

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

UCARE Research Products

UCARE: Undergraduate Creative Activities &
Research Experiences

Spring 4-2020

Media Use and Depression in College Students

Vanessa Woosley

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, nessa3bros@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ucareresearch>



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Woosley, Vanessa, "Media Use and Depression in College Students" (2020). *UCARE Research Products*. 165.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ucareresearch/165>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the UCARE: Undergraduate Creative Activities & Research Experiences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in UCARE Research Products by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Media Use and Depression in College Students

Vanessa R Woosley

Sociology Department, College of Arts and Sciences



Background

Depression and College Students

- New stressors introduced
- Growing need for mental health services on campuses

Media Use Habits of College Students

- Televisions
- 98% of college students use the Internet

Media Consumption and Well-Being

- New media use associated with higher reports of mental health issues
- New media as a social support system

Methods

Dependent Variables

- Distress
- General Health

Independent Variables

- Old Media
- New Media

Mediating Variables

- Self-Esteem
- Life Satisfaction
- Stress

Analytical Plan

- Bivariate analysis through correlation testing
- Ordinary least-squares regression to test links between the media variables and the proposed mediating variables
- Regression to test significance of the media variables on well-being variables
- Self-esteem, life satisfaction, and stress were introduced into the models to explore possible mediation

Results

Internet hours is significant in relation to all three mediating variables. The more Internet hours one consumed, the higher the stress, the lower the self-esteem and the lower the life satisfaction people experienced. Old media, in contrast, is not significantly related to any of these factors.

Internet hours are significantly related to distress; old media is not significant. In the second model, the mediating variables of self-esteem, life satisfaction, and stress are included. Stress is a significant, positive value indicating that the higher the stress, the more distress. Life satisfaction and self-esteem are negative, significant values demonstrating that the lower one's life satisfaction or self-esteem the higher the distress. Internet hours, however, loses its significance suggesting these factors mediate between new media use and depression.

Old media use was significant in the base model. However, in the second model it lost its significance when the mediating factors were introduced. Self-esteem, life satisfaction, and stress were all significant in the full model, meaning that old media use effects college students through the mediating variables of self-esteem, life satisfaction and stress. Given that old media use was correlated with each of these variables, it could be a case of mediation. However, the regression model (Table 3) indicated no association with old media use once demographics were controlled. The relationship among these variables needs additional research.

Limitations/Future Research

Data Limitations

- Ungeneralizable sample
- Media Consumption measured broadly
- No specific measure of how Internet was used
- No information on how respondents accessed the Internet

Future Research

- Focus on Internet
- Video Games as a symptom
- Media Multitasking

Research Questions

Is there a direct relationship between both old media and new media and depressive symptoms and self-reported health?

Does increased stress, lower self-esteem, and lower life-satisfaction increase depression and decrease health?

	Sex	NonWhite	Age	Parent Education	Distress	Health	Old Media Use	Internet Hours	Stress	Self Esteem	Life Satisfaction
Sex	1										
Nonwhite	0.03	1									
Age	0.08*	-0.06	1								
Parent Education	0.05	-0.30*	0.01	1							
Distress	-0.12*	0.07*	-0.12	-0.10*	1						
Health	0.13*	-0.12*	-0.02	0.06	-0.36*	1					
Old Media Use	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	0.05	0.08*	-0.10*	1				
Internet Hours	0.01	0.11*	-0.01	-0.06	0.15*	-0.06	0.41*	1			
Stress	-0.02	0.04	-0.01	-0.03	0.49*	-0.31*	0.0945*	0.14*	1		
Self Esteem	0.10*	-0.02	0.04	0.06	-0.56*	0.33*	-0.09*	-0.12*	0.35*	1	
Life Satisfaction	-0.03	-0.09*	-0.01	0.08*	-0.43*	0.34*	-0.07*	-0.11*	0.32*	0.47*	1

Conclusion

Based on the prior research and the current research results, there appears to be a relationship between media consumption and well-being among college students, especially new media like Internet use and psychological distress. Furthermore, based on the results of this paper, Internet use has an effect on self-esteem, life satisfaction, and stress. The more Internet use, the lower the self-esteem and life satisfaction, and the higher the stress. These factors, in turn, affect distress.

Old media use (television and movies), in contrast, is less common in this sample of college students, consistent with prior research. Interestingly, old media use had a limited effect on students' stress, life satisfaction, and self-esteem, and did not appear to affect well-being. New media matters more because of the amount of time spent on with new media is more than old media. 96% of Americans own a cell phone and 90% of people use the internet (Perrin, 2019).

Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this thesis project to Dr. Lisa Kort-Butler and Dr. Christina Falci for their support throughout this process. Thanks to my friends and family for always encouraging me to do my best. I would also like to acknowledge the Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience (UCARE) program for their support as well.