페이스북에서 상대방에 대한 존재 인식: 사회적 현존감의 실증적 분석☆

Awareness of the Others on Facebook: Empirical Analysis of Social Presence

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ABSTRACT

TThe purpose of this study was to explore the reasons why college students use Facebook and the ways in which they feel of social presence while using Facebook. In fact, the study aimed to specify the links between motivations for using SNS and a sense of 'being together'. The findings of this study suggest that major motivations of SNS use were social interaction, entertainment, self-presentation, and information-seeking. Specifically, results from a survey of 280 respondents revealed that college students used Facebook to seek maintenance and connection with friends, to express themselves, to get information about school activities, and to be entertained. These findings are consistent with the existing literature regarding SNS as a primary channel to maintain the existing social relationships among college students. The study also found that all motivation factors, except information-seeking factor, were positively and significantly related to social presence. The strongest correlations were between social presence and Facebook use for social interaction and entertainment needs. It seemed that users who seek social interaction and entertainment needs are more likely to feel a sense of being with others while users who seek to get information are less likely to feel a sense of social presence. These findings implied that to some extent, a sense of social presence occurs in the context of Facebook and that the experience of social presence depends on what college students seek from Facebook use. In addition, the results showed a positive relationship between Facebook use and social presence; the more college students use Facebook, the more they are likely to experience sense of social presence. Given that Facebook provides college students with a place where they can share thought and feelings among friends, it can be concluded that Facebook contributes to the sense of belonging among users. And such feeling may enhance a sense of presence with others while using Facebook. These findings suggest that uses and gratifications researchers should consider the concept of social presence as an important variable in explaining what audience members do with media.

☞ keyword : Facebook, Motivations, Social presence, Awareness of the others

1. INTRODUCTION

Many studies on social networking sites drawing from uses and gratifications approach suggest that SNSs fulfill several gratifications such as providing social support, emotional attachment and information seeking [1, 2].

In particular, many studies confirm that SNSs support both the maintenance of the existing social relationships and the formation of new connections [3, 4]. Furthermore, individuals feel emotionally connected with the others during SNSs use. Given that SNSs evoke emotional attachment among users, critical issue addressed in the literature is whether or not SNS users experience, a sense of "being with others"- social presence in virtual environment.

According to Biocca, Hams, and Burgoon [5], social presence is defined as "the moment-by-moment awareness of the co-presence of another sentient being accompanied by a sense of engagement with the other" (p. 2). This awareness is regarded as an important factor for the success of many types of communication technologies ranging from low bandwidth interactive text technologies (e.g., email) to high bandwidth audio-visual technologies (e.g. video conferencing). These technologies have created interactive virtual environment in which people interact and in some cases, experience social presence. Many studies confirm that interactive virtual environments created by Internet technologies evoke social presence and that a user's experience of social presence impacts on online social interaction [6,7,8,9]. However, few studies have assessed to what extent SNS users feel a sense of 'being with others' or experience social presence in a

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virtual site.

If people use SNS to get instant connection with others, it seems reasonable to assume that users may perceive the others. In addition, they may feel a sense of being with others while using SNS and finally such feeling may affect their usage of SNSs.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between SNS use and social presence by focusing on Facebook use among college students. Drawing from uses and gratifications approach and social presence theory, the present study suggests that the concept of social presence may be integrated into the uses and gratifications paradigm.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

An important approach within the communication discipline that examines media uses and effects is the uses and gratifications approach. As a tool or understanding the motivations for media use, the uses and gratifications approach has guided most studies of new media technologies.

Under the assumptions that "people are aware of their needs and able to identify their sources of satisfaction" (p.179), Katz, Gurevitch, and Hass [10] attempted to create a conclusive list of human needs and to determine which media most effectively meet those needs. They identified 14 needs and grouped them into five categories: cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs and escapist needs.

Uses and gratifications studies suggest that people seek broad gratifications and that media function as sources of diversion such as entertainment, information seeking and social interaction. These studies have witnessed people's media consumption as goal-directed. People at least are aware of their needs (or motivations) and they actively use the media to satisfy these needs [11].

In essence, media consumption is seen as a selective behavior in which people attempt to satisfy a variety of needs. Uses and gratifications studies, therefore, investigate the extent to which people attempt to use media to fulfill these needs and the extent to which those attempts are successful [11].

2.2 MOTIVATIONS FOR USING SNS

Some new technology researchers have advocated uses and gratifications approach to investigate why people use SNSs. Much attention has focused on Facebook, since it is regarded as one of the biggest online social networking services. Launched on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his fellow Harvard University students, Facebook gained huge popularity among the original members and it gradually expanded support for others, adding new functions simultaneously. As of June 2014 Facebook had over 1.3 billion active users, according to status announced by Facebook. [12]

Studies on Facebook suggest that people used Facebook to keep in touch with old friends and to maintain or intensify relationships established offline. For instance, college students used Facebook most often for social interaction, primarily with friends with whom the students had a pre-established relationship offline [13]. Similarly, college students in the U.S. used social networking sites for social interaction with offline acquaintances in order to maintain friendships rather than to make new friends [14]. On the other hand, from a Korean sample one study found that motivations for using SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter and KaKaoStory were identity, content-sharing, communication, connection, and expert search [15].

However, the motivation may differ due to the users' personality. A study focusing on the gender differences in motivations for using Facebook found that females were more likely to use for group-in-self, passing time, and entertainment, while males were more likely to report SNS use for social compensation and social identity gratifications[16].

Other studies examined cultural influence on SNS use. For example, in a study of motivation for and patterns of using SNS among college students in America and Korea, the results show that although the major motives for using SNS are similar between the two countries, the weights placed of the motives are different. Reflecting the unique social nature of the medium, Korean college students put more weight on obtaining social support from existing social relationships, while American students place relatively greater emphasis on seeking entertainment [17]. Several other studies indicated that people use Facebook to gratify needs of self-presentation, passing time, and entertainment [18].

2.3 SOCIAL PRESENCE THEORY

"Social presence," initially proposed by Short, Williams, and Christie [19] was defined as "degree of salience of the other person in the interaction". They insisted that different media convey varying degrees of social presence based on their ability to transmit nonverbal and vocal information. Consequently, Short and his colleagues regard social presence as a quality of the communication medium. This notion, however, was challenged by researchers who studied in a variety of mediated communication environments [5]. They argued that social presence was as much a matter of individual perceptions as an objective quality of the medium. For instance, Walther [20] insisted that social presence should be viewed as a subjective quality dependent on objective qualities of the medium, because perceptions of the degree of social presence in an interaction vary among users. Therefore, several studies on social presence attempt to understand social presence in terms of the user's experience of the medium. Today, operative definition of social presence and its measurement, however, vary among researchers [5]. For instance, Mason [21] insists social presence is a "feeling of co-presence" as individuals feel as if they are located in the same environment. It is also defined as "the level of awareness of the co-presence of another human being or intelligence" [22]. Other researchers define social presence as mutual awareness, "the extent to which other beings in the world appears to exist and react to the use" [23]. Furthermore, social presence is defined as "virtual togetherness" in a mediated environment [6].

SNSs emphasize the presence of other people's involvement in order to facilitate interaction through the Internet. Because individuals prefer to use the medium that produces highest social presence [24], a high perceived social presence would have a greater impact on individuals to join and to continue using an online social networking site. In fact, one study found that social presence is the most important factor determining college student use of Facebook [25]. To examine the social presence on Facebook among college students, this study defines social presence as the user's perception of "being together" or the feeling of "emotional connectedness" in virtual environment.

2.4 EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL PRESENCE IN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Social presence is growing in popularity as an important factor for understanding effects of new media. Several researchers found that social presence had an impact on CMC environment. Findings indicated that user's experience of social presence was positively related to greater social use of email [26], motivations for Internet use [8], and Instance Messaging satisfaction [9]. These findings confirm that the experience of social presence is related to motivations behind the use of certain types of CMC. And when the feeling of social presence is high, users perceived that they learn more. Furthermore, social presence enhances satisfaction with CMC use.

Other researchers have examined social presence in virtual environment. For instance, MUD game users experienced "being with others" during game, almost 70% of participants reported that they felt a sense of presence with others while using the technology [7]. Other studies focusing on social presence in an online learning environment indicated that students who felt high social presence learned more from the online courses and were more satisfied with instructor than students with low perceived social presence. [27]

In light of these facts, it is possible that as a one of the most popular SNSs, Facebook, may evoke social presence and that this feeling of social presence can lead to heavy usage of and satisfaction with Facebook activities.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As newest and fastest growing Internet service, SNS has provided a challenge to researchers. The growing number of new users and the variety of SNS services continually has caught the attention of media researchers. The present study seeks to explore the uses and gratifications of SNS among college students. Facebook is a friend-networking site that has become extremely popular among college students. To understand the role of Facebook within the college sector, the personal and social needs individuals are obtaining from using this friend-networking site should be explored. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

RQ1. What are the salient motivations for using Facebook among college students?

The literature on new media effects suggests that social presence is a significant predictor of the user's satisfaction with online social interaction. For instance, CMC user's perception of social presence is positively related to the greater use of e-mail, interactive TV and computer conferencing. Furthermore, studies report that specific motives are positively related to user's experience of social presence. For instance, respondents who used Internet for passing time, convenience, entertainment, and interpersonal needs reported that they felt a high degree of social presence [8]. Also motivations for using Instant Messaging are highly related to sense of social presence [9].

Based on literature discussed above, the following research question is proposed:

RQ2. How is students' experience of social presence on Facebook related to motivations for using Facebook?

4. METHOD

4.1 SAMPLING

The respondents for this study were college students in South Korea. They were drawn from undergraduate communication classes at university. Participant in the study was voluntary and respondents received extra credit for the participation.

The online survey was conducted in May 2014. A total of 280 surveys were completed. The majority (58.5%, N=163) of respondents were females, and the average of age of the respondents was 22.5years.

4.2 SURVEY MEASUREMENTS

To measure Facebook gratifications sought, respondents were given a list of 14 statements which were adapted from the previous studies on Facebook [e.g.1,2,4]. They were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

To measure a sense of social presence through Facebook use the study used 3 items. These items were selected from previous studies [5,6,7] and modified for the final list of social presence. Three items are "I feel a sense of being together with the other person while using Facebook", "I feel emotionally connected with the other person while using Facebook", and "I feel as if I and the other person are located in the same room while using Facebook." Respondents were asked to report their levels of agreement with these statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

Finally, to assess Facebook use behavior respondents were asked to report how long they have been using Facebook and how many minutes they use Facebook in a typical day.

5. RESULTS

5.1 GRATIFICATIONS SOUGHT FROM FACEBOOK USE

The first research question concerns identifying motivations of Facebook use among college students. To determine gratifications factors an exploratory principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation as conducted. The analysis accounted for 60% of total variance and the results are summarized in Table 1.

The first factor was comprised of 5 items and suggests that Facebook functions to fulfill the need for "social interaction." The second factor consisted of 3 items and suggests that Facebook functions to fulfill the need for 'entertainment.' The third factor was comprised of 3 items and suggests that Facebook functions to fulfill the need for "self-presentation.' The fourth factor consisted of 3 items and suggests that Facebook functions to fulfill the need for 'information-seeking'. The index of each factor was tested with Cronbach's alpha and it was reliable, ranging from .81-.87.

The means of each gratifications factor were assessed to determine which gratifications sought were the most salient for this group of respondents. Social interaction (M=4.3, SD=1.02) and self-presentation (M=4.1, SD=1.01) had the highest mean scores.

(Table 1) Result for Factor Analysis

Reasons for using Facebook	Factor Roading	Reliablity Cronbach's α
Factor 1: Social Interaction		.87
To get peer support from others	.81	
To feel closer to others	.79	
To maintain relationships with my old friends	.70	
To talk about something new with others	.70	
To stay in touch with people I know	.60	
Factor 2: Entertainment		.81
Because it is funny	.86	
Because it is entertaining	.84	
Because it is exciting	.61	
Factor 3: Self-presentation		.81
To post daily events and photos	.81	
To express who I really am	.73	
To update my profile	.73	
Factor 4: Information seeking		.83
To get information that is not available elsewhere	.86	
To learn about on/off campus events	.86	
To get useful information about product/services	.63	

5.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GRATIFICATIONS SOUGHT FROM FACEBOOK USE AND SOCIAL PRESENCE

The second research question concerns how social presence is related to gratifications sought from using Facebook. For the analysis a social presence index was constructed from a set of 5 items that measured social presence. Then Pearson correlations were conducted to understand relationships between gratifications factors and social presence index. These correlations were revealed that all gratifications factor, except information-seeking factor, were positively and significantly related to social presence. The correlations are presented in Table 2.

(Table2) Pearson Correlations between motivations and social presence

	Social presence
Social interaction	.38**
Entertainment	.32**
Self-presentation	.18*
Information-seeking	.03

When college students used Facebook for social interaction, entertainment, self-presentation, they experienced social presence. However, motivation for information seeking was not related to user's experience of social presence. The strongest correlations were between social presence and Facebook use for social interaction (r=.38, p<.01) and entertainment needs(r=.32, p<.01). These findings suggest that social and entertainment motives for using Facebook are highly related to sense of social presence. Respondents in the sample indicated that they felt a high degree of social presence when they used Facebook to get peer support, feel closer to others, and maintain relationships with their friends. Respondents also reported that they experienced social presence when they use Facebook to have a fun and entertainment. In addition, the results showed a positive relationship between Facebook use and social presence; the more college students use Facebook, the more they are likely to experience sense of social presence.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore college students' gratifications from Facebook use and their experience of social presence while using Facebook. The results showed that students used Facebook to seek maintenance and connection with friends, to express themselves, to get information about school activities, and to take a rest. These findings are consistent with the existing literature regarding SNS as a primary channel to maintain the existing social relationships among college students.

A major contribution of this study lies in understanding the relationship between Facebook use and feeling of social presence. The findings indicated that users who seek social interaction needs are more likely to feel a sense of being with

others when they use Facebook. In other words, students who use SNS to maintain personal relationships and get social support feel sense of mutual togetherness and co-presence during SNS activities.

On the other hand, information-seeking is not a significant factor to evoke a sense of social presence on Facebook. These findings imply that a sense of social presence, "being together", or "emotional connectedness" occurs on Facebook and that experience of social presence depends on what college students seek form Facebook use. This echoes several previous studies that noted positive relationships between social presence and motivations for Internet use [8] and Instant Messaging system [9]. However, the results demonstrating the relationships between social presence and motivations for SNS use suggest that uses and gratifications researchers should consider the concept of social presence as an important variable in explaining what audience members do with media.

Given the fact that Facebook provides college students with a place where they can share thought and feelings among friends, it can be concluded that Facebook contributes to the sense of belonging among users. And such feeling may enhance a sense of presence with others while using Facebook.

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