Social sharing through interpersonal media: Patterns and effects on emotional well-being

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Social sharing is the act of discussing significant emotional events with others. Using a daily diary methodology, this study investigated (1) patterns of media use for social sharing; and (2) effects of mediated social sharing on sharers' emotions. Results show that easily accessible and non-intrusive media (i.e., texting, Twitter) were more likely to be used for sharing positive than negative events, and intrusive and rich media (i.e., phone calling) were more likely to be used for sharing negative than positive events. Highly intense positive events were more likely to be shared via Twitter than low-intensity positive events, and highly intense negative events were more likely to be shared face-to-face than low-intensity negative events. Regardless of the medium used, people experienced increased positive affect after sharing positive events, and increased negative affect after sharing negative events. The results extend the social sharing framework, and advance the media use and effects literature.

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1. Introduction

Social sharing, or communicating with others about significant emotional experiences, is a highly prevalent phenomenon. People share these experiences with relational partners about 90% of the time (Rimé, Philippot, Boca, & Mesquita, 1992), a rate that is strikingly similar across cultures (Singh-Manoux & Finkenauer, 2001; Yogo & Onoe, 1998). This suggests that social sharing may fulfill fundamental human needs related to emotional expression and social connectedness. Additionally, the simple act of social sharing has been shown to have powerful effects on sharers' emotional well-being, amplifying their initial emotional response to the triggering event (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004; Lambert et al., 2013; Langston, 1994; Marin, Bohanek, & Fivush, 2008; Rimé et al., 1992).

Due to its prevalence and emotional significance, social sharing has received a great deal of empirical attention. However, the existing body of research has exclusively examined social sharing in face-to-face contexts – a narrow focus that does not reflect the realities of today's communication landscape, where a great deal of social interaction occurs over mediated channels (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2012). Interpersonal media, or media used for personal contact between users (e.g., phones, text messaging, email, Facebook), provide access to people with whom one can share, immediately after the triggering event has happened and across geographical distances. Interpersonal media is therefore likely to be used prominently for social sharing (see Lambert et al., 2013 for a similar suggestion).

This paper is the first to examine social sharing as it takes place via interpersonal media. In this initial examination of the topic, we focus on two issues of theoretical significance: (1) *media selection*, or how people choose media for social sharing, as a function of the type of emotional event experienced; and (2) *psychological effects*, or how sharing through various media impacts sharers' emotional response to the triggering event. We first identify a set of media affordances relevant to social sharing. Then we empirically test how people utilize these affordances to meet the psychological needs elicited by events of varying valence (positive vs. negative) and intensity (low vs. high). For instance, for what kinds of events do people prefer media where messages are visible to large audiences (e.g., Facebook posts), or with limited nonverbal cues (e.g., texting)? With respect to psychological effects, we investigate whether the known effects of social sharing persist when the sharing is done in communication environments that differ substantially from face-to-face. For instance, does the sharing of positive events amplify positive affect even when there is no nonverbal feedback from one's communication partner (e.g., via text)? To address our research questions, we use an undergraduate student population and we consider the most ubiquitous of today's interpersonal media: phone calling, texting, instant messenger (IM), email, Facebook posts, Twitter posts, blogs, and video chat.

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2. Social sharing and media affordances

Social sharing is defined as the process of communicating with others about significant emotional experiences and about the event that triggered those experiences (Rimé, 2009). An emotional experience is an event or issue that elicits either positive or negative emotion (Gable & Reis, 2010; Garrison & Kahn, 2010; Reis et al., 2010). Social sharing is different from mundane sharing in that the latter usually refers to trivial happenings or gossip that have little emotional repercussions. For instance, revealing that one has received a good grade on an exam constitutes social sharing because this event likely elicited a notable emotional response. However, discussing what one had for breakfast likely constitutes mundane sharing, provided that breakfast fare did not elicit a significant emotional response.

Further, it is important to note that social sharing, with its focus on significant emotional experiences, constitutes one specific and narrow type of emotional communication. It is possible to engage in emotional communication that does not constitute social sharing, for instance when expressing emotion that is not associated with a personal event (e.g., "I'm glad it's sunny today!"), expressing emotion that is associated with a mundane event (as discussed earlier), or expressing mood, which is a low-grade emotion that is not necessarily triggered by an event. While emotional communication, broadly defined, has been investigated in computer-mediated contexts (e.g., Bazarova, Taft, Choi, & Cosley, 2013; Guillory et al., 2011; Hancock, Landrigan, & Silver, 2007), this is the first study to investigate the more narrowly defined phenomenon of social sharing.

The social sharing theoretical framework postulates that people engage in social sharing in order to deal with the emotion elicited by the triggering event (Rimé et al., 1992; see also Bruner, 1990; Schachter, 1959). Generally speaking, dealing with this emotion elicits two categories of psychological needs: (1) personal expression, or verbalizing one's thoughts and feelings; and (2) feedback, or receiving appropriate responses from communication partners (Harber & Cohen, 2005; Rimé, 1995).

By definition, media affordances are features of the media that are perceived by users to impact their ability to fulfill their goals and needs (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Kraut et al., 2002). For example, in the context of deception, relevant affordances include a reduction in nonverbal cues (because people who do not need to manage these cues may find it easier to lie) and recordability (because having a record of the deception may facilitate deception detection, and thus hinder liars' success) (Hancock, Thom-Santelli, & Ritchie, 2004). In the context of social sharing, relevant media affordances should be those that impact sharers' ability to fulfill their needs for expression and feedback. Below we identify these affordances.

Consider first media affordances relevant to the need for expression. Since expression facilitates the processing of emotions, individuals typically feel a need to verbalize their thoughts and feelings in close temporal proximity to the event that triggered the emotional reaction (Rimé et al., 1992). For this reason, social sharing often occurs on the same day as the triggering event. The media affordance that can fulfill this need for immediate expression is *accessibility*, or the extent to which media can be quickly and easily accessed for interpersonal contact (Lee, 2010). Highly accessible media are those that are easily portable (such that individuals have them on their person and can access them anytime) and do not require Internet connectivity (such that individuals can access data even in situations where Internet connections are not available). Cell phones meet the portability criterion. Indeed, research shows that 85% of Americans over the age of 18 own a cell phone, but only 45% have Internet connectivity on it (Pew Internet

& American Life Project, 2012). Of the media that can be accessed on cell phones, voice calling, texting and Twitter meet the connectivity criterion, in that they can be accessed even without Internet connectivity (Snow, 2009). As a result, these three media can be conceptualized as highly accessible. Conversely, media such as Facebook, blogs, and video chat require an Internet connection and sometimes access to a computer (which, even if it is a laptop, is more cumbersome to carry than a cell phone), and therefore are generally less accessible.

Another need experienced by social sharers is expressing their thoughts and feelings to an appropriate communication partner. The literature shows that individuals sometimes share indiscriminately, to whomever will listen, whereas other times they seek close and trusted others (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). In response to this need, the media makes it possible to compose messages that are visible to a large and diverse audience of communication partners. Certain media render messages visible to audiences comprising hundreds or thousands of members with varying degrees of relational closeness to the sharer (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, blogs). Other media, such as texting, phone calling, and video chat, restrict message visibility to small groups or just one other individual (who can be targeted to be a trusted person). We label this affordance *message visibility (private vs. public)* (see also Treem & Leonardi, 2012).

Consider now media affordances relevant to the need for feedback. Extant research shows that sharers sometimes seek nonverbal feedback (e.g., a hug, a pat on the back), as these tactile expressions are highly effective at conveying support and encouragement (Dolin & Booth-Butterfield, 1993). The relevant media affordance is *availability of nonverbal cues* (Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Walther & Parks, 2002), which can range from (1) full, when all nonverbal cues are present (i.e., face-to-face), (2) partial, when only certain nonverbal cues are present (i.e., vocal cues for the phone; vocal and gestural, but not haptic, cues for video chat), or (3) none (i.e., texting, Facebook, Twitter).

Lastly, just as individuals experience a need for immediate expression, they sometimes also need immediate feedback from communication partners. Immediate feedback can be obtained in media that directly reach a communication partner and command his/her attention through real-time conversation (i.e., the phone, IM). These media are interactive (see also (Burgoon et al., 2002) and, importantly for our purposes, they can be used to interrupt the communication partner's activities (e.g., one must suspend current activities in order to pick up the phone). Hence, we label this affordance *intrusiveness* (see also Nardi, Whittaker, & Bradner, 2000; Setlock, Fussell, Ji, & Culver, 2009), with intrusive media being used to demand immediate feedback through real-time conversation. Non-interactive media (i.e., Facebook posts, Twitter posts, texting) are not intrusive because respondents can answer on their own time.

In sum, we expect the affordances of accessibility, message visibility, nonverbal cues, and intrusiveness to play a meaningful part in media selection for social sharing. The importance of each affordance should vary according to the type of event that triggers the social sharing episode, as described below.

3. Patterns of social sharing via interpersonal media

Extant research shows that the valence (positive vs. negative) and intensity (low vs. high) of emotional events substantially shape social sharing (Uysal & Oner-Ozkan, 2007). For example, imagine that you are a college student and have just found out you got your first job – a highly positive event. Immediately upon finding out the good news, you might call your family and friends. You might post an ecstatic status update on Facebook. You might

also share the good news with people sitting next to you in class, even though you do not know them very well. Now imagine you experience a negative event – you failed an important exam. You may not tell people from your immediate surroundings (e.g., class-mates, co-workers), because you do not want them to judge you negatively. You may keep the news to yourself for a while, until a close friend or family member is available to talk. You might especially enjoy a hug, or need a shoulder to cry on. As these examples illustrate, people experience different psychological needs for expression and feedback depending on the type of triggering event. Consequently, we expect them to select media whose affordances can satisfy those psychological needs.

3.1. Valence of the triggering event

Individuals experiencing positive events should feel more motivated to engage in immediate expression than those experiencing negative events, because social norms dictate that good news be shared quickly, such that friends and acquaintances can partake in the joy (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Dibble & Levine, 2013). Additionally, these individuals do not need time to reflect on how to frame the event in a way that will not elicit negative judgments from others, nor do they need to wait until they can connect with trusted and reliable relational partners. Conversely, individuals experiencing negative events should be reluctant to share bad news as quickly, because they experience self-presentational concerns (Bond & Anderson, 1987; Tesser & Rosen, 1975). This tendency to keep negative information to oneself, at least for a while, is well-documented and known as the MUM effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1972).

Consistent with this reasoning, research shows that individuals experiencing positive events are more likely to share them on the same day that they happen, and sometimes even self-disclose to strangers when things are too good to keep to themselves (Dibble & Levine, 2013; Reis et al., 2010; Rimé, 2009). By contrast, individuals experiencing negative events often prefer to keep things to themselves in order to process the negative emotion (Tesser & Rosen, 1975; Yariv, 2006) and/or find trusted relational partners with whom to share (Weenig, Groenenboom, & Wilke, 2001).

Media accessibility, which allows for immediate expression, should then be more important when sharing positive than negative events. Message visibility, on the other hand, should be more important when sharing negative than positive events, with a small number of recipients comprised of trusted relational partners being preferred (i.e., private messages). In support of this claim, recent research on Facebook has found that people express positive emotions equally in the public (i.e., status updates and wall posts) and private (i.e., IM) modalities of Facebook. However, they express negative emotions predominantly through private, rather than public, Facebook messages (Bazarova, 2012).

When it comes to feedback, individuals experiencing positive events should not feel justified in intruding upon others in order to obtain laudatory feedback, because these events are not urgent and do not necessitate help or assistance. Social norms dictate that others should only be interrupted or disturbed (e.g., by being called while at work) for urgent matters. Conversely, individuals experiencing highly negative events should feel justified in intruding upon close others, because they are not simply trying to boast (as in the case of positive sharing), but are likely to be in genuine need of help, support, or reassurance (see Taylor, 2007). Intrusiveness should then be sought after when sharing negative more so than positive events. A lack of intrusiveness, on the other hand, should be preferred when sharing positive events.

Lastly, research shows that nonverbal behaviors are highly effective in conveying support and providing comfort (e.g., a hug)

(Dolin & Booth-Butterfield, 1993). Individuals who experience negative events should be more likely to find such tactile expressions helpful and to seek them than individuals experiencing positive events. Availability of cues, either full or partial, should then be sought after for sharing negative more than positive events.

In sum, accessibility and non-intrusiveness should be prioritized for positive, as opposed to negative, events. The media that are both accessible and non-intrusive are texting and Twitter. Intrusiveness, richness of cues, and private message visibility should be prioritized for negative, rather than positive, events. The media that have all these affordances are face-to-face and phone calling. Hence:

H1. Easily accessible and non-intrusive media (i.e., texting, Twitter) will be used for sharing positive events more than for sharing negative events.

H2. Intrusive media rich in cues with private message visibility (i.e., face-to-face, phone calling) will be used for sharing negative events more than for sharing positive events.

3.2. Intensity of the triggering event

Now consider the intensity of events. Previously we have argued that non-intrusive media are generally preferred for sharing positive events. Among these non-intrusive media, those with public message visibility should be preferred for sharing highly intense positive events. These intense positive events can be justifiably broadcast to a large number of people because they tend to be rare and meaningful (e.g., getting engaged, receiving a job offer), as opposed to less intense positive events (e.g., finishing weekly chores) (Harber & Cohen, 2005; Rimé et al., 1992). For this reason, research shows that sharers engage in a great deal of repetition in recounting intense positive events (Luminet, Bouts, Rime, & Manstead, 1996). Public message visibility is an affordance particularly suited to this need, with media increasing access to many people with relatively little investment of time and energy on the sharer's behalf (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, blogs). Therefore, non-intrusive media with public message visibility should be preferred for highly intense positive events as compared to low intensity positive events.

H3. Non-intrusive media with public message visibility (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs) will be used for sharing intensively positive events more than for sharing less intensively positive events.

For intense negative events (e.g., a romantic break up), social sharing has been shown to be enacted in safe contexts, consisting of a small group of trusted others, such as parents or a romantic partner, who typically provide supportive feedback (for a review, see Rimé et al., 1992). Highly intense negative events are also less likely to be shared than moderately intense and non-intense negative events, precisely because social sharers wish to minimize their likelihood of being negatively evaluated (Luminet et al., 1996). Messages about intense negative events should then be made visible only to small and targeted audiences. Moreover, social sharers experiencing these rare and potentially devastating events have a need for obtaining immediate help, support, and reassurance from trusted others. Demanding immediate feedback is acceptable. Thus, intrusiveness should be important. Lastly, nonverbal cues should also matter for sharing intensely negative events, as nonverbal feedback is highly effective in providing support and assurance, leading to a preference for media providing

full nonverbal cues. The medium that has all these desirable affordances (private message visibility, intrusiveness, full nonverbal cues) is face-to-face.

H4. Face-to-face interaction will be used for sharing intensely negative events more than for sharing less intensely negative events.

4. Effects of social sharing via interpersonal media

The effects of social sharing on sharers' emotional well-being, as well as their underlying mechanisms, have been shown to depend largely on the valence of the triggering event. For positive events, research shows that social sharing boosts sharers' positive affect above and beyond the positive affect generated by the event itself. This phenomenon has been labeled *capitalization* (Gable et al., 2004; Hicks & Diamond, 2008; Langston, 1994; Rimé, 2009). Several mechanisms have been proposed to explain how capitalization occurs. First, it has been argued that expressing personal thoughts and feelings maximizes the salience, memorability, and significance of the events (Langston, 1994). A second proposition is that discussing these events enables sharers to construct and rearrange their memory, such that their understanding of the event and their ability to find meaning in it is enhanced (Feldman, Joormann, & Johnson, 2008). Third, enthusiastic feedback from others has been shown to amplify the meaningfulness of the event, suggesting that it is, at least partially, responsible for the boost in sharers' positive affect (Reis et al., 2010). Finally, it has been proposed that the sharing process involves deeper social interaction, which can lead to improved social relationships with the recipients, and therefore enhances positive affect (Rimé, Finkenauer, Luminet, Zech, & Philippot, 1998). Note that, while empirical support for each of these mechanisms has emerged in different studies, no research to date has attempted to integrate the mechanisms or to establish the boundary conditions under which they operate.

Does social sharing through interpersonal media generate capitalization? Based on existing findings, we argue that it should. Similarly to face-to-face sharing, mediated sharing allows for personal expression, such that the memorability, salience, and personal significance of the event can be enhanced. It also allows for enthusiastic feedback to be conveyed, and for a deepening of social relationships (Walther & Parks, 2002). Indeed, research finds that mediated communication and face-to-face communication are strikingly similar in terms of their degree of emotional expression and social connectedness (Derks, Fischer, & Bos, 2008; Hancock et al., 2007). Hence:

H5. Capitalization will occur across the media through which social sharing is done.

Does the sharing of negative events offer psychological benefits akin to capitalization? Theoretically, it can be expected to do so, with the act of sharing increasing sharers' ability to comprehend the negative event and to vent emotion (Pennebaker, 1997). Indeed, studies have found that writing diary entries about traumatic events increases psychological health (Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006; Pennebaker, 1990, 1997). However, within the social sharing framework, where personal expression occurs socially rather than in a private dairy, support for the beneficial effects of sharing negative events did not emerge. Quite the opposite, the social sharing of negative events has been found to increase negative affect, rather than neutralize it (Rimé et al., 1998; Zech & Rimé, 1996, 2005).

Theoretically, several explanations have been advanced to explain this effect. First, the social sharing of negative events can elicit evaluative concerns, with individuals perceiving themselves as incompetent, or a failure, through the eyes of others

(Schlenker & Weigold, 1990). Second, as is the case with capitalization, thinking and communicating about negative events can make them more salient and memorable (Nolen-Hoeksema, Parker, & Larson, 1994). Indeed, empirical evidence supports the idea that venting anger or rumination about the negative experience makes people angrier and more aggressive (Bushman, Baumeister, & Stack, 1999; Bushman, Bonacci, Pedersen, Vasquez, & Miller, 2005). Third, expressing negative emotion prevents an individual from distracting, a process which has been shown to reduce the negative affect produced by a negative event (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1993; Tice & Bratslavsky, 2000; Wegner, 1994).

We suggest that the sharing of negative events over interpersonal media has the same negative effects as face-to-face sharing, because mediated sharing can also elicit evaluative concerns, increase event salience, impede distraction, and enable rumination. Interactive media prevent distraction and enhance event salience because communication partners ask questions and engage with the sharers' negative experiences. Media that are not interactive are always textual (e.g., texting, Facebook), and writing down the issue may aggrandize its importance and encourage rumination even further. Finally, public message visibility can maximize the perceived salience and importance of the event. Hence:

H6. The social sharing of negative events over interpersonal media will be associated with higher negative affect.

5. Methods

5.1. Participants

The participants were 311 undergraduates at a large Midwestern university who were compensated with extra-credit in their Communication courses. Participants were randomly assigned to two groups. The first group was asked to report their social sharing of *positive* events ($N = 183$, 153 women; age $M = 20.37$, $SE = 1.16$) and the second to report their social sharing of *negative* events ($N = 117$, 96 women; age $M = 20.89$, $SE = 2.00$). For simplicity, we refer to these groups as the positive event group and the negative event group.

5.2. Procedure

As a way of building on the existing literature, the present study used the same daily diary procedure utilized in prior studies of social sharing, where participants complete a questionnaire about the most important emotional event of the day every night before going to bed (Gable et al., 2004; Garrison & Kahn, 2010; Langston, 1994). The daily diary method has notable advantages, in that it allows recording everyday events of various emotional intensities, and eliminates retrospective biases (Rimé, 2009).

The study took place entirely online. After signing-up, participants were emailed links to the study questionnaires, in two stages. First, participants filled out a battery of questionnaires about their personality, demographics, and general media usage. Second, they completed a daily diary form, where they reported the most significant positive or negative (depending on group) event they experienced that day. Participants in both groups reported their positive and negative affect of the day and identified the media through which they shared the event with others.

Participants in both groups completed the daily diary form every day for a week (i.e., 7 days). Each day, they were emailed the link to the diary form at 9 pm and were asked to submit it by the following morning at 9 am. In the diary, participants were asked to identify and then briefly describe "the most important positive event or issue of the day" in the positive event group, or

"the most important problem or stressful event or issue of the day" in the negative event group. They were told that this may be "something that happened today, something that happened in the past that affected you today, or something you anticipate happening in the future." This procedure was borrowed verbatim from Gable et al. (2004).

Following the procedure of Langston (1994) and Gable et al. (2004), only participants who completed the diary form for at least five days were included in the analyses. This resulted in the reporting of 1210 positive events and 773 negative events.

5.3. Measures

5.3.1. Intensity of the event
Participants in the positive event group rated how positive they perceived the event to be (1 – *not at all positive*; 5 – *very positive*). Similarly, participants in the negative event group rated how negative they perceived the event to be (1 – *not at all negative*; 5 – *very negative*). This measure was borrowed from Gable et al. (2004). On average, positive events were rated 3.93 (*SD* = 1.24) on the positivity scale, and negative events were rated 3.01 (*SD* = 1.30) on the negativity scale.

5.3.2. Social sharing through media
For each event, participants indicated which media they used to discuss it from the following options: phone calls, text messages, e-mails, IM, face-to-face interaction, Facebook posts, Twitter posts, blogs, and video chat. They were asked to select all applicable media, or select "did not share" if they had not discussed the event with anyone.

One important note is that social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter) allow both publicly (i.e., status updates, wall posts) and privately visible messages (i.e., one-on-one communication). We instructed participants to select Facebook and Twitter posts if they had publicly posted messages on these platforms. If they used the platforms for one-on-one communication, we instructed them to select IM if it was a synchronous conversation, or email if it was an asynchronous message (i.e., one that did not get a response immediately).

5.3.3. Amount of social sharing
For each medium selected, participants indicated how much information they shared along five dimensions: (1) details of the event itself, (2) their feelings during the event, (3) their thoughts at the moment, (4) their interactions with others during the event, and (5) their physical condition during the event. Each item was measured on a 5-point scale (1 – *very little information* to 5 – *very much information*, and 6 – *not applicable*). An overall measure of amount of social sharing was computed by summing these five items.

5.3.4. Positive and negative affect
Participants in both groups completed the well-established Positive and Negative Affect Schedule questionnaire (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The PANAS consists of ten positive emotion adjectives (e.g., interested, excited, enthusiastic) and ten negative emotion adjectives (e.g., distressed, upset, irritable). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they experienced each emotion on a scale from 1 = *very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *extremely*. Participants completed the PANAS at the end of every day of the diary period. As such, the emotion captured by the PANAS had been experienced after the triggering event and the social sharing had taken place. Acceptable reliability was achieved for both positive affect (α = .91) and negative affect (α = .87). Consistent with previous research (Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1999), the ratings for positive and negative affect were

not correlated with each other $r = -.05$, *ns* for the positive event group (at the event level, $n = 1210$), and $r = .01$, *ns* for the negative event group (at the event level, $n = 773$).

5.3.5. Control measures
Participants reported their general demographics and general media usage, by rating how often they use each medium in everyday life on a 7-point scale (1 – *very rarely* to 7 – *very frequently*) (texting $M = 6.55$, $SD = .88$; Facebook $M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.42$; e-mail $M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.51$; phone calling $M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.59$; IM $M = 3.13$, $SD = 2.13$; Twitter $M = 3.05$, $SD = 2.24$; video chat $M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.76$; Blog $M = 1.63$, $SD = 1.20$).

5.4. Analytic approach

Since the data were hierarchical – events nested within persons, we used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to test H5 and H6. HLM enables researchers to simultaneously address effects of both events and persons, and provides independent estimates of the relationships among constructs at the lower level (level 1: events within persons) and models them at the upper level (level 2: between persons) as a random effect. Using HLM may prevent an overestimation of the effect of demographics and an underestimation of the theoretical variables' effects. Because of insufficient variance in the data for some of the media, we were unable to use HLM for testing H1–H4. Instead, we used chi-square analyses, which are appropriate for testing associations between two categorical variables, such as event valence and whether or not the media was used (Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2013).

6. Results

6.1. Media use for social sharing: Descriptives

Positive events were shared 78.2% of the time and negative events were shared 76.4% of the time. These rates were not statistically different, $X^2(1, N = 2043) = .82$, *ns*, and are consistent with previous studies (Gable et al., 2004; Langston, 1994).

For both positive and negative events, social sharing through face-to-face interaction occurred most frequently, with about half of the events shared face-to-face, followed by texting, phone calling, Facebook posts, e-mail, IM, Twitter posts, video chat, and blog. The percentage of social sharing instances through each medium is presented in Fig. 1. Note that participants could have shared each event via more than one medium. Therefore, the total sharing attempts (%) for all the media combined exceed 100%.

Participants commonly used interpersonal media for their social sharing. 77.5% of reported events were shared with others and 69.8% of the shared events were shared via at least one interpersonal media. The average number of media used for sharing a positive event was 1.34 (SD = 1.14; min = 0; max = 7) and 1.28 (SD = 1.10; min = 0; max = 7) for a negative event. This difference was not statistically significant, $X^2(7, N = 2043) = 4.46$, *ns*. In the positive event group, 43% of the events were shared through only one medium. Similarly, in the negative events group, 45% of the events were shared through only one medium. When only one medium was used, most events were shared face-to-face (i.e., 21.85% of positive events and 25.69% of negative events).

6.2. Media use for social sharing: Hypotheses testing

H1 proposed that positive events are more likely than negative events to be shared through easily accessible and non-intrusive
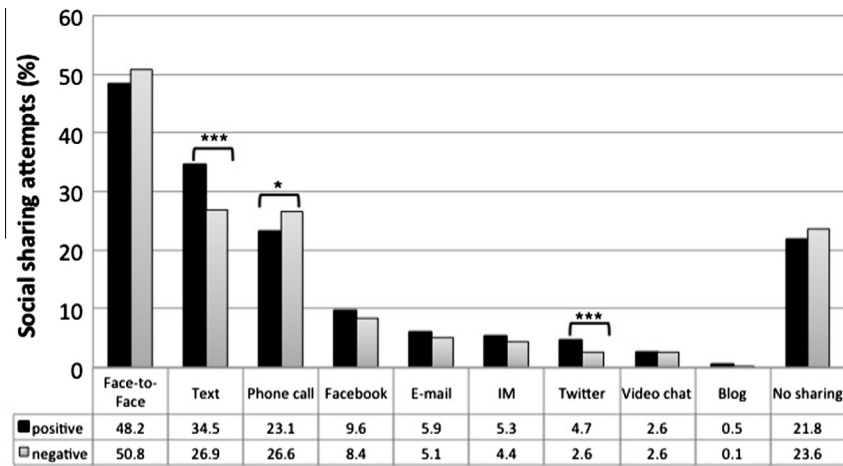
Fig. 1. Percentage of social sharing instances across the media for positive and negative events across the media. *Note.* Participants could have shared each important event via more than one medium. Therefore, the total sharing attempts (%) for all the media combined exceed 100%.

Fig. 2. Percentage of social sharing instances across the media for high and low-intensity positive events. *Note.* Participants could have shared each important event via more than one medium. Therefore, the total sharing attempts (%) for all the media combined exceed 100%.
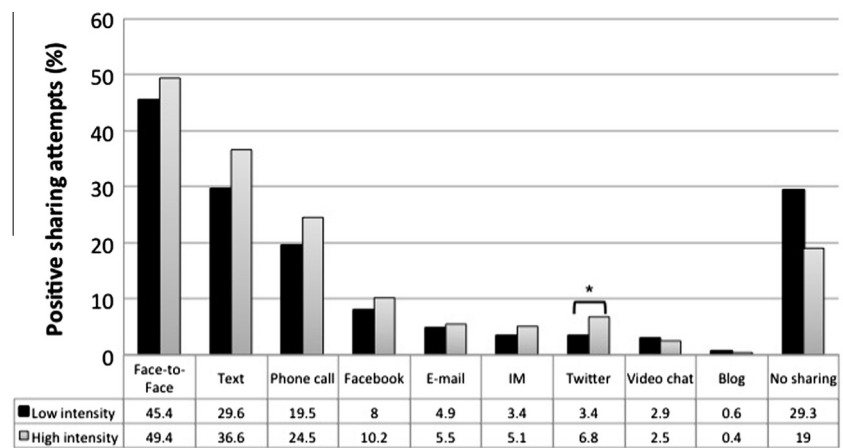
media (i.e., texting and Twitter posts). Chi-squared analyses show that positive events were more likely than negative events to be shared via texting, $X^2(1) = 12.99$, $p < .001$, and Twitter posts, $X^2(1) = 11.57$, $p < .001$, providing support for H1 (see Fig. 1).

H2 proposed that negative events are more likely than positive events to be shared through intrusive media rich in cues (i.e., face-to-face, phone calls). Chi-squared analyses show that negative events were more likely than positive events to be shared via phone calls $X^2(1) = 3.25$, $p < .05$, but not via face-to-face $X^2(1) = 1.27$, *ns*, providing partial support for H2 (see Fig. 1).

H3 predicted that non-intrusive media with public message visibility (e.g., Facebook posts, Twitter posts, blogs) will be used for sharing more intense compared to less intense positive events. Chi-squared analyses show that more intensely positive events were more likely than less intense positive events to be shared via Twitter posts $X^2(1) = 5.16$, $p < .05$, but not via Facebook posts, $X^2(1) = 1.32$, *ns* or blogs $X^2(1) = 0.08$, *ns*. H3 then received partial support (see Fig. 2).

H4 predicted that face-to-face will be preferred for sharing more intense compared to less intense negative events. Chi-squared analyses show that highly intense negative events were more likely to be shared through face-to-face interaction, $X^2(1) = 4.77$, $p < .05$, providing support for H4 (see Fig. 3).

6.3. Effects of social sharing: HLM analyses

H5 predicted that capitalization, an enhancement of positive affect as a result of sharing positive events, will occur across all the media. To test this hypothesis, a hierarchical linear model was built with positive affect (PA) as the dependent variable, and the overall amount of social sharing done through each medium, including face-to-face interaction, as an independent variable nested within participants. Separate models were built for each medium. Gender, age, participants' general use of each medium, and event intensity were included as controls in all of these models. Only the four most frequently used channels, face-to-face, text, phone call, and Facebook posts, were entered in the analyses. Email, IM, Twitter posts, and blogs were excluded because of insufficient sample size for HLM analyses.

As an illustration, consider the HLM model predicting daily positive affect (PA) from the overall amount of sharing done via text. The event-level (Level 1) equation was:

$$PA_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} * (INTENSITY_{ij}) + \beta_{2j} * (TEXT\_SHARE_{ij}) + r_{ij}$$

where β_{0j} refers to the intercept (i.e., the person's PA on an average day); β_{1j} represents slopes between PA and intensity ratings of the positive event; β_{2j} represent the slope between daily PA and the
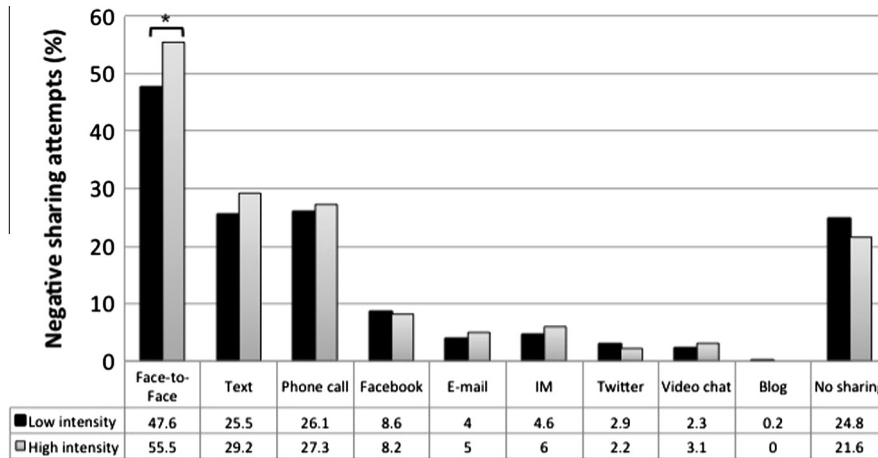
Fig. 3. Percentage of social sharing instances across the media for high and low-intensity negative events. *Note.* Participants could have shared each important event via more than one medium. Therefore, the total sharing attempts (%) for all the media combined exceed 100%.

overall social sharing variable indicating how much information was shared about the positive event via texting, and r_{ij} represents error. Intensity ratings of the positive event were centered around each participant's mean, and therefore the coefficients represent the degree to which a rated event intensity on the ith day deviated from the person's average event intensity rating. Thus, person j's PA on the ith day is predicted from his or her average PA (β_{0j}), the perceived intensity of each day's most positive event weighted by its coefficient (β_{1j}), and overall social sharing via texting weighed by its coefficient (β_{2j}), plus error (r_{ij}). Person-level (Level 2) effects were estimated as follows:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} * (GENDER_j) + \gamma_{02} * (AGE_j) + \gamma_{03} * (Text\ Use_j) + u_{0j}$$
$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + u_{1j}$$
$$\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + u_{2j}$$

where gender, age, and general text use are person-level control variables, and u_{0j} represents residual variances of the intercepts between persons (a random effect). Here, age and text use were grand mean-centered so that for cases with average values those variables' coefficients could be interpreted as the effect of age and text use.

The mixed model is a combined model with all the equations merged into one. By substituting the second-level model for each coefficient (β_{xj}) into the first-level model, a combined model is obtained.

$$PA_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} * GENDER_j + \gamma_{02} * AGE_j + \gamma_{03} * Text\ Use_j + \gamma_{10}$$
$$* INTENSITY_{ij} + \gamma_{20} * TEXT\_SHARE_{ij} + u_{0j} + u_{1j}$$
$$* INTENSITY_{ij} + u_{2j} * TEXT\_SHARE_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

The same model was generated for each medium (face-to-face, phone calling, and Facebook) separately, and a model for face-to-face was generated without controlling for general media use. Results show that the sharer's positive affect increased significantly with the overall amount of social sharing done through face-to-face communication, phone calls, texting, and Facebook posts, respectively (see Table 1). Thus, H5 was supported. The coefficients of the covariates are presented in Table 1, but are not discussed here since they are not a primary interest in this study.

The exact same procedure was applied to test H6, which concerned the effects of sharing negative events. HLMs were built with negative affect as the dependent variable, the overall amount of sharing done through each medium as an independent variable

nested within participants, and gender, age, general media use, and intensity of negative events as controls. As predicted, across the four separate HLMs built for each medium, negative affect increased with social sharing done through face-to-face, phone call, text, and Facebook posts, providing support for H6 (see Table 2).

7. Discussion

The present study examined patterns of social sharing across interpersonal media and the effect of social sharing on sharers' affect. Results indicate that people used media affordances to fulfill the psychological needs for expression and feedback elicited by significant emotional events. Moreover, evidence emerged that social sharing via interpersonal media impacted sharers' emotional well-being, by increasing positive affect when the event shared was positive, and boosting negative affect when the event shared was negative. This research contributes to theory on several fronts. First, it advances the social sharing framework, which, to date, has only been applied to face-to-face settings, by considering how media affordances can meet the psychological needs experienced by social sharers. Second and relatedly, it offers insight into whether the effects of social sharing on emotional well-being persist when the sharing is done in communication environments that differ substantially from face-to-face. Third, it advances understanding of media use by showing how people use media when they experience significant emotional events, and what effects this use may have. These contributions are discussed below.

7.1. Media affordances and social sharing

Existing research has only examined social sharing in face-to-face settings (e.g., Gable & Reis, 2010; Gable et al., 2004; Langston, 1994). However, the extraordinary proliferation of interpersonal media, which allow users to easily contact friends and family, invites a broadening of this research focus. Indeed, the present study found that undergraduate students utilized interpersonal media, particularly texting, phone calling, and Facebook posts, for about 70% of their social sharing. While face-to-face was still the preferred setting for social sharing in our sample, it was used in conjunction with interpersonal media for the majority of social sharing instances. Only about 30% of sharing instances occurred exclusively through face-to-face. In all, this initial pattern

Table 1
HLM results for predicting daily positive affect (PA) from the overall amount of social sharing of positive events done through each medium.

DV	PA							
Fixed effect	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.
Level-2 individual variables								
Intercept	31.62***	1.86	32.33***	1.80	33.22***	2.15	32.65***	1.88
Age	−.42	.34	−.49	.34	−.40	.34	−.36	.35
Female	−2.83**	1.01	−2.93**	1.00	−3.51**	1.17	−3.03**	1.03
Phone call use			.36	.32				
Text use					.87	.65		
Facebook use							.61	.35
Level-1 event variables								
Intensity	2.00***	.19	2.06***	.19	2.02***	.19	2.04***	.19
Face-to-face sharing	.10***	.02						
Phone call sharing			.07**	.03				
Text sharing					.09**	.03		
Facebook sharing							.11*	.05
Random effects	Variance	S.E.	Variance	S.E.	Variance	S.E.	Variance	S.E.
Level-two random part								
Intercept	36.25***	6.02	34.59***	5.88	36.02***	6.00	34.92***	5.91
Intensity slope	1.22**	1.48	1.79***	1.34	1.66**	1.29	1.61	1.27
Face-to-face sharing slope	.01*	.12						
Phone call sharing slope			.00	.06				
Text sharing slope					.00	.07		
Facebook sharing slope							.02	.13
Level-one variance								
$\sigma_0^2 = \mathrm{var}(R_{ij})$	30.86		31.77		31.67		31.84	
Deviance	8241.50		8261.44		8254.89		8259.38	

Note. Level-1 N = 1210, Level-2 N = 178.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

Table 2
HLM results for predicting daily negative affect (NA) from the overall amount of social sharing of negative events done through each medium.

DV	NA							
Fixed effect	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.
Level-2 individual variables								
Intercept	21.37	2.14	21.50***	2.22	20.75***	2.12	21.24***	2.04
Age	−.46**	0.16	−.44**	.14	−.44**	.15	−.51***	.15
Female	−2.02	1.18	−2.23	1.21	−1.67	1.13	−1.81	1.12
Phone call use			−.25	.28				
Text use					−.04	.37		
Facebook use							.04	.32
Level-1 event variables								
Intensity	1.50***	.20	1.55***	.20	1.59***	.21	1.58***	.20
Face-to-face sharing	.05*	.02						
Phone call sharing			.15***	.03				
Text sharing					.10***	.03		
Facebook sharing							.17**	.05
Random effects	Variance	S.E.	Variance	S.E.	Variance	S.E.	Variance	S.E.
Level-two random part								
Intercept	23.49***	4.85	20.87***	4.57	23.57***	4.86	22.69***	4.76
Intensity slope	2.12***	1.46	2.14***	1.46	2.38***	1.54	2.18***	1.48
Face-to-face sharing slope	.00**	.05						
Phone call sharing slope			.02**	.14				
Text sharing slope					.02**	.15		
Facebook sharing slope							.02*	.15
Level-one variance								
$\sigma_0^2 = \mathrm{var}(R_{ij})$	18.33		16.78		17.17		18.16	
Deviance	4922.10		4880.44		4909.11		4915.59	

Note: Level-1 N = 798, Level-2 N = 117.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

of results suggests that interpersonal media is widely used for social sharing and therefore merits scholarly attention.

Consequently, one of the important goals of this study was to enhance the ecological validity of the social sharing framework by considering how people utilize interpersonal media to fulfill the psychological needs related to social sharing (i.e., expression and feedback). To do so, we conceptualized a set of media affordances that, theoretically, should be able to address the psychological needs experienced by sharers: (1) accessibility, which meets the need for immediate expression; (2) message visibility, which meets the need for public dissemination of messages, or, conversely, restricted dissemination to selected partners; (3) availability of nonverbal cues, which meets the need for receiving nonverbal feedback; and (4) intrusiveness, which meets the need for requesting immediate feedback and help from others. As a general principle, we argued that people will use media whose affordances can meet their psychological needs. Since these psychological needs vary with the valence (positive or negative) and intensity (low or high) of the triggering event, we proposed that media affordances will be used differently for each of these types of events.

Specifically, immediate expression and upholding politeness norms are salient needs for positive events; therefore, sharers should prioritize media that provide accessibility and non-intrusiveness (i.e., texting, Twitter) for positive more than negative events. This claim was supported by the data. Conversely, immediate feedback and nonverbal manifestations of support are salient needs for negative events; therefore, sharers should prioritize media that offer intrusiveness and richness of cues (i.e., phone calling, face-to-face) for negative more so than positive events. This proposition was partially supported by the data. Phone calling was indeed preferred for sharing negative rather than positive events. Face-to-face, however, was used equally for sharing both positive and negative events. It is possible that the face-to-face setting is chosen regardless of the valence of the triggering events because it is so widely available, with our undergraduate respondents likely surrounded by peers who are willing to engage in conversation most of the time (e.g., in dorms, classes, etc.). Therefore, positive events may be expressed face-to-face in a non-intrusive fashion by our sample.

For highly intense positive events, the need for wide dissemination is salient, in order to conform to social norms about sharing these rare and meaningful events. Therefore, we predicted that media with public message visibility (e.g., Twitter and Facebook posts) would be chosen for more intense rather than less intense positive events. This hypothesis was supported for Twitter posts, but not Facebook posts. One possible explanation is that social norms are developing whereby boasting is viewed as undesirable through Facebook posts, with users preferring to share mundane, rather than intensely emotional events on this social media platform. Lastly, for individuals experiencing highly intense negative events, we predicted that the need for immediate and supportive feedback would be particularly acute. Consequently, they would prefer face-to-face interaction (which is intrusive, provides full nonverbal cues, and has private message visibility) for sharing intensely negative events compared to less intensely negative events. This hypothesis was supported.

In sum, our affordance framework was generally supported by the data, suggesting that media affordances are meaningful when people decide how to use media for social sharing. The affordance framework captures a complex web of factors that affect people's decisions about how to socially share, such as temporal factors (i.e., *when* to share), politeness norms (i.e., when it is appropriate to interrupt others), and indicators of the relational status of the communication partner (i.e., *with whom* to share). However, the affordance framework may be refined by future research by considering additional factors that shape people's decisions about social sharing. For instance, the current affordance of *message visibility* represents only a coarse indicator of the relationship between sharers and those with whom they share, in that it assumes that media with public message visibility (i.e., Facebook posts, Twitter posts, blogs) indiscriminately reach people of various relational closeness, whereas media with private message visibility can be used to target select, close others. Future research should consider whom exactly social sharers want to reach through interpersonal media. An additional factor that future research may consider is that of social norms for disclosure across media platforms, particularly those with public message visibility (i.e., Facebook and Twitter posts). Research has only begun to capture such norms (see McLaughlin & Vitak, 2012). For instance, Bazarova (2012) shows that intimate disclosures are viewed as less appropriate when posted on Facebook's wall, rather than transmitted through its email function. Similarly, our results suggest that social norms of Facebook use may dictate that only mundane, rather than private, information should be posted through status updates. As research identifies disclosure norms across the media, these norms should be incorporated into the social sharing framework. Finally, it is possible that individual differences shape people's psychological needs related to social sharing and, in turn, may determine their media use. For example, research has shown that having an avoidant attachment style leads people to prefer mediated channels compared to face-to-face (Jin & Pena, 2010; Morey, Gentzler, Creasy, Oberhauser, & Westerman, 2013). Individual differences should be examined by future research.

As mentioned earlier, our affordance framework for social sharing rests on the assumption that people use media affordances to meet their psychological needs. This assumption lies at the core of the media selection literature and has received much attention in the field of computer-mediated communication. For instance, media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) proposes that people choose media based on its ability to satisfy their needs for reducing the equivocality, or ambiguity of a message. According to this theory, media that possesses affordances such as interactivity and richness of cues is selected for highly equivocal messages, while non-interactive media lean in cues is more efficient when conveying simple, straightforward messages. Similarly, O'Sullivan's (2000) self-presentational framework proposes that people have a need to control the flow of information when revealing negative aspects of self, and therefore they select mediated channels, whose affordances allow such control. However, when revealing positive aspects of self, they relish the pleasant nonverbal feedback likely to ensue (e.g., hug, high-five) and therefore select face-to-face communication. Finally, Hancock et al.' (2004) features-based approach to deception argues that people consider media affordances when deciding in which medium to lie. For instance, liars experience a need not to get caught, and therefore they avoid recordable media (e.g., email). By the same token, they select media whose affordances make it easy to lie (e.g., distribution, or not sharing the same physical space, lack of recordability).

The present study adds to this body of research by examining how people match media affordances with their psychological needs in the context of social sharing, and as such makes an important contribution to the field of computer-mediated communication. It bears noting that the focus on media affordances espoused by our work, as well as by the research cited earlier, has been both lauded and criticized (e.g., Treem & Leonardi, 2012; Walther, 2012). On the one hand, it has been praised for *not* viewing the media as monolithic entities with uniform effects, but rather recognizing that they have a complex and sophisticated set of features (i.e., affordances) that may affect social processes differently. Therefore, identifying individual affordances and conceptualizing how they work together to produce effects is

important. On the other hand, the affordance approach has been criticized for often failing to identify the individual effect of any one of the affordances studied, and for not specifying whether each affordance matters equally as the others. Indeed, since each medium bundles several affordances together, it is hard to disentangle the effect of any one of its affordances. For instance, does intrusiveness matter as much as nonverbal cues for the sharing of intense negative events? While studies that unbundle these affordances are rare because of the difficulty in separating affordances from each other, we recommend that future research extends our present work by attempting to do so in a social sharing context.

7.2. Effects of mediated social sharing

An equally important goal of the present study was to examine the effects of social sharing via interpersonal media on users' emotional well-being. Results indicate that the same effects identified by prior research in face-to-face settings also occur when the sharing is done through interpersonal media. That is, the act of sharing aggrandizes the emotional tone of the triggering events, increasing the positive affect generated by a positive event, but also the negative affect generated by a negative event. These findings shed some light on the mechanism through which social sharing impacts affect – an issue of theoretical importance.

Consider first the effect of sharing positive events (i.e., capitalization). The face-to-face literature has proposed that capitalization occurs because the act of sharing (1) elicits enthusiastic feedback from others; (2) entails deep social interaction; (3) maximizes the salience and memorability of the events; and (4) enhances sharers' ability to find meaning in the event by rearranging memory structures. The present findings have implications for several of these mechanisms. First, we are finding that capitalization emerged even when social sharing was done through restrictive media, such as texting. Indeed, texting completely lacks nonverbal cues, constrains personal expression to very short messages, and has limited interactivity (i.e., while recipients tend to reply quickly, the medium is not interactive per se). This suggests that it may not be necessary for enthusiastic feedback to be expressed nonverbally in order to induce capitalization, nor is it necessary for this feedback to be offered immediately after the social sharing has occurred. Verbal messages of congratulations and praise offered at some time after the sharer's disclosure (i.e., through texts) may be sufficient for inducing capitalization. Second, capitalization occurred when social sharing was done via Facebook wall postings, where social interaction is notoriously brief and superficial (i.e., through "likes" and short wall comments) and users oftentimes connect with "weak" ties – that is, acquaintances and friends who may not be especially close (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Therefore, deep social interaction may not be necessary for capitalization to occur, with quick feedback that is low in cost to produce (i.e., pressing the "like" button) potentially able to induce capitalization on its own. Third, while the face-to-face literature has found that *talking* about important events induced capitalization, our findings show that *writing* can do so as well. Since writing has been shown to facilitate cognitive restructuring (Pennebaker & Graybeal, 2001), these results support for the claim that memory rearrangement and increased memorability of the event operate as mediators of capitalization.

One notable finding is that the standardized coefficient (i.e., beta) for capitalization was bigger when participants shared the good news face-to-face than through media, denoting a larger effect. Since face-to-face interaction provides access to all the proposed mechanisms of capitalization (e.g., enthusiastic feedback, deep social interaction, extensive elaboration of the events), it is possible that these factors have a cumulative effect, working together to enhance capitalization. Future research is necessary

to investigate how these mechanisms of capitalization work together.

Consider now the effect of sharing negative events. The face-to-face literature has proposed that the social sharing of negative events enhances negative affect because it impedes distraction and encourages rumination (Lyubomirsky, Caldwell, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998). Our findings advance this claim by suggesting that even brief messages conveyed through lean and non-interactive media (i.e., through text or Facebook posts) may also impede distraction. Therefore, the act of written expression, even in the absence of immediate feedback and of nonverbal cues, may be sufficient to impede distraction and generate negative affect.

Interestingly, the data shows that the association between sharing negative events and sharers' negative affect was weaker when the events were shared face-to-face than through media. As we speculated above, one possible explanation is that the richness of face-to-face interaction provides more comfort for sharers. Although it appears that sharing negative events is not the best way to cope with the events, sharing face-to-face may be the *least* undesirable channel for doing so.

7.3. Implications for Facebook

Recent research has been particularly concerned with the psychological uses and effects of Facebook, due to its extraordinary pervasiveness in everyday relationship management. The present research contributes to this large literature. Our findings show that while Facebook is widely used on a daily basis, it is less likely to be used for sharing significant emotional events. Participants reported that they used Facebook more than phone calling in everyday life; however, Facebook posts were less used than phone calling for social sharing. Moreover, the intensity and valence of triggering events were not related to social sharing through Facebook posts, suggesting that people do not turn to Facebook to share their emotional events more so than mundane events. Our results suggest that Facebook is more of an everyday habitual communication channel, rather than a channel used for the sharing of special, meaningful events (see also Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn, & Hughes, 2009; Pempek et al., 2009).

Research on the psychological effects of Facebook has identified both positive and negative such effects stemming from Facebook use. On the one hand, presenting oneself positively on Facebook and accumulating more friends was associated with an increase in subjective well-being (Kim & Lee, 2011). Similarly, examining one's own profile self-presentation led to a boost in self-esteem (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Toma, 2013) and to self-affirmation (Toma & Hancock, 2013). On the other hand, more time spent on Facebook was associated with a decline in subjective well-being (Kross et al., 2013). The present research finds both positive (when sharing positive events) and negative (when sharing negative events) effects of Facebook posts on users' subjective well-being. In all, this body of research suggests that Facebook is a complex psychological platform that can be both helpful and hurtful to users depending on what exactly they do on it. Here we find that when communicating positive news, users experience psychological benefits, but the opposite is true when communicating negative news.

7.4. Limitations and additional directions for future research

This study has several noteworthy limitations. First, we used a sample of college students. While this is common in studies of social sharing (Gable et al., 2004; Reis et al., 2010) and useful in investigating theoretical relationships between variables, such as the intensity and valence of the experienced events, media use, and emotional well-being, future research should examine

non-student samples, who may use the media differently. Relatedly, our sample included a disproportionately high number of women. Future research should attempt to include equal gender distributions.

Second, in order to enhance the ecological validity of the data, we allowed participants to select *all* the media they used for sharing each significant event. Results show that, indeed, respondents used multiple media for sharing about half of the events they experienced. While ecologically valid, this procedure makes it difficult to isolate the effects of individual media on sharers' emotional well-being. It will be important for future research to follow-up on this initial study with research where individuals share through only one medium at a time.

Further, we used a diary study procedure that assesses correlations between the variables of interest, rather than causation. While diary studies are the typical methodology used in the field (Gable et al., 2004; Langston, 1994), we invite future research to complement it with experimental or longitudinal studies that can establish causality.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, it will be important for future research to identify the role of individual affordances both in people's selection of media for social sharing, and in the effects the media produce on emotional well-being. For instance, do nonverbal cues matter equally as media accessibility in engendering capitalization? Relatedly, future research should identify affordances that affect emotional well-being over a longer time frame (recall that in this study we only examined emotional effects that took place within one day of the social sharing). For instance, it is possible that message persistence, or the extent to which a message is recorded and archived (see Hancock et al., 2004), produces emotional effects long after the social sharing has taken place, as it enables the sharer to reminisce about the triggering event (see also Cosley, Sosik, Schultz, Peesapati, & Lee, 2012).

8. Conclusion

Sharing emotional events is prevalent in daily life, and it is increasingly done through the intermediary of interpersonal media. The present study shows that people choose communication channels to meet their emotional needs depending on the valence and intensity of the events they experience. Further, mediated sharing affects people's emotional well-being. In all, we conclude that interpersonal media and their technological affordances have notable consequences on people's everyday affective experiences, both as an outlet for expressing emotions and as an instrument for enhancing already felt emotions.

Acknowledgement

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