

# **The Influence of Facebook Usage on Perceptions of Social Support, Personal Efficacy, and Life Satisfaction**

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*This research focused on: 1) The impact of Facebook usage on perceptions of social support, and 2) the relationship between Facebook usage, social support, and efficacy in predicting life satisfaction. Our findings showed that social support as perceived by Facebook users was significantly higher for face-to-face friends, for three types of social support (emotional, informational, and instrumental). Also, the greater the number of hours spent on Facebook, the more social support was perceived from both face-to-face and Facebook friends. Only goal efficacy and interpersonal control had a significant relationship with life satisfaction. Implications for organizational leaders are discussed.*

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AT WORK**

The impact of positive relationships at work and effective support networks in nonwork relationships on overall life satisfaction is well established (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Barsade, 2002; Diener, Biswas-Diener, 2002). However, with the explosion of social media usage there is little understanding of how it impacts the formation and maintenance of relationships both at work and at home (Aaker & Smith, 2010; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have all impacted choices about how individuals spend their time and interact with others (everyday over 175 million people worldwide log on to Facebook); how organizations engage employees and customers (to “Like Me” on Facebook); and politics (the election of Barack Obama in 2008). The full range of possible uses of social media to drive change and impact how we interact with each other personally and professionally continues to expand (Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001). Social media has created the possibility to exchange information and establish relationships with people across the globe that we might never have had the opportunity to meet and interact with in the past.

Researchers are just beginning to investigate the significance of using frequent use of social media on relationships, communications, and the ability to facilitate change (Doyle, 2008; Kramer, 2010; Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011). Anecdotal examples highlighted in the media include positive effects (i.e., networking to increase job opportunities) and negative impacts (i.e., use of Facebook to bully and

“stack”). The impact of social media on expanding relationships and how individuals experience social support and overall satisfaction with their lives was the focus of the present research. We also investigated the relationship between the use of Facebook and perceptions of personal/interpersonal efficacy and overall satisfaction with life. Given the amount of time that individuals spend on social media each day, we wanted to further examine the impact on the type and quality of support the is perceived in these relationships when compared to traditional face-to-face interactions.

### **Types of Social Support**

Healthy social relationships are essential to help individuals feel embedded in a social network that allows them to effectively address the most mundane problems (i.e. What should we do on Saturday night?) to the most complex (i.e., how to deal with the stress and pain that results from the loss of a loved one; displacement from work; economic stress caused by un/underemployment). Research has shown that *positive* social relationships help individuals cope with a variety of stresses that they face (Barrera, 1986; Carroll & Landry, 2010; Glew, 2009; Lin, 1999; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). This research, however, is grounded in understanding relationships in which people have had some face-to-face contact and interactions with those providing the support. When using social media, there often are people who are “friends” or are sharing information/opinions with others whom have never met face-to-face, and may never interact with each other in the traditional way that friends would have prior to the explosion of social media usage.

The traditional operational definition proposed by House (1981) social support is an interpersonal transaction in which one can rely on others for information, help, and advice. In House’ conceptualization, social support has multiple dimensions. *Emotional support* is showing others that you care about them, have empathy for their situation/problem, trust and respect them, and even love them. Research shows that this is the most important and often researched form of social support (Carroll & Landry, 2010; Cobb, 1976; Gottlieb, 1983). *Instrumental support* is perceived when others provide specific help or assistance to others. This dimension can include taking care of others, helping them complete tasks or activities that need to be done, or lending them money. The third dimension, *information support* occurs when information is shared with others to help them address a problem, make a decision, or cope with a stressful situation. Information support is conceptually different from instrumental support in that by providing it, the information helps the person help him/herself. Each of these three types of support (emotional, instrumental, and informational) are interrelated and often are linked in complex ways in relationships with others. Individuals need each type of social support to help them feel embedded in a social context and connected to others in a positive way.

Given that millions of people who invest hours each day on social media such as Facebook, it is clear that some needs are being met, but what type of social impact it has on friendships is unclear and speculative. The question posed in this research project focuses on the types of social support given by face-to-face friends compared to the types of social support provided by friends on Facebook. Previous research has demonstrated that spending time on Facebook can create both a feeling of connectedness AND a feeling of disconnectedness (Sheldon et al, 2011). Thus, in this research one of our goals was to deepen our understanding of the impact of spending time on Facebook by looking more closely at the perceptions of the *type* of support experienced with Facebook friends. We posited that using the conceptual framework of social support types (House, 1981) may offer further explanation for the paradox that Sheldon et al (2011) found that use of Facebook resulted in both feelings of connectedness with and disconnectedness from others. Also, understanding the type of social support that is perceived with Facebook friends can assist organizational leaders in understanding the impact of such social media and possibly assist in setting policies and clarifying how and when social media, such as Facebook, can be used at work to facilitate positive relationships at work.

*Research Question 1:* Are their differences in the type of social support (emotional, informational, and instrumental) that individuals perceive from face-to-face friends compared to friends on Facebook? What is the relationship between the perceptions of social support received from Facebook friends and expressed behavioral intention to continue to use Facebook in the future?

## **Social Support, Efficacy, and Life Satisfaction: The Impact of Social Media**

When building and maintaining relationships with others, particularly in professional and work contexts, one factor individuals often consider is how others can help them achieve their goals. Developing a large social network and expanding one's social capital have been found to be related to the ability to achieve important life goals: making friends, admission to colleges, access to job interviews, and personal educational experiences (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Luthans et al, 2007). While "what you know" is important in terms of achieving goals, "who you know" can have a significant impact on one's ability to achieve important goals by providing information, access and other valuable "connections"..

Building social capital and expanding social support are related to one's personal efficacy and the interpersonal impact. Personal efficacy is the belief in one's ability to engage in activities and activate processes which positively contribute to one's ability to achieve specific goals or valued outcomes (Paulhus, 1983; Paulhus & Christie, 1981). Positive interpersonal impact develops through having experiences with a wide range of people and varied interactions with others in different contexts. Through these experiences, individuals have the opportunity to learn how to adjust their behavior to optimize their impact on others in social situations. Sandler and Lakey (1982), for example, found that having an internal locus of control (a belief that one has the ability to make a specific impact in a situation or when interacting with others) led to receiving more social support from others. Those individuals, who believed that they had the ability to achieve goals that were important to them and were perceived as effective when interacting with a wide range of people, were able to establish a large social support network and more frequently met their goals (Sandler & Lakey, 1982). Individuals who have more personal efficacy and make a positive interpersonal impact may also be the ones who reach out to others more frequently now using social media to build, expand, and maintain their relationships with others. This relationship though has not yet been assessed to understand the relationship between Facebook usage and personal efficacy.

Individuals who report the highest levels of happiness, also more often experience meaning and purpose in their lives (Kabanoff, 1980; Sheldon et al, 2011). In addition, happiness has a multiplier effect. Through the process of emotional contagion, Lakin and Chartrand (2003) found that others are "infected" by the feelings that they perceive in others. Therefore, those who are experiencing happiness are more likely to have a positive impact on others' happiness (Barsade, 2002; Neumann & Strack, 2000; Sy, Cote, & Saavedra, 2005). Similarly, social media could create this multiplier effect related to the sheer number of people who use it daily and the amount of time that people invest posting information about themselves and events that are occurring. The information individuals post has the potential to create positive emotions in others and accelerate the impact of positive change (Aaker & Smith, 2010). Posting and sharing positive information could provide informational social support that would facilitate other's efficacy and ability to achieve goals that are important to them.

*Research Question 2:* What is the relationship among social support, use of Facebook, personal efficacy, and interpersonal control? What is the impact of social support (from face-to-face friends and Facebook friends), personal efficacy, and interpersonal efficacy on overall life satisfaction (e.g. feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment through being with friends)?

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Surveys were completed by 218 participants who were undergraduate and graduate students at a private university in southern California. A total of 178 respondents were Facebook users and thus completed the "I'm a Facebook user" long version of the survey, while 40 non-Facebook users completed the "I'm not a Facebook user" shorter version of the survey. The participants in the study were almost evenly divided by gender (50.8% men) and degree program (53.8% graduate, full time working students). The ethnic distribution of the participants was 34.8% Caucasian, 4.5% African American, 25.8% Hispanic, and 22.2% Asian.

## Procedures

The authors distributed questionnaires during business classes to students who were willing to participate. Students were given an informed consent letter which described the purpose of the research project, types of questions they would answer, and a guarantee of their anonymity. Participants did not write their name on the questionnaire and only general demographic data were gathered. There were two versions of the questionnaire, one for individuals who used Facebook regularly (49 items) and one for those individuals who did not currently or who never have used Facebook (22 items).

## Measures

In the "I'm a Facebook User" version of the survey, participants were asked of their frequency of weekly Facebook usage (less than 1 hour, 1 - 3 hours, 3 - 5 hours, 5 - 8 hours, 8 - 10 hours, or more than 10 hours). The participants then continued to answer questions on how they have used Facebook and to what extent their friends on Facebook have shown certain friendship behaviors. Most questions used a five-point response scale anchored by either "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (5) or "not at all" (1) and "to a very great extent" (5). The participants rated the type of social support they received from their friends (Instrumental, Emotional, and Informational), how they interact with others in social situations, their personal and interpersonal efficacy, current life satisfaction, and finally their intentions to continue to use Facebook to connect with their friends. In the last section of the survey, participants were asked two open-ended questions referring to the "three most important" reasons why they are on Facebook or "three reasons why they do not spend much time on Facebook".

In the "I'm not a Facebook User" version of the survey, the questions that focused on face-to-face social support, efficacy, and life satisfaction were identical to the questions on the "I'm a Facebook User" survey. Questions on Facebook usage, how they have used Facebook, and to what extent their friends on Facebook have shown certain friendship behavior were deleted from this 22 item survey for non-Facebook users. The open-ended question referring to the "three most important reasons why they are on Facebook" were also removed.

Facebook Usage was a 6-item measure ( $\alpha = .70$ ) derived from Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) used to measure the ways in which participants used Facebook. An example item was, "I have used Facebook to check out someone I met socially". Social Support was a 9-item scale, which has three dimensions of three items each measuring Emotional (e.g., listened to my feelings and concerns; Facebook  $\alpha = .76$ ; Face-to-face  $\alpha = .88$ ), Informational (e.g., given me information to help me understand a situation I was in; Facebook  $\alpha = .85$ ; Face-to-face  $\alpha = .90$ ), and Instrumental (e.g., pitched in to help me do something that needed to get done, Facebook  $\alpha = .66$ ; Face-to-face  $\alpha = .86$ ) social support (Barrera, Ramsey, & Sandler, 1981).

Personal Efficacy was based on the research of Paulhus (1983). This scale has two subdimensions, Goal Efficacy (3-items,  $\alpha = .72$ , e.g., I can learn almost anything if I set my mind to it) and Interpersonal Efficacy (3-items,  $\alpha = .63$ , e.g., I have no trouble making and keeping friends). Life Satisfaction was assessed by modifying scale items from Liang (1984). This 6-item scale ( $\alpha = .71$ ) included items such as, "I am just as happy now as when I was younger". A 3-item Facebook Behavioral Intention scale (e.g., I will connect with my Facebook friends sometime during the next 2 weeks,  $\alpha = .79$ ) and a 4-item Facebook Outcomes scale (e.g., Facebook has increased the number of friends that I have,  $\alpha = .85$ ) were also measured for the Facebook users.

## RESULTS

Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the study variables. As can be seen in Table 1, the relationship between the Facebook Use variable was significantly correlated with the perceived levels of all three forms of Facebook social support at the  $p < .01$  level, but only face-to-face levels of emotional social support were significant at the  $p < .05$  level. Hours of Facebook use per week again correlated at the  $p < .01$  level for all three forms of Facebook social support, but at  $p < .01$  for

informational face-to-face social support,  $p < .05$  for instrumental face-to-face social support, and non-significantly with emotional face-to-face social support.

**TABLE 1**  
**CORRELATION MATRIX**

Variables	Mean	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Facebook use	2.81	1.49	.198**	.046	-.031	.159*	.146	.092	.333**	.255**	.235**	.419**	.234**	.009
2. Hrs of FB / week	2.88	.76		.037	-.059	.123	.207**	.163*	.420**	.417**	.414**	.454**	.590**	-.084
3. Interper Efficacy	3.61	.67			.438*	.101	.075	.076	.086	.068	.022	.103	.046	.281**
4. Goal Efficacy	4.13	.57				.062	.018	-.020	-.033	-.074	-.127	.075	-.107	.337**
5. SS1FtoF	3.70	1.09					.689**	.731**	.410**	.239**	.221**	.332**	.043	.117
6. SS2FtoF	3.41	1.07						.773**	.378**	.335**	.314**	.240**	.139	.040
7. SS3FtoF	3.26	1.11							.281**	.241**	.365**	.238**	.120	.043
8. SS1FB	3.08	.93								.569**	.559**	.469**	.402**	.069
9. SS2FB	2.53	.96									.661**	.359**	.441**	.078
10. SS3FB	2.39	.81										.300**	.413**	.079
11. FB Beh Intentions	3.86	.78											.439**	.129
12. FB Outcomes	2.87	.85												-.112
13. Life Satisfaction	3.83	.61												

**Note:** SS1FtoF = Emotional Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS2FtoF = Informational Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS3FtoF = Instrumental Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS1FB = Emotional Social Support Facebook Friends; SS2FB = Informational Social Support Facebook Friends; SS3FB = Instrumental Social Support Facebook Friends.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

In order to determine if the mean level of social support was different for Facebook versus face-to-face friends, paired samples t-tests were conducted for Facebook users. As can be seen in Table 2, the mean level of social support for all three types of support (emotional, informational, and instrumental) was significantly higher for face-to-face friends compared to Facebook friends. The effect sizes for these differences ranged from small ( $\eta^2 = .25$  for emotional support) to moderate ( $\eta^2 = .40$  for instrumental support). Interestingly, ordering of the mean levels of types of social support were the same for Facebook and face-to-face friends, with emotional social support being the highest, informational social support the second highest, and instrumental social support the lowest. However, no significant differences were found in the levels of face-to-face social support reported for Facebook and non-Facebook users in terms of their perceived level of social support across all three types of social support.

**TABLE 2**  
**PAIRED SAMPLES T-TESTS COMPARING SOCIAL SUPPORT FROM FACEBOOK AND FACE-TO-FACE FRIENDS FOR FACEBOOK USERS (N=178)**

Social Support	Facebook		Face-to-face		Paired t-test	$\eta^2$
	Mean	Std	Mean	Std		
Emotional	3.07	0.93	3.72	1.12	7.66**	.25
Informational	2.53	0.96	3.47	1.09	10.50**	.38
Instrumental	2.39	0.81	3.31	1.12	10.98**	.40

\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3 displays the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses for predicting Facebook Behavioral Intentions. As can be seen in Table 3, the control variables of the number of hours of Facebook use per week and the Facebook use scale were entered in model 1. This resulted in a significant  $R^2$  of .323. Both hours of Facebook use per week and the Facebook use scale were statistically significant

predictors of the Facebook Behavioral Intentions, with the latter being the stronger of the two predictors. In model 2, the interpersonal and goal efficacy scales were entered. The change in  $R^2$  was nonsignificant ( $\Delta R^2 = .017$ ). For model 3, the three face-to-face social support measures were added. The change in  $R^2$  was significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .058$ ). However, only emotional social support was a significant individual predictor of Facebook Behavioral Intentions. Finally, in model 4 the three Facebook social support measures were added. This again resulted in a significant change in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = .038$ ). Both the emotional social support and informational social support face-to-face were marginally significant ( $p < .10$ ) predictors of Facebook Behavioral Intentions, while emotional social support on Facebook was significant at  $p < .05$ . The results in tables 1 – 3 shows that face-to-face and Facebook friends provide all three types of social support (at different levels) and that receiving this support from Facebook friends is related to the intention to continue to use Facebook in the future.

**TABLE 3**  
**SUMMARY OF HIERARCHIAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR PREDICTING FACEBOOK BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS (N =178)**

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	SE B	$\beta$									
Hours	.17**	.03	.32	.16**	.03	.32	.15**	.03	.28	.12**	.03	.24
FB Use	.43**	.07	.41	.43**	.07	.42	.43**	.07	.42	.34**	.07	.34
Interpersonal Efficacy				.04	.09	.03	.07	.09	.05	.03	.09	.03
Goal Efficacy				.14	.09	-.09	.12	.09	.09	.15†	.09	.12
SS1FtoF							.23**	.07	.34	.15†	.08	.22
SS2FtoF							-.10	.08	-.14	-.15†	.08	-.21
SS3FtoF							-.01	.08	-.02	.06	.09	.08
SS1FB										.18*	.07	.22
SS1FB										.08	.07	.10
SS1FB										-.07	.09	-.07
$R^2$	.323			.340			.398			.436		
Adj $R^2$	.314			.323			.370			.398		
$\Delta R^2$	.323			.017			.058			.038		
F for $\Delta R^2$	38.15*			2.07			4.94*			3.41*		

† $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

**Note:** SS1FtoF = Emotional Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS2FtoF = Informational Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS3FtoF = Instrumental Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS1FB = Emotional Social Support Facebook Friends; SS2FB = Informational Social Support Facebook Friends; SS3FtoF = Instrumental Social Support Facebook Friends.

Table 4 displays the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses for predicting Facebook Outcomes. As can be seen in Table 4, the control variables of the number of hours of Facebook use per week and the Facebook use scale were entered in model 1. This results in a significant  $R^2$  of .347. However, only the Facebook use scale was a statistically significant predictor of the Facebook outcomes variable. In model 2, the interpersonal and goal efficacy scales were entered. The change in  $R^2$  was nonsignificant ( $\Delta R^2 = .007$ ). For model 3, the three face-to-face social support measures were added. Again, the change in  $R^2$  was not significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .003$ ). Finally, in model 4 the three Facebook social support measures were added. This did result in a significant change in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = .046$ ). However, none of the individual Facebook social support measures were statistically significant.

**TABLE 4**  
**SUMMARY OF HIERARCHIAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR**  
**PREDICTING FACEBOOK OUTCOMES (N =178)**

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	SE B	$\beta$									
Hours	.06	.04	.10	.05	.04	.09	.05	.04	-.03	.02	.04	.04
FB Use	.64**	.07	.56	.63**	.07	.56	.62**	.08	.04	.50**	.08	.44
Interpersonal Efficacy				.09	.10	.07	.08	.10	-.87	.05	.10	.04
Goal Efficacy				-.13	.10	-.09	-.13	.10	-.03	-.08	.10	-.06
SS1FtoF							-.04	.09	.30	-.07	.09	-.09
SS2FtoF							.05	.09	.30	-.00	.09	-.00
SS3FtoF							.01	.09	.30	.02	.10	.03
SS1FB										.10	.08	.11
SS1FB										.12	.08	.13
SS1FB										.09	.10	.08
R <sup>2</sup>	.347			.354			.357			.403		
Adj R <sup>2</sup>	.338			.337			.327			.363		
$\Delta$ R <sup>2</sup>	.347			.007			.003			.046		
F for $\Delta$ R <sup>2</sup>	42.16*			.89			.21			3.91*		

\*p<.05; \*\*p<.01

**Note:** SS1FtoF = Emotional Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS2FtoF = Informational Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS3FtoF = Instrumental Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS1FB = Emotional Social Support Facebook Friends; SS2FB = Informational Social Support Facebook Friends; SS3FtoF = Instrumental Social Support Facebook Friends.

Table 5 displays the hierarchical multiple regression results for predicting Life Satisfaction. As can be seen in Table 5, the control variables of number of hours of Facebook use per week and the Facebook use scale were entered in model 1. This resulted in a nonsignificant R<sup>2</sup> of .022. In model 2, the interpersonal and goal efficacy scales were entered. The change in R<sup>2</sup> was significant ( $\Delta$  R<sup>2</sup> = .147). Both interpersonal and goal efficacy were significant individual predictors of life satisfaction. For model 3, the three face-to-face social support measures were added. The change in R<sup>2</sup> was not significant ( $\Delta$  R<sup>2</sup> = .012). Finally, in model 4 the three Facebook social support measures were added. This again resulted in a nonsignificant change in R<sup>2</sup> ( $\Delta$  R<sup>2</sup> = .019). Thus, the result related to research question 2 showed that only goal and interpersonal efficacy were related to life satisfaction.

## DISCUSSION

Our first research question focused on Facebook's impact on three different types of perceived social support. Our findings suggest that the mean level of social support, perceived by Facebook users, was significantly higher for face-to-face friends, across all three types of social support. Additionally, a significant correlation was found between Facebook users and their offline activities. This finding reinforces the prior research (Glew, 2009; Luthans, et al, 2007; Seligman, 2002) which shows the importance of social support in personal and workplace relationships.

**TABLE 5**  
**SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION FOR PREDICTING LIFE SATISFACTION**  
**(N =178)**

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	SE B	β									
Hours	.01	.03	.02	.00	.03	.01	.00	.03	.00	-.01	.03	-.03
FB Use	-.12†	.06	-.15	-.11†	.06	-.13	-.11†	.06	-.13	-.16*	.07	-.19
Interpersonal Efficacy				.17*	.08	.17	.17*	.08	.17	.15†	.08	.16
Goal Efficacy				.27**	.08	.27	.27**	.08	.27	.29**	.08	.30
SS1FtoF							.03	.07	.06	.04	.07	.07
SS2FtoF							-.06	.07	-.11	-.07	.07	-.14
SS3FtoF							.07	.07	.13	.05	.08	.09
SS1FB										.02	.07	.02
SS1FB										.02	.07	.04
SS1FB										.10	.08	.13
R <sup>2</sup>	.022			.168			.181			.200		
Adj R <sup>2</sup>	.009			.147			.144			.148		
Δ R <sup>2</sup>	.022			.147			.012			.019		
F for Δ R <sup>2</sup>	1.77			14.04*			.77			1.23		

†p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01

**Note:** SS1FtoF = Emotional Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS2FtoF = Informational Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS3FtoF = Instrumental Social Support Face-to-face Friends; SS1FB = Emotional Social Support Facebook Friends; SS2FB = Informational Social Support Facebook Friends; SS3FtoF = Instrumental Social Support Facebook Friends.

These results contribute to the literature by demonstrating that while face-to-face friends offer higher levels of social support across all three types (emotional, informational, and instrumental), Facebook friends augment the support provided through all three types of social support (McMillan & Morrison, 2008; Procidano & Heller, 1983; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter & Espinoza, 2008). This result has implications for organizational leaders regarding how the use of Facebook impacts building and maintaining positive working relationships. However, this research should be extended to a full time employee sample to clarify our understanding of the generalizability of these results.

Organizational leaders need to be cautious in how they manage the use of Facebook and other social media to ensure that negative social encounters do not result, despite the manager’s good intentions to build relationships among coworkers. For example, “requiring” coworkers to become friends on Facebook would potentially cause significant problems for those employees who want to keep their private lives “private”. Using other social media such as Linked In and Twitter to share professional information (e.g. about job openings and new positions that become available when individuals are promoted), may be a more productive way to encourage coworkers to share information and provide support to each other, without blurring the lines between personal and professional information sharing. The key learning outcome from this result is that people are indeed looking for all three types of social support (emotional, informational, and instrumental), and investing time on Facebook does indeed fulfill some of the social support needs. Managers need to be aware of how to use social media and other approaches to facilitate social support among work colleagues to facilitate collaboration and positive working relationships without mandating that colleagues become Facebook Friends (if they do not want to be “friends”).

Additionally, participants who reported higher Facebook usage expressed that they were more likely to continue to use Facebook in the future. Specifically, participants scoring high on emotional social support were most likely to state that they intended to continue to use Facebook in the future when compared with the impact of information support and instrumental support. While causation cannot be inferred, the results indicate that active Facebook users tend to have a higher motivation to continue to use Facebook. Although studies have shown that active Facebook users can feel both greater connectedness and disconnectedness with their friends, those who were deprived of Facebook usage tended to engage in more Facebook activities after the deprivation period (Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011). Given this result, organizational leaders may want to consider the impact of policies that completely prohibit use of Facebook at work and explore alternatives that allow employees to interact with others, but within the work context and not solely to post pictures for family and friends. Again, using other social media tools, such as Linked In and Twitter, may provide other avenues to engage others in a professional social context and create a venue for sharing information to provide others to be successful in their work goals and projects. For example, information shared on Linked In about people who have recently received a promotion to a new job in the organization, will provide others with information on new job openings (e.g. the job that is now vacant due to the promotion the individual received) and may be shared more quickly than Human Resources Department can post it on the organizations' website.

For research question two, we explored the impact of social support, personal efficacy, and interpersonal control on overall life satisfaction, as well as Facebook Behavioral Intentions. Findings from the regression analyses suggest that Facebook related usage does not contribute to perceptions of personal efficacy and that staying connected with friends on Facebook does not lead to higher perceived satisfaction with their lives. However, we found that Facebook usage was a significant factor for predicting Facebook outcomes (e.g., I feel that my Facebook friends: 1) provide positive support and help to me, 2) would support me when I needed help, 3) improve the quality of friendships I have, and 4) increase the number of friends that I have). The results also showed that the greater the number of hours spent on Facebook, the higher the informational, instrumental, and emotional support those individuals perceived from their Facebook friends and the higher informational support they received from their face-to-face friends. Again, creative use of social media tools can contribute to individuals' ability to achieve their goals and gain access to information as well as enhance inclusion and embeddedness (Sheldon et al, 2011). Facebook has been masterful in creating the embeddedness feeling by tracking what friend are doing and the number of friends individuals have in their network. That basic human need to feel a part of something bigger than oneself is related to "having 458 friends" (Aaker & Smith, 2010). The key is to ensure that those friendships are meaningful and that technology is used to enhance social capital and does not result in technology based separation and loneliness that diminishes the social support that is provided by face-to-face friends. In this way, using social media in a positive way to facilitate work relationships can contribute to a positive organizational culture, through building and reinforcing strong collegial relationships and retention.

In our analysis, both goal and interpersonal efficacy were significantly related to perceptions of overall life satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research on efficacy (personal and interpersonal) and overall life satisfaction (Csikszentihalyi, 1990; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Gilbert, 2006; Kabanoff, 1980; Levenson, 1973; Procidano & Heller, 1983). While the other variables were nonsignificant in predicting life satisfaction, it may be that the use of Facebook and social support has a more complex and nuanced relationship with life satisfaction that needs to be assessed in future research (Wellman & Gulia, 1999; Yee, Bailenson, Urbanek, Chang, & Merget, 2007; Young, 2004). It is clear organizational leaders and individuals need to have a clearer understanding of these relationships as they consider how to invest their valuable time and energy to achieve important individual and organizational goals (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011).

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