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COMM 350

Methodology Paper

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Facebook and the Work Place

Facebook has becoming a booming website for many socialites, especially in the younger generations. Since the beginning of my research my research questions remains the same, “How has Facebook and other social media affected the communication style in today’s society throughout the work place?” Facebook is the new buzz among people and has leaked into the work place. It can be a key tool in helping you find or get a job, but it can also take away a job opportunity. Another scenario would be if Facebook played a part in the firing of an employee. Throughout my research I want to find whether or not Facebook helps or hurts your career in the long run. My hypothesis would be that it can be helpful if used appropriately. Since I am a public relations major I find Facebook to be more than helpful getting the word out, and making social connections with others.

During my research I encounter various participants that helped with a number of research tools. The data that I have gathered is both qualitative and quantitative. Starting with the qualitative research, I held ten different focus groups with a facilitator present at each one. For the first focus group it was strictly high school students, second group was just college students, third group was age range from 24-30, the fourth group was age range from 31 and above, the fifth group was CEOs in corporate companies, the sixth group was teachers, the seventh group was management positions in various companies, the eighth, ninth, and tenth group was a mixture of all of these groups together. The groups would range from 10 to 15 people depending on how many were willing to participate. Each session was video recorded and okayed by the participants. Each participant, including the facilitator, had to sign a form that basically says they know what I’m trying to research, and how their answers will be used throughout my research. In these groups I wanted an even number a females to males, and different ethnic backgrounds from Caucasian to African American to Asians. The participants were all from the United States and residents in the state of Kansas, but a handful of them had done business overseas. The facilitator was to keep each group on track, and begin each focus group the same way. Also, the room will be the same for all sessions with the same lighting and temperature along with drinks and snacks. Since the session will be recorded I will keep the disc with my research so those who want to continue the research can see the questions and direction that each group took while talking about Facebook.

Second, is my quantitative research, which is measured by a questionnaire. Since Facebook is still kind of new to the work place I wanted to make up my own questionnaire that would benefit my research. I came up with a questionnaire that is 50 questions long, and some of them seem to repeat but have a twist to them. I will include the questionnaire with my final research project so someone else can revise and further my research. The questionnaire was developed like a Likert Scale with numerical values ranging from one to five. There will also be a non applicatiable (NA) answer as well. So if the participants choose not to answer I tested the questionnaire in three of my communications classes and had both advisors look over to see if I need to make any changes before issuing the research tool. Again, I used the same group sized and sections from the focus groups, but not the same people so I could get a different set of people’s input. The questionnaire was designed and developed to help researchers getting a feeling about the attitudes towards Facebook.

Third, I would take all of my results and begin organizing them into graphs and charts. The data will be collected from the qualitative and quantitative research to be analyzed. The last thing I did for my research was start a blog. I did this so I could get anyone’s opinion that was willing to give it, and this way it reaches out to anyone not just Kansans. With the blog I hope to get real life experiences to integrate into my research conclusion. The blog is meant to be a bonus to my research to help support the other conclusion I found from my other research tools. In the introduction of my blog I want to make it apparent and upfront about what this blog is focused towards. Also, that it will be used in my research and anything said can be used to support a topic or point during my research. Throughout my research process I want to be open to everyone’s ideas and opinions, and use them anyway I can to help support my research.

My dependent variable will be Facebook and one of my research tools, the questionnaire. My independent variable will be my subjects or participants, since they will be changing and influencing the website and social network of Facebook. Facebook will always be known as one of the most popular social networking sites. My thought is that the independent variable will change from the dependent variable after hearing pros and cons of Facebook. I hope that the independent variable will change how they use Facebook to their benefit from job interviewing to productivity at work.

In conclusion, Facebook has more pros than cons when it comes down to it. The social network has been known to enhance the work place, and has even found jobs for individuals who had a connection with someone through Facebook. Also, people have found jobs through Facebook along with other various social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, MySpace, JobFox, ect. (Schawbel 2009). After constructing my annotated bibliography my assumptions were right about the social networking world, that there are two sides to every story. There are many pros to Facebook and the work place, but just as many pros as there are there are just as many cons to match it. My conclusion is that as long as we appropriately use our social networking websites and pages it can enhance our work place. One major con to Facebook is the productivity plummets, because people are so busy/worried about who wants to be there friends for who wrote on their wall. I am aspiring to be a public relations practitioner and Facebook to be is such a pro. With all the things you can do on Facebook to get the word out about your event, business, or even a job offer. Facebook can work to the business’s advantage if it is used correctly.

If I had my research to do over again I would have just focused on how Facebook and other social networking sites affect a public relations practitioner’s work place. Many businesses and companies don’t have a real need for Facebook. I would say that teachers would say it’s an incontinence and distraction in their classrooms. As a student myself it can be a huge distraction if I take my computer to class, therefore I don’t pay attention like I should. I thought my research was specific but I don’t think it was specific enough, because there are so many places of business that see Facebook as a positive or negative network. If I focused more on my area of expertise I think I would find more of the results I was looking for.

I think my research is important to many and worthwhile to research. Since Facebook has become a booming business, and has affected the work force tremendously it is important for those working to keep up with the times and technology. Facebook and other social networking sites has become a huge part of a PR practitioner’s job description. Facebook in some way has affected everyone, and I believe that is why it is so important to become educated on every angle of the social network.