

Lock Haven University

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Contact:

Dr. Reynol Junco

814.441.0339

rey.junco@gmail.com

Some Facebook uses could positively affect student GPA
LHU professor publishes study

Lock Haven, Pennsylvania - Results of a study released last week in *Computers in Human Behavior* by Dr. Reynol Junco of Lock Haven University, Pennsylvania, show a positive correlation between college grade point average and Facebook use when students use the social network for information collection and sharing.

Study participants included 1,839 college students, all of whom were U.S. residents and admitted through the regular admissions process at a four-year, public, primary residential institution. Data collected and examined centered around the relationship between multiple measures of frequency of Facebook use, participation in site activities, time spent preparing for class and overall GPA. GPA data were gathered from the university registrar.

Results reveal that the social network's use positively related to GPA when that student used his or her time on the site mimicking educational behaviors, such as sharing links or gathering information. The time a student spent on the social network only weakly correlated to the time he or she spent preparing for class.

As with excessive offline socializing, Facebook social activities, such as chatting and updating one's status, were negatively related to either GPA or time spent preparing for class. The author observed a negative relationship between time spent on Facebook and GPA, with students who invested 279 added minutes on Facebook per day above average also earning an overall GPA .37 points below average. But the relationship between time spent on Facebook and grades could not be explained by students spending less time studying.

"While further study is necessary, these results do help educators understand which Facebook activities could prove problematic and which were beneficial, when to target interventions around comparable online and offline behaviors like excessive socializing,

and the possibilities of using Facebook to enhance student learning and engagement,” Junco explained.

Educators have an opportunity to transform activities in a manner that fully leverages those individual features that promote positive academic outcomes, Junco concluded. For instance, because research indicates a positive correlation between communication and gains in academic performance, faculty members could foster online course-related discourse via self-administered Facebook groups.

Dr. Rey Junco’s full study, “Too much face and not enough books: The relationship between multiple indices of Facebook use and academic performance”, is available online at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563211001932>. Media representatives may contact the author for interview requests.

Dr. Rey Junco is a social media scholar whose primary research interest lies in using quantitative methods to analyze the effects of social media on student psychosocial development, engagement, and learning. He earned his doctorate in education in counselor education from Penn State University. Junco also earned his master’s degree in clinical psychology from Penn State where he studied and conducted research in neuropsychology. He holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology from The University of Florida where he studied and conducted research in neuroscience. He is currently a professor in the Department of Academic Development and Counseling and the Director of Disability Services at Lock Haven University.

Lock Haven University is a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), the largest provider of higher education in the commonwealth. Its 14 universities offer more than 250 degree and certificate programs in more than 120 areas of study. Nearly 405,000 system alumni live and work in Pennsylvania.

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