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## ABSTRACT

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Although social comparison has been studied for over 60 years, little research has been done to determine the effects it has on the workplace. Moreover, the explosion of social networking sites and their potential impact on the workplace have been largely overlooked by organizational researchers. Therefore, this study will attempt to evaluate the effect social comparison, specifically through social media, has on work relevant outcomes such as one's job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and entitlement, moderated by materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability) of the referent other. Participants selected from an alumni database of a large Midwestern University were asked to view a manipulated Facebook newsfeed page and then complete a brief survey (N=290). A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to assess the hypotheses. Results, implications, and limitations are also discussed.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Social interactions occur daily, and from these interactions comparisons are made in order to determine one's relative standing, performance, and skills. This process is known as social comparison. Although Festinger (1954) proposed social comparison theory nearly 60 years ago, researchers have continued to take an interest in social comparison (Buunk, Groothof, & Siero, 2007; Greenberg, Ashton-James, & Ashkanasy, 2007; Taylor, Buunk, & Aspinwall, 1990; Wood, 1996). Social comparison is defined as the process of thinking about information about other people in relation to oneself (Wood, 1996). Social comparison has been found to occur both consciously and subconsciously, and very frequently (Wood, 1996). Although social comparisons are ingrained into the workplace through both planned activities such as performance evaluations and unplanned activities such as monitoring a co-workers response to determine appropriate social cues, few studies have actually investigated social comparison within organizations (Greenberg et al., 2007). Individuals engage in social comparisons in the workplace when they are attempting to evaluate the organization's fairness or justice, when determining one's value or self-worth to the organization, and when interpreting how to handle stressful situations (Greenberg et al., 2007).

In addition, social networking sites (SNS) are becoming an increasingly important research focus. For example, SNS can play an important role in organizations' recruiting

and selection of employees because information about the applicant is readily available to employers, recruiters, clients, and colleagues (Abril, Levin, & Del Riego, 2012). Despite the potential influence of SNS, little research has been done in regards to how it, specifically Facebook, influences work-related variables. With respect to social comparison, SNS provide people with a wide array of comparison targets, far more than they would come across in their everyday environment otherwise. As a result, SNS have the potential to increase the frequency and impact of social comparisons.

Therefore, the purpose of this thesis will be to investigate the phenomenon of social comparison through the lens of social media. Specifically, how social comparisons via social media, moderated by one's job expectations (attainability) and level of materialism (relevance), impact the work-relevant outcomes of employee entitlement, job satisfaction and life satisfaction will be tested. This thesis will propose that comparing oneself to others who are better off via social media will decrease overall job and life satisfaction when the goals are relevant, but not attainable and that this comparison will increase one's job and life satisfaction and level of entitlement when the success is believed to be attainable and relevant.

To achieve these goals, research on social comparison will first be reviewed. Then, research on social networking sites will be reviewed, and a theory linking the two will be presented. Finally, hypotheses will be developed based on the theory and research in social comparison and social media. The hypotheses will be tested in a sample of young adults randomly assigned to one of three conditions (fabricated upward and downward Facebook newsfeed pages and a control Facebook newsfeed page). The results of this study should allow organizations to have a better understanding of social

comparisons in the workplace through social media. Knowing the nature of these comparisons and the outcomes will allow organizations to better understand the attitudes of their workers and to create SNS policies.

### 1.1 Social Comparison Theory

Whether intentionally or not, comparison with others is believed to be universal (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). It has been suggested that people compare themselves to others that are similar to them because doing so allows them to reduce uncertainty about themselves and their situation and to enhance their self-esteem (Dakin & Arrowood, 1981) and that they compare themselves to others they do not know personally, but appear to be better or worse at certain things than the individual doing the comparing (Wood, 1996). Social comparison, defined as the process of thinking about information gathered from other people in relation to oneself (Wood, 1996) has been found to occur both consciously and subconsciously, and very frequently. The key underlying assumption behind social comparison theory is that individuals desire to maintain accurate self-appraisals (Taylor et al., 1990). Although objective information to form these appraisals is difficult to find, individuals seek information from other people as a means to evaluate themselves (Festinger, 1954). This process is known as “self-evaluation” (Wood, 1989). An example of when self-evaluation is used is when individuals compare their salary to someone else’s in order to determine the discrepancy between salaries, in order to improve one’s own standing. Most commonly, people are motivated by self-evaluation when engaging in social comparison (Wilson & Ross, 2000).

### 1.1.1 Process

The process of social comparison begins when individuals encounter information about others. This information is then evaluated in relation to oneself. Based on this evaluation, people then conclude that the individual being compared to is better off, worse off, or about the same as them (Wood, 1996). These are referred to as upward, downward, and lateral comparisons, respectively.

Upward social comparison focuses on identifying others who are thought to be superior to the self on some dimension (Wood, 1996). This type of comparison in an organization often result in negative effects, such as decreased job satisfaction or lower organizational commitment (Brown, Ferris, Heller, & Keeping, 2007). People engage in upward social comparisons in an attempt to make themselves better or more similar to those they are comparing themselves with (Greenberg et al., 2007). Buunk, Taylor, Collins, VanYperen, and Dakof (1990) found that individuals focused on self-evaluation generally engage in upward social comparisons. For example, this type of comparison could be when a doctor compares himself or herself to another that appears to be more qualified to perform the procedure.

The next type of social comparison, downward social comparison, can be defined as the process in which an individual evaluates himself/herself based on someone who is thought to be inferior on some dimension (Wood, 1996). Downward comparisons can result in more positive effects (more job satisfaction; Brown et al., 2007). When people are threatened on a particular dimension, individuals prefer to engage in downward social comparison in an attempt to feel better about themselves (Buunk, Ybema, Gibbons, & Ipenburg, 2001). Comparing oneself to someone thought to be inferior on some

dimension makes one feel more accomplished and better about oneself, increasing one's self-evaluation (Greenberg et al., 2007). For instance, a student struggling in a course will find someone who received a lower test grade in an attempt to increase one's self-esteem.

In addition to types of comparisons, there are three main consequences of social comparisons: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. Affective consequences occur when people experience positive emotions when making downward comparisons, as well as experiencing negative emotions when making upward comparisons (Greenberg et al., 2007). This relationship is so strong that it occurs independently of one's relationship with the referent other or the nature of the comparison (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992). Buunk et al. (1990) found that the direction of the comparison (upward or downward) has no effect on the how the comparison will be affectively construed. However, Buunk et al. (2001) found that upward comparisons created more positive affect than downward comparisons and that upward comparisons usually resulted in less negative affect than downward comparisons. Buunk et al. (2001) study was specifically looking at burnout in sociotherapists. Therefore, these findings are not consistent with previous literature as one's burnout was a main factor in the direction of someone's affect. Assessing both the cognitive and affective effects of social comparison, Bui and Pelham (1999) found that a person's cognitive reaction to social comparison was independent of their affective reaction. Finally, Greenberg et al. (2007) found that employees model their behavior after their coworkers they compared themselves to in order to reach the desired outcome.

### 1.1.2 Workplace Importance

Social interactions, and subsequently, social comparisons influence every person's practices, judgments, and beliefs, whether intentional or automatic (Asch, 1955). Considering the workplace is a social context and social comparisons made at work may be due to formal and informal procedures (mentoring, performance appraisal, observing others, etc.), social comparisons in the workplace should be studied in order to determine the influence these comparisons have on workplace behavior. It is through the acquiring of social information in the workplace that is particularly important because this information has been thought to be observed and then comparisons made either intentionally or passively (Gilbert, Giesler, & Morris, 1995; Wood, 1996). However, social comparison studies in organizations have resulted in a third type of comparison – the direct results of formally imposed procedures (i.e. organizational justice, performance evaluations, affective behavior in the workplace, stress, changes in leadership, pay policies, etc.) (Greenberg et al., 2007). After acquiring the aforementioned information, individuals then think about the information and make judgments about themselves (Wood, 1996). These thoughts could be in relation to one's standing relative to another's performance or likelihood for advancement.

Specifically, social comparisons have the potential to influence both individual and organizational well-being because of their regularity and long-lasting effects. These comparisons occur regularly in the workplace when employees or managers consider their performance in relation to someone else's, conduct peer evaluations or performance appraisals, when thinking about organizational justice, affective responses, and coping with stress (Greenberg et al., 2007). Greenberg et al. (2007) provides several situations

when social comparison takes place as a result of formally imposed procedures. First, assessments of fairness on the job are comparative in nature, from judging the outcomes individuals receive to the outcomes others receive, to the procedures in which individuals and others obtain rewards, to the manner in which individuals and others are treated when the processes are rolled out. Perceptions of inequity are thought to be greater if the referent others are unknown by the one making the comparisons (Singh, 1994). Second, when providing peer evaluations for performance appraisals, individuals are likely to gage others performance in relation to their own. Next, one's affective responses at work are closely linked to social comparison in that people experience positive emotions when making downward comparisons and negative emotions when making upward comparisons; additionally, people experience both self-conscious (internal emotions, i.e. shame, guilt, pride, embarrassment, etc.) and social (external, i.e. arrogance, envy, etc.) emotions when they see their coworkers achieve various accolades or accomplishments (Greenberg et al., 2007).

Finally, Greenberg et al. (2007) also suggested social comparison to be prevalent in the workplace when employees are determining how to handle stress because comparisons with others help individuals know the resources available to them to complete the task, and in turn, how to respond to stressful situations. Additionally, social comparisons allow employees to seek social support in order to learn the best coping strategies and to engage in problem-solving activities (Taylor et al., 1990).

Greenberg et al. (2007) suggest that the workplace is rife with comparison opportunities that influence one's affect, cognitions, and behavior. Further, social

comparison processes are important to the workplace because of the impact these comparisons have on an individual's motivation, attitudes, and adjustment to work pressures (Goodman, 1977).

Additionally, individuals are likely to engage in upward comparisons in the workplace for several reasons. First, due to the competitive environment of the workplace (Greenberg et al., 2007), and thus the potential for others to utilize self-presentational strategies in order to appear as positively as possible, the workplace is likely to be filled with unrealistic positive information about others' status. Second, individuals interested in self-improvement are likely to use upward comparison (Wood, Michela, & Giordano, 2000). Finally, due to the proximity of co-workers, employees are likely to engage in social comparison because co-workers are readily available, whether similar or dissimilar (Wood, 1996). Social comparisons in the workplace should be studied to help understand the dynamics that play into performance management, leadership, affective responses, stress management, and perceptions of justice (Greenberg et al., 2007).

## 1.2 Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites (SNS) are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a specific system, articulate a list of other users as connections ("friends"), and view and share those connections (boyd & Ellison, 2007). SNS networks are environments in which people create a self-descriptive profile, usually in a way to create a positive self-presentation, and then make links to other people, creating a network of personal connections (Chou & Edge, 2012). These connections serve as important signals to people to help navigate social networks and help validate

identity formation (Donath & boyd, 2004). SNS systems are organized around people, rather than interests or hobbies, and are growing in popularity. As users of SNS, individuals are cognizant of their self-presentation, which usually leads to more socially desirable information posted and individuals creating and tailoring their social identities based on their audience (Abril et al., 2012; Strano & Queen, 2012). SNS systems are the perfect platform to present oneself positively because users are able to strategically create their image highlighting only the most desirable traits (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011). As a result, SNS can influence one's perceptions of others, tending to make users believe that life is not fair, others are more satisfied with their lives, and others are better off financially (Chou & Edge, 2012). Haferkamp and Krämer (2011) found that people who make social comparisons through SNS report greater discrepancies between their actual selves and ideal selves. It appears then, that when engaging in social comparison through Facebook, individuals are comparing his or her true self to the idealized on-line version of others (Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014).

The use of SNS has increased over the years, such that the percentage of adults using SNS has increased nearly 60% over the last decade (Madden & Zickuhr, 2011). For instance, the majority of Facebook users, which was originally created for college students, are now made up of individuals aged 35 and older (Van Eck Peluchette, Karl, & Fertig, 2013). Of the SNS networks, Facebook and LinkedIn are the most widely used, with 1.19 billion monthly users and 259 million monthly users, respectively (Grandoni, 2012; Langer, 2013), with Facebook having 727 million users daily (Facebook, 2013). Although the specific uses of Facebook and LinkedIn differ, both are used for allowing people to get in touch or remain in touch with acquaintances, colleagues, or networks

within which one belongs. SNS acts as a means to create and strengthen ties to other individuals, and are therefore, also beneficial to make connections with people for advancement purposes, internal campaigning, gathering information, and relaying information (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). These online social networks grow exponentially quicker than an individual's in-person network, making it near impossible for individuals to interact closely with each member of their network (Chou & Edge, 2012).

Due to this general increase in users and shift in demographics, many corporations are investing more time and money in creating, purchasing, promoting, and advertising their SNS network (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Additionally, organizations and users alike are beginning to value and use social media in the workplace. This is because SNS can facilitate informal learning and is a resource for organization knowledge sharing, collaboration, and social exchange (Jarrahi & Sawyer, 2013).

### 1.2.1 Workplace Importance

Because Facebook and LinkedIn are heavily laden with impression management, and the workplace is the quintessential environment in which individuals are likely to engage in impression management techniques and present themselves in a positive light, organizations heavily monitor social media for cues about applicants (Abril et al., 2012). Further, Abril et al. (2012) found that while the millennial generation is comfortable blurring the line between social and professional boundaries, they strongly oppose being judged based on their online social identity. However, Van Eck Peluchette et al. (2013) found that organizations are using information on Facebook to recruit potential job applicants, make decisions about applicants, and strengthen the organization's social capital. Social media uses have become commonplace in the lives of millions, including

organizations and are a significant source of comparison among individuals (Jarrahi & Sawyer, 2013). The information gleaned from these comparisons will be used to evaluate one's self, leading to either positive or negative self-judgments (Feinstein et al., 2013).

### 1.3 Proposed Moderators

Individuals are most likely to draw comparisons between themselves and another when the other is viewed as relevant (Major, Sciacchitano, & Crocker, 1993). Relevance can be defined as the similarities drawn between two people that resemble each other in features, structure, and purpose (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). People are more likely to engage in defensive mechanisms only if the person to whom they are comparing themselves is similar to them. As these similarities between people decrease, the other person is considered less relevant for the purpose of social comparison, and therefore, less likely to affect one's perceptions of himself/herself (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). For the purpose of the present study, materialism will be used as a proxy to measure relevance. The connection between relevance and materialism is that those who score higher on the materialism scale will be more likely to find the social comparison information provided more relevant to themselves as the information has to do heavily with material possessions. Those who value material possessions are more likely to find the social comparison conditions relevant to themselves. Social comparison and materialism are closely linked in that individuals use the possessions of referent others to determine the items they should possess (Chan & Prendergast, 2007).

The second potential moderating variable is that of attainability, or the likelihood the individual performing the comparisons has of reaching the success of the other (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). If an individual believes he or she can attain the success of

the referent other in the future, the individual is more likely to be inspired to achieve those goals than to be discouraged that they are currently not in that position (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). However, if the success of the referent other does not seem attainable, the individual engaging in the comparison will be discouraged, demoralized, disheartened, and feel inferior (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Major, Testa, & Bylsma, 1991). For the purpose of the present study, one's job expectations will act as a proxy for attainability as expectations directly impact one's belief in one's ability to achieve those goals.

#### 1.4 The Present Study

As stated above, the purpose of the present study will be to investigate the phenomenon of social comparison through the lens of social media, moderated by materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability). Specifically, I plan to test whether social comparisons carried out via social media impact the work-relevant outcomes of employee entitlement and job and life satisfaction, moderated by one's level of materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability). See Figure 1. I will propose that comparing oneself to others who are better off via social media will decrease overall job and life satisfaction and that this comparison will increase the perceived rights or rewards individuals believe they deserve (entitlement) for those high in materialism and expectations.

Social comparison theory states that people engage in most social comparisons in an attempt to evaluate and improve themselves. Such comparisons are thus generally upward in nature (Buunk et al., 1990). Research on social comparison in the workplace has shown that individuals engage in social comparisons during stressful situations, peer evaluations, and when seeking organizational justice (Greenberg et al., 2007; Taylor et al.,

1990) and that these evaluations tend to result in decreased job and pay satisfaction when people engage in upward social comparison and increased pay and job satisfaction when they engage in downward social comparisons (Brown et al., 2007).

With respect to social comparisons, SNS provide more readily available information with which to compare one's self. These comparisons are also highly relevant to the user, as the comparisons are being made with an individual within his or her own network. Social comparisons made via SNS are very likely to be upward in nature due to the impression management techniques used by the users. As users of SNS, individuals typically only post more socially desirable information to their sites, and individuals create and tailor their social identities based on their audience (Abril et al., 2012; Strano & Queen, 2012). Therefore, the availability and applicability of social comparisons through SNS are likely to increase the frequency and impact of social comparisons. These comparisons will be upward in nature due to the impression management strategies people use when posting information to SNS. Thus, it is essential to evaluate the impact of upward social comparisons on employee attitudes.

In order for someone to engage in social comparison, the comparisons must be relevant in nature to the individual (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). Research on social comparison has repeatedly demonstrated that comparing oneself to others who are better off makes people feel worse about themselves if the status does not seem attainable (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Wood et al., 2000). Additionally, research has shown that engaging in upward comparisons in relation to salary can create lower job satisfaction if the expectations are not attainable (Harris, Anseel, Lievens, 2008; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Taylor & Vest, 1993).

Therefore, it is predicted that:

*H1: There will be a three-way interaction between one's social comparison condition, job expectations (attainability) and materialism (relevance) on job satisfaction. For participants in the upward social comparison condition, the greater the relevance, the higher the job satisfaction when attainability is high. However, when attainability is low, the greater the relevance the lower the job satisfaction. For participants in the control social comparison condition, there will be no change in job satisfaction based on relevance and attainability. For participants in the downward social comparison condition, the greater the relevance, the lower the job satisfaction when attainability is high. However, when attainability is low, the greater the relevance the higher the job satisfaction. See Figure 2.*

*H2: There will be a three-way interaction between one's social comparison condition, job expectations (attainability) and materialism (relevance) on life satisfaction. For participants in the upward social comparison condition, the greater the relevance, the higher the life satisfaction when attainability is high. However, when attainability is low, the greater the relevance the lower the life satisfaction. For participants in the control social comparison condition, there will be no change in life satisfaction based on relevance and attainability. For participants in the downward social comparison condition, the greater the*

*relevance, the lower the life satisfaction when attainability is high. However, when attainability is low, the greater the relevance the higher the life satisfaction.*

See Figure 3.

*H3: There will be a three-way interaction between one's social comparison condition, job expectations (attainability) and materialism (relevance) on entitlement. For participants in the upward social comparison condition, the greater the relevance, the higher the employee entitlement when attainability is high. However, when attainability is low, the greater the relevance the lower the employee entitlement. For participants in the control social comparison condition, there will be no change in entitlement based on relevance and attainability. For participants in the downward social comparison condition, the greater the relevance, the lower the entitlement when attainability is high. However, when attainability is low, the greater the relevance the higher the employee entitlement. See Figure 4.*

## CHAPTER 2 METHOD

### 2.1 Sample

Data were collected from 334 participants from a large Midwestern University alumni database. Due to participants not completing the survey or not meeting the survey requirements (college graduate, working at least 20 hours per week in paid employment, and a current user of Facebook), 44 participants were eliminated from the study, leaving a sample of 290 participants (N=290). The average age of the participants was 28.06 years old (SD = 5.96), with 59% being female, and 73.8% White/Caucasian.

### 2.2 Design and Procedures

The present study used an experimental research method to investigate the effects social comparison, through social media, has on job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and one's level of entitlement or narcissism, moderated by materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability). Participants were e-mailed a link to an online survey and told they would be compensated \$10 at the completion of the survey. Individuals were asked to answer questions first in regards to their views on material possessions and their job expectations. Then they were shown one of three fabricated Facebook newsfeed pages (upward social comparison condition, downward social comparison condition, or neutral

social comparison condition). After viewing one of the three pages, participants were asked to answer a series of questions regarding their levels of life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and entitlement.

The upward social comparison Facebook newsfeed page contained work-relevant information that is upward in nature, such as, “Had an AMAZING month at work (top in sale, thankyouverymuch). Drinks on me!” and “Who would have thought at 25 I’d land my dream job! Just got offered the job and looks like I’m moving to Denver!!!!” The posts in the downward social comparison Facebook newsfeed page contained work-relevant information that is downward in nature, such as, “My job is never what it seems and I can never do the job well enough...I think I’ll just go back to bed in hopes of forgetting about the disappointment I’ve become” and “Apparently having a Skype teleconference isn’t so easy, turns out everyone could hear my kid screaming in the background and I had peanut butter on my suit.” The neutral social comparison Facebook newsfeed page contained general information such as “The best part of dinner was not doing the dishes...I do love going out to eat” and “The Walking Dead returns. Just one month.” Both the upward and downward social comparison pages included a few neutral posts such as “Okay, so the new 300 movie isn’t as bas as I thought it would be” and “Happy birthday to my best buddy, Luke! Have a great day!” All three fabricated Facebook newsfeed pages contained 15 posts, with the upward and downward pages each containing nine work-relevant posts (either upward or downward in nature, respectively).

## 2.3 Measures

The assessment used in the current study included an information page stating the purpose of the study as looking at the effects social media has on social comparison.

Instructions were then given to answer each question as honestly as possible. Following a brief demographic section, the survey included the social media manipulation (one of the three fabricated Facebook newsfeed pages), and then questions regarding the individual's attitudes towards his/her life, job, and what he/she believes he/she deserves.

### 2.3.1 Demographics

The present study included several demographic variables including the participants' age, gender, income, race/ethnicity, and education. Additionally, questions regarding one's social media use were included to ensure social media was indeed used.

### 2.3.2 Proposed Moderators

A person's attitude towards material belongings was used as a moderator to measure the relevance of the comparisons. These attitudes were measured on a 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*) Likert-type scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992;  $\alpha = 0.80$ ). To achieve the final scale in the present study, one item was removed "I try to keep my life simple as far as possessions are concerned", increasing the overall reliability to .85. Therefore, the final materialism scale for the present study consisted of eight items. A person scoring higher on this scale indicated more importance placed on material belongings. Participant expectations towards their jobs were also asked to assess the attainability of the comparisons being made. Participants were asked to answer seven items regarding their expectations and feelings towards their job ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ). Participants were asked to rate their agreement to the items using a Likert-type scale from 1 (*Strongly*

*Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Items included “*I expect to get a better job soon*” and “*With my qualifications, I should be doing more interesting work than I am.*” A higher score on this scale indicated an individual having greater job expectations.

### 2.3.3 Social Comparison Condition

The Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM) scale was used to measure the extent to which people generally compare themselves to others on the 6-item subscale of ability (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999;  $\alpha = 0.80$ ). The items were scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). An example question from this scale is “*I often compare myself with others with respect to what I have accomplished in life.*” A higher score indicated a stronger orientation towards engaging in social comparison.

### 2.3.4 Job Satisfaction

This survey is interested in the level of satisfaction the participant has towards his/her job in general (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951). The 5-item scale was scored from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*) and has an alpha level of 0.88. Two items were reverse coded (“*Each day of work seems like it will never end*” and “*I consider my job rather unpleasant*”). A higher score on this scale indicated a higher level of job satisfaction.

### 2.3.5 Life Satisfaction

This 5-item scale asked participants to rate their agreement to each item on a 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*) Likert-type scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, &

Griffin, 1985;  $\alpha = 0.86$ ). Questions in this scale included, “*In most ways my life is close to my ideal*” and “*If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.*” A higher score on this scale indicated greater life satisfaction.

### 2.3.6 Entitlement

The present study used the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES) to determine one’s level of entitlement. Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, and Bushman (2004) created the 9-item PES to evaluate one’s sense that he/she deserves more and is entitled to more than others ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ). These items were scored on a Likert-type scale from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). One item on the PES was reverse coded (“*I do not necessarily deserve an extra break now and then*”). A higher score on this scale indicated that someone believes they deserve more or are entitled to more than others. In addition to the PES, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) has been suggested to help capture psychological entitlement (Campbell et al., 2004). The NPI is a series of forced choice questions evaluating one’s level of emotional stability (Raskin & Terry, 1988,  $\alpha = 0.76$ ). The present study included both the PES and NPI measures; however, only the PES was used in the analyses because the reliability of the PES scale and the reliability of the combined measures were lower than the reliability of the PES on its own ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ;  $\alpha = 0.68$ , respectively). The “super entitlement” scale was created using the combined standardized scores for both the PES and NPI scales.

## CHAPTER 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Preliminary Results

Scales were created for SCO, materialism, job expectations, entitlement, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction items using the means. Eight items were reverse coded in order to create the SCO scale, the job expectations scale, the job satisfaction scale, and the entitlement scale; one item for the SCO scale (“I am not the type of person who compares often with others”), four items for the job expectations scale (“I feel I am currently underpaid,” “I am disappointed by my job,” “I think others my age have better jobs than I do,” and “I am jealous of others my age who have better jobs than I do”), two items for the job satisfaction scale (“Each day of work seems like it will never end” and “I consider my job rather unpleasant”), and one item for the entitlement scale (“I do not necessarily deserve special treatment”), such that higher responses indicated stronger orientation towards engaging in social comparisons, greater job expectations, greater job satisfaction, and higher levels of entitlement, respectively. Additionally, the materialism and job expectations scales were centered.

As seen in Table 1, all reliabilities are within an acceptable range ( $\alpha = 0.68-0.92$ ). Initial analyses revealed finding did not differ from entitlement when using narcissism, and was therefore not included in further analysis as the narcissism scale reliability was lower than the entitlement scale reliability ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ;  $\alpha = 0.87$ , respectively). The

combined score for entitlement and narcissism (super entitlement) was also not used in further analysis, as its reliability was lower than entitlement alone ( $\alpha = 0.68$ ,  $\alpha = 0.87$ , respectively). Means, standard deviations, and correlations for each of the scales are also presented in Table 1. The correlations were in the expected directions. For instance, the more entitled participants were, the less job satisfaction they reported.

Chi-squared analyses were conducted to determine whether the conditions were significantly different based on gender ( $X^2(4, N=290) = 3.737$ ,  $p = 0.443$ ) or education level ( $X^2(6, N=290) = 7.803$ ,  $p = 0.253$ ). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to determine whether the conditions were significantly different based on social comparison condition ( $F(2, 288) = 1.22$ ,  $p = 0.297$ ) and age ( $F(2, 287) = 2.88$ ,  $p = 0.058$ ). Both the upward and downward social comparison conditions had significantly higher mean ages than the neutral comparison condition ( $M = 28.68$ ;  $M = 28.61$ ;  $M = 26.88$ , respectively). These results suggest there was no significant difference in assignment of men versus women to the three conditions, no significant difference in assignment based on education level to the three conditions, no significant difference in assignment of SCO to the three conditions, and a marginally significant difference in assignment based on age to the three conditions, therefore, gender, education level, and SCO were not controlled for, while age was controlled for.

### 3.2 Test of Key Hypotheses

Hierarchical regression was used to assess both the independent and interaction effects of social comparison condition, materialism (relevance), and job expectations (attainability) on each dependent variable (job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and entitlement). The analyses involved two continuous variables, materialism and job

expectations, and one categorical variable, social comparison condition (upward, neutral, downward). The social comparison condition was dummy coded into two vectors representing three conditions, such that those in the neutral social comparison condition were the referent group (DC1: 1 = upward social comparison condition, 0 = neutral social comparison condition, 0 = downward social comparison condition; DC2: 1 = downward social comparison condition, 0 = neutral social comparison condition, 0 = upward social comparison condition). Thus, when the two vectors are considered simultaneously in the regression equation, DC1 represents the contrast of those in the upward social comparison condition versus the neutral social comparison condition, while DC2 represents the contrast of those in the downward social comparison condition versus the neutral social comparison condition. Main effects of materialism, job expectations, and dummy-coded social comparison condition were entered in Step 1. Two-way interactions were entered in Step 2, and 3-way interactions were entered in Step 3.

### 3.2.1 Hypothesis 1

**Is there a three-way interaction between one's social comparison condition, materialism, and job expectations on one's job satisfaction?**

The results for the hierarchical multiple regression analysis for job satisfaction are presented in Table 2. They suggested that both the first and second step accounted for a significant amount of variance in job satisfaction; Step 3 was not significant, suggesting that there were no significant three-way interactions. Specifically, job expectations had a significant impact on job satisfaction such that those with higher expectations reported greater job satisfaction ( $\beta = .310, t(283) = 5.417, p = 0.000$ ). Materialism also had a marginally significant main effect on job satisfaction, such that those lower in

materialism reported higher job satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.107, t(283) = -1.848, p = 0.066$ ). However, the main effect of materialism is qualified by a two-way interaction between materialism and social comparison condition. As shown in Figure 5, the effect of materialism on job satisfaction was only present in the upward condition ( $\beta = -0.203, t(278) = -2.451, p = 0.015$ ). There was no significant relationship between materialism and downward social comparison condition ( $\beta = -0.066, t(278) = -0.863, p = 0.389$ ).

### 3.2.2 Hypothesis 2

**Is there a three-way interaction between one's social comparison condition, materialism, and job expectations on one's life satisfaction?**

The results for the hierarchical multiple regression analysis for life satisfaction are presented in Table 2. They suggested that the first step accounted for a significant amount of variance in life satisfaction; Steps 2 and 3 were not significant, suggesting there were no significant two- or three-way interactions. Specifically, job expectations had a significant impact on life satisfaction such that those with higher expectations reported greater life satisfaction ( $\beta = .270, t(284) = 4.643, p = 0.000$ ). The upward social comparison condition is also a significant main effect on life satisfaction, such that those in the upward social comparison reported lower life satisfaction than those in the neutral social comparison condition ( $\beta = -0.130, t(284) = 1.970, p = 0.050$ ).

### 3.2.3 Hypothesis 3

**Is there a three-way interaction between one's social comparison condition, materialism, and job expectations on one's level of entitlement?**

The results for the hierarchical multiple regression analysis for entitlement are presented in Table 2. They suggested that the first step accounted for a significant

amount of variance in entitlement and step 2 accounted for a marginally significant amount of variance in entitlement; Step 3 was not significant, suggesting that there were no significant three-way interactions. Specifically, one's age had a significant impact on entitlement, such that older individuals reported higher levels of entitlement ( $\beta = 0.151$ ,  $t(284) = 2.864$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). Other significant main effects on entitlement are: materialism, such that those higher in materialism reported higher levels of entitlement ( $\beta = 0.397$ ,  $t(284) = 7.019$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), job expectations, such that those with higher job expectations report higher levels of entitlement ( $\beta = 0.107$ ,  $t(284) = 1.922$ ,  $p = 0.056$ ), and the upward social comparison, such that those in the upward social comparison report greater levels of entitlement than those in the neutral social comparison condition ( $\beta = 0.129$ ,  $t(279) = 1.951$ ,  $p = 0.052$ ). However, the main effects of materialism and job expectations are dependent on each other, such that those high in materialism and job expectations report the greatest amount of entitlement, as shown in Figure 6 ( $\beta = -0.152$ ,  $t(279) = -2.782$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ).

## CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

In a novel context, social media, the present study tested Lockwood and Kunda's (1997) idea that information must be both relevant and attainable to the individual making the comparison in order for the individual to engage in social comparison. As mentioned previously, the present study used proxy variables for both relevance and attainability, such that relevance was measured by materialism and attainability was measured by one's job expectations. Therefore, the present study predicted three-way interactions for all three hypotheses: hypothesis 1 predicted a three way interaction would take place between materialism (relevance), job expectations (attainability), and social comparison condition on job satisfaction; hypothesis 2 predicted a three-way interaction between materialism (relevance), job expectations (attainability), and social comparison condition on life satisfaction; hypothesis 3 predicted a three-way interaction between materialism (relevance), job expectations (attainability), and social comparison condition on employee entitlement.

Although hypothesis 1 was not fully supported, a two-way interaction was revealed between materialism (relevance) and social comparison condition such that those in the upward social comparison condition high in materialism (relevance) reported lower levels of job satisfaction and those low in materialism (relevance) in the upward social comparison condition reported greater levels of job satisfaction. This finding

suggests that individuals who place higher value on material possessions experience decreased job satisfaction when they compare themselves to individuals considered better off than themselves and those who do not place great value in material possessions experience greater levels of job satisfaction when they compare themselves to individuals considered better than themselves.

Said differently, the more individuals value material possessions and the more they engage in comparisons to those considered more successful than themselves, the less satisfied they will be with their current jobs. This moderated relationship between materialism (relevance) and social comparison on job satisfaction is in agreement with previous research (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Major et al., 1993, etc.) in that it has been suggested that there must be similarities between the one making comparisons and the referent other. One reason a three-way interaction did not occur between someone's job expectations, value of material possessions, and social comparison condition could be that people's job expectations heavily influence their levels of job satisfaction regardless of how much they value material possessions.

Hypothesis 2 was not supported; only main effects were found for those with high job expectations (attainability) and for social comparison condition such that individuals reported higher life satisfaction when job expectations (attainability) were high and those in the upward social comparison condition reported lower levels of life satisfaction than those in the control condition. This finding supports previous research in that individuals reported higher levels of life satisfaction when attainability, or in the present study, one's job expectations, was high (Harris et al., 2008; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Taylor & Vest, 1993; Wood et al., 2000). The present study's finding that individuals in the upward

social comparison condition reported lower levels of life satisfaction can also be explained by previous research because information that is upward in nature is more salient on Facebook as people tend to post only their best versions of themselves (Abril et al., 2012; Strano & Queen, 2012). This highlighted version of others lives makes others believe their own lives are less satisfying and not as quality as others because they are comparing their real lives to the idealized lives of others (Brown et al., 2007; Chou & Edge, 2012; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Vogel et al. 2014).

Hypothesis 3 was also not supported, but revealed a two-way interaction between materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability), such that those with high materialism (relevance) and high job expectations (attainability) reported greater levels of entitlement, and those low in both materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability) reported lower levels of entitlement. Because materialism and job expectations were both proxy variables for relevance and attainability, respectively, another way of looking at this is to understand that individuals who perceive things to be both highly relevant to themselves and highly attainable, will also likely express attitudes indicating they believe they deserve more than others.

As mentioned previously, the present study also revealed several main effects on entitlement, with the most notable being age. The majority of individuals in the present study were classified as millennials, however, the older people were, the more entitled they reported feeling. This is counterintuitive because the stereotype says all millenials are entitled, but this shows there is variability within the millennial generation.

#### 4.1 Contributions

The present study provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the social comparison literature. First, it demonstrates that life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and entitlement are easier to move than originally anticipated, as a brief manipulation (15 items on a fictitious Facebook page) resulted in significant increases or decreases in satisfaction or entitlement. Next, social comparison has been thought to occur between one individual and a referent other (Wood, 1996), whereas the present study extends that to multiple others through the use of Facebook newsfeed pages. This addition to the literature indicates that social comparison is likely to happen with more than one person when using SNS and although those comparisons occur within someone's network, it does not mean referent others are known by the one making the comparison, which is in line with previous research (Chou & Edge, 2012; Singh, 1994; Vogel et al., 2014). Further, the present study is one of the first of its kind to evaluate the moderated relationship of social comparison by materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability) on work-relevant outcomes such as life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and entitlement through SNS. This furthers the SNS research by deepening the link between social comparison, SNS, and work-relevant outcomes.

The present study helps to expand the entitlement literature by demonstrating that overgeneralizations regarding entitlement should not be made and that there are important individual differences within generations. This means that people within the same generation express different levels of entitlement.

Practically speaking, the present study helps interpret the effect social comparisons through SNS have on individuals. The present study is able to help

organizations and individuals alike to better understand the impact of social comparison information presented through SNS. Such information is likely to be positive in nature, and only a glimpse of the ideal version of someone else, and therefore should be taken lightly when making the comparison back to oneself. This is especially important when comparing oneself to information of a referent other that is not well known by the individual making the comparison because the information seen is highly censored. However, the current findings suggest people do attend to and are influenced by this information, in ways that have consequences for their jobs. In order to help people realize and understand the highly censored information, and perhaps protect themselves from it, organizations could help their employees create achievable stretch goals. This would teach individuals to better understand where they are currently while creating a plan for where they want to be, rather than using someone else's ideal self.

Additionally, the present study could help organizations create social media policies, such that there is greater restriction on social media use at work due to the abundance of comparisons likely to take place. Specifically, organizations could block social media sites such as Facebook from their network to limit employee access.

Another practical implication of the present study is that it could encourage organizations to provide more information when they are making decisions that affect employees (such as promotions, hiring, leadership changes, etc.). Specifically, organizations could provide specific reasons behind someone's promotion, which would provide tangible goals for others to work towards. This will reduce the ambiguity surrounding the situation, leaving little room for employees to fill in missing gaps inaccurately and subsequently make comparisons based on limited information.

## 4.2 Limitations

The present study had several limitations. First, both materialism and job expectations were proxy variables for relevance and attainability, respectively. They were not intended originally to measure those constructs. However, the link between job expectations and attainability can be argued for based on that fact that attainability is the likelihood of reaching the accomplishments of the referent other (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). Additionally, the link between materialism and relevance can also be argued for such that those who score higher on the materialism scale will be more likely to find the social comparison information provided more relevant to themselves as the information has to do heavily with material possessions or monetary values (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997).

Another limitation of the present study could be in the approach used to manipulate upward and downward social comparisons through the Facebook newsfeed pages in that the pages contained mostly upward or downward information about multiple topics from multiple sources, rather than comparing to just one individual. However, in everyday life, Facebook users view information of many individuals via their newsfeed.

Further, the downward social comparison page was potentially not strong enough as only the upward social comparison page resulted in significance when testing the model. This is, however, consistent with previous research that positive information is more salient on SNS due to impression management techniques and that upward social comparisons are thought to have greater impact on individuals (Abril et al., 2012; Chou & Edge, 2012; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Haferkamp & Krämer, 2011; Strano & Queen, 2012). The lack of significance from making downward social comparisons is

also consistent with previous research in that it typically only benefits those with low self-esteem, which would not likely be the case with this sample (Buunk et al., 2001; Greenberg et al., 2007).

#### 4.3 Future Directions

Although the predicted three-way interaction was not found between social comparison condition, materialism (relevance), and job expectations (attainability), these findings show promise for future research. Specifically, the significant effects for both materialism and job expectations as proxy variables suggest that social comparison is indeed moderated by relevance and attainability. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if when using the actual measures of relevance and attainability, the findings hold from the present study using proxy variables, as the literature suggests it should (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). Because the literature suggests relevance and attainability, it would be valuable to conduct a similar study to the present study in order to determine if the actual variables result in any significant three-way interactions between social comparison condition, attainability, and relevance on one of the work-related outcomes (job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and entitlement).

Additionally, researchers could consider having participants spend time on their own Facebook page and newsfeed before answering questions about satisfaction and entitlement, rather than observing hypothetical newsfeeds to determine the natural amount of upward to downward information presented and its subsequent effects on life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and entitlement. Finally, special attention could be given to the length of time individuals spend on SNS networks to help determine whether time is a factor in job satisfaction, life satisfaction, or entitlement.

The present study aimed to investigate the moderated relationship of social comparison by materialism (relevance) and job expectations (attainability) on job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and entitlement through SNS. The present study found that materialism and one's job expectations tend to impact one's job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and level of entitlement when comparing upward. These findings help broaden the social comparison literature by providing information that social comparisons can occur with more than one person at a time and the referent other does not have to be known by the individual making the comparisons to be have an impact. The present study adds to the SNS literature in that it deepens the connection between social comparison, SNS, and work-relevant outcomes. Finally, the present study can help users of SNS and organizations alike by providing a better understanding of the typical information posted to the SNS networks, the effects SNS has on users, and the effects allowing SNS in the workplace can have on employees.

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## TABLES

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, and Correlations Among Variables

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Sex	Education	Age	SCO	Materialism	Job Expectations	Job Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction	Entitlement	Super Entitlement
Sex	1.59	0.49	-	-									
Education	5.49	0.67	-	-0.051									
Age	28.06	5.96	-	-0.050	.303**								
SCO	3.14	0.73	0.80	-0.050	-0.041	-.193**							
Materialism	2.92	0.76	0.85	-.133*	-.040	-.186**	.422**						
Job Expectations	3.13	0.49	0.76	-0.081	.063	.023	-.212**	-.227**					
Job Satisfaction	3.64	0.83	0.88	.105	.103	.033	-.145*	-.178**	.335**				
Life Satisfaction	3.43	0.85	0.86	.095	.050	-0.018	-.114	-.132*	.279**	.471**			
Entitlement	2.60	0.69	0.87	-0.056	.068	.094	.217**	.337**	.026	-.164**	-.136*		
Super Entitlement	0.00	0.32	0.68	.049	.102	.077	.135*	.157**	-.048	-.166**	-.232**	.645**	
NPI	1.69	0.21	0.76	.140*	.032	.003	-.117*	-.215**	-.090	-.007	-.128*	-.378**	.414**

Table 2 Hierarchical Regression for Outcome Variables

	Job Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction	Entitlement
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
Step 1			
Social Comparison Condition – Down vs. Control	.046	-.061	-.021
Social Comparison Condition – Up vs. Control	-.011	-.133*	.129*
Materialism	-.108	-.079	.368***
Job Expectations	.310***	.271***	.102
Step 2			
Social Comparison Condition – Down vs. Control	.060	-.060	-.020
Social Comparison Condition – Up vs. Control	-.014	-.137*	.143*
Materialism	.045	-.193*	.477***
Job Expectations	.217*	.173	.142
Materialism x Job Expectations	.094	.020	-.160**
Materialism x Down vs. Control	-.066	.020	-.037
Job Expectations x Down vs. Control	.043	-.016	.031
Materialism x Up vs. Control	-.203**	.147	-.115
Job Expectations x Up vs. Control	.123	.160*	-.075
Step 3			
Social Comparison Condition – Down vs. Control	.067	-.055	-.008
Social Comparison Condition – Up vs. Control	-.021	-.133*	.134*
Materialism	.040	-.189	.472***
Job Expectations	.212*	.178	.137
Materialism x Job Expectations	.119	-.003	-.134
Materialism x Down vs. Control	-.062	.018	-.032
Job Expectations x Down vs. Control	.046	-.019	.033
Materialism x Up vs. Control	-.197*	.143	-.109
Job Expectations x Up vs. Control	.122	.158	-.077
Materialism x Job Expectations x Down vs. Control	.025	.019	.042
Materialism x Job Expectations x Up vs. Control	-.056	.021	-.069

Note: For Job Satisfaction  $R^2 = .126$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = .038$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = .003$  for Step 3  
 For Life Satisfaction  $R^2 = .096$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = .024$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = .000$  for Step 3  
 For Entitlement  $R^2 = .145$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = .033$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = .006$  for Step 3  
 +p < .10; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

## FIGURES

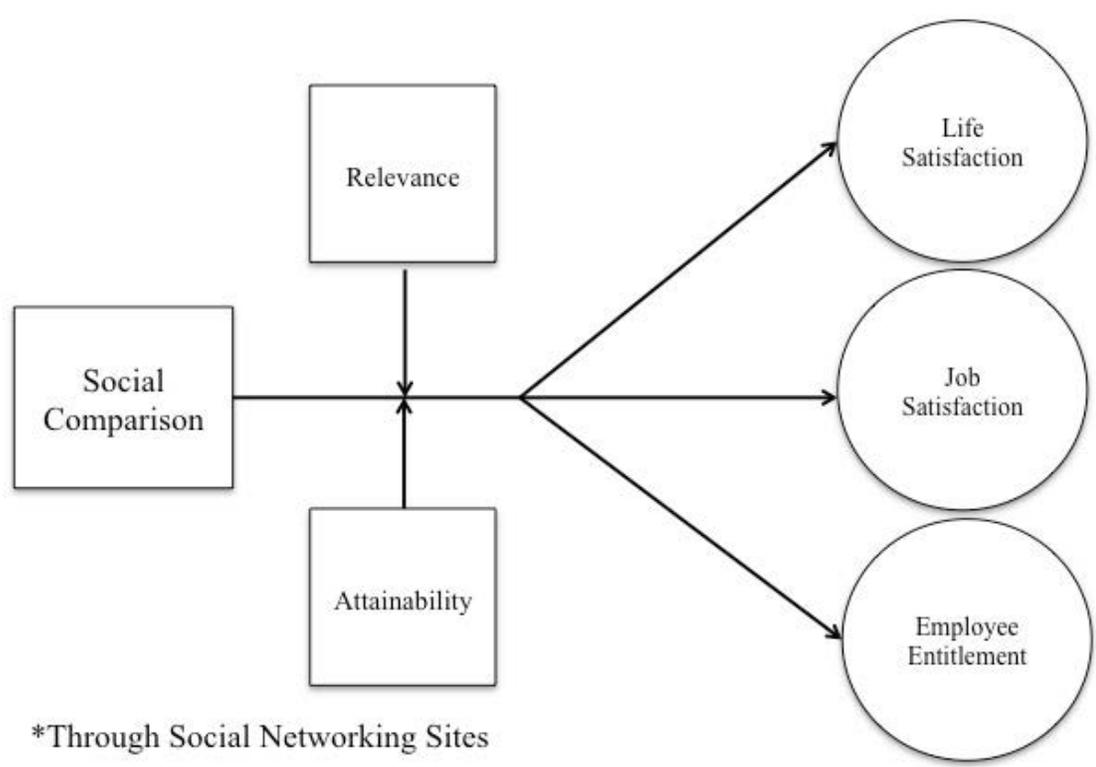


Figure 1. Proposed model; The effects social comparison has on life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and entitlement, moderated by attainability and relevance.

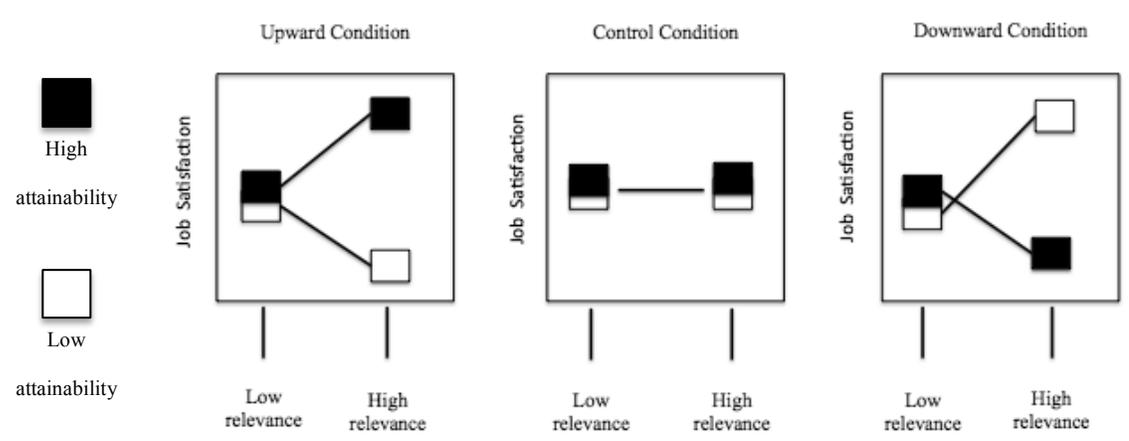


Figure 2. The relationship between social comparison condition, relevance, and attainability on job satisfaction.

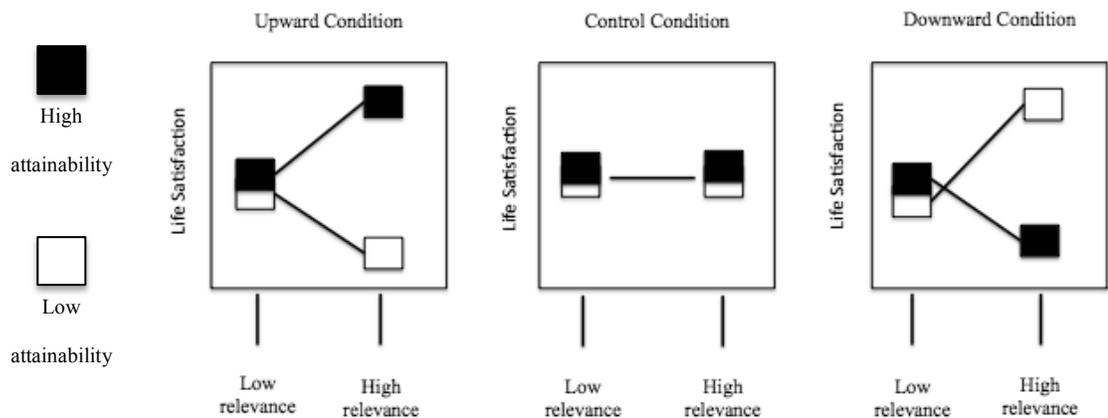


Figure 3. The relationship between social comparison condition, relevance, and attainability on life satisfaction.

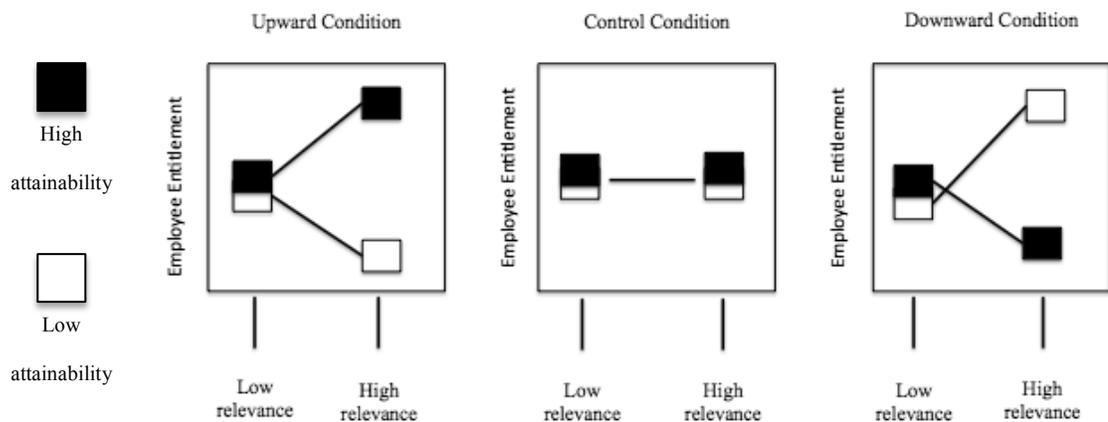


Figure 4. The relationship between social comparison condition, relevance, and attainability on employee entitlement.

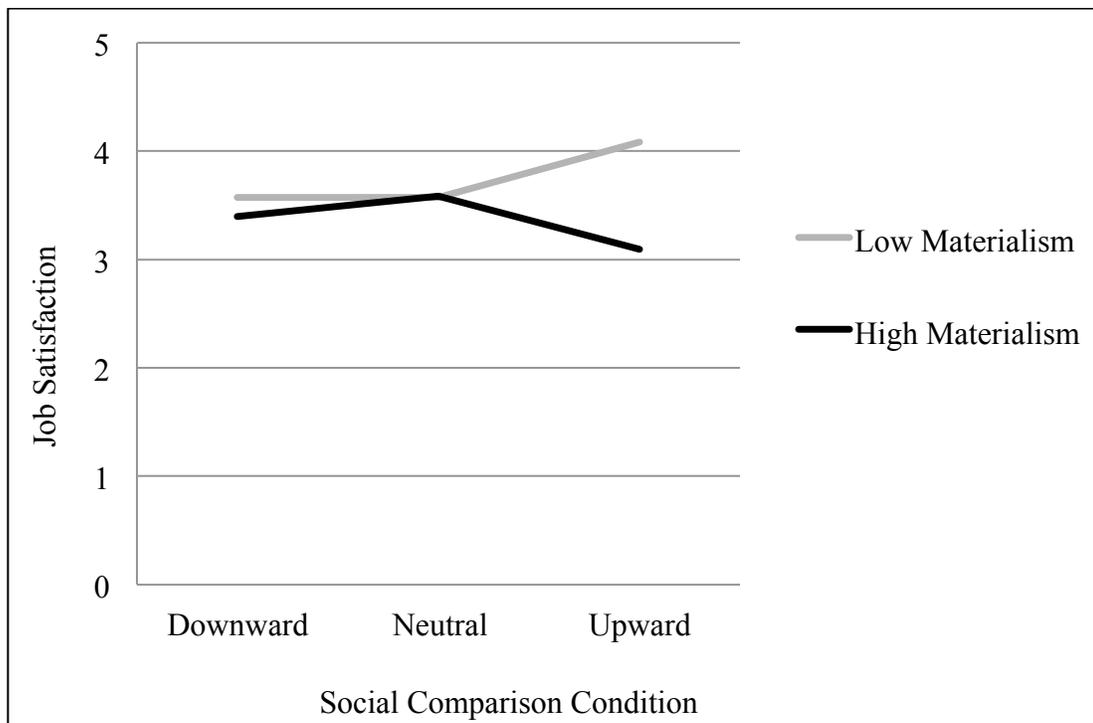


Figure 5. Interaction of materialism and social comparison condition on job satisfaction.

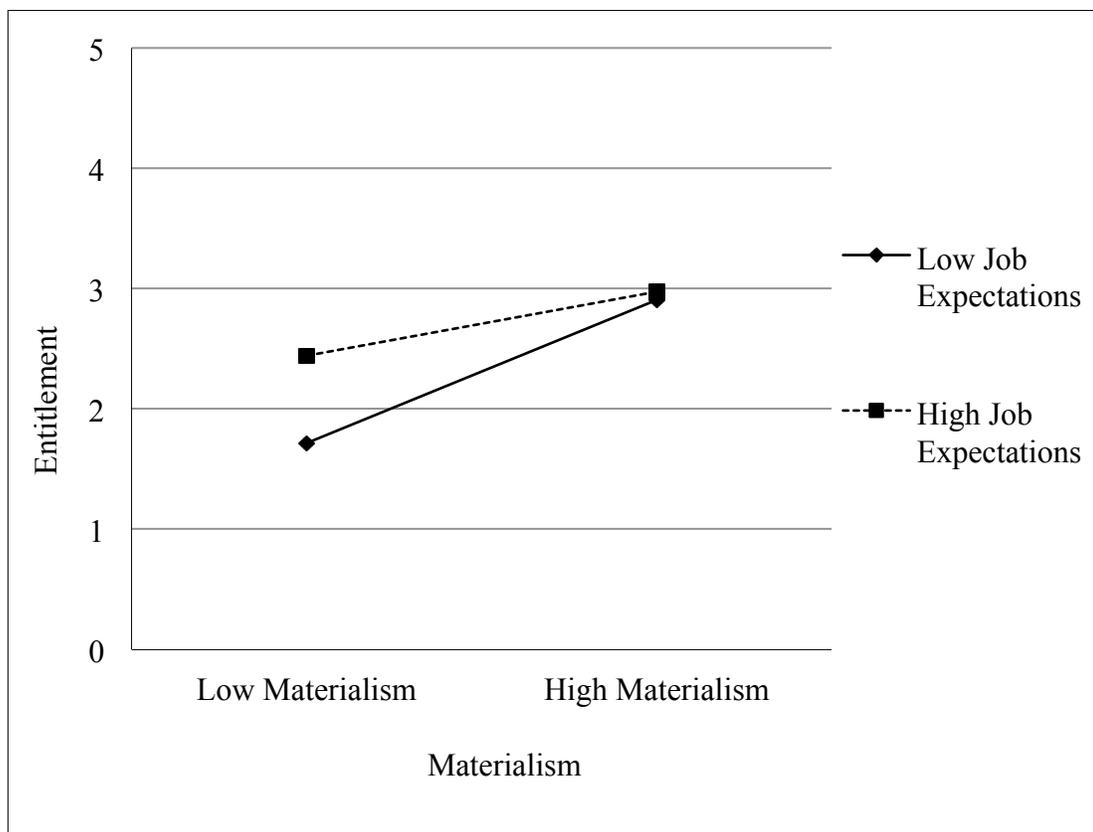


Figure 6. Interaction of job expectations and materialism on entitlement.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A Recruitment Email

Subject: Invitation to participate in an IUPUI study about Facebook

As an IUPUI alum, you are invited to participate in a study about Facebook being conducted by an IUPUI faculty member.

To participate you must:

- 1) be at least 18 years old**
- 2) be employed at least 20 hours per week in a paid position**
- 3) be a current Facebook user**

The study is entirely online and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. For your participation, you will receive a \$10 Amazon.com gift card.

We hope you will consider participating in this research.

For more information about the study and to access the survey, please follow the link below:

<http://sgiz.mobi/s3/3321f48bc6d6>

Thank you for your time. We greatly value your potential contribution to our project and your support of our research.

If you would prefer not to participate, you can simply delete this message--I will not contact you again about this study.

Dr. Elizabeth M. Boyd  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis  
402 N. Blackford St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
[drlizboyd@gmail.com](mailto:drlizboyd@gmail.com)  
317-274-2961  
<http://psych.iupui.edu/people/elizabeth-m-boyd>

**IRB STUDY #XXXXXXXXXX****INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR****Social Comparison, Social Media, and the Workplace**

You are invited to participate in a research study of how you compare yourselves to others through social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram). You were selected as a possible subject because you are an IUPUI alumni. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Elizabeth M. Boyd, PhD. It is funded by IUPUI.

**STUDY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects social media has on comparing oneself to others.

**PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:**

If you agree to be in the study, you will take an online test (30 minutes) related to Facebook.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees.

**PAYMENT**

You will receive payment for taking part in this study. You will receive \$10 for completed the online test in the form of an Amazon.com gift card.

**CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

For questions about the study, contact the researcher Elizabeth M. Boyd at 317-274-2961

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (317) 278-3458.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with IUPUI.

## Appendix C Thesis Measures

**\*\*All scales will be scored on Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree), unless otherwise mentioned.**

### Demographics

*This part of the survey is concerned with gathering some general information about you.*

First, we are interested in gathering some general demographic information from you.

1. What is your sex? (circle one)
  - M
  - F
  
2. Do you identify as a member of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (GLBT) population? (circle one)
  - YES
  - NO
  
3. What is your age? (please provide an exact number in years)
 

Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How many hours do you typically work each week in paid employment? (please provide an exact number): \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What is your job title at your current job? Please try to be as specific as possible (e.g., retail associate, product manager) \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What is your annual total income in dollars?
  - less than \$20,000
  - \$20,000 - \$39,999
  - \$40,000 - \$59,999
  - \$60,000 - \$79,999
  - \$80,000 - \$99,999
  - \$100,000 - \$119,999
  - \$120,000 - \$139,999
  - \$140,00 or higher

7. What is your current level of education? (circle one)
- Some high school
  - High school diploma or GED
  - Some college
  - Associate's degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - Advanced degree (e.g., PhD, JD, MD)
8. What is your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)
- White  
 Black or African American  
 Hispanic  
 American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Asian or Pacific Islander  
 Asian Indian  
 Some other race (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
9. In which month range were you born?
- January – April
  - May – August
  - September – December

Next, we are interested in your attitudes toward material belongings.

- I admire people who own expensive cars, homes, and clothes
- The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life
- I like to own things that impress people
- Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure
- I like a lot of luxury in my life
- My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have
- I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things
- It bothers me that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like

### Social Comparison Orientation

This section is interested in the extent to which you compare yourself with others. Most people compare themselves from time to time with others. There is nothing particularly good or bad about this type of comparison, and some people do it more than others.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the statements below.

1. I often compare myself with others with respect to what I have accomplished in life.
2. I always pay attention to how I do things compared with how others do things.
3. I often compare how my loved ones are doing with how others are doing.
4. I am not the type of person who compares often with others. **(R)**
5. If I want to know how well I have done something, I compare what I have done with how others have done.
6. I often compare how I am doing socially (e.g., popularity) with other people.

### Social Media

1. Do you use any form of social media?
  - a. YES
  - b. NO
2. Which do you use (select all that apply)?
  - a. Facebook
  - b. Linked In
  - c. Instagram
  - d. None of the above
3. On average, how many MINUTES do you spend on social media daily? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In comparison to your friends, are your posts to your Facebook page generally more positive, negative, or about the same as others?
  - a. More positive
  - b. More negative
  - c. About the same as my friends
5. If you were to write a Facebook post about your job right now, what would it say? \_\_\_\_\_

### Job Expectations

These questions relate to your expectations and feelings regarding your job. Please answer honestly.

1. I expect to get a better job soon.
2. I expect to get a raise soon
3. I feel I am currently underpaid (R).
4. I am disappointed by my job (R).
5. I think others my age have better jobs than I do (R).
6. With my qualifications, I should be doing more interesting work than I am.
7. I am jealous of others my age who have better jobs than I do (R).

### **Manipulation.**

Participants will be shown one of 3 different Facebook newsfeed pages, dependent on the range in which their birthday falls. One page will contain pictures and status updates that are intended to be upward comparisons in nature, another page will be downward in nature, and the third page will be neutral in nature. [Pages appended in D-F].

### **Outcomes.**

#### **Job Satisfaction** (Brayfield, A.H., & Rothe, H.F., 1951)

This section deals interested in the level of satisfaction you have towards your job in general. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

1. I feel fairly satisfied with my job.
2. Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.
3. Each day of work seems like it will never end. **(R)**
4. I find real enjoyment in my work.
5. I consider my job rather unpleasant. **(R)**

#### **Life Satisfaction** (Diener, E., Emmons, R.A., Larsen, R.J., & Griffin, S. (1985)

This section is interested in the level of satisfaction you have towards your life in general. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

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

#### **Entitlement Scale:** (Campbell, W.K. et al., 2004)

1. I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others.
2. Great things should come to me.
3. If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the *first* lifeboat!
4. I demand the best because I'm worth it.
5. I do not necessarily deserve special treatment. **(R)**
6. I deserve more things in my life.
7. People like me deserve an extra break now and then.
8. Things should go my way.
9. I feel entitled to more of everything.

In order to receive your gift card please include your email address.

What is your email address? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D Upward Social Comparison Manipulation

f

Home

Update Status
Add Photos/Video

What's on your mind?

SORT: MOST RECENT

**FAVORITES**

- News Feed
- Messages 5
- Events
- Photos
- Browse

**GROUPS**

- Add Group...

**FRIENDS**

- Close Friends 18
- Family 12

**APPS**

- Games 2
- On This Day
- Games Feed 20+

**PAGES**

- Pages Feed 20+
- Like Pages 20+
- Create a Page...

Chat is currently off. To chat with your friends, turn on chat.

**Matthew**  
March 10

Had an **AMAZING** month at work (top in sales, thankyouverymuch). Drinks are on me!

Like · Comment · Share ·

**Sarah**  
March 10

One of the many perks of my job, getting to wake up to this every morning for the next week. #livingthegoodlife

Like · Comment · Share ·

**Michelle**  
March 10

So thankful for my understanding boss as I couldn't make it in to work today because of the weather. #mybossisthebest

Like · Comment · Share ·

**Rob**  
March 10

An awesome wife, 2 beautiful kids, a great job and a brand new house. I couldn't ask for more in life. #firsthome

Like · Comment · Share ·

**Steve**  
March 10

Who would have thought at 25 I'd land my dream job! Just got offered the job and looks like I'm moving to Denver!!!!

Like · Comment · Share ·

**Trending** Learn More

- Bob Marley: Today Would Have Been Bob Marley's 69th Birthday
- Aaron Sorkin: Aaron Sorkin - Philip Seymour Hoffman's Death Saved 10 Lives | TIME.com
- Pat Robertson: Pat Robertson Tells Fellow Creationist Ken Ham, 'Let's Not Make A Joke Of Ourselves'

See More

---

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Apply for Discover it

Keep an eye on your credit score—it appears automatically on your statements. Terms apply.

March of Dimes

Every baby deserves to be born healthy. Help us make it a reality. Join us and Walk today!

Don't Forget the Flowers!

Surprise her with a beautiful bouquet! Order today and Save \$15 on products \$79.99 and up!

Peapod Delivers to Indy!

Peapod: The Freshest Way to Shop. Hundreds of Weekly Specials! Try Peapod and Save \$20!

Taylor Carey likes this.

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Get yours with \$5/mo data from Sprint. Restrictions and other monthly charges may apply.

New Game on Facebook

★★★★★ Candy Crush Saga

Candy Crush Saga - The new Puzzle Game! Click and Play now!

Play Now - Leticia Awog Starks and Hannah Irene Troutman played Candy Crush Saga.

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www.manaraa.com



Kelly  
March 10

It's official: new diet starts Monday.

Like · Comment · Share ·



Kristin  
March 10

Love seeing these beautiful sunsets on my way home from work!



Like · Comment · Share ·



Phil  
March 10

Thought I was going to have a terrible day today because I woke up in an awful mood, but my amazing coworkers cheered me up and made my day go by so quickly. You guys are the best!!

Like · Comment · Share ·



Beth  
March 10

Finally felt the warm sun on my face today! Spring come quickly!

Like · Comment · Share ·



Kyle  
March 10

I know people say it's tough, but I found a job where I'm actually using my degree, making good money, and LOVING what I do. It is possible!!

Like · Comment · Share ·



Tiffany  
March 10

Next vacation spot?



Like · Comment · Share ·



Josh  
March 10

Happy birthday to my best buddy, Luke! Have a great day!

Like · Comment · Share ·



Steph  
March 10

Hate to do this to everyone in the cold weather, but I just got a job in Florida!!!  
#jobrelocation #bringonthesun

Like · Comment · Share ·



Lauren  
March 10

Job promotion – check. New shoes – check. New car – check.



Like · Comment · Share ·



Chris  
March 10

Just got a free coffee at Starbucks...hello increased productivity #coffeeaddict

Like · Comment · Share ·

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Chat (Off)

## Appendix E Downward Social Comparison Manipulation

The screenshot shows a Facebook news feed interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation icons. Below the search bar is a status update box with the text "What's on your mind?". The news feed contains three posts:

- Kelly (March 10):** "So tired of being sick! It started on Sunday and I am feeling the worst I've been all week today. To top it off, my boss told me I'm fired if I don't come in." (Like - Comment - Share)
- Chris (March 10):** "Try to work out this logic: For most magazines, it's cheaper to buy a subscription to the print version, which comes with a free accompanying iPad subscription, than it is to just buy the iPad subscription." (Like - Comment - Share)
- Josh (March 10):** "Looks like I'm going to be late to work today..." (Image of a car accident) (Like - Comment - Share)

The left sidebar includes sections for Favorites (News Feed, Messages, Events, Photos, Browse), Groups (Add Group...), Friends (Close Friends, Family), Apps (Games, On This Day, Games Feed), Pages (Pages Feed, Like Pages, Create a Page...), and a chat status indicator.

The right sidebar features a "Trending" section with news items about Bob Marley's birthday, Aaron Sorkin's death, and Pat Robertson's comments. Below it is a "Sponsored" section with advertisements for Citi credit cards, Discover credit cards, March of Dimes, and 1800flowers.com.



April  
March 10

Crappy day at work and everyone forgot it was my birthday. Glad people care about me. #pissedoff

Like · Comment · Share ·



Michelle  
March 10

Why yes mom, I "am" using my degree. I am using it to cover a hole that I don't know how to fix in the wall of the apartment that I can't really afford to pay for with my crappy unfulfilling job. Thanks for asking.

Like · Comment · Share ·



Seth  
March 10

Okay, so the new 300 movie isn't as bad as I thought it would be.

Like · Comment · Share ·



Pat  
March 10

Precisely how I'm feeling. So much to do, so little time #stressedtothemax



Like · Comment · Share ·



Matt  
March 10

If a single other person in my office were the slightest bit competent, it would be a whole lot more enjoyable to be there.

Like · Comment · Share ·

Peapod Delivers to Indy!  
peapod.com

**Peapod: The Freshest Way to Shop. Hundreds of Weekly Specials! Try Peapod and Save \$20!**

Taylor Carey likes this.

Galaxy Tab 3 Just \$49.99  
shop.sprint.com

Get yours with \$5/mo data from Sprint. Restrictions and other monthly charges may apply.

New Game on Facebook  
★★★★☆: Candy Crush Saga

Candy Crush Saga - The new Puzzle Game! Click and Play now!

Play Now - Leticia Awog Starks and Hannah Irene Troutman played Candy Crush Saga.

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Mike  
March 10

Could the traffic be any more ridiculous right now?? #commuterproblems



Like · Comment · Share ·



Kelsey  
March 10

Apparently having a Skype teleconference isn't so easy, turns out everyone could hear my kid screaming in the background and I had peanut butter on my suit.

Like · Comment · Share ·



Lauren  
March 10

What are your thoughts on country music? Which artist should I listen to? Or should I not even bother? Maybe I'll just stick with Indie...

Like · Comment · Share ·



Taylor  
March 10

Even the snowman wants summer, so sick of the snow. #summercomequickly.



Like · Comment · Share ·



Kevin  
March 10

My job is never what it seems and I can never do the job well enough...I think I'll just go back to bed in hopes of forgetting about the disappointment I've become.

Like · Comment · Share ·



Sarah  
March 10

Okay guys I am on the hunt for a new job . I could stand this hellhole if my boss wasn't such a jerk, but I just can't do it anymore. Anyone know of any job openings in the area? I'm getting desperate!

Like · Comment · Share ·



Mitch  
March 10

Just got my student loan bill and my paycheck on the same day. I need a drink.

Like · Comment · Share ·

## Appendix F Neutral Social Comparison Manipulation

The screenshot shows a Facebook news feed interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation icons. Below the search bar, there are options to "Update Status" and "Add Photos/Video". A text input field contains "What's on your mind?". A "SORT: MOST RECENT" dropdown is visible.

**FAVORITES**

- News Feed
- Messages (5)
- Events
- Photos
- Browse

**GROUPS**

- Add Group...

**FRIENDS**

- Close Friends (18)
- Family (12)

**APPS**

- Games (2)
- On This Day
- Games Feed (20+)

**PAGES**

- Pages Feed (20+)
- Like Pages (20+)
- Create a Page...

Chat is currently off. To chat with your friends, turn on chat.

**Post 1:** Kelly, March 10. "The best part of dinner was not doing the dishes...I do love going out to eat." Like · Comment · Share ·

**Post 2:** Chris, March 10. "Loved watching the Olympics! #teamUSA" SOCHI 2014 logo. Like · Comment · Share ·

**Post 3:** Josh, March 10. "Happy birthday to my best buddy, Luke! Can't believe we've been friends for 4 years now...looking forward to the years to come. Have a great day!" Like · Comment · Share ·

**Trending** Learn More

- Bob Marley: Today Would Have Been Bob Marley's 69th Birthday
- Aaron Sorkin: Aaron Sorkin: Philip Seymour Hoffman's Death Saved 10 Lives | TIME.com
- Pat Robertson: Pat Robertson Tells Fellow Creationist Ken Ham, 'Let's Not Make A Joke Of Ourselves'

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- March of Dimes: marchofdimes.marchofdimes.com Every baby deserves to be born healthy. Help us make it a reality. Join us and Walk today!
- Don't Forget the Flowers!: 1800flowers.com Surprise her with a beautiful bouquet! Order today and Save \$13 on products \$79.99 and up!



April  
March 10

The fact that the elevators are broken in my building (and I have to walk up and down two whole stories - gasp!) totally justifies my cookie at lunch, right?

Like · Comment · Share ·



Michelle  
March 10

What a great month...spring is coming, my parents anniversary, and my bday, cannot wait to celebrate!

Like · Comment · Share ·



Seth  
March 10

What are your thoughts on country music? Which artist should I listen to? Or should I not even bother? Maybe I'll just stick with Indie...

Like · Comment · Share ·



Pat  
March 10

A barista at Starbucks is getting certified...hello free drinks! #coffeaddict

Like · Comment · Share ·



Matt  
March 10

My new, healthier diet. Frankly, it's just to lose the holiday/travel fat that I gained. To health!



Like · Comment · Share ·

Peapod Delivers to Indy!  
peapod.com

**Peapod: The Freshest Way to Shop. Hundreds of Weekly Specials! Try Peapod and Save \$20!**

Taylor Carey likes this.

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New Game on Facebook  
★★★★☆ Candy Crush Saga

**Candy Crush Saga - The new Puzzle Game!** Click and Play now!

**Play Now** - Leticia Awog Starks and Hannah Irene Troutman played Candy Crush Saga.

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**Mike**  
March 10

The Walking Dead returns. Just one month.

Like · Comment · Share ·



**Kelsey**  
March 10

Dinner tonight, nothing like comfort food.



Like · Comment · Share ·



**Lauren**  
March 10

Downton Abbey!!!! I cannot believe what is happening to Anna, and poor Mr. Bates!

Like · Comment · Share ·



**Taylor**  
March 10

Love, love, love Frozen! Well done Disney.



Like · Comment · Share ·



Kevin  
March 10

The Olympics and the World Cup all in one year?! Deal.

Like · Comment · Share ·



Sarah  
March 10

Love these beautiful sunsets.



Like · Comment · Share ·



Emily  
March 10

Try to work out this logic: For most magazines, it's cheaper to buy a subscription to the print version, which comes with a free accompanying iPad subscription, than it is to just buy the iPad subscription.

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