In two of them, people are holding drinks. The posts with text along with the pictures present words like “good time,” “laugh,” and “fun,” and in one of the posts there is even a “it couldn’t be better” sentence.

The fifth category is “grades,” with four posts with text, no pictures. One is talking about how she passed a presentation and an exam, two are talking about a 4.0 GPA, one is saying that she was able to maintain good grades even though she has two jobs, and the other is “feeling super good” because she remembered all the answers for a test.

The sixth category is “selfies” (when a person posts a picture of her own face). There are six photos in this category, four of them are individual selfies. Two of them have text, with positive messages and exclamation marks. People were smiling in all of the selfies.

The seventh category is “relaxation,” with six posts showing people relaxing (or at least showing part of their bodies). In five of the pictures only their feet appear in the photo, usually with an ocean or a pool in the back. An interesting similarity among these posts, besides the feet, is the irony of some of the texts, with sentences like “Hard life,” and “The bad view from our bedroom.”

Finally, the last and eighth category was named “thanks and blessings,” with six posts that show the words “thankful,” and “blessed,” always appreciating something good that had happened. Heart emoticons and exclamation marks, besides lots of adjectives, are common in this category.

Besides the use of the posts collected by me, in order to answer the first research question, I asked the participants to list what are the three positive posts they see the most. Trips and hanging out with friends were in the top of the list, cited, respectively, five and four times. Posts that were mentioned twice were: parties, food, engagement, graduation, new jobs, and babies. And posts that were mentioned once were: jokes, grades, grandmas with their grandkids, weddings, love declarations, weight loss, relationships, personal accomplishments, old family photos, and photos with cats.

I also asked if, in general, they see more positive or negative posts on their Facebook newsfeed: nine participants said they see more positive/happy posts, and one said he sees more complaints.

So after finding out what people see the most on their Facebook accounts, and some of the themes that emerged, it is time to answer research question number 2: “**Why do people post news of happy events of their lives on Facebook?.**” In order to do that, I first asked the participants to tell me about one of their own positive posts. The answers were all different: a story published on the paper, an engagement, an award for a research poster, a change of relationship status, a daughter who started crawling, a trip to Korea, a trip to California, a ticket for a concert, a trip to Europe, and a study abroad program.

All of the participants told me they got many likes for the post (many, in this case would be more than usual, or more than 50 likes, according to them). It was very easy for

them to think of a positive post of their own, but after the question “So why did you post it?” usually, there was a pause. After a little bit of thinking, the explanations for that were “Probably because it is just the thing to do. It is just what you do,” said Carol, about changing the relationship status on her Facebook. For Mary, there is a need for recognition, too. “When you work hard you want to show people how proud you are, because if you don’t post you are not going to feel that good, you are not going to be that recognized,” she said about her award. Other participants stated that posting these events on Facebook was a simple and fast way to tell people what is going on. “It was easier to let everybody know, like friends and family who live very far away,” said Jill, who got engaged and didn’t have to call the relatives who live in Canada, because of the post. “It was a big milestone,” said Wendy, about the post when her daughter started crawling. “It is a big thing for her, and I just wanted everybody to see that she was able to do that. It was like ‘Look at my baby’.”

When the question was not about their personal posts, but about people in general (I asked “So why do you think that people post happy events on Facebook?”), the answers were all very similar: that nobody wants to show sadness. Happiness is the feeling that is made public all the time. “Nobody likes to see posts that are not happy. People look for happiness and good stuff on Facebook,” said Robert. Logan had a very similar answer, saying: “You don’t want people to see you are miserable, you just want people to see how happy you are,” he said. So it is not only about feeling happy, but about showing the world that you are happy, Logan explained. “It is like that story: if the tree falls in the forest, and nobody is there to hear it, does it make a sound? People knowing what you did and what you accomplished make it more worthy.”

Janet said Facebook is like a diary, in which you only want to record the good things of your life. “And you don’t want to remember the bad things, you want to forget the bad. You don’t want to tell the world how sad you are, people don’t want pity from others.” Besides the pity, according to Robert, people don’t want others to see they are not doing well because that might cause them some kind of personal satisfaction. “I don’t want to post a bad thing that happened to me, because people who don’t like me would see and think ‘See, he deserved this’,” said Robert.

According to Jill, posting the happy events on Facebook is a way of keeping people updated. “But it’s keeping only a positive side of what’s going on. I don’t see many ‘Oh, I failed out of college today’, because that is shameful, and you don’t want to put yourself for public shame. You want to put out there for cheers, likes, and self-reward. People like that,” Jill said.

Facebook has been around for many years, according to Wendy, and “there is this idea in our heads that it is not legit until it is on Facebook. But that only applies for the good things, because we don’t want to emphasize the bad. It is a ‘Look, this is what is going on, I am proud of that’, but the bad... no, we don’t want to show that,” said Wendy, giving an example that happened to her. After every time she and her husband take their daughter to the doctor they post something on Facebook, so that friends and family can know how well the baby is doing. In one of these last visits, though, they got some bad news from the doctor, “So we didn’t post anything, we stayed away from Facebook. We don’t want to amplify the bad, but when it is good we want to share and brag about,” Wendy explained.

The bad and the sad also exist in real life, though, and participants did recognize that during the interviews. But they believe that those are the aspects that usually stay private. Like Kim said: “On Facebook, people tend to stay away from sadness focusing on the positive of life. They would talk about it in person about the sad parts, but they don’t want to broadcast that. They prefer people to see that they are happy and suffer on the inside.”

For Zach, Facebook is like “a photo album,” and “people think they are that important, that they want everybody to know the good things that are going on in their lives.” Which relates to what Carol said, that “anything that anyone posts on Facebook is attention getting. People have some kind of thing inside them that makes them want to get everyone’s attention,” she said.

Besides the attention, according to Mary, there is another gratification that people get from posting the positive on Facebook: an excuse to start offline conversations. “When they see that person who posted, they will ask ‘Oh, how was the wedding?’, or then ‘How’s the baby?’, because they saw it on Facebook. It’s a way to get people to talk to you. And they also like to have likes, because it makes them feel good.”

Since I interviewed only college students, I thought about what would be a very big event for them, and the answer I found for that was graduation. So I asked all the participants if they could graduate and not post anything about it on Facebook. Eight of the participants said “no,” that they had to post something. Only one said she doesn’t care so much about Facebook, so she might not post it, and the other said he would not post it, but only because he knew other people would post pictures of him graduating, and would tag him (so that would appear on his timeline anyway).

Again, when the question was “Why?” participants needed some time to think about it. “If I were graduating now there was no way I could resist the urge of posting about it on Facebook. Like it or not (and it is funny how I am using the word ‘like’ in there), Facebook is part of our culture now, as much, or even more, as weird clothes and makeup were part of the 80’s. It is something that we do, it is not something that we necessarily need to understand, we just go on and do it: major life events are posted on Facebook,” said Malcom. “I would post something, just to show everybody how happy I am,” Robert explained.

All the participants said that they felt nice when they got likes for their own positive posts, even though, they didn’t know exactly why, like Robert stated: “When I get a lot of likes I feel nice, I feel happy. I don’t know why, I just enjoy it.” So in order to answer research question number 3: **What does a like represent?**, I asked the interviewees what do they think it means when someone likes a post. Words related to “approval,” “support,” and “recognition” appeared at this part of the conversations. “It is like a high five,” said Jill. “It is an ‘I approve,’ or ‘I read what you posted and I like what you just said,’” explained Zach.

Janet said that when someone like hers posts it means that the person wants the life she is “projecting on Facebook.” And that is one of the reasons why she posts it, “so people can think ‘Oh, that is the life I want in the future.’ It is nice to see people liking your picture. It makes you want to share more.”

According to Mary, the meaning of a like can be different, depending on whom is liking your post. She said: “If you have a lot of people in your Facebook that you don’t

even know, they might just like your picture, and that does not mean anything. If it is a like from family and friends, then it is different.”

What is also different, as Malcom stated, is the feeling that you have when you receive a like from when you give a like. He said: “ I forget about most of the likes that I do five minutes later. Likes are only ‘Oh, that is nice, moving on.’ But when you are the one who got the likes you still feel pretty good after a while.”

Participants feel good about the likes, but the opposite effect happens with the lack of likes. Wendy explained, “I enjoy when we get likes, especially when it’s about my baby, and we always get a lot of likes with her posts. But if she didn’t get many likes, it is almost offensive, because I feel like I am showing her off, and I want people to like.”

Wendy also brought a concept: “the obligatory like,” that can be applied to family members. “I have a cousin who has a 3-year-old son, so she always likes my baby’s pictures, and I always like her little boy’s pictures. I feel like I need to like it,” she said. Zach also talked about this same concept: “Likes don’t really count, people sometimes feel obligated to like a picture.”

After the topic about the posts’ gratifications, I discussed with the participants the research question number 4: **How do participants believe Facebook portrays real life?** In order to answer that question, I asked them how real is the image that people project of themselves on Facebook, and if the social media represents real life as it is.

None of the participants said that Facebook represents reality. All of them stated that the social media only shows parts of real life, and these parts are only the good ones. “People just show the positive, they want others to see that they are happy, so they only post things that make them look good and happy,” said Kim. “We are not always

partying, always happy, always traveling. Most of the time we are working, we are worried, but we don't want to share this to everybody," said Robert.

For Malcom, this positive representation is not always a conscious act: "And it is not like they are trying to lie, it is just how social media is. People post things that try to portray things better than they are in reality," he said.

Facebook can give you a false idea of people's lives, according to Jill. She said that when you see happy posts, you are not seeing everything people are going through: "You think you know what's going on to people but you actually don't. 'Oh, they got married, 'Oh, they had a baby,' but you don't know anything in between. It's basically a photo album, of 'these are the happy things we want people to see,'" said Jill. Logan said something similar: "Facebook doesn't show what you have been through to get there, how much you had to work before getting in that place. Like graduation: you didn't post that it took you another semester and you had to pay it again because you didn't pass a class," he explained.

This false idea of reality was also cited by Wendy. She said people only post what is happy, and try to hide that maybe everything around is not. And she gives a personal example: "When we posted pictures of my daughter crawling for the first time, it looked like we were having a great time in our house, but actually my husband and I were fighting all night," she said. "I think that Facebook makes people believe that everybody is having these happy lives, this great time, but maybe everything around them is not as positive as they presented," she concluded.

It is very rare to see someone posting that is feeling horrible, or then sharing a very ugly picture, said Mary, explaining: "I don't think people want the others to think

they are not feeling good. In general, people always want other people to think that you are feeling ok, that you don't have problems, which is a lie." Some people would eventually post something negative, Mary said, like a death of a loved one, or even about a death of a cat or a dog, "but they do that because they want support."

So after finding out that Facebook does not portray real life, I started the second part of the interviews, with the goal of finding out which kind of feelings were evoked in the participants after seeing these embellished lives exposed on Facebook. In order to answer research question number 5: **How do Facebook friends respond after seeing these happy posts?**, I asked participants how do they feel when they see positive posts. Also, I asked them if they have ever felt jealous of a post, if they have felt unsatisfied about their own lives, and if they have ever thought their Facebook friends are having more exciting lives.

One thing that was clear with their answers is that Facebook can evoke negative emotions. Not in all situations in which a happy post is seen, but in many of them. Also, I found out the way people are going to respond to the post is closely related to the stage they are in their personal lives. For example, single people generally get jealous of engagement and other relationship posts. Students who are still far away from graduation, get sad when they see graduation posts, and so on.

Malcom, for example, said there were times where he saw posts of friends hanging out and he thought "I wish I had friends like that," or then when he sees photos of people drinking with friends at the bar, he thinks "I wish people would invite me to do things like that". Also, he said that when somebody posts that is getting married he gets

“I wish I could get that someday”. “So there is a definitely jealous factor out there. Jealousy and dissatisfaction on social media go hand and hand,” he explained.

While for Malcom the posts about parties and engagements can make him jealous, the same happens to Mary when she sees posts about trips. “When I see people traveling the world and I am stuck at home, I feel jealous. I wish I could be there too,” she said.

For Zach, the posts that make him jealous are very specific ones: “Beaches and food. When people post that, it is torture for me,” he said. He believes that sometimes Facebook leads him to feel their friends are having more exciting lives. “Like last Spring Break, they were all at the beach, at the sun, and I was here in Pittsburg, looking outside the window,” Zach said.

According to Wendy, when she was in a job that she didn’t like, and her friends were posting they got new jobs, Facebook made her feel really unsatisfied. “That lead me to believe I was the only one stuck in a job I didn’t like. So I was seeing pictures of people buying a house, getting married, getting these jobs, and I was not making much money, and I was always thinking why is it working for everybody else, but not for me?” she said.

The feeling of “everybody is doing better” was also cited by Carol. “I am on that age that everybody is getting married, everybody is having kids, so before I got engaged it was kind of ‘I am so behind in my own life... these people are moving on with their lives and I am still in school!’” she said, adding: “The majority of the time I am excited for the people but there were times when it kind of depressed me about my own life.” Carol believed that Facebook is responsible for “enlightening the satisfaction that people

might be already feeling. It was something internally that was wrong with me, but it was brought out because of Facebook.”

Besides jealousy, Facebook was also mentioned by participants as cause of anxiety. “A few weeks ago, a friend got engaged, and I felt really happy for him, but at the same time it reminded me that I want to get engaged and that made me more anxious,” said Logan, who is 20 years old. For Kim, graduation posts are the ones that make her nervous, “I am so jealous! I still have a year and a half to graduate. What makes even worst is that I have younger relatives and they are graduating before me.”

Janet said she feels bad when she see couples pictures on Facebook, because she is in a long distance relationship. “I see people with their partners next to them, some of them are getting married, or then getting jobs, and I feel that their lives look better. But if I were in their position, I would envy me, a student living abroad,” explained Janet, a student from Taiwan.

Other people, like Jill, responded in a different way to positive posts. She said she never felt unsatisfied about her life, only the opposite of that “Other people’s joy does not make me sad,” said Jill. Even though she said she never felt jealous because of a post, she did say that because of Facebook she feels that some friends are having better opportunities, like one of her friends, who goes to school in California, and keep posting about the experiences she is having in a bigger school. Kim said something similar: “I don’t feel they are having more exciting lives. (pause) Except from one who is studying abroad in Paris right now. And one in Madrid,” she told.

The feeling of competition on Facebook was confirmed by most of the participants, after the question “Do you think that Facebook can be a competitive world?”

For Mary, competition is visible especially among girls. “Girls change their profiles pictures a lot, and choose the ones where they have the most beautiful smile, most beautiful clothes. It is like ‘Look at me, I am hot, my boyfriend is hot, our group of friends is hot and beautiful, well dressed, and wealthy.’ And that’s the biggest problem with Facebook, people trying to be who they are not,” she said.

For Wendy, the only mom among the interviewees, the competition she sees the most involves babies: “I have a lot of friends who have babies, so when they post something about their babies I post something about my baby. I don’t know if I mean to, but I feel like I have to compare,” she told.

Competition on real life can be increased online, as Carol said. “I have a cousin who got married before I did, and had a child before I did. And she and I always had this competitive relationship, and she is one of these people who lives on Facebook, and that has a lot of impact on me,” Carol said.

For Janet, the thing that has a lot of impact is when a friend post that is getting a new job. “And I feel like ‘damn, I am so miserable’, because I am still a student, and I don’t earn money. You can turn that into a positive thing, thinking you want to be like that person, so you compete with that person secretly, or then you turn into a bad thing, and think ‘oh, I will never get something like that’,” Janet said.

Finally, in order to answer research question number 6, **What feelings do people have after being exposed to different types of positive Facebook posts? (Engagements, parties, relaxation, trips, shopping, grades, thanks and blessings, and selfies)**, the only question I asked participants was “How do you feel when you see these kinds of posts?”

After seeing **engagement** posts, five of the participants said they “feel happy” for the other person, or that “they love it.” One participant said it makes him want to rush his life to get there, too. One said he feels annoyed: “The proposal pictures annoy me. Why can’t you just enjoy the moment by yourselves?” asked Zach, who is single. Another participant said he feels envy. “Here I am, single, I am not even close to getting married. Engagements are much more powerful than seeing just couples’ pictures on Facebook,” said Malcom. Finally, two participants (one who is engaged and one who recently got married) said those posts used to bother them, creating feelings of “this is never going to happen to me.” When they got engaged, though, they started to like these posts. There is a limit, though, of the number of times you should post about your engagement, according to Mary, one of the participants who said she feels happy. “My feeling changes if the person posts about it every single day. I already know that you are happy, you don’t have to push it. I don’t know if they are really happy or if they just want the likes,” she said.

After being exposed to the second category of posts, **parties**, eight participants said they feel annoyed, for different reasons. For example: one feels jealous because he is underage and cannot go out yet, and two of them (who don’t go out very often) feel envy because they feel like they wanted to be there too. The other two said that they judge people who post pictures at parties, because that is not good for their professional images. The other gets annoyed because she said parties are part of her past, and the other because she doesn’t have time to go out anymore: “I feel miserable because I haven’t been to the bars this semester because of my thesis, so when I see people drinking I just want to beat the hell out of them. But in my first semester in Pitt I partied a lot, so I used

to like these pictures, and feel happy for whom was posting,” said Janet. Kim also changed the way she feels about these posts: “These pre-party photos... I can’t stand them. Before I turned 21 it used to look fun, and I wished I was there, but now I don’t care anymore,” she told. Only two participants had positive reactions to the party posts, saying they think “It’s nice,” and that they feel “happy for the people.” Both of them have the habit of going to parties.

When exposed to the third category, **relaxation**, two participants said they feel jealous. Two said they want to do the same thing “right now,” and three said they got really irritated with the feet that appear on the photos: “Feet are stupid, why are you posting a picture of your feet?” said Kim. “What is with the feet? I don’t understand. All I can think is ‘feet, feet, feet’,” said Malcom. Another participant said he feels mad at himself when he sees people relaxing at the beach, because he is not able to do the same thing. The other described the feeling with only one word: “torture.” Two participants said they liked these kind of pictures. “I know they are having their time to relax, I had mine. I wanted to be there too, but it is not like I don’t want them to be there,” said Robert.

After being exposed to the fourth category, **trips**, five people said they “like it” and that they might “feel happy for the people”. One person said she would only feel happy if it is a friend who is posting it, otherwise, she would feel jealous. Two people said they feel that they “want to go there,” like Kim, who said: “I like looking at the pictures and I think: ‘I will get there one day,’ but at the same time I feel: ‘but it’s not today,’” she said. One person said he feels jealous, the other gets annoyed, and other feels

upset: “Makes me not want to live in Kansas. Makes you want to travel, and if you don’t get to travel, it makes you upset because of the opportunities other people have,” said Jill.

The fifth category, **shopping**, was the one that evoked the less intense feelings on participants. One said he would not post that, because it makes no sense, and three others said they just don’t care enough to feel anything, like Carol explained: “That does not really affects me very much. I just think: ‘more payments and debts for you.’” One said she hates it, especially if the car has a name, and one said he feels happy if it’s a big thing, like a car or a house, but not if it is a phone, for example. For Wendy, the feeling is going to depend on where she is at in her life: “Before I got my car, I would been kind of jealous, but now that I got a new car I don’t care,” she said. For Jill, it doesn’t depend on where she is at, but it depends on whom is the person posting it. “I feel good for the car pictures if I feel that the person earned the car. But if I knew it was ‘oh, mom and dad bought you another car,’ I just would not like it very much. Knowing the people changes how you feel about the post,” she said.

After seeing posts of category number 6, **grades**, four participants said they like these kind of posts, and that they “feel happy”. Like Malcom explained: “I have done this too. It is just an expression of pride, it is like a ‘yay,’ you want people to know that you are happy because you have achieved something.” For Wendy, that is the kind of thing that make people have “something worth bragging about, instead of just posting what they are making for dinner that night.” Two participants said they would “feel happy, depending on the person”. One participant said he hates it, because people are just trying to show off how smart they are. Finally, another student said she would “just click like without too much thinking.”

Getting towards the end of the interviews, participants were exposed to the seventh category, **thanks and blessings**. Although five participants said it was nice, two of them explained that the feeling can change if these posts are too frequent: “If it is someone who post that every week saying that everything is wonderful, then I just think ‘oh, you want to pull that again? you want to show that so much?’” asked Logan. Two participants said they feel irritated with these posts, like Kim, who said: “It is thrown in your face constantly, and I get that they are thankful and blessed but I don’t need to know that every day.” Zach thinks the same: “On Thanksgiving and Christmas that doesn’t bother me, but if it’s just a regular day and if it is the same person constantly... I understand gratefulness but she can’t be thankful for every person in her life.”

Finally, participants respond to the last category, **selfies**. Five people said they like selfies, but most of them said that if the selfie is too frequent, then they would feel irritated. Two people said it depends on the selfie. Like Malcom explained, it is what they are doing in the selfie that really matters to him. “If they are just smiling and it is a nice selfie I think is cool, I give a like, because the person is feeling good about herself. But then duckface or doing something embarrassing in a public setting, it is the kind of thing you wish you had a dislike button,” said Malcom. For Zach, the quotes that follow the selfie can be annoying: “I like these posts, because I commit the crime of selfie too. It is nice to see people’s faces, but if it’s a quote that comes with the selfie, like ‘patience is a virtue,’ for example, that annoys me”.

Discussion

Imagine you just came back from a trip with your family. If you are old fashioned, like my family, you will make sure you print the pictures and put them in a photo album. That way, you can look at that album every time you miss that trip and that time. Here is the tricky part, though. You probably had some issues during the trip. You might have had some fights, you might have gotten lost on the way, taken the wrong train, missed your plane, gotten food poisoning, and many other things that we know that can go wrong during trips. None of these things, though, will be in your photo album. The only pictures that will be there will be the happy and smiling faces of you and your family enjoying the trip.

With this research, I found out that the same thing that happens to a photo album, happens on Facebook. People know that the bad and ugly could be part of this album, if they wanted this album to be like reality was. What they want to remember, though, is not the reality, but that embellished image, that idea that everything went well. What happens on Facebook is that people also want other people to think that way, and that is why the majority of them will only share the positive side of their lives.

When I first started talking about this idea, back in the Spring semester of 2014, I honestly thought that something was seriously wrong about the way people present

themselves on Facebook (I am sure about this now). I would see my best friends showing themselves as these very happy people all the time on their Facebook accounts, and because I would see them and talk to them outside of Facebook, I knew that most of that was not real. They had many problems—problems they didn't want to post about.

I started talking to a lot of people about this issue, because I wanted to be sure it was not something only in my mind. I had a hard time convincing people that I could focus my study on the happiness on Facebook. “People also show the negative,” they were telling me. Yes, some people also complain and post bad things on their Facebook; I see that on my newsfeed, too. And although I could not find a study that showed how much of what is posted is negative and how much is positive (probably because that would be really hard to measure), I did find studies showing that positive messages are more influential, and that happiness exposed on Facebook can lead to feeling that other people are happier. Facebook itself hired researchers to study how contagious a post can be. So there was definitely an issue there that deserved to be studied.

So after spending months reading about what other authors had said about self-representation, and the feelings that Facebook can evoke, I could start my own methods to find out what I wanted to know: why people post the happy moments, and how others feel when they see that. And after I was done with this research, the title, “Life in a frame,” made even more sense. This research showed that people really do put their lives in a frame when posting on Facebook. Inside this frame, of course, they will put the pretty aspect, and not the bad. Why? As participants said during the interviews, nobody wants others to think they are not doing well, nobody wants pity from others. People want the recognition, the applause, the admiration.

The Uses and Gratifications theory fit very well in this research, after all, people proved they do use Facebook for some reasons and some gratifications. Besides the fact they want to show the world they are doing fine (even though that is not necessarily the truth), they also expect the world's approval.

Under Facebook rules, this approval comes with likes. People feel well if they get a reasonable number of likes. They were already feeling well just because of the accomplishment itself, so they feel even better after they see people recognizing this accomplishment by liking it. On the other hand, when they don't get as many likes, they feel the opposite. And that is one of the most interesting things here: they think of the like as being something really personal. Like the mom who was interviewed, and told she feels that if people don't like her baby's pictures, it is almost like they are not liking her baby. For me, the baby competition for likes, explained by this participant, was one of the most disturbing discoveries: moms can feel bad if other babies are getting more likes on Facebook.

What is also very curious is the fact that most of participants said that they don't think much before hitting the like button. They just do it. Most of them told me they forget about most of the likes they give. So that was the first of a series of contradictions I've seen: if the likes are so random and meaningless, why do people care so much about getting (or not getting) likes? So, for me, likes work as a kind of passive stimulation: people just know they feel good about getting likes, but they don't actually think about that.

Another thing that fit well with the literature review was the idea of self-representation. All the participants said that people present themselves in a positive way

on Facebook, which, of course, is not always the honest way. That is why Facebook does such a bad job of portraying real life. All the interviewees said that the social media does not represent life as it is, only parts of it. On Facebook posts, you see the wedding, the baby, the graduation, but you don't see the couples' fights, the baby crying at night, and the long hours of study (or the student loans) required to get to a degree. The embellishment of life became clear with this study. People can try to look happier than they really are by selecting and posting only the good parts of their days, and, as a result, they end up creating a false sense of their lives to other peoples' perspectives.

That is very concerning, because this false projection of a happy life impacts others. Many happy posts create jealousy, and a feeling that "everybody else is doing better." This, for me, is very powerful, and it reminds me of when I was a teenager. I use to use this argument to convince my dad to let me go to a party: "Everybody is going, I need to go too!" I used to say. "Everybody? Girl, your world is small," he replied. I didn't understand at the time, but now it makes perfect sense. Participants told me this "everybody" idea during their interviews. "Everybody is at the party," one of them said, "Everybody is getting married, having babies and moving on with their lives, and I am here, getting my degree," another participant said. No, it is not everybody. Facebook can give this false idea, that "everybody" is better. But in reality, only a few people are doing these kinds of things. The problem is that people are constantly exposed to these posts, having the feeling that good things happen more with other people than with themselves.

Besides the jealousy and these feelings that other people are better, I also noticed a lot of feelings of competition. Almost all of the participants said Facebook can be competitive, with people trying to show their lives as better than they are in reality.

And this is where another contradiction comes up: if people know that what is posted on Facebook does not represent real life, why do they care so much about what is posted? Why do they feel jealous of a post that might as well not even be real? If they know “people lie” on Facebook, like one of the participants said, why do they bother believing it?

Life is made of ups and downs. And even though we rarely see these downs publicly exposed on Facebook, we know they exist. The fact that nobody wants to broadcast that does not make it less real. I found out that people would tell their close friends or family if they had a problem, but they would not usually post that on their timelines. Isn't it ironic that even though people know that life is made of good and bad parts, there is actually a place in which they can expose only the good parts? “People go to Facebook to see happiness,” one of the participants said. And that reminds me of my best friend, who does not go to the movies to watch dramas. She would only pay to watch romances or comedies. “Real life is already full of sad events,” she says. We can think of Facebook in the same way. People log in to escape from the reality, which is not always happy.

Finally, the last topic worth mentioning in this discussion is the one that came up after a participant said: “If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” The quote can be applied to what happens on Facebook. Many people do not get satisfaction just by accomplishing something. They need to post for everybody to see and receive the recognition for that. It's like another famous quote: “Happiness is only real when shared.”

The graduation example was perfect for the interviews because all students, except for one, said they would not be able to graduate and not post about it. This proves that Facebook has an important role on reassurance and validation. People do not always reflect about it, and usually don't know how to explain why this happens. They know they need to post it, but they don't know how to explain it very well—and I include myself on this issue. Even though I spent months studying Facebook, after I was done writing this thesis I felt this need that I could not control: the need that I had to post that I was done with my thesis on my Facebook account.

Limitations

The biggest limitation of this research was the time. The study started in the Fall semester of 2014, but only as a project for a research class. It was in January 2015 that the project was actually developed. So there were only three full months to conduct the study. With more time available, richer data, especially on the thematic analysis of the Facebook posts, could have been collected. Speaking of the thematic analysis, that was a limitation too, because being only one researcher I only saw posts of my own Facebook friends. Maybe with the help of more researchers we could have used different Facebook newsfeeds, and probably could have had a better collection of positive posts.

The number of participants was also a limitation. Even though the interviews were very useful to answer all the research questions, if a larger sample of 10 people were interviewed, the data could have been more meaningful.

Another limitation is the fact that only Pittsburg State students were heard. So another way to have a better sample would be talking to people outside the college level,

too. Their views about Facebook could probably be very different from the interviewees, who were in their 20s. In that way, with a richer sample, the results could have been different.

Areas of future research

With the findings of this research, it is more than clear to me that social media, especially Facebook, is a very rich topic for research. Future studies should consider focusing on comparing the levels of happiness or well-being of participants with how much they care about happy posts. Were the people who say they get excited for posts about trips, parties, and engagements, for example, considered happier than the others who felt jealous? This relation is definitely something to be studied. Besides, other aspects like age, sex, or financial situation, could be applied in this comparison. Do women care more than men about what is posted on Facebook? Do young people get more annoyed than old people? Do people with a better financial situation care less when they see categories like trips and shopping posted on Facebook? Those are questions that could be explored.

Since many participants stated that the feeling they have regarding the post is related to the person who is posting it, future research could also focus on finding out what is the relation there. They could focus on trying to understand why people tend to feel happy for friends who are graduating, but feel jealous when the person who is graduation is not very close to them. Or then, why does someone get happy for a friend who is taking a nice trip and posting pictures about it, but gets annoyed when someone out of his circle of close friends is the one who is travelling?

Future research could also study how people maintain their relationships, and maybe try to explain why they only tell the negative things to people who are close to them, and the positive things they feel like they can tell everybody. Is that related to their offline lives too? Do they usually open up their problems to fewer people? Do they usually tell the majority of people when something good happens? Probably, that is what happens, but a study that could connect the way they keep their offline relationships with the online relationships could be very useful.

Another topic that could be analyzed is why Facebook posts can increase negative feelings. For example: if a friend of yours tells you he is going to a very nice place, that probably is not going to bother you; you will even be happy for him. A couple of days later, though, you start seeing his great pictures on Facebook, and you realize you are feeling a little weird, maybe a little jealous? So why is seeing the posts of the trip different from your friend telling you about the trip? Is it because now everybody else is seeing it, too? Is it because he is getting many likes? Is it because now you are even more sure that he is there enjoying the trip and you are not?

The likes, which had become a fascinating aspect of this research, could also be more explored. All the people interviewed said they feel well when they get likes. It could be interesting to see what happens when they post something and don't get many likes. How much does this affect the person? Does not getting enough likes evoke a more powerful feeling than getting a lot of likes?

This psychological aspect of Facebook, for me, is full of new possibilities to be studied. A social media that was created with the goal of making people closer and connected can actually make them feel bad, and sometimes disconnected from everything

else they think is happening. There is definitely a contradiction here that deserves more attention.

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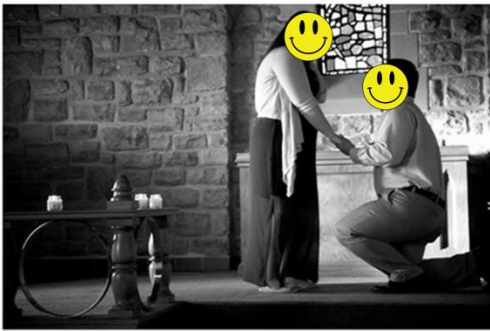
APPENDIX

Appendix I

Engagements



I finally popped the question to [redacted] and she said YESSSS!!! I'm so excited that I'm going to be spending the rest of my life with the woman whom I love the most!! — [redacted]





Some days are just better than others!!! I'm marrying my best friend 😊 –



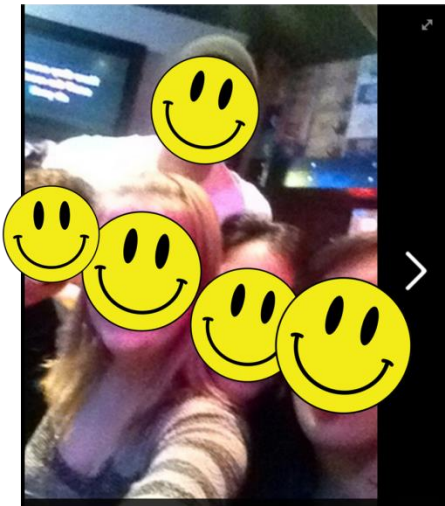
Parties





Não podia estar melhor -

*It couldn't better



Having fun at 505!! 🍷💗



Relaxation



Ou ou ou que vida boa.

*What a good life.



1
3
3
3+
1
3+
4
8
5
13
3+



Vida difícil #pool #family #weekend — em Artesana Chocolates.

* Hard life.



Vista ruim do quarto ... #Natal #férias

* The bad view from our bedroom... #beach #vacation



Trips





Shopping

Feliz. Papai Noel já passou e deixou meu mimo. Obrigada.



*Happy! Santa Claus has been here and let my gift. Thank you.

Obrigado senhor por me permitir mais essa conquista!

* Thank you, Lord!, for another accomplishment!



Well Susie(the Suzuki) it's been a great 5 years but it's time for an upgrade.
Say hello to my new Rav4 😊



Loving my early Christmas gift, Samsung galaxy tab s 8.4.

Grades

Don't know how I did it, but I was able to maintain a 4.0 all 3 semesters of graduate school. Thank you to everyone that helped me.

One more grade before I know if I got a 4.0 this semester. — 🙄 se sentindo

3 A's, 3 B's and a pass. not bad while maintaining two jobs!

Very excited that I went in to take my math test and it was exactly the same was my review guide that I studied all night for so all I did was remember the answers on the test! Made it super easy for me! Feeling super good knowing that I did well on it! — 😊 se sentindo animada.

Thanks and blessings

What am I thankful for? In this Thanksgiving I'm thankful for that my dreams are coming true. ❤️ This is so magical and so incredible that I'm still not believing in what are happening. I just want to say thank you to God and to my mother for this amazing experience of studying abroad. Make friends from all over the world, see snow for the first time, and still have the love of my family and friends from Brazil are more than I could expect. Definitely, I believe that dreams can come true.

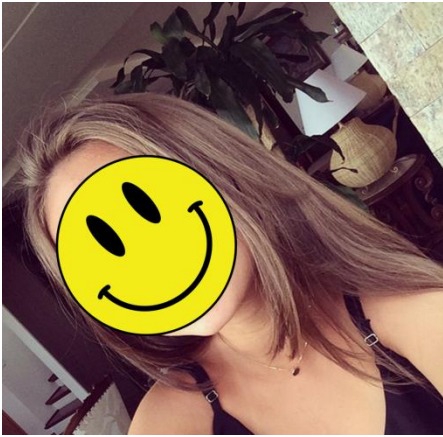
2014 has been good to me! I'm blessed by all the wonderful friends and family I have in my life full of love and support. Can't wait to see what 2015 will bring 😊 #happynewyear! #NYE #2015 —
pessoas.

O penúltimo dia do ano não podia ter sido melhor! 2014, seu lindo, como e
amei você! O ano dos sonhos realizados e das grandes conquistas ❤️



*The last day of the year could not have been more perfect! 2014 was gorgeous, I loved this year so much! The year of dreams coming true and great accomplishments.

Selfies





Amei o nosso dia ontem amiga!!!



*I loved our day yesterday, girl!

E volta ao trabalho... Com as pilhas novas e com o coração mais feliz do mundo volto para mais um ano de muitas conquistas...



*Back to work... With lots of energy and with the heart full of joy, ready to a new year of new accomplishments...

Appendix II

Title: Facebook and Happiness: Life in a Frame

Researcher: Valquiria Vita, a Masters candidate in the Department of Communication, Pittsburg State University – Pittsburg, KS.

Advisor: Troy Comeau, PhD., Professor at Pittsburg State University – Pittsburg, KS.

Purpose: This project will study why people post positive events of their lives on Facebook and how their Facebook friends feel about it.

Participation: Participation in this study requires that you be at least 18 years old. Your participation is voluntary. You may quit the interview at any time.

Risk: No risk is involved in the study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will not be revealed in any written documents or presentations.

Contact: Valquiria Vita

Department of Communication/Pittsburg State University

417 Grubbs Hall

Pittsburg, KS 66762

917-7413075 vvita@gus.pittstate.edu

Thank you for your participation,

Valquiria Vita

By returning this signed survey, you are stating that you understand your rights.

Signature

Date

Appendix III

Interview 1
Malcom
24 years old
Senior

What do you see the most on Facebook?

People who share content, then adds. So content not produced by someone.

Do you remember one of your positive posts?

I published a story I wrote for the newspaper about the ROTC kids and it got like 50 likes. Every time somebody likes your content it says on your wall that that person liked that content, so the likes are kind of like a vicious cycle, you got a lot more exposure that way, and exposure is good, makes you feel like people care about what you have to say.

Why did you post that?

Exposure for myself and my company, and having people aware of what we are producing. Sharing my content on Facebook also makes me feel good if you got likes, there is a personal gratification, way outside of professional concerns.

What does a like represent?

It is kind of tough because there is no dislike button. So I am not really sure of what a like mean, I know it is a momentarily approval, more of the half that I do I forget about five minutes later. But when you are the ones who got the likes you still feel pretty good after a while. Likes are only “oh, that is nice, moving on”.

Do you think you could accomplish something really important and not post that on Facebook? Like graduating, for example.

No way, if I was graduating now there was no way I could resist the urge of posting about it on Facebook, once the event actually occurred, and probably before the event too.

Why?

I don't think that is something we really think about too much. Like it or not (and it is funny how I am using the word 'like' in there', Facebook is part of our culture now, as much, or even more as weird clothes and makeup were part of the 80's. It is something that we do, it is not something that we necessarily need to understand it, we just go on and do it: major life events are posted on Facebook.

Why do you think we see more engagements, than divorces, for example, or more 4.0s than Fs on a class posted on Facebook?

Long pause. Relying on my own process when I am on social media, that is so automatic. There are many times when I am on social media, sometimes I say hold on, that is gonna go many times, literally everywhere, so there were many times that I literally wrote something and before I post it I deleted, just because I you don't want to say things about yourself that you don't want to be out for the general public. But if it is a good thing then you don't think like this.

How do you think Facebook portrays real life?

I don't think is conscious, I think they sometimes might post things that try to portray things better than they are in reality. But it is not like they are trying to lie, it is just how social media is.

Have you already felt unsatisfied about your own life by browsing Facebook?

Yes, I have. There has been times where I have gone and said 'oh I wish I had friends like that', when somebody I know posts a photo drinking with five people at the bar and I think 'oh, I wish people would invite me to do things like that' or somebody posts that is getting married and I get 'I wish I could get that someday', so there is a definitely jealous factor out there.

Have you already felt unsatisfied about your own life by browsing Facebook?

Jealousy and dissatisfaction on social media go hand and hand.

Have you felt that your friends are having better lives than you?

Sometimes. I don't let it bother me, but when I look at it, it triggers emotions. For example when I see photos at parties, karaoke, and I think that this would be fun, but opportunity does not come up to me. But then I move on. It is just a momentary emotion.

Engagements: If I see people getting engaged and posting things like 'OMG I am going to spend the rest of my life with my best friend and blablabla' I get the feeling of envy. Here I am, single, I am not even close to getting married. Engagements are much more powerful than seeing just couples' pictures on Facebook.

Trips: This one I feel different, it makes me think that I want to go on vacation, it does not disturb me, like couples posts. I think these posts are nice.

Relaxation: What is with the feet? I don't understand. All I can think is "feet, feet". And this glasses on the pool, Oh my God.

Shopping: Oh, ok, so you bought something. You have to be careful with that, because it is very easy to seem materialistic with these kind of post, because people are like "oh, look, I have the money to buy this kind of stuff, and most of the people don't", but who really cares?

Parties: They are having such a good time, it would be nice to have a good time like that.

Grades: I have done this too. It is just an expression of pride, it is like an "yey", you want people to know that you are happy because you have achieved something.

Selfies: what I feel depends entirely on the selfie. Generally I don't care about the person, if they want to post a selfie it is up to them, it is what they are doing in the selfie that really matters to me. If they are just smiling and it is a nice selfie I think is cool, I give a like, because the person is feeling good about herself. But then duckface or doing something embarrassing in a public setting, it is kind of like, common, that is the thing you wish you had a dislike button.

Thanks: oh, good for you.

Interview 2

Jill

22 years old

Senior

What do you see the most?

Graduation. Wedding. New job

Do you notice that people post more positive or negative posts?

It depends on the people. People from Pitt post really happy things, but then my friends back from home, who are not in school aren't as happy things. Because they made really bad choices of their lives. A couple of them already had kids in high school and are always complaining about them.

Do you remember one of your positive posts?

I posted when I got engaged because it was easier to let everybody know, like friends and family who live very far away. I got a hand full of likes.

What does a like represent to you?

It is like a high five. Makes you feel good in general, that people were recognizing happy things going on your life.

Are you able to accomplish something really important and not post it?

Yes, I don't post most of the things that happen, it is time consuming, or I just don't care enough to post it.

Why do you think people post happy events on Facebook?

It's an easier way to let everyone know what's going on. What that, I can tell my extended family what's going on, when I got engaged, for example, even my aunt in Canada found out, and I was not going to call her and tell her, but we are friends on Facebook. It's a way to keep people updated, but it's keeping a positive side of what's going on. I don't see many "oh I fail off of college today". Because it's shameful, you don't want to put yourself for public shame. You want to put out there for preys and likes, and self-reward, people like that.

How do happy posts make you feel?

It depends on the person. I am happy for some of them, it's good to see "oh look at what are they doing now", it's nice to know what people I lost touch with are doing. But then when I see my friends from high school posting pictures of having a second or third baby after they started having babies on senior year of high school I think 'hum... you shouldn't be doing this'

How do you think Facebook portrays real life?

I don't think it represents real life. For the most part they are just showing the happy parts of their lives, so you don't actually see how they are and what they are going through. You think you know what's going on to people but you actually don't. "Oh they got married", "oh they had a baby", but you don't know anything in between. On Facebook you have a false sense of knowing what's going on with someone. It's basically a photo album, "these are the happy things we want people to see". You give a like and you move on. 90% that I like I forget about it, but big things like getting married or having a baby I

will still remember, these major life events. But most of the time you forget the things that you like.

Do you think that Facebook is a competitive world?

Some people are competitive in that nature, but not everybody.

Have you ever felt unsatisfied about your own life because of Facebook?

No, the opposite of this, I see them making poor decisions and I see, oh I am in the right rack. And besides, other people's joy does not make me sad.

Have you ever jealous unsatisfied about your own life because of Facebook?

No.

Have you felt your friends are having more exciting lives?

I would not say more exciting, but some of the things I feel like they have more opportunities to do so. One of my friends goes to UCLA and she posts all the time, and I see all the opportunities she has because of the school she goes too.

Images:

Engagement: I am engaged too, so if I knew them I would feel happy for them.

Couples: Same thing.

Trips: Makes me not want to live in Kansas. Makes you want to travel, and if you don't get to travel it makes you upset because of opportunities other people have.

Fancy meals: It makes me think of the awkwardness of taking picture of your food while eating dinner. Most of the time I don't think picture of my food, and when I do I don't know why I would do that. And I would just send it to someone, not post to everybody to see because they don't care.

Relaxation: It bothers me the fact that there are feet. I don't want to see your feet, feet are gross. And then I would just keep on scrolling. It just makes me wonder why people post things like this.

Shopping: I feel good for the car pictures, I feel that the person earned the car, if I knew her I would think that. But if I knew it was "oh, mom and dad bought you another car", I just would not like it very much. Knowing the people changes how you feel about the post. So if you know that the person worked hard to get that you feel fine, but if not, I just think, "oh, ok, now you have everything you want" and I just move on with my life.

Parties: I judge people who post that. Education majors, like me, that post pictures like this, I feel like I don't want kids to learn from you. I think people are going to have future issues for pictures like this, it does not matter what is in your cup, people assume what they assume. That is why I hardly post, I don't want people to say things.

Selfies: it depends. If is someone who post a selfie every single day, I just think, "I don't want to see your face every day". My aunt post pics of my cousin, I enjoy seeing this sometimes, but if she would post a pic every single day I would get sick of it. It just makes me think why again, like this back to work and a selfie, why would I care?

Grades: I like seeing things about people in school because it is good to see that they are progressing

Thanks: there are people who feel more genuine, more real, other just want to tell people "I have this happening and this, look at me my life is going so great".

Interview 3

Mary

25 years old

Senior

Do you remember one of your own positive posts?

The day that I posted about the prize that I won for a research poster, that was very nice. I got more than 100 likes, and usually I don't get that many likes. I felt even better after that. It was a work that I was doing for a long time, so being recognized for that was really cool, even though a lot of people didn't even know anything about the research. It is interesting how even people you don't talk to give you likes.

Why did you post it?

Pause. I think is because when you work hard you want to show people how proud you are, because if you don't post you are not going to feel that good, because you are not going to be that recognized. That makes you want to do a even better job.

What does a like represent?

That the person agrees with what you said, or that they are happy for you. But sometimes, depending on what you post, if you have a lot of people in your Facebook that you don't even know, they might just like your picture, that does not mean anything. If it is a like from family and friends is different.

Can you graduate and not post anything on Fb and not post that?

I probably would not. I will post it, because is a goal that I've achieved. Facebook is a good way to show people what you are doing.

How do you think that Fb portrays real life?

It is not real life. If they are your friends, you can tell if they are being real on Fb, but if it is somebody you don't really know there is no way know that. But in general I don't think it represents, because usually people just post the good things (unless the dog or cat dies, or someone in the family, but then they do that because they want support). But it is hard to see someone posting that is feeling horrible today, or posting a picture in which is very ugly. I don't think people want the others to think they are not feeling good, unless it is a friend of yours, but then in this case you would go and talk to your friend, not post that. In general, people always want other people to think that you are feeling ok, that you don't have problems, which is a lie.

Do you think Facebook can be a competitive world?

Yes, definitely. Especially with girls. What you look like, in Brazil, for example, is the most important thing. So girls change their profiles pictures a lot, and chose the ones where they have the most beautiful smile, most beautiful clothes.. it is like "see, me, I am hot, my boyfriend is hot, our group of friends is hot and beautiful, well dresses, wealthy", and maybe they are not. And people are going to look and think "oh my, they are so nice". So people are always trying to look better than they really are among others. That's the biggest problem with Facebook, people trying to be who they are not. And also people who cannot live without Facebook anymore, and don't know how to communicate with people in real life.

Have you ever feel unsatisfied because of Fb?

I wish I could be there too, I feel sometimes. When I see people traveling the world and I am stuck at home. I felt jealous.

Have you ever felt they are having more exciting lives?

No, because a lot of people who try to show that, I know that is not true, they are just trying to show that.

Do you notice more happy posts or negative?

Usually happy and funny posts.

Why do you think people post happy things on Facebook?

Because when they post people will automatically know what their lives are, they will like, comment, and when they see that person they will ask “oh how was the wedding? how’s the baby?”, because they saw it on Facebook. It’s a way that letting people know what’s going on, and also to get people to talk to you. They also like to have likes, because makes them feels good. Usually if nobody likes it or comments it, they think that nobody seen it, or that nobody cares. If they get likes they feel good about it. One of these days I posted that I published an academic article, and a lot of people liked and commented, it makes me feel good, felt like my worked was recognized.

Which reward people get when posting happy things?

Likes and comments. And conversations on real life, because they will talk to you after they seen what you post on Facebook.

Posts:

Engagements: Make me feel happy for the people, you can see they are happy, and I know that nowadays it is difficult to find a person to spend to rest of your life with. But my feeling changes if the person post this every single day. I already know that you are happy, you don’t have to push. I don’t know if they are really happy of if they just want the likes.

Thanks and blessings: Is I know the person I will read everything, if I don’t know nothing changes for me, I would not even read. But I think this kind of posts is kind of cool.

Grades: That depends on the person, it depends if you know that the person is trying to show off or not. You know 4.0s are just going to do that to show they got another 4.0, but if it’s a 4.0 for the first time, that is happiness, that is different. People usually do that because they want to feel better about themselves, or because they want people to see they did a good job.

Parties: That can be the most fake ever, or the most real thing ever. I can feel happy for these people, because I post pictures having fun with my friends at parties too.

Shopping: for me is like “oh, ok”, I don’t even look at it.

Trips: this is nice, I feel ok, when I am traveling to, or will travel. In this case, Facebook can be a like a personal library, that is how it works for me, I go over my photos sometimes just to remember my trips.

Relaxation: This makes me want to relax too. Does not bother me, just gives me positive thoughts.

Selfies: one sometimes, ok, but a lot of similar selfies makes me irritated.

Interview 4

Carol

24 years old

Graduate

What do you see the most?

Engagements, babies, new jobs.

Tell me about one of your positive posts.

I got the most number of likes when I changed my relationship status to engaged.

Why?

Long pause. Probably because it is just the thing to do. It is just what you do.

How did you feel?

I guess I just kind of expected, so I didn't feel anything about it. Because I have seen it with other people.

What does a like represent?

I don't know. pause. It could just mean it is a good post, they like it, could mean they are supporting you doing something.

Could you graduate and not post that on Fb?

I could not post but I will post it.

Do you feel people post more happy things or negative things?

More positive things. The negatives I see I know they are just doing it for attention. I have a friend she was posting she was having morning sickness but she has never posted she was pregnant. And then in the comments she said "oh, it's because I am pregnant".

How do happy posts make you feel?

I am on that age that everybody is getting married, everybody is having kids, so before I got engaged it was kind of "I am so behind in my own life...these people are moving on with their lives and I am getting my graduate degree, I am still in school". I think majority of the time I am excited for the people but there were times when it kind of depresses me about my own life.

Why do you think people post happy things on Facebook?

I think that anything that anyone post on Facebook is attention getting. They are trying to get attention because they want their family to know "hey, here is what is going on in my life, I want people to know about me", or then they have some kind of thing inside them that they needs to get everyone's attention, that needs people to get attention to them. If I post a 4.0 I am just looking for congratulations

Do you feel that Facebook represents real life?

I think it represents pieces of real life, if they post positive or negative things that doesn't mean they are positive or negative people, so I think it's kind of pieces of their real lives.

Have you felt unsatisfied about your life?

Not because of Facebook, because I think that Facebook enlightens the satisfaction that you were already feeling. It was something internally that was wrong with me, but it was brought out because of Fb.

Have you felt your friends are having more exciting lives?

I feel they maybe accomplish more, or lived more, had more experiences. Travel for sure. I never wanted to get a Masters degree. And I figured out it was because what I've always wanted to do was being a wife and a mom and career was going to be secondary. And I have many friends who have done that (wedding and kids), so I feel they have accomplish more than me. Even though I am more educated than they are, and probably going to have a better career, because of my personal goals I feel that they have accomplished more than I. I have a cousin who got married before I did, and had a child before I did. And she and I always had this competitive relationship, and I think that has a lot to do of it as well, and she is one of these people who lives on Facebook, and that has a lot of impact on me.

Posts:

Engagements: This one with the hand and the ring on it, I think "that is a nice ring but I like mine better". If I wasn't engaged I would think "that is pretty but that is not exactly what I want", or "I can't believe she is engaged but not me", or "I am never going to be engaged". It would be an instant of happiness for the person, but then irritation for a longer period. And when they say "I am marrying my best friend" I think "that is unfortunate", you need someone who is not your husband to be your best friend. You need someone to talk about that person with."

Thanks and blessings: I think it's nice when people are thankful.

Grades: I get happy for them because I know how difficult it is.

Parties: Most of the time if I see pictures of people partying on Facebook I think "bad choice", you should not be posting pictures that involve alcohol. You are less likely to get a job this way.

Shopping: That does not really affects me very much, I don't feel very much. "More payments for you, more debt".

Trips: I think that I want to go there, especially when its somewhere warm and I am here and it is snowing. So tropical places, or anywhere in Europe.

Relaxation: I love hammock pictures. It makes me wish I could do that right now.

Selfies: Selfies are stupid. I think there is a limit to the amount of selfies that should be taken. If you are doing a selfie on vacation, that is fine, you can see where they are, but if it's just your face going to lunch, for example, it's unnecessary.

Interview 5
Wendy
24 years old
Graduate

Tell me about one of your positive posts?

The last one was when my baby started to crawl.

Why?

It was a big milestone, a big thing for her, and I just wanted everybody to see that she did that. We got quite a few likes on that one.

How did you feel?

I like when we get likes, especially when it's about the baby, I guess it is like showing her off, and we always get a lot of likes. If she didn't get a lot of likes, it was almost being offensive, because I feel like I am showing her off, I want people to like.

What do you think that a like represent?

When I like I find it interesting, or funny, but sometimes there are the obligatory likes, to family members. I have a cousin who has a 3 year old son, so she always likes my baby's pictures and I always like her little boy's pictures. So I feel like I need to like it.

Could you graduate and not post that?

I could but I won't. But usually when is a big event, I let people post for me and tag me. When my baby was born, for example, I didn't want to look that I was posting instead of taking care of her. Graduation I would feel that I will bragging about myself, so I would ask my husband to take the picture and post it for me. When we got married I didn't post either, people at our wedding took pictures and tagged us.

Do you see more positive or more negative?

More happy. I see both, and a lot of day to day, nobody cares about. But more positive.

Why do you think people post the happy events?

We posted when we got married, when got engaged, when the baby was born. We say it's because we want people to know, but I guess it is also because we are proud of something, like "we are proud of this baby, look at her". Facebook is being around since I was in highschool, so it is in our heads that is not legit until it is on Facebook. But that only applies for the good things, because we don't want to emphasize the bad. It is a "look, this is what is going on, I am proud of that", but the bad... no. For example, sometimes during my daughter doctor's appointment, we always post that she is doing well, but then yesterday we got some bad news so we didn't post anything, we didn't share that, we stayed away from Facebook. We don't want to amplify the bad, but when it is good we want to share and brag about.

How do you think that Facebook portrays real life?

I think people just post the happy things. But sometimes what you post is happy, but everything around it is not. For example, when we posted pictures of my daughter crawling for the first time, it looked like we were having a great time in our house, but

really my husband and I were fighting all night. I think that Facebook make people believe that everybody is having these happy lives, that is what I think when I look at my newsfeed, that my friends are having this great time, but maybe everything around them when they posted was not as positive as they presented.

Do you think Fb can be competitive?

Yes, I have a lot of Fb friends who have babies, so maybe when they post something about these babies I post something about my baby. I don't know if I mean to, but I feel like I have to compare.

Have you felt unsatisfied?

Yes, when I was in a job that I didn't like and there where people posting they were getting new jobs, leading me to believe I was the only one stuck in a job I didn't like. So I was seeing pictures of people buying a house, getting married, getting these jobs, and I was not making much money, and I was always thinking "why is it working for everybody else, but not for me?".

Have you ever felt jealous of a post?

Yes, it ties with the dissatisfaction.

Before I had a baby, I used to be really annoyed with the posts. I use to complain about my newsfeed, filled with people having babies and getting married, and then I had a baby, and those are the things I post.

Have you ever felt your friends are having more exciting lives?

Yes, but I felt that more before I had a baby.

Engagements: Used to annoy me when I would see this before I got engaged. I felt that everybody has to see a picture of the ring. And I felt like everyone else was getting married and having kids. After I got engaged, it changed my way of thinking, because I was the one posting that.

Thanks and blessings: it depends on what they are thankful for, but I saw a girl who posted "God is so good, I am so thankful, I saved 2\$ on my cellphone plan", I thought it was the most ridiculous post I have ever seen. But if it's Thanksgiving, birthdays, New Year's, than yes.

Grades: I like people who post that, because I feel they actually have something worth bragging about, instead of just posting what they are making for dinner that night. So I can relate to it.

Parties: This annoys me now, but in college, the first time, I used to like these pictures, because I used to go out. Now my reality is different, I feel like this is part of the past now.

Shopping: We post when we bought a new car. It depends where I am at in my life. Before I got my new car, I would been kind of jealous, but now that I got a new car I don't care.

Trips: It annoys me, I have in laws in Florida, and they post pictures and that annoys me. Relaxation: I kind of like pictures of vacations. It's like being nosy, I think, especially if it is somewhere I want to go.

Selfies: It depends. That annoys me, if it is just a selfie of one person, but if it is a picture of a group of picture, ok. But if you are just taking a picture of yourself, unless you have a good reason to, than that would annoy me.

Interview 6

Janet

24 years old

Graduate

What do you see the most?

1. Trips 2. Food 3. Friends hanging out.

One of your positive post:

The latest trip to Europe, during Winter break. It was the most wonderful trip I could have in my life, with my boyfriend, and I posted photos. It was fun and beautiful.

Did you get many likes?

People gave positive feedbacks. I got many likes for those posts. I guess people liked because many people didn't experience something like this, and they probably thought it was cool.

Why did you post it?

Because it was an adventure, something really awesome and cool to me, and I thought it would be cool to other people too. It is a way to share your life.

How did you feel with the likes?

I liked very much, I kept tracking how many likes, and who liked. It is nice to see people liking your picture, and makes you want to share more.

What does a like represent?

I think that means that most of them want the life as mine, the life that I project on Facebook. And that is why I post, so people can think "oh, that is the life I want in the future".

Do you think represents real life?

I think as older as I get I don't post something that often, only important for me to share or for somebody to know, but when I was younger it was more my entire life.

Can you graduate and not post that?

No. laughs. Before Facebook I used to write on my diary, nowadays Facebook is my diary to record my experiences, and it is more fun.

Do you see more positive or more negative?

Happy things.

Why?

Like a diary too, you want to record the good things in your life and you don't want to remember the bad things, the bad you want to forget about it. You don't want to tell the world how sad you are, people don't want pity from people.

Do you believe it can be competitive?

Yes, definitely. It arouses in you some kind of emotions, like some people are getting a new job, and you feel like "damn, I am so miserable", because I am still a student, I don't earn money, so even if you turn that in a positive thing, I am going to be like that person, I am going to compete with that person secretly, or psychologically, or then you turn into a bad thing, "oh, I will never get something like that".

Have you ever felt jealous?

Yes, but if it is a really close person you feel happy for her.

More exciting lives?

Yes, some of them. I have a long distance relationship, so sometimes I see on Fb people with their partners next to them, or then with jobs, some of them are getting married, and I feel their lives look better. But if I were in their position, I would be envy of me, a student living abroad.

Engagements: I like them, because it is happy and I want that, it is a very important milestone in life.

Thanks and blessings: some of them touch me. That reminds me to feel thankful, but if I don't really like the people I just think "you are just fake".

Grades: Yes, you would just see the good grades. I just click like without too much thinking.

Parties: oh, parties! It depends of my mood at the moment, if I am miserable, like now, because I haven't been to the bars this semester because of my thesis, so if people are drinking I just want to beat the hell out of them. But in my first semester in Pitt I partied a lot so I used to like the pictures, and feel happy for who was posting.

Shopping: Nice, I don't feel much, because I don't drive here, and in Taiwan you don't need a car, so a car for me doesn't represent very much.

Trips: I used to look at a lot of pictures, and look at all of them, nowadays I just click like and don't care much. If it is a friend I would be happy for them posting this, but if I don't know them very much I feel a bit jealous.

Relaxation: this is great, I feel like I want something like this right now.

Selfies: if they are pretty I like them, is that superficial? I like if they are my friends.

Interview 7

Zach

26 years old

Senior

What do you see the most?

Achievements like I did good on my tests and I kicked ass in scrabble. People hanging out together. Grandmas with their grandkids, I have a lot of old ladies on my Facebook one of your positive posts?

I went to Korea and to NY.

Why?

More to see if there was anybody there to hang out. And to show to some people.

What does a like represent?

It is a “I approve” or “I read what you posted” or “I like what you just said”

Graduate and not post?

Yes, because people will post and tag me. I don’t post very much.

Why people post the positive?

I see that a lot in sorority girls, “having such a blessed day with this woman in my life”, and I am “ok, we get it, you don’t have to do such a dramatically post every time”. I get annoyed because they post too much, not just because they want to show they are happy.

Can be competitive?

I can see how that is. Facebook is the new version of call everyone. It is a way to showing of. “I got engaged, let me tell everyone”.

Jealous?

Beaches and food. When people post that is torture for me.

More exciting?

Sometimes, like last Spring Break, at the beach, learning at the sun, and I was here in Pittsburg, looking outside the window.

Do you see more negative or positive posts?

Mostly funny stuff than things that bothers them. If I had to rank I would say first someone complaining about something, sharing an article and complaining, and after that we have “I had a wonderful day seeing my family”, or “oh my God, my boyfriend proposed”, then birthdays.

How do happy posts make you feel?

Depending on the person I tend to be happy for them, if it’s someone I know, “good for them”. But usually since most of them are engagement posts of usually young people my reaction is usually “God damn it, seriously?”, because I don’t think it’s a good thing. But when is someone being dramatic about how happy they are, I get annoyed too. Usually if it’s a silly happy post, “I had a fun day”, if they are American i tend to get annoyed, but if

they are internationals like me then I get happy. But maybe I am jealous because I am far away from my family, I don't know.

Why do people post happy events on Facebook?

So instead of calling everyone you just tell people in a faster way. It's a good way of share major things to people we lost touch with. I think we want everybody to know what's going on in our lives, because we think we are that important. I think as a photo album.

Have you ever felt sad about your life because of other people's posts?

Mostly about marriages, but not about my own life, but life in general when I see people who are really young and are getting engaged, that annoys me. It feels sad, because it's too early when you haven't even graduated and you decided to focus your life on making someone happy.

Do you think that Facebook represents real life?

It's more like showing only what you want to share, nobody shares everything. People look for likes, it's annoying. Once, I saw a guy bragging of how many liked he got it from a picture, and I was like "dude, that's just a picture of you with a towel". Likes doesn't really count, people sometimes feel obligated to like a picture

Engagements: nice nails. It bothers me if it is a young person, because it is throwing her life away, and the proposal pictures annoy me too, why can't you just enjoy the moment by yourselves?

Thanks and blessings: Thanksgiving and Christmas doesn't bother me, but if it's just a regular day and if it is the same person constantly... I understand gratefulness but she can't be thankful for every person in her life.

Grades: if you see "I probably did bad on a test is just because people want to hear that they did well. They are just trying to lower what they think their effort deserves. If I see good grades I feel good for you, unless I don't like the person.

Parties: sometimes I feel oh they are all meeting there and I am not.

Shopping: you shouldn't be taking a picture of your car. I feel weird, because I grew up with my mom not wanting us to show off. They should show to people close to them, not post it on Fb.

Trips: I get jealous if it is a place I want to go

Relaxation: torture, I want to be there.

Selfies: I like those, because I commit the crime of selfie too. It is nice to see people's faces, but what comes with the selfie, if it's like a quote, "patience is a virtue", for example, that annoys me.

Interview 8

Kim

21 years old

Sophomore

What do you see the most?

Engagements is huge right now. Jokes are another, like funny stories or puns or whatever. And graduation stuff is starting to pop up a lot now too

One of your posts?

I posted when I got a ticket to a show I really wanted.

Did you get likes?

A few.

How did make you feel?

It is cool, it is interesting to see who likes it, I like t see who likes, not just numbers, than You see you haven't talked to the person in years but he liked your post.

What does a like represent?

I only like things that I actually think is very interesting.

Can you graduate and not post that?

Probably not. And my family will post a lot, and tag me. my mom would be posting a month in advance, my baby is graduating.

Why do you think people post happy events?

People tend to stay away from sadness and focusing on the positive of life, That is pretty common. And they would talk about it in person about the sad parts, but they don't want to broadcast everywhere that they are sad, they prefer people to see that they are happy and suffer on the inside.

More happy or sad on FB?

Happy and funny things.

How portrays real life?

It doesn't, people just show the positive, they want people to see that they are happy, only Post things that make them look good and happy.

Can be competitive?

Sometimes. They like to say what is going on, but don't like to say what is bad.

Have you ever felt jealous?

50% of my friends list is engaged or married, with kids, or then graduating and I am so jealous! I still have a year and a half to graduate, and that makes things worst. What makes even worst is that I have younger relatives and they are graduating before me.

More exciting lives?

No. except from one who is studying abroad in Paris right now.

Engagements: I look at the ring more than anything. But then I see the proposal's pictures and I love it.

Thanks and blessings: they make me really irritated. It is thrown in your face constantly and I get that you are thankful and blessed but I don't need to know that every day.

Grades: good for them, good job, doesn't really matter.

Parties: it makes me laugh. I hate the sorority pictures, with the poses, hugging each other with the foot up, these pre party photos I can't stand them. Before I turn 21 it used to look fun, and I wished I was there, but now I don't care anymore.

Shopping: I hate it, especially when people name their cars.

Trips: I live looking at the pictures and I think "I will get there one day", but at the same time is "but it's not today".

Relaxation: feet are stupid, why posting a picture of your foot. But the view pictures are cute.

Selfies: it depends on the selfie and person, you see a person doing a topless selfie in bed like this and you think "really?"

Interview 9
Logan
20 years old
Junior

What do you see the most?

Parties, love demonstrations, and trips.

Your positive posts?

When I posted that I was coming to study in the US. I got a lot likes. People like these posts a lot, or then when I post with my boyfriend.

Why post it?

Because I wanted people to know.

How did the likes make you feel?

Happy, because a lot of people showed interest for me.

What do you think it represents?

I hope it means they are happy for me.

Can you graduate and not post?

Never thought about that. I would probably post something, to show everybody how happy I am.

Why ppl post the good stuff?

You don't want people to see you are miserable, they just want people to see how happy you are.

More happy or negative?

I see more complaints, and then how much everything is wonderful, exaggerating. I know because it is usually the same people, and you can't be that thrilled all the time.

What are the gratifications?

Accomplishment. It is like that story: if the tree falls in the forest, and nobody is there to hear it, does it make a sound? So people knowing what you did and what you accomplished make it more worthy.

How portrays real life?

Only the good parts, it doesn't show what you have been through to get there, how much you had to work on before getting in that place. Like graduation, you didn't post that it took you another semester and you had to pay again, because you didn't pass a class, for example.

Competitive?

I can see that, but I don't care that much for Facebook. But attention whores exist.

Unsatisfied?

yes, not majoring insatisfaction, but I see all the people at the beach and I am here, I feel I could be somewhere else. But I don't get too upset, good for him, bad for me. For me, it is temporary.

More exciting lives?

No

Jealous?

2 weeks ago a friend got engaged, I felt really happy for him but at the same time reminded me I want to get engaged and makes me more anxious.

Engagements: I feel I want to rush my life to get into that place too.

Thanks and blessings: I like these. if it is a close person I feel happy, but if it is someone who post that every week saying that everything is wonderful, then I just think “oh, you want to pull that again? you want to show that so much?”.

Grades: I feel they are trying to show off, to show how smart they are. I don't mind seeing these posts, because I used to do it too. Because I wanted people to know I was doing well and getting good grades. You don't want them to know how bad things are going.

Parties: those posts make me a little bit jealous. If I am not out and everybody is posting pictures it makes me angry because I am not there and I wanted to be.

Shopping: feel happy for them, if it is something major like a car or a house, but a phone, you should not be posting something, it is just a phone. Facebook is to share the major stuff, not everything that happens to you.

Trips: I tend to feel happy for them, because they are getting more experiences and to know the world, and I want to do that too.

Relaxation: it bothers me, because it is Spring Break and *everybody* is there and I am not, because I couldn't travel. I don't feel jealous, I feel bad at myself for not being there too.

Selfies: I don't really care, unless the person post too much then I don't like it.

Interview 10
Robert
26 years old
Freshman

what do you see the most?

Friends, parties and trips.

your own post?

I went to California, it was one of my happiest posts, last Summer.

Why?

I just post to show my parents and friends that I was having fun. I got a lot of likes. I felt nice, felt happy when I saw so many people liking my post, I don't know exactly why, I just enjoyed.

What does a like represent?

I've never thought about it. I don't know. Maybe it represents that they enjoy what I am doing that moment.

Can you graduate and not post that?

I would feel bad if I could not post it. Because it is an important moment of my life and I want to share with my friends. Not to make them jealous, but to show them what I am doing and that is a nice side of my life.

More positive or negative?

Positive, for sure.

Why?

People like to see happiness, nobody likes to see what is not happy. Nobody likes to see I am sad, I think people look for happiness and good stuff on Facebook.

Real life?

No, not at all. Just a part of a life, not real life. We are not always partying, always happy, always traveling. Most of the time we are working, we are worried, but we don't want to share this to everybody.

Competitive?

Part of people are trying to show someone that they are in a better situation than them.

More exciting lives? Jealous?

no. at that moment, they are having fun, and that is nice, but I never felt jealous or thought they are having better lives.

engagements: I feel happy, because I know it is an important moment for who is posting.

shopping: I don't know, I would not post that, it makes no sense.

parties: that is nice, I always post that. I feel normal. I would like the post.

relaxing: jealous. that is nice, I wish I could be there.

trips: I don't feel jealous, I know they are having their time to travel, I had mine, and I will have mine. I wanted to be there too, but it is not like I don't want them to be there.

thankful: it is nice, because sometimes when they are posting pictures they are just showing off, and with these posts they post what they are really feeling.

grades: that sucks. People are just trying to show off. You would never see people posting a bad grade, if this same person got a bad grade in a class, he would never post that. That is why it sucks.

selfie: I am a selfie guy, but not alone, in a group. It doesn't bother me. I like selfies, especially when people are having fun.