

ONLINE APPENDIX A. PILOT STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the prevalence of posting about others. To do this, we asked participants to indicate whether their most recent Facebook posts contained other-relevant information such as photographs or videos, tags, or name mentions. In addition, we asked them to indicate whether their posts contained self-relevant information.

We also sought to investigate whether the language of posts containing other-references differed from that of posts without other-references. We have theorized that people may post about others to improve how they themselves or stakeholders are perceived. Given that positive information is associated with positive interpersonal outcomes (e.g., social approval; Barasch 2020), we therefore posited that posts with other-references might contain more positive language than those without other-references.

Method

We pre-registered (<https://aspredicted.org/9m45-8d28.pdf>) and requested 300 responses on Prolific. A total of 313 responses were returned.¹ One did not provide consent, 44 were screened out, and one was excluded from analysis (all criteria for screening and exclusion were pre-registered). This left a usable sample of 267 ($M_{\text{age}} = 39.64$, $SD = 11.03$; 65.5% female).

The two screening questions were, “Have you made at least 1 original post on Facebook in the past year? If you are not sure, please check now,” and “To participate in this study, you must be willing to log onto Facebook, look at a recent post, and provide information about it. Are you willing to log into Facebook and provide information about the post? (No personal identifiable information will be requested.)” For both questions the response options were, “Yes,” and “No.” Only those who responded “Yes” to both questions continued to the survey.

¹We requested that those who were screened out return their responses, which would open spaces for additional participants. Because some workers did this, more than 300 total responses were generated.

Participants read, “Now, please log onto Facebook and find your most recent original post. There is a slight delay to ensure this step is completed. Once you have identified this post, press the arrow to continue.” On the next page, participants indicated the date the post was made and answered an open-ended question, “In a few words, why did you make the post?”

Then participants read, “Are you pictured or tagged anywhere in the post?” (response options: Yes; No). They indicated through checkboxes all of the ways in which they were referenced (e.g., Photographs – I am pictured; Videos – I am tagged). Then, participants read, “Is any person other than you pictured or tagged in the post?” (response options: Yes; No) and indicated all of the ways in which other people were referenced (e.g., Photographs – another person(s) is pictured; Videos – another person(s) is tagged). Finally, participants provided age and gender, and answered the question, “Did you really log into Facebook and look at your most recent post? Please answer honestly. There is no penalty for answering, “No.”” (response options: Yes; No). One participant selected, “No.” As per the pre-registration, this participant’s responses to all questions were excluded from analysis.

Results

Following the pre-registration, we calculated the percentage of participants (46.1%) who selected “Yes” to the question, “Is any person other than you pictured or tagged in the post?” We then summed the number of options checked to create a continuous measure of other-references. Among those who answered “Yes” to the question, “Is any person other than you pictured or tagged in the post?” there were $M = 1.79$ ($SD = 1.07$) other-references. For the entire sample, there were $M = 0.81$ ($SD = 1.08$) other-references.

We calculated the percentage of participants (37.1%) who selected “Yes” to the question, “Are you pictured or tagged anywhere in the post?” We then summed the number of options checked to create a continuous measure of the number of self-references. Among those who answered “Yes” to the question, “Are you pictured or tagged anywhere in the post?” there were $M = 1.66$ ($SD = 1.08$) self-references. For the entire sample, there were $M = .77$ ($SD = 1.06$) self-references. For exploratory purposes,

we calculated the percentage of posts that included both other- and self-references (27.3%).

We coded posts according to whether they included other-references (1) or did not (0), and included self-references (1) or did not (0). We submitted the answers to the question, “In a few words, why did you make the post?” to analysis in the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) text analysis tool (Pennebaker et al. 2001). The focal measure of interest was positive tone (i.e., “tone_pos”). Then, we conducted a two-way analysis of variance with other-references and self-references as fixed factors, and measure of positive tone as the dependent variable.

Results showed that posts with (vs. without) other-references had more positive tone ($M_{\text{other references}} = 12.17$, $SD = 18.23$ vs. $M_{\text{no other references}} = 7.10$, $SD = 10.87$; $F(1, 263) = 6.40$, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$). This indicates that, on average, posts about others contained more words such as “good, well, new, love.” There was no evidence that posts with (vs. without) self-references differed in positive tone ($M_{\text{self references}} = 10.28$, $SD = 16.78$ vs. $M_{\text{no self references}} = 8.93$, $SD = 13.72$; $F(1, 263) = .21$, $p = .65$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$) and no evidence that the presence of other-references and self-references interacted to impact positive tone ($F(1, 263) = .11$, $p = .74$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$).

Discussion

This study sought to examine the prevalence of posting about others. Results showed that nearly half (46.1%) of participants’ recent posts contained other-references, for example in the form of photographs or tags. A smaller percentage of posts (37.1%) contained self-references. Text analysis revealed that posts with other-references used more positive language, including words such as good, well, and love. Results did not show differences on this dimension for posts with versus without self-references.

References

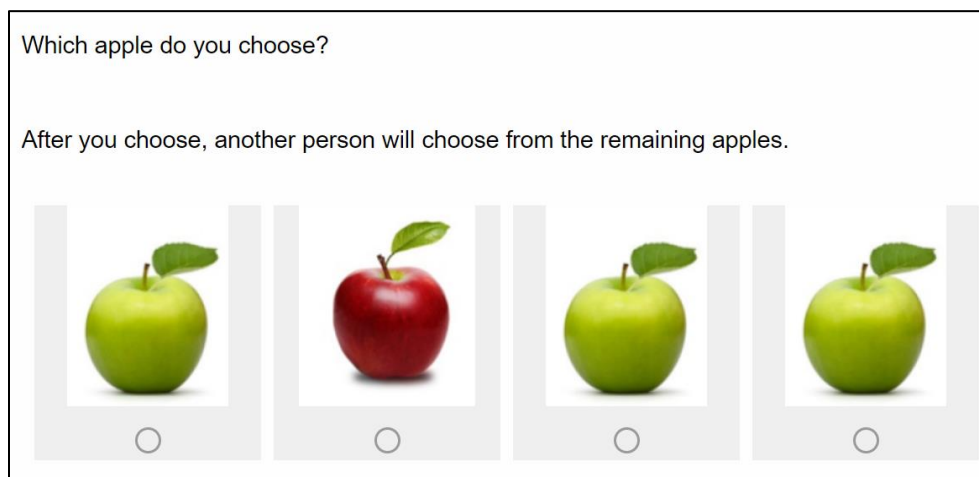
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ONLINE APPENDIX B. MEASURE OF SOCIAL MINDFULNESS

Participants read that they would see 15 sets of products. For each set, they were to imagine that they could choose any product they liked and keep it for themselves. After choosing, another person would then choose from the remaining options. This was specified to be a person they did not know and would not be likely to meet in the near future.

Participants viewed the 15 sets of products presented in random order. Ten measured social mindfulness. Each of those 10 sets consisted of two or three identical options and one unique option. For example, in one set of products, participants chose an apple (figure 1). Three of them were green, and one was red. Choosing one of the identical options (e.g., a green apple) is considered socially mindful because it affords the next person a choice between two different options. Choosing the unique option (e.g., the red apple) is considered not socially mindful because it leaves the next person without a meaningful choice. The other five sets of products were fillers included to obscure the purpose of the task. For these sets of products, participants' decisions would not impact the next person's choice (e.g., because all options were identical).

Figure 1. One set of products in the social mindfulness choice task.



Following the pre-registration, we formed a social mindfulness score by calculating the percentage of socially mindful choices made. Responses to the five filler questions in the product choice task were not analyzed.