

Qualitative interviews use participants who have given consent to be asked questions regarding the topic being researched. These interviews provide a space for participants to expand on personal thoughts, feelings, and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers for these questions and participants are allowed to decline answering any questions they like. The purpose of these interviews are mainly to gain insight into people's lives and meet them where they are at. Rather than collecting specific data, qualitative interviews record stories and thoughts that participants are willing to share and find common themes amongst these responses to try and gain answers to the research questions. For this qualitative methods research I found two participants willing to do interviews with me and discuss their experiences with social media. I used a semi-structured interview format where I had previously planned questions and follow ups, but left room for off scripted questions and the ability to explore other things brought up by participants. I had two main research questions, and created a series of questions to ask the participants in order to prompt answers about their personal lives and experiences that will help answer the questions I am researching.

What experiences do college students have with negative social media content affecting their moods and thoughts?

Negative content on social media can cause students to see changes in their mood, and avoid this content when possible. Within both interviews, I noticed that both participants did not enjoy seeing negative content on their social media accounts, one participant, Catherine, stating that "they don't make [her] feel great." Both participants expressed how they see content about death, and feel like it is content they would rather not see and sometimes even makes them cry. One participant, Rebecca states, "I normally just click not interested, if it is something upsetting." These college students find this negative content to be an upsetting part of their day, and sometimes it has a lasting effect, while other times it is something they see and are sad about for a second, but scroll and move on with their day.

Popular trends on social media at the time can influence changes in moods, thoughts, and opinions on various things. Both college student participants expressed how seeing things on social media did have a part in creating their interests, likes/dislikes, and opinions. Catherine touched more on fashion trends and how things she previously did not find fashionable became of more interest to her whenever it began to trend on social media, then when they stopped trending she reverted back to her initial opinion. Rebecca, provided a different aspect of the same insight, discussing the side of politics and how she sees a lot of different viewpoints on social media, and, although not her only source of information, she uses these to help inform herself and create opinions. Rebecca states "it's good to see people from all over the world and see how they think, or their perspective on certain situations." She finds social media to be a helpful tool in creating well informed opinions. Although not directly related to negative content, this information provided by the participants allows us to see how social media has a big influence in the minds of these college students, which is likely mirrored in other areas, like seeing negativity online.

How do college students who use social media feel it impacts their productivity in daily life?

College Students find social media to oftentimes become a distraction in their daily routines.

The routines consist mainly of school, seeing friends, and daily household actions. Both participants describe their daily routines to be interrupted at times by social media. Rebecca discusses how the first thing she does in the morning is “sit on [her] phone for an hour before [she] even gets out of bed.” When asked how many hours a day she spends on social media she states, “I’m awake probably like 12. I’m probably on social media, like 6.” So, she spends approximately half of her day on social media. Additionally she states, “if I had no social media, there would be a lot more free time to actually get stuff done.” Based on her responses I have concluded that social media takes up a large portion of her day rather than being productive in other areas of her life. Similarly, Catherine discussed how she feels that social media is a distraction to her, more specifically while she is trying to get schoolwork done. This then causes her schoolwork to take longer and takes time away from her day that she could spend doing other things like hanging out with her friends. Between the two participants' responses there is a conclusion that social media intertwines its way into both participants' lives and decreases the productivity of their days.

College students use social media for entertainment and feelings of connectedness and are often not willing to give that up for increased productivity. While exploring the relationship between social media use and productivity, I saw a common theme of motivations for social media use come up as reasons why participants are so adamant on using social media. Entertainment was one of the reasons both participants expressed using social media saying it is “just a time to get away and have a laugh without it being that serious.” Additionally, discussing how in the past Rebecca had different hobbies, but now being in college she uses social media as her source of entertainment mostly due to the convenience of having her phone with her at all times. The other motivation that was very prevalent in both participants' responses was their feelings of connectedness due to social media. Rebecca and Catherine both discussed how they use social media to talk to their friends and keep up with the lives of people in their communities. When what stops them from giving up social media for any period of time, they both expressed the worry that they would be disconnected from their friends. Catherine even stated that the main reason holding her back from getting off social media is “the fear of disconnecting from people.” So despite both participants sharing thoughts about decreased productivity in their days due to social media, they both also have determined that connecting to people through social media outweighs the productivity loss.

These findings are useful when determining the main motivations of using social media amongst college students, and the importance it holds in their lives. Social media is such a big part of these college students' days and has a major impact on them both mentally and physically in their routines. This research matters because it allows us to examine the use of social media in our society and identify faults and problems that need to be addressed and find solutions to help fix these problems. For example, how can we make students feel connected to others in their communities without social media to increase their productivity in their day. This research can also help bring awareness to what kind of content we are putting out into the world and understanding the impacts it can have on the people seeing it, good or bad. For marketers this could be useful in strategizing how to make products trend and promote what they are selling. For others it can create mindfulness in keeping negative content off social media so that other people don't have to witness it and deal with the emotions that come with that type of content. Social media is a major aspect of college student's lives so doing research and learning more about different effects it has on students will always be important to improving the quality

of students' lives and physical and mental health..