**Advisory Board Grant Report, 2018-2019**

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I was awarded an advisory board grant award for a course release for the spring 2019 semester. This course release allowed me to work on empirical research that is timely, collaborative, and will be written up for publication. This research is still ongoing. Below, I describe the purpose, what we have done, and what stage the research is in currently.

The purpose of the research was to examine whether social media can lead to positive outcomes. Social media have been linked to a number of negative psychological outcomes include loneliness and depression and anxiety, bullying, and the fear of missing out. But, we believe that the outcomes of social media use can go both ways—it can lead to both good and bad psychological outcomes. And, this process is much more nuanced than media attention has suggested. We expanded on prior research that showed that students who viewed their own Facebook page for five minutes were better able to cope with self-threatening information. They suggested that viewing one’s Facebook page allows you to affirm the important qualities and aspects of one’s identity. We expanded this research by examining whether these affirming qualities would extend to Instagram, which is now the more popular site when it comes to younger individuals.

During the spring 2019 semester, my student and I, along with a researcher at Radford University designed two experiments that would test whether Instagram had self-affirming qualities. We spent the spring programming a game called Cyberball, which we used to as a self-threatening experience. It is a game that is used to create social exclusion or inclusion. We also designed Qualtrics surveys, and created a protocol for one of the experiments, which was to be conducted in person. Finally, we completed and submitted our IRB applications for the studies—which were approved at the very end of the spring semester.

During the fall 2019 semester, we collected data. In November, for one of the experiments, we submitted a poster presentation for the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association. This poster was presented in April 2019. For the second experiment, we needed a larger sample size, so data collection continued through Fall 2020. Data collection for both experiments is now complete. I met with my collaborator at the annual meeting for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology during the Spring 2020 semester. After meeting, we decided that the research would benefit from at least two more follow-up experiments. These projects are now currently in planning phase.

In addition to allowing me to progress with the self-affirmation research, the advisory board grant also gave me time to start a separate student-led project with a collaborator at Texas Tech University. This project examines student athletes’ use of social media. We designed the study during the spring 2019 semester, and received IRB approval. We collected data during Fall 2019. I recently presented this research at the Media and Technology Preconference at the annual meeting for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (January, 2020).

In conclusion, the advisory board grant, which was used to support a course release during the spring 2019 semester, allowed me to design and carryout three separate studies, all of which have now been presented at conferences.