

Communication: Social Media vs. In person

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Introduction

According to researcher, the internet is perceived as a characteristic of modern life where people can communicate through computer mediated communication (CMC). CMC can elicit higher rates of sharing information online than in offline communication (Friend & Hamilton, 2016).

- Social media are the online communication Websites and application channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing, and collaboration (Communications, 2017).
- Previous research suggests that SNS use is related to increased face-to-face communication (Spradlin, Cuttler, Bunce & Carrier; 2017).
- Today, over 1.5 billion people are members of the social networking site (SNS) Facebook [1] Brailovskaya J, Margraf J (2016).
- Specifically, the relationship between Facebook use and face-to-face communication was significant for individuals with low to moderate levels of extraversion (i.e., introverts) only. As extraversion increased, the magnitude of the relationship between Facebook use and face-to-face time decreased (Spradlin et al., 2017).
- Individuals with poor social skills may be attracted to online communication partly because they do not need to deal with the rich nonverbal cues that are normally present during face-to-face social interactions (Kang & Munoz, 2014).
- One in four people spends more time socializing online than they do in person. Even when there is an opportunity to see people face-to-face, up to 11 percent of adults still prefer to stay at home and communicate on their devices instead (Emma Reeves April 09, 2015)
- Based on the fact that we live in the 21st century and most people do have some type of social media account and are constantly on their phones, we hypothesize that the majority of people prefer to communicate online rather than engaging in face-to-face conversations. Furthermore, our hypothesis concentrates on exploring the personality traits (OCEAN) of people.

Methodology

Participants:

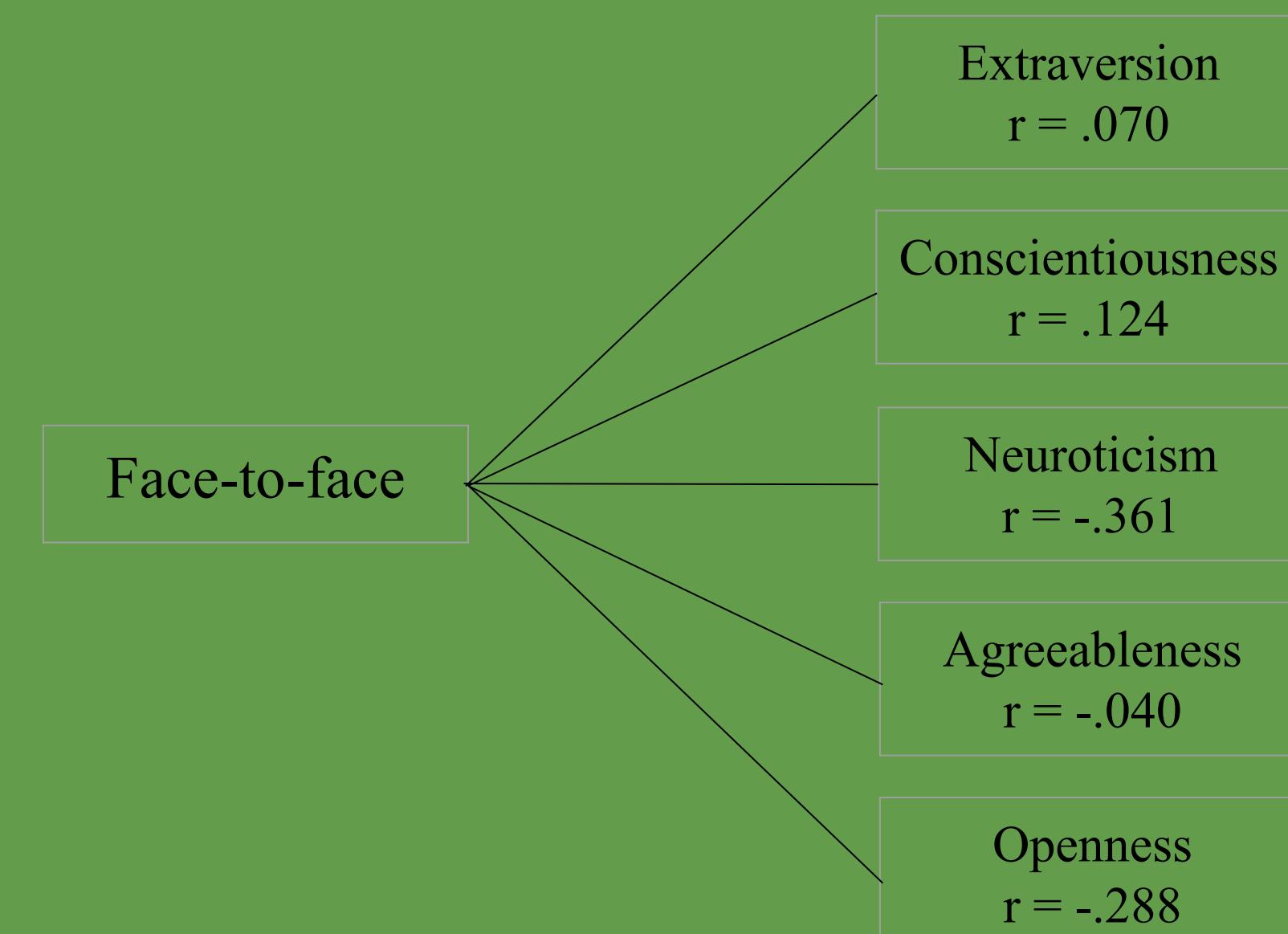
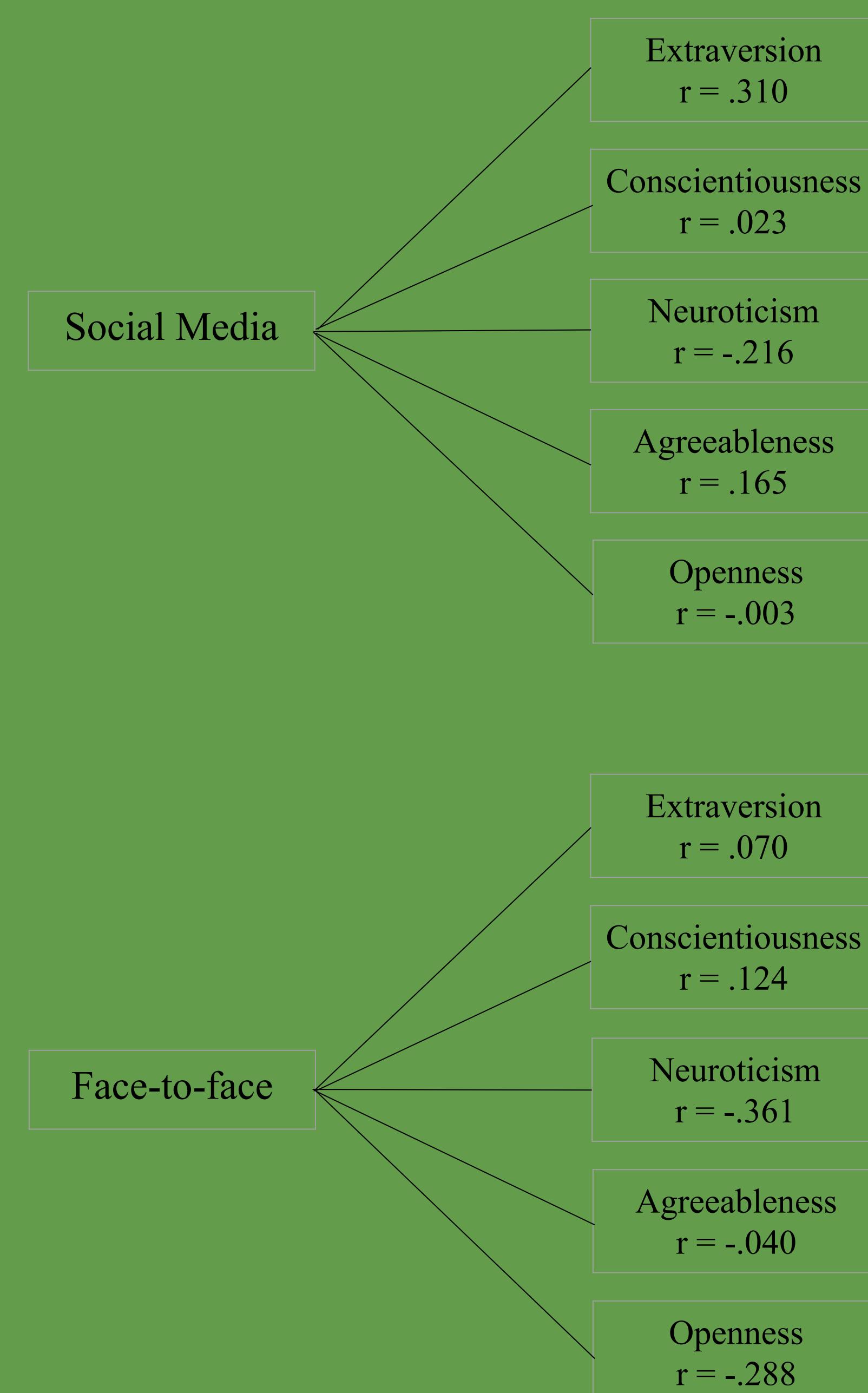
- 57 participants, age range from 18 to 34 years (M=20.6)
- 25 males, 30 females, and two who identify as others from Foothill and De Anza Community College.
- Ethnicities: Asian (n=22), more than 1 race (n=19), White (n=10), Hispanic (n=3), African American (n=2), Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (n=1).

Materials and Procedure

- 12 Questions indicating one's preference of online or in-person communication. Answer choices are rated from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree).
 - E.g. "I find it difficult finding words to express my feelings in person."
- 30 Questions of Personality traits. Answer choices are rated from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree), with the higher they agree, the lower their scores are on their personality traits (OCEAN).
 - E.g. "I like to have a lot of people around me."
- 11 Demographic questions.
 - Gender, self-reported age, ethnicity, and information about how often people spend on social media accounts (if they have), and how they communicate with their partners (if they have ones).
- Participants were asked to fill out the survey in order to receive extra credit for their records.

Results

- People who have low scores on extraversion tend to be more comfortable sharing information face-to-face ($r=.310$).
- People whose scores are low on neuroticism are less comfortable sharing information face-to-face ($r = -.361$).
- People who are less open tend to be more comfortable sharing information on social media format ($r = -.288$).
- The results indicate that there are no significant correlation between people who have high scores on conscientiousness and agreeableness with either communicating online or face-to-face.



Conclusions

- Based on our results, our hypothesis was wrong. We found that people, especially extroverts, prefer to have a regular face-to-face conversation rather than engaging in a form of online communication, which was out of our expectation.
- Our research did have limitations, one being that we could have gotten a larger sample size and a more diverse sample.
- It was interesting that, even though technology has advanced tremendously and it is now easier and faster to communicate online, our results showed that in-person conversations are still what people prefer.

Acknowledgments

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