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As Predicted: "Chatroom Social Exploration and Exploitation" (#88699)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

Do more emotionally intense conversation starters make people interact with fewer partners? We will answer this question by bringing anonymous participants into an online chat platform in groups of 10. Participants will be given a set of conversation starters they will use to guide their conversations. They will be free to initiate one-on-one conversations with the 9 other participants and can choose how many people they want to talk to over the course of the session. They can maintain multiple conversation threads at once.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

We will add up how many words each person sent to every other person in a 10-person chatroom. We will use these counts as the edges in a social network graph created for each participant session (ns=10). We will compute the following social network metrics using igraph:

At the session level: Network density will be calculated by dividing the actual number of connections by the total amount.

At the individual level: Weighted indegree and outdegree centrality scores will be calculated for each participant.

We will also include a modified version of the social connectedness scale (Lee & Robbins, 1995) as a subjective measure of connection.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

Participants will be assigned to two conditions: small-talk and meaningful talk. Assignment will happen at the experimental session level (with 10 participants in each session group). Condition assignment will determine which set of conversation starters they use.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

We will use the `lm()` function in R to regress network density on experimental condition (coded as -.5=small talk, .5 = meaningful talk). We will use the `lmer()` function to regress a) indegree centrality, b) outdegree centrality, and c) self-reported social connectedness on experimental condition and will include a random intercept for session (since participants in a session are not independent from each other). We will examine the model residuals to check that model assumptions are met, and if we have nonnormality, nonlinearity, or heteroscedasticity, we will transform variables as necessary or use `glm()/glmer()`.

We will use Linguistic Inquiry Word Count 2015 (LIWC; Pennebaker et al, 2015) to determine if the emotional intensity of conversations actually differed per group.

Secondary regressions using our IV and DVs of interest will control for the proportion of female and white participants within each chatroom (for the group-level model predicting network density) and, in addition, we will control for participant gender identity in the individual-level models. We will conduct exploratory analyses using the following variables:

Positive affect (Diener et al.)

Enticing primal world belief (Clifton et al., 2019)

Psychological richness (Oishi et al. 2019)

SWLS (Diener et al., 1985)

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

We will exclude any participants under the age of 18. Groups that have less than 10 participants will be excluded from the analyses. Participants that failed the attention check within quadratics or failed to follow directions (e.g., did not actually use the conversation starters in their chats) will also be excluded from analyses.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size?

No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

We expect to recruit 300 participants from the psychology department's participant pool.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register?

(e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

Nothing else.

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