

The Influence of Personality on Sharing and Verifying News on Facebook

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Abstract

This research evaluates the effect of personality on the sharing and verifying behavior of Facebook users. It looks at the relation between the Big Five personality traits and one's sharing behavior as well as its relation with one's verification process. Furthermore the research looks at the influence that the type of article has on sharing and verification behavior. Lastly the relation between sharing intent, prior computer mediated communication experience and gratification needs was studied as well as the effect of personality on this sharing intent.

The research was conducted using an online survey that was distributed among 100 respondents. The survey used four actually published articles that were manipulated to have the same layout. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they would share the articles on their Facebook profile and if so, would they also verify the article beforehand. To make sure that even those that indicated not to share the article were shown questions about verification, three additional questions were added in the survey. After these questions 20 questions about personality were asked using the Mini-IPIP. Lastly a number of questions about sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience were asked using Lee and Ma's (2012) Uses and Gratifications measurement.

Results showed that the respondents showed very little intention to share the four articles used in the survey. This complicated the analysis of the results somewhat. When looked at each personality type individually we found that sharing intention differed for each personality type. Those scoring high on Agreeableness and Openness to Experience showed more intent to share the articles, while those scoring high on Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism did show little intention to share the articles. The gratification needs; Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking, however did show to be influencing the sharing intention of the respondents. We saw that some of the hypothesis could be rejected fully, while other could only partly be confirmed.

This research attempts to provide insight into the effect that personality has on the sharing and verification behavior of Facebook users as well as the effect that gratification needs have on sharing intention.

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1. Introduction

Newspapers in the train, the news section of a radio show, mobile apps from news sites, news is all around us. While traditional news outlets are still popular reading and sharing news online has become increasingly more normal in our everyday life. Internet based news sites have become the most used news source after national and local news on television (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel & Olmstead, 2010). Traditional news however is not as easily shared with others as online news is. Social media and especially Social Network Sites have made it easy to share news that one comes across on the web. With just a few clicks news can be shared on various Social Network Sites, making it a fast way to share content with networks. Which is a reason why the traditional news outlets have started to incorporate Social Media into their broadcasting tools. Using both Traditional tools and various Social Media to reach as many people as possible. Sharing content has become easier for the professional news channels, but also for the public, keeping the news stream constantly active.

But with news comes the possibility of falsehood, news that gets broadcasted has to be verified and if not done properly or not at all false news can easily be spread around. While false news does not solely appear on the internet, the platform is certainly prone to it. Sharing information online has become easy and can be done by everyone. And because it can be done by everyone the chance that something is in fact not true becomes bigger. Social Media only makes the spread of false news faster, resulting in confusion and misinformation among a lot of people.

But why do we want to share these items, what makes us click those buttons? One's online activities are influenced by certain needs that one tries to gratify with these activities (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1974). These needs are Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking and they can all influence the online behavior of people. Someone might share news to store useful information and to keep up to date with the latest news, while someone else shares news to exchange ideas with other people. Yet another person might have shared that news item, because they simple were bored and wanted to pass time. And some people may share news to gain status and make themselves feel important (Lee & Ma, 2012). All these different gratification needs can influence the sharing intention that someone has. But are these gratification needs really all that influences people to share news? Why does certain news get shared by a lot of people and other news by no one? Does the type of news have an effect on the sharing and verifying behavior of people? What effect

does one's personality have on this sharing and verification behavior? Individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving form someone's personality (Psychology Topics, para, 37). Some personality traits might make people more or less likely to share news. And if they share news does it also influence the verification process of people? This leads to the main question in this research, the research question, which is defined as follows:

RQ: Why do people share news using Social Media and what is the role of verification in this process?

Which in turn leads to the following Research Plan.

This research builds upon previously done research into news sharing and the use of Social Network Sites (in particular Facebook). Certain gratification needs have been shown to influence people's sharing intention (Lee & Ma, 2012). While all four of the previously mentioned gratification needs have been tested with sharing intention only Information Seeking and Status Seeking have been correlated with Prior Social Media Sharing Experience, therefore we will test all four gratification needs with Prior Experience. Since personality is an important factor in this research both Sharing Intention and Prior Experience will also be tested when controlled for each of the five personality types separately. The use of the Social Network Sites itself has been known to be influenced by one's personality (Amichai-Hamburger, & Vinitzky, 2010; Correa, Hinsley, & de Zúñiga, 2010; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Ross et al., 2009), but what effect does it have on one's sharing and verification behavior. And do our gratification needs also influence our actual sharing behavior? This study will use a survey to try and determine the effect that personality has on sharing and verification behavior. With questions about vignettes to try and simulate news sharing and verification behavior and questions about previous sharing and verification behavior. To determine the personality of the participants, questions from the Mini-IPIP (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird and Lucas, 2006) will be used (Appendix B). These personality traits will be used to determine the effect that personality has on news sharing and verification behavior.

The following chapters will be discussed in this thesis. In chapter 2 the theoretical framework is given in four parts, news sharing (2.1), gratification needs (2.2), verification (2.3) and personality (2.4). In chapter 3 the method used for this study will be discussed. Following will be the results of the study in three parts, in chapter 4. In the last chapter; chapter 5, the conclusions as well the limitations and implications for future work will be discussed.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter we will build further onto news sharing using traditional media and modern media (2.1) and we will take a closer look at Social Media (2.1.1). Thereafter the gratification needs and their influence will be explored (2.2), which will lead to the first hypothesis. Then verification and its importance as well as the ways to verify news content will be discussed (2.3). Lastly personality and various models to determine personality will be discussed and the other hypotheses will be formulated (2.4).

2.1 News Sharing

Sharing news online has become increasingly more normal and everyday behavior for people. And interaction between traditional news media and modern news media has become the norm. Print media such as local and national newspapers and broadcast news, namely the radio and local and national TV fall under the category Traditional News Media. New or Modern News Media refers to computer-based or digital news sources often found on the Internet, such as online newspapers, blogs and Social Networking Sites (Manovich, 2003). Key aspects of New Media are the on-demand access that it provides, the interactive user feedback and creative participation (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014).

The internet is the third most popular source for news after local and national television news (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel & Olmstead, 2010). The high level of control users have over their news browsing is an important factor in the popularity of internet as a news source (Havick, 2000; Kleinberg 2006). Around the world social media platforms are used as a real-time information source by the staggering amount of hundreds of million people (Herdağdelen, Zuo, Gard-Murray & Bar-Yam, 2013). By being able to access the internet and social media on both laptops, computers and smart phones online mobility has changed vastly making sharing news much easier, nowadays news sharing and receiving happens in real-time.

2.1.1 Social Media

Social Media are the mobile and web-based technologies used to form interactive platforms. Both individuals and communities use these platforms to share, co-create, discuss and modify content (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). Nowadays a big part of the world's population uses Social Media, in 2008 75% of Internet users had already used a form of Social Media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). A big part of Social Media or the Social Network sites (SNS). The main idea behind Social Network Sites is the building of Social

Networks or relationships and maintaining them via these media. SNSs come with a range of different practices and amount of users. These sites allow their users to share with the people in their network, with different Social Media focusing on the sharing of different features.

New Social Network Sites are launched regularly, but what makes a SNS get attention and a growth in users? What determines the longevity of social network sites? Facebook a SNS launched in 2004 saw its number of users grow to 1 billion in 2012 (Fowler, 2012). While Myspace a site launched in 2003 which was very popular from 2005 until 2008 has been losing users ever since (Gillette, 2011). Hyves a Dutch equivalent of Facebook launched in 2004 had 10.3 million users in 2010, but the growth of Twitter and Facebook caused the growth to slow down and as of 2013 Hyves no longer serves as a social network platform. While one SNS grows another one is going down, which causes the Social Media environment to change rapidly.

One of the main features of SNSs is the sharing of content, which can vary in its form. With the freedom of the Internet users can find news that is consistent with their interest, it gives individuals control over their news browsing (Havick, 2000; Kleinberg 2002) and sharing content on SNSs can be done with just a click of a button. Not only can one share news found through New News media, news broadcasted through Traditional Media has become easier to share through the internet.

Finding and sharing content online has become a lot easier with the use of social media and SNSs, but what makes people share content they find online? Does one's prior social media experience have an effect on one's sharing intention and behavior? There might be more behind sharing news than just a push of a button. What does one consider before they share content?

2.2 Gratification needs

To find out what people do with news the Uses and Gratifications theory will be used. This theory by (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1974) is a theory that wants to answer what people do with media. The public is an active party and has control over the media they want to see. People want to satisfy their needs and do this with the use of media that best gratifies those needs.

To research the use of Traditional Media, Rubin and Perse (1987) studied the audience activity of viewers of local television news using the Uses and Gratifications theory. Using a questionnaire they found that those who sought entertaining information had a more active news viewing orientation. Which was related to greater perceived realism, news affinity,

intentionality and involvement. Perceived realism and news affinity were linked to news viewing motives.

Lee and Ma (2012) studied the factors that influence news sharing via social media and drew on both the Uses and Gratifications theory and the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). The Social Cognitive theory takes the perspective that people are self-developing, proactive, self-regulating and self-reflecting. Using these theories Lee and Ma studied the influences that Information Seeking, Entertainment, Socializing, Status Seeking and prior social media sharing experience had on news sharing intention of social media users. Past research had lead them to use these four gratifications, but what do each of these gratifications actually refer to. With Information Seeking one looks at to what extent news that is shared on Social Media provides people with relevant and timely information (Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005; Luo, 2002). Entertaining media can help users with their need for escapism or enjoyment (McQuail, 2005), thus the gratification need Entertainment looks at the way in which news media does this for its users. Lee and Ma (2012) argue that Socializing using Social Media helps develop and maintain relationships online and news sharing then becomes a shared social experience. Lastly Status Seeking is a gratification need that helps people attain status among their peers. By sharing knowledge one can obtain peer recognition and status (Hew & Hara, 2007; Mauss, 2002). A survey was used to determine the influence these gratifications needs had on the news sharing intention of the respondents in Lee & Ma's (2012) research. They found that prior social media sharing experience, socializing, status seeking and information seeking were significant predictors for the intention to share news. The only factor that was not found to be significant in this study was that of entertainment, sharing news is not a satisfying way to gratify entertainment needs.

Zhang and Zhang (2013), looked at the real-time news browsing behavior of their 49 participants. Like Lee and Ma they drew from the Uses and Gratification theory and analyzed the link between gratifications and behaviors of the subjects. While Lee & Ma (2012) only used survey data, Zhang and Zhang (2013) also looked at the actual behavior of their participants with screen videos to record the real-time browsing. By doing so differences between the self-report data and perceived behavior could be determined. They looked at two different types of gratifications, namely information-related and experience-related gratifications for browsing. Dimensions related to information-related gratifications were surveillance, status, opinion and social utility, while dimensions related to experience were involvement, freedom, spontaneity, mastery and intrinsic enjoyment. The use of different

types of gratifications was also linked to different behavior in the real-time news browsing aspect of the experiment.

Already with Traditional News Media one's gratification needs influences people's perceived realism, news affinity, intentionality and involvement. As the results show in these studies in the new News Media, one's gratification needs can be seen as predictors for the intention to share news via Social Network Sites. While previous research has studied the influence of Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking on one's sharing intention, only Information Seeking and Status Seeking have been tested for its influence on prior social media sharing experience. Previous research by Lee & Ma (2012) only used self-report data in their survey and while this study will not use video recording to determine actual behavior, as done by Zhang and Zhang (2013), it will try to simulate an environment for actual behavior using vignettes of news articles. While the vignettes will be used to try and determine actual behavior the four gratification needs used by Lee & Ma (2012) will be used to determine the sharing intention, as well as the prior social media sharing experience of the participants.

Therefore the first two hypotheses are presented as follows:

Hypothesis 1

The gratification needs Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking will be positively associated with sharing intention.

Hypothesis 2

The gratification needs Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking will be positively associated with prior social media experience.

2.3 Verification

With news appearing everywhere around you and from multiple sources how do you know if what you hear is correct or even actual news. How do we verify the news that we come across? To verify something is to prove, find out or state that it is true or correct (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2014). Verifying content that you come across online is difficult. Finding original sources can be quite a task and news articles in comparison to scholastic work often do not have a list of references included, making it hard to find out where a particular line in the article came from. And not every website is as trustworthy as another. To find out if what has been said in an article is correct one has to look for additional information about the content. Journalists often have a hard time with verifying their sources as well. The

European Journalism Centre (2013) tries to give journalists and aid-providers, or anyone else who wants to use their handbook, advice and tools for verification of content.

It is, in the end, about achieving a harmony of two core elements: Preparing, training and coordinating people in advance and during and emergency; and providing them with access and resources to enable them to take full advantage of the ever-evolving tools that can help with verification (Verification Handbook, 2013).

Social Media and verification of information might not necessarily go hand in hand. Social Media has made it easy to share news and in doing so verification of news can easily be overlooked. News can be spread within a network of people rapidly and not every single person in that network will verify the content. Another challenge comes from the fact that news comes from multiple sources nowadays and finding the original source can be a challenge.

Verification of new reports on medical news is an important case. When an incident happens, for example an outbreak of a new virus, there will initially be a lot of coverage attracting the public's attention. But once some time has passed and the results of more detailed investigations get published the interest within the public has usually decreased, resulting in a less accurate and comprehensive understanding of the incident with the public (Mizuno et al., 2010).

While the Internet provides the user with control over their news browsing it is still possible to stumble upon news one was not actively searching for. Unintentionally news exposure has become more common with the influx of Social Media, one can stumble upon news on their Social Network profile (Kim, Chen & de Zúñiga, 2013). Incidental news exposure had a significant effect on people's political participation both offline and online. Those that indicated that they had been exposed to news incidentally were more likely to be more active in political participation. If unintentional news exposure can lead to more involvement in political issues it may well have an effect on the perceived authenticity of news items.

Verification of content is important to keep misinformation and confusion at bay. Now that news sharing has become easier and is increasingly done by the public the verification of it is becoming even more important. News travels fast, which also means false news can travel fast. Following the steps provided by the Verification Handbook can help one in their verification process when they want to share news. But will everyone really use these tools?

Personality might be a way to determine whether someone with a certain personality type would or would not go through such a complicated process.

In this research the main purpose is to answer this research question: *Why do people share news using Social Media and what is the role of verification in this process?* Sharing news using Social Media gratifies certain needs within individuals. These needs can be different in nature, namely information seeking, socializing, status seeking and prior experience with sharing news (Lee & Ma, 2012). News sharing has been studied before, but the aspect of verification in this has not yet been looked into. Which steps do individuals go through before they share a news article with their network? Have they verified the information in articles they share and if so how? Personality may have an influential part in whether someone will share news or not and the reasoning behind it, as well as in the verification process.

2.4 Personality

The American Psychological Association refers to personality as “individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving” (Psychology Topics, para, 37). Personality is that what distinguishes the behavior of one person from that of another one. The study into personality started with Hippocrates’ Four Temperaments. He theorized that a person’s personality was based on the balance of four bodily fluids and personality types, sanguine (sociable), cholic (ambitious), melancholic (analytical) and phlegmatic (thoughtful) (Childs, 2009; Martin, Carlson & Buskist, 2010). After Hippocrates took the first step different models to determine an individual’s personality have been formed. The Five-Factor Model, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Enneagram of Personality are three of them.

Costa and McCrae (1992) established five dimensions of personality, The Big Five. These personality dimensions are Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience and can be measured on a bipolar scale. While extraverts are individuals who are sociable and assertive their polar opposite introverts will be less outspoken and more solitary. Individuals scoring high on Agreeableness are considerate, and concerned for social harmony and those scoring low on this dimension will be more self-centered. Conscientious individuals are thorough and self-disciplined and individuals scoring low on this dimension will be more easy-going and less goal-oriented. Neuroticism concerns a person’s affect and emotional control. Individuals scoring high on this scale will be more sensitive and worrisome. If one scores low on this scale one will be stable and have a good control over their emotions. Openness to Experience, defines if one has broad interests and

seeks novelty, those scoring low on this dimension will instead prefer familiarity and to stick to conventions (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a questionnaire used to measure the psychological preferences of individuals, how they perceive the world and make decisions (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1980) and implements the psychological type theory of Carl Jung. Four dichotomies of preferences are used that form a total of 16 different personality types. These four pairs are Extraversion and Introversion, Sensing and Intuition, Thinking and Feeling and Judging and Perception. Combining one factor from each pair determines one's personality. One could for example have a personality type consisting of introversion, intuition, feeling and perception (INFP). The Extraversion and Introversion aspects are the same as previously described in the section on the Five-Factor Model. Sensing and Intuition are information-gathering functions describing how a person understands and interprets new information. Sensing individuals will trust information that is concrete, while Intuitive individuals will be more likely to trust abstract or theoretical information. Thinking and Feeling form the dichotomy that functions as the decision-making scale. Those with a preference for Thinking will make decision from a logical standpoint, while those that prefer Feeling will make their decision by emphasizing with the situation. The last dimension is that of Judging and Perception. Those who are judging will like to have matters settled, Individuals who prefer perception prefer to have decisions be open (Myers Briggs & Myers, 1980). While this is a valuable personality measure, most tests are quite long and can only be answered with yes or no answers whereas the Five-Factor Model can be answered on a Likert scale.

The Enneagram of Personality is a model of personality which uses nine interconnected personality types. The first theories of the Enneagram were developed in the 1950's by Ichazo and Naranjo. The types linked with the Enneagram come from an ancient tradition wherein one remembers the nine Divine attributes as reflected in the human nature (Sayre-Adams, 2006). The Enneagram consist of nine types namely, the Reformer, the Helper, the Achiever, the Individualist, the Investigator, the Loyalist, the Enthusiast, the Challenger and the Peacemaker (Riso & Hudson, 2000). Each of the types has a Basic Fear, a Basic Desire and an Unconscious Childhood Message connected to them. The Enneagram of Personality is linked to spirituality and is a method for self-understanding and self-development. However it has been criticized because of subjective nature (Kaluzniacky, 2004).

Most research on personality and its relation to Social Media has been done using the

Five-Factor Model, so while the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Enneagram of Personality are valuable Personality Frameworks the Five-Factor Model will be used in this study. In multiple studies (Amichai-Hamburger, & Vinitzky, 2010; Correa, Hinsley, & de Zúñiga, 2010; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Ross et al., 2009) on social networks the Five-Factor Model was used to determine the influence of personality. Most of these studies have been done using the SNS Facebook. Different research methods resulted in different outcomes, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs

2.4.1 Extraversion

Using the 10-item Personality Inventory (Gosling et al., 2003) Correa, Hinsley, and de Zúñiga, (2010) found that extraversion had a positive effect on Social Media use. Using self-report data Ross et al. (2009) found that Extraversion influenced the number of Facebook groups one was part of, but not the number of friends one had. Amichai-Hamburger (2010) found contradicting results with user-information upload as a research measure. Those scoring high on Extraversion had more friends, but number of Facebook groups was not influenced by this personality trait. Moore and McElroy (2012) used both self-report data and actual Facebook data in their study. Looking at the actual Facebook data they found that participants scoring higher on extraversion had a significantly larger amount of friends compared to those scoring low on extraversion.

Individuals that score high on extraversion may be more likely to share news via their Facebook profile considering the higher number of friends they will have. If one has more friends one may share news content to socialize or to seek status. They might be more likely to verify their news beforehand considering the status they may have in their network, causing their network to rely on their judgment.

Therefore the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3

Because of their greater tendency to be sociable and the higher number of friends, it is hypothesized that individuals with a high score on the Extraversion trait will demonstrate more sharing of news content and verification of this content.

2.4.2 Agreeableness

Ross et al. (2009) did not find significant results on the relationship between agreeableness and Facebook use. Amichai-Hamburger (2010) found that those that scored high on agreeableness were less inclined to use Facebook page features. Those scoring high on

agreeableness reported to having greater levels of regret from their Facebook posts (Moore & McElroy, 2012).

Scoring high on agreeableness may result in less news sharing on the Facebook profile. As Amichai-Hamburger (2010) and Moore and McElroy (2012) found, agreeable individuals are less likely to use page features and will have greater levels of regret over their posts. If an agreeable person shares news they may be more likely to verify the content beforehand as to avoid regret of postage.

The following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4

Because individuals scoring high on Agreeableness are more likely to regret postage of content, it is expected that they are less inclined to share news on their Facebook profile, but if they do they will be more likely to verify the content beforehand.

2.4.3 Conscientiousness

A higher score on conscientiousness meant one had more Facebook friends than those with a lower score in Amichai-Hamburger (2010). Those scoring high on conscientiousness also reported to having greater levels of regret (Moore & McElroy, 2012).

Conscientious individuals might be more likely to use their Facebook profile to seek and share information to gratify their needs. Sharing news on their profile might also result in an increase in status. Beforehand an individual scoring high on this dimension will most likely verify the content. Both to maintain status and because of the nature of their personality, they are careful and reliable.

Therefore the following is proposed:

Hypothesis 5

Because sharing news can gratify the information seeking needs of Conscientious individuals they will be more likely to share content on their Facebook profile. And because of their Conscientious personality they will also apply verification on the content that they post.

2.4.4 Neuroticism

Ross et al. (2009) found that those scoring high on neuroticism would use the wall function more. And a U-shaped correlation was found for the sharing of basic information on their profile. Individuals with higher levels of Neuroticism were more likely to use Social Media than those scoring lower on this dimension (Correa, Hinsley, and de Zúñiga, 2010). Moore

and McElroy (2012), found that neuroticism was influential to the reported amount of time spend on Facebook and the level of regret one had about posts.

Scoring high on this dimension may result in one being less likely to share news items on their profile, this way one will avoid regret of postage. Then again those scoring high on this trait use the wall function more and might unintentionally come across news more often. They also use their profile to socialize and sharing content might be a way to gratify this need. Before posting content they will most likely verify their news to avoid regret.

Hypothesis 6

Because of their higher levels of regret from postages individuals scoring higher on the Neuroticism dimension will be less likely to share news content, but depending on their socializing needs they may share news to gratify these needs. Prior to sharing news they will most likely verify the content.

2.4.5 Openness to Experience

Those scoring high on the Openness to Experience dimension had a greater tendency to be sociable on Facebook, but also showed less knowledge of CMC (Ross et al, 2010). Correa, Hinsley, and de Zúñiga, (2010) found a positive relationship between Openness to Experience and Social Media use and for older people scoring high on this dimension it determined if one was more likely to use Social Media. Openness to experience was the only dimension that was not related to regret for inappropriate content postage (Moore & McElroy, 2012).

Those more open to experience will be more likely to share news via their profile, because it will be a new experience to them. It also is a way for them to be more sociable on their profile. Verifying the content will most likely be something that is overlooked by individuals scoring high on this dimension, since they are less knowledgeable about CMC (Ross et al, 2010). They also feel less or no regret about the content that they post on their profile, if it was inappropriate, correct or not.

Because of this the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7

Due to their curious nature individuals scoring high on the Openness to Experience personality type will be more likely to share news items, but will also be less likely to verify the content beforehand.

3. Method

In this chapter the sample that was used for this study will be discussed (3.1), as well as the procedure that the participants went through (4.2). Lastly the measures used in this study will be explained (3.3)

3.1 Sample

A sample of 115 participants took part in this study of which 100 participants filled out the survey completely. This group of participants had an average age of 22.4. The only requirement to take part in the study was having a profile on the SNS Facebook.

3.2 Procedure

The study was executed using an online web-based survey that was offered to the participants online. The survey consisted of four parts; background information, 4 news articles with questions about news sharing and verification intention, questions to determine one's personality and questions to determine one's gratification needs.

3.3 Measures

This survey allowed us to gather data on news sharing and verification processes, as well as information about the personality traits of the participants. To measure news sharing and verification intention four vignettes were used as well as a Uses and Gratifications questionnaire, which will be discussed further on in this chapter. By using both the vignettes and the questionnaire both actual behavior and the intention of the participants could be analyzed. Although there was no actual use of participants' Facebook profile, participants were asked to imagine sharing the articles on Facebook. For these vignettes actual published news articles from different news sites were used, however they were made to look as if from the same source and no indication of the news source was shown (i.e. banner with source name) (Appendix A). These vignettes contained news articles within two categories; crisis situations (i.e. news about earthquakes, bombings or famine) and entertainment (i.e. news about new movies or music). Each category contained one real and one fake article, so two true and two false articles were used. All articles used in the survey were actually published both the true and false articles. All articles were published on actual news sites and not entertainment websites (the hyperlinks to the original articles can be found in Appendix A). Participants were asked if they would share the articles shown in the vignettes and if so why. If they answered yes on the question about their intention to share the article they were also

shown a question about verification intention. If this question about verification was answered affirmative as well they were shown a question about their reasoning for verifying and their way of verification. To make sure that those who answered negative on the news sharing questions were also shown questions about verification three more questions about verification were used. First the participants were asked to rate their verification intention on a slider scale that ran from 0 till 100 for each of the four articles. This way mean scores of verification intention could be calculated. Thereafter they were asked to rank six verification steps from most to least important; three empty boxes were provided to give the respondent the option of adding their own verification step. The verification steps provided to rank were: *Source of news item; Similar content in other places; Author of the news item; Publishing date of the news item; Related content on the page; and Amount of times the item is shared on social media*. Lastly respondents were asked which of the seven given verification tools they had used before, once again there was an option to provide their own answer as well. The options provided were *Google Image, Google Translate, Google.com, SearchSystems.net, Snopes.com, TinyEye and Pipl.com*. Some of these verification tools were gathered from the verification handbook (2013).

To measure personality traits the Mini-IPIP by Donnellan, Oswald, Baird and Lucas (2006) was used (Appendix B). This is a 20-item measure based on the International Personality Item Pool. For each of the five personality traits within the Big Five, the Mini-IPIP uses four items. Each item could be answered on a 5-point Likert scale, so that the mean score of the four items per personality type could be calculated. Across five studies the scales had consistent and acceptable internal consistencies. Afterwards the results from the Mini-IPIP were analyzed to determine if the personality types were equally spread across the 100 participants. To determine the personality types of the respondents, the mean scores of the four questions were calculated. When one had a score of 3.26 or higher they were considered as part of that personality type and placed in the High category. Those scoring 3.25 or lower were placed in the Low category and not used for analysis for that personality type.

Lastly the gratification needs and news sharing intention of the participants were determined using a 5-point Likert scale and Lee and Ma's (2012) Uses and Gratifications measurement (Appendix C). Using this measure the effect of gratification needs on news sharing was determined. This measure was also used to determine the participants' prior news sharing experience and news sharing intentions. By using both the Mini-IPIP and the Uses and Gratifications measurement the effect of one's personality on gratification needs could be analyzed.

4. Results

In this chapter we describe the results of the correlations between sharing intention, prior social media sharing experience and gratification needs (4.1). Thereafter the data analysis of sharing behavior in general (4.2) and sharing behavior and the effect of personality (4.2.1) will be described. And lastly verification behavior in general (4.3) and verification behavior and the effect of personality (4.3.1) will be examined.

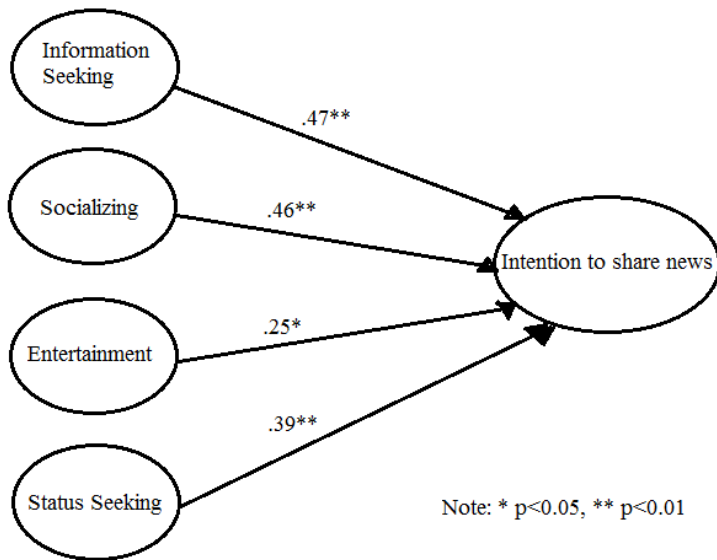
4.1 Sharing intention, prior social media sharing experience and gratification needs

The first two hypotheses introduced in the theoretical framework were as follows: *'The gratification needs Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking will be positively associated with sharing intention'* and *'The gratification needs Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking will be positively associated with prior social media sharing experience'*. To test these hypotheses correlation analyses were conducted. First we look at the results for the correlations between sharing intention and the gratification needs. Then at the correlations between prior social media sharing experience and gratification needs. Lastly we looked into the effect that personality might have on sharing intention and social media sharing experience.

4.1.1 Sharing intention and gratification needs

The mean scores for the three questions concerning sharing intention and the three questions for each gratification need were used for the correlation analysis. Between the questions about information seeking and the questions about sharing intention a significant correlation of $r = .47$, ($p < .01$) was found. For socializing and sharing intention a significant correlation of $r = .46$, ($p < .01$) was found. Status seeking and sharing intention correlated significantly $r = .39$, ($p < .01$). And between entertainment and sharing intention a significant correlation of $r = .25$, ($p < .05$) was also found.

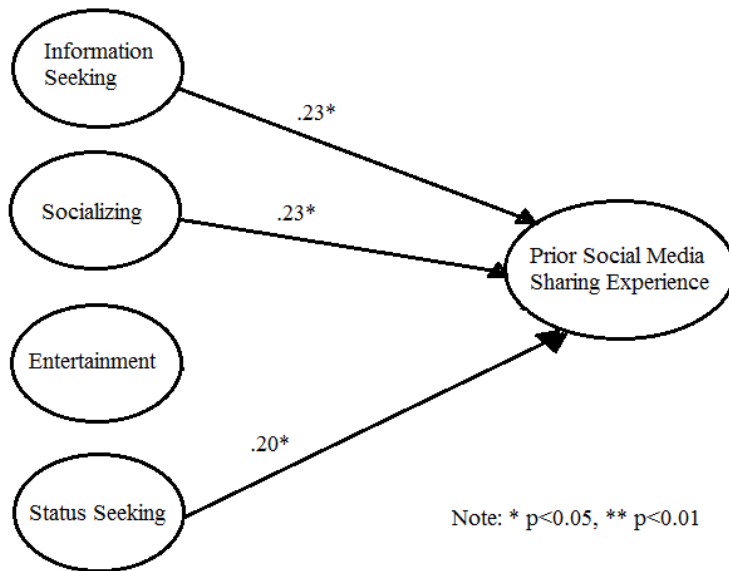
Figure 1: Correlations between gratification needs and news sharing intention



4.1.2 Prior social media sharing experience and gratification needs

For the correlations between prior social media sharing experience and the gratification needs the mean scores of the questions were once again used. After conducting a correlation analysis, a weak correlation was found for the relation between prior social media sharing experience and information seeking $r = .23$, ($p < .05$); socializing $r = .23$, ($p < .05$); and status seeking $r = .20$, ($p < .05$). No significant correlations were found between entertainment and prior social media sharing experience.

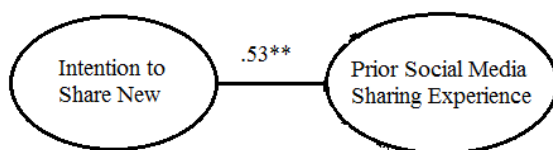
Figure 2: Correlations between gratification needs and prior social media sharing experience



4.1.3 Sharing intention, prior social media sharing experience and the effect of personality

Between sharing intent and prior social media sharing experience a correlation analysis showed a significant coefficient of $r = .53$, ($p < .01$).

Figure 3: Correlation between Sharing intention and Prior social media sharing experience



Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Using only the responses scoring High within each personality type category correlation analyses between sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience were also conducted. The results found in these analyses were significant as well and can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: Correlations between sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience per personality type

	Correlation coefficient
Extraversion	.41**
Agreeableness	.59**
Conscientiousness	.43**
Neuroticism	.80**
Openness to Experience	.60**

*Note: ** $p < 0.01$*

Between sharing intention and the five personality types correlation analysis showed no significant results. The only significant result found by correlation analysis between prior social media sharing experience and the five personality types was found between prior social media sharing experience and Neuroticism $r = .22$, ($p < .05$).

4.2 Sharing behavior

To determine one's sharing behavior the respondents were asked to answer the question 'Would you share this article' for each of the four articles used in this study. It soon became clear that the respondents did not show intent to share the articles very often. Frequency analyses show that out of the 110 participants that answered these questions the first article was answered with yes only 5 times, where article 2 was only answered affirmative 3 times and article 4 only 7 times. The only article that was shared more frequently was article 3, which was still only shared 26 times.

4.2.1 Sharing behavior and the effect of personality

The five personality types were evenly distributed. Only Extraversion and Neuroticism had more people scoring Low than High on the personality types, but they had still enough people scoring High in their category.

Table 2: Percentage of participants scoring Low or High on each personality type

	Low *	High
Extraversion	59.4%	40.6%
Agreeableness	24.8%	75.2%
Conscientiousness	47.5%	52.5%
Neuroticism	70.3%	29.7%
Openness to Experience	32.7%	67.3%

*Note: * Personality traits scored lowest until 3.25 (low) and 3.26 through highest (high)*

Table 3 shows the amount of times the articles were shared by the respondents with a high score within each of the personality trait categories. As previously stated the articles were only sparsely shared which resulted in certain articles not being shared by the high scoring group of a personality type at all.

Table 3: Percentage of respondents sharing the articles for each high scoring group within the personality trait category

	Share			
	Art1 (N=5)	Art2 (N=3)	Art3 (N=26)	Art4 (N=7)
Extraversion	20%	66.7%	43.5%	33.3%
Agreeableness	80%	33.3%	78.3%	66.7%
Conscientiousness	40%	0%	39.1%	50%
Neuroticism	20%	0%	30.4%	0%
Openness to Experience	60%	66.7%	69.6%	66.7%

Sharing behavior and the effect that personality had on this sharing behavior was tested using an independent samples t-test for each of the four articles and each of the 5 personality types. No significant results were found between sharing behavior and any of the five personality types using independent samples t-tests.

4.3 Verification behavior

To see if those that shared the articles also verified the article a frequency analysis was done for both sharing and verifying as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Number of respondents sharing and verifying the 4 articles

	Sharing Article	Verifying Article
Article 1	5	4
Article 2	3	1
Article 3	26	9
Article 4	7	1

A paired samples t-test was conducted between the questions ‘*Would you share this article?*’ and ‘*Would you verify this article?*’ for article 3 with a significant result ($t(25) = -6.87, p < .00$). Conducting a paired samples t-test for the same questions for article 4 also resulted in significant difference ($t(6) = -6.00, p < .001$).

The responses given by the respondents that said they would verify article 3 are shown in table 5. Since only 1 person said they would verify article 4 only the responses from article 3 are shown.

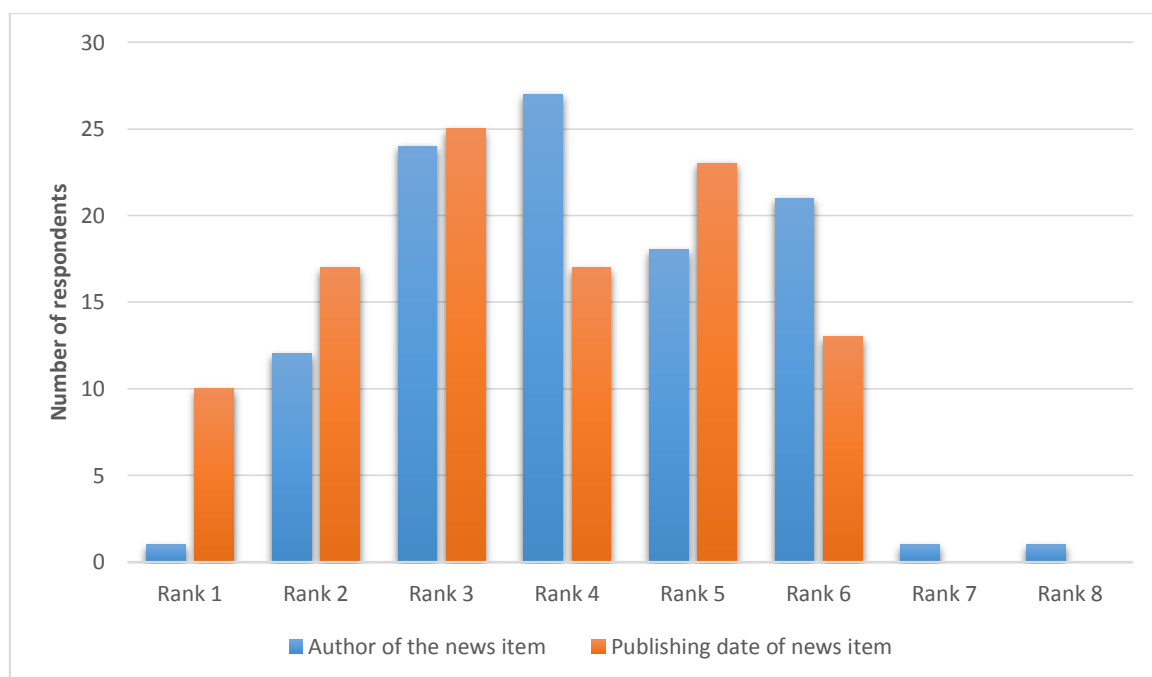
Table 5: Responses on how respondents would verify article 3

Responses
Searching other news sites.
Search on Google to see if other news websites and newspapers have published this.
Googling it probably, and searching for the interview video/feed
Verschillende websites met nieuws hierover bezoeken. (Visit multiple websites with news about this.)
Search for the article, find it on multiple sources, search his name and news and see if this shows up, etc.
I don't know.
Google or just look at the source.
Searching across Google to find similar quotes.
I would verify it on Google.

Then the mean scores for the amount of verification for each article were conducted, the scores ran from 0 to 100. The mean scores for each of the articles were as follows: Article 1 ($M = 39.35$, $SD = 31.05$), Article 2 ($M = 37.15$, $SD = 28.25$), Article 3 ($M = 35.26$, $SD = 28.73$) and Article 4 ($M = 28.21$, $SD = 23.80$) (To see the articles see Appendix A). To determine if there was an effect between the false and true article within each article category (crisis and entertainment) a paired samples t-test was executed. A paired samples t-test between article 1 (true) and article 2 (false) showed us that there was no significant effect between the two ($t(104) = .91$, $p = .37$). However for the articles within the entertainment category (article 3 & 4) a significant difference was confirmed ($t(104) = 2.74$, $p < .01$), effect consistency 45%.

Frequency analysis shows that 64.8% of the respondents indicated the *Source of the news item* as the most important step in their verification process. 41% of the respondents placed *Similar content in other places* as the second most important step. *Related content on the page* was ranked on the fifth place by 36.2% of respondent, while *Amount of times the item is shared on social media* was ranked as least important step by 50.5% of the respondents. The *Author of the news item* and *Publishing date of the news item* verification steps had more spread out rankings, which can be seen in figure 4.

Figure 4: Distribution of the ranking for verification step 3 and 4. Rank 1 means that the participants placed the verification step as the most important verification step, whereas Rank 8 means the least important.



A frequency analysis was performed to see how many of the respondents used the 7 verification tools given in the last extra verification question.

Table 6: Amount of times verification tools were indicated and percentage

	Number of people indicating to have used the verification tool before (N=115).	Percentage
Google Translate	44	38.3
Google Image	17	14.8
Google.com	100	87.0
SearchSystems.net	0	0
Snopes.com	4	3.5
TinyEye	2	1.7
Pipl.com	0	0

The responses given with the *other* option for verification tools are shown in the word cloud shown in figure 5. The frequencies of each response are shown in the following table (table 7).

Figure 5: Word cloud of verification tools added by respondents



Table 7: Frequency of the verification tools added by the respondents

	Frequency of verification tools added
Wikipedia	2
Nos.nl	2
Nu.nl	2
Anp.nl	1
BBC	1
Google Scholar	1

4.3.1 Verification behavior and the effect of personality

Since the articles were not shared a lot the questions about verification were only seen by a few respondents (i.e. those that indicated they would share one of the articles). To determine the verification per article for the high scores on each personality type a frequency analysis has been conducted.

Table 8: Percentage of respondents verifying the articles for each high scoring group within the personality trait category

	Verification			
	Art1 (N=4)	Art2 (N=0)	Art3 (N=8)	Art4 (N=1)
Extraversion	25%	-	37.5%	100%
Agreeableness	75%	-	75%	0%
Conscientiousness	25%	-	12.5%	0%
Neuroticism	25%	-	50%	0%
Openness to Experience	75%	-	75%	100%

For none of the personality types and articles significant results were found. To see if one's personality type has an influence on whether one shares an article with verification or not a paired samples t-test was conducted for each personality type. Using only the data with the high scores for personality type paired samples t-tests between sharing and verification were conducted for each article. For Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness

to Experience significant differences were found for article 3, respectively; ($t(9) = -4.58, p < .001$), ($t(17) = -5.83, p < .000$), ($t(8) = -8.00, p < .000$), ($t(15) = -5.00, p < .000$). However these t-tests are done for very low amounts of data as can be seen in the degrees of freedom.

Mean scores for the amount of verification on each of the four articles were calculated like in 4.2, but this time they were calculated for each personality type individually.

Table 9: Mean scores and standard deviations for verification intention per article and for each personality type.

	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3	Article 4
Extraversion	33.46 (29.27)	31.34 (24.16)	34.78 (22.15)	27.88 (22.08)
Agreeableness	38.42 (31.13)	37.54 (28.35)	35.76 (30.61)	27.38 (23.29)
Conscientiousness	38.17 (27.55)	39.91 (28.29)	32.79 (26.06)	26.96 (20.61)
Neuroticism	40.17 (33.53)	36.67 (29.42)	39.87 (29.82)	28.63 (24.13)
Openness to Experience	40.06 (32.24)	36.44 (29.12)	34.00 (29.13)	26.63 (23.78)

5. Conclusion & Discussion

In this chapter, the results of the study will be interpreted to answer the hypotheses and ultimately the research question. In the first part of this chapter (5.1) the theoretical and practical implications of the study will be discussed. The second part of this chapter will answer the research question. And lastly, the limitation of the study will be discussed as well as possible implications for future research into this topic.

5.1 Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate if one's gratification needs and personality have an effect on the sharing and verifying behavior of Facebook users, this way one can learn about the thought process behind people's behavior. With the gratification needs we looked at the sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience of the respondents, while with personality we looked at the actual sharing and verification behavior respondents showed. This was done to try to determine whether the reasoning behind sharing and verification behavior can be explained by one's personality or if there might be another effect at play. For the first hypothesis, concerning gratification needs, the Uses and Gratification Needs Theory was used. The five dimensions from the Five-Factor Model from Costa and McCrae (1992) were used to form the other five hypotheses. First the general results about sharing and verification behavior will be discussed, thereafter the hypotheses will either be confirmed or rejected.

General results

Sharing behavior

The question '*Would you share this article?*' was only sparsely answered affirmatively by the 110 respondents. It thus shows that this group of people were not very likely to share news items of any category on their Facebook profile at all. So while sharing news online has become easier this does not necessarily mean that people will actually share news. A reason for the results in this particular study might be the fact that the articles used in this study clearly came from an environment outside of the SNS Facebook. News found outside of the SNS may not be shared as often as news found within the SNS environment in general. It is possible that most people that do share content via Facebook find this content on the SNS itself. Sharing news from within the SNS may be easier for people since it requires less work. As said in the 2.1.1, sharing can now be done by just one click and this especially is true for in

SNS environment content. It might also very well be true that people are not very likely to share news on their Facebook profile in general no matter where they find the content. Another possible reason for these results is that the respondents were in an experimental setting, namely the survey page, they were not using their actual Facebook account to answer the questions.

It is interesting to see that the first article within the entertainment category was shared considerably more than the second article while the articles in the crisis category were more closely related. Considering the articles used in this category again we see that the first article was specifically about a celebrity while the other article was a more general article in the entertainment category. Lee and Ma (2012) discuss that sharing news with entertainment-oriented content can help in satisfying certain needs. This type of content lends for discussion, gossiping and making fun of the content, which was clearly the case for article 3.

Verification behavior

Those that said to share the articles used in the survey saw questions about verification after this. When we looked at the results it became quite clear that those that did share an article were not very likely to then also verify the article. For article 3 and 4 significant differences were found between those that both shared and verified the content. It was particularly interesting to see that the false article (article 3) did not receive a lot more verification from the respondents than those that saw the verification question after the true article (article 4).

The mean scores for amount of verification for all the articles lay below 50 points, which was the midpoint of the scale. Generally speaking we could thus say that people are not very likely to verify content before sharing it. As Mizuno et al. (2010) found with medical news people are very willing to believe news that gets a lot of coverage, but once better results are found there is not a lot of coverage anymore and people will not know that what they believed was in fact not true. If people are not likely to verify news before they share it with their network they in a way form their own misinformed coverage of news within their network. While there were no significant differences found between the amount of verification between those that saw the verification questions after article 3 and article 4 in the beginning of the survey, there was a significant difference found between the amounts of verification for these article in the verification question seen by everyone. Article 3, which was false, had some doubtful and possibly outrageous information whilst article 4, which was true, was a simple article about record sales. This might indicate to what kind of article people would try to verify beforehand sooner. The question that asked the respondents to rank the

verification steps gave us some insight in what is seen as the most important in people's verification process. It was interesting to see that some steps were clearly seen as most important while others had more spread out rankings. Not everyone might know that the author of an article or the publishing date of an article can give you clues as to if the article is true or not. Other articles may use links to previously released content to make a point clear, what people might forget is that the article that was linked in the article they read may have been published a while ago. Older information may by then have been proven to be untrue or may not be relevant for the present situation anymore. Furthermore web-based content is prone to alteration and these alterations can be hard to detect when you read the content (Alexander & Tate, 1999).

Lastly we saw that Google.com was by far the most used verification tool (87%), Google Translate was indicated a lot as well (38.3%). People may draw upon this tool to translate certain articles to see if they understood it correctly, or to be able to read an original source published in a language unknown to them. Google image was indicated by 14.8% of the respondent, possibly people use it to Reverse Image Search. Much like TinyEye a verification tool especially designed to do this which was only indicated sparsely (1.7%). It is interesting to see that those tools especially designed for verification were not used very often. They might not be known by a lot of people. Snopes.com, a website to search for urban legends and rumors was only indicated 4 times (3.5%), while it may help a great deal in determining whether something is true or not. SearchSystems.net and Pipl.com were not indicated at all by the 100 respondents. SearchSystems.net is a database full of public records to check your references. While Pipl.com is designed to find people. The word cloud with the added responses from the participants shows that Wikipedia is used often as well. Furthermore direct links to news sites were indicated as well. This is in line with the earlier response considering the *similar content in other places* step in the ranking question. One may use these news sites to verify an article published on a different place of the web.

Hypotheses

H1 *The gratification needs Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking will be positively associated with sharing intention.*

As shown by Lee and Ma (2012) a person's gratification needs and prior social media sharing experience can have an influence on one's sharing intention. Using the measurement used in Lee and Ma, we found that Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking all influenced the sharing intention of the respondents. This is in line with what was

found by Lin, Salwen & Abdulla (2005), since Information Seeking can be related to online news use, since it helps people stay up-to-date. Socializing influences sharing intention because sharing content with one's network is a valuable way to develop and maintain relationships (Lee & Ma, 2012). Those with an Entertainment need want to enjoy themselves or escape for a while and reading and sharing news they come across can thus be seen as gratifying this need. Though where we found a significant result for Entertainment Lee and Ma did not. Status Seeking also influenced one's intention to share news, which is in line with what Rafaeli and Ariel (2008) found. By sharing content users may increase their reputation as well as popularity within their network. **H1** can thus be confirmed for all four gratification needs.

H2 *The gratification needs Information Seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking will be positively associated with prior social media experience.*

Where Lee and Ma only tested the gratification needs Information Seeking and Status Seeking with prior social media sharing experience, we tested Socializing and Entertainment as well. The correlations for Information Seeking, Socializing and Status Seeking were found to be significant. Between sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience a positive correlation was found. Prior social media sharing experience can thus be influenced by one's Information Seeking, Socializing and Status Seeking need, but not by their Entertainment needs. **H2** can thus be confirmed for Information Seeking, Socializing and Status Seeking. Those that use their Social Media for Entertainment purposes will be less likely to have prior experience with sharing content. The Uses and Gratification measure from Lee and Ma thus shows to be a valuable measure for people's sharing intention.

To relate these results with the other hypotheses we also tested the effect that personality had on sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience. Between the five personality types and sharing intention no significant results were found. When we controlled for personality type and then looked at the correlation between sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience we found significant results for all of them. Some personality types had higher correlations than others, showing that once personality has an influence on prior sharing experience leading to sharing intention. The other five hypotheses were related to the effect of the five personality types from the Big Five.

H3 *Because of their greater tendency to be sociable and the higher number of friends, it is hypothesized that individuals with a high score on the Extraversion trait will demonstrate more sharing of news content and verification of this content.*

It was proposed that Extravert people would be more likely to share and verify content on their Facebook profile. The results did however not confirm this. On both the verification questions in the beginning of the survey and on the extra verification questions, those scoring high on Extraversion did not show a lot of verification intention. They might not realize the importance of verification and the impact they can have on their network of friends when they post content. They have to realize that web-based information lacks professional gatekeepers (Alexander & Tate, 1999) and in this situation they are the gatekeepers. In previous research it was shown that those scoring high on Extraversion were more likely to use Social Media. Where the number of friends that Extraverts had was a more debatable topic. Namely Ross et al. (2009) did not find that Extraversion had an influence on the number of friends one had, but both Amichai-Hamburger (2010) and Moore and McElroy (2012) did find that Extraversion had an influence on the number of friends one had. Having more friend on Facebook might have been influential on the sharing intention of those scoring high on Extraversion, but we did not find this in the results. **H3** can thus be fully rejected.

H4 *Because individuals scoring high on Agreeableness are more likely to regret postage of content, it is expected that they are less inclined to share news on their Facebook profile, but if they do they will be more likely to verify the content beforehand.*

In contrast with the first part of the hypothesis those that scored high on Agreeableness were more likely to share the articles used in the survey. Maybe they like to share news to create some social harmony, by sharing content with their network they make sure everyone knows what is going on. When they shared news they also showed more intention to verify the content beforehand. This is in line with Moore and McElroy (2012), who talk about the avoidance of regret from postage. However the results for the sharing behavior of Agreeable respondents were not in line with previous studies since they showed that those scoring high on this dimension were less inclined to use Facebook and its features (Amichai-Hamburger, 2010). **H4** can thus be rejected for sharing behavior, but confirmed for verification behavior.

H5 *Because sharing news can gratify the information seeking needs of Conscientious individuals they will be more likely to share content on their Facebook profile. And because of their Conscientious personality they will also apply verification on the content that they post.*

When we looked at the data for Conscientiousness we did not find any significant results for news sharing or verification. Those scoring high on this dimension while interested in news might be less interested in sharing the news they find with their network. It might be more for themselves and they might think that content that they share does not need

verification, because if it were not correct it would not have interested them anyway. Previous studies showed that those scoring high on Conscientiousness often had more friends on Facebook (Amichai-Hamburger, 2010) and were also more likely to regret postage (Moore & McElroy, 2012). Therefore it was proposed that they would be more likely to share news on their profile and be more likely to verify the content beforehand. Credibility perceptions of media content have been shown to vary given the user's motivations (Greenberg & Roloff, 1974). Given their Conscientious nature it would be more likely for those scoring high on this dimension to verify the content they find online. They may be more likely to look at the trustworthiness and reputation of the website that they found the content on (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007). However always trusting in specific media and media content can also cause for a skewed opinion (Reagan & Zenalty, 1979). The results were however contradicting and **H5** can be fully rejected.

H6 *Because of their higher levels of regret from postages individuals scoring higher on the Neuroticism dimension will be less likely to share news content, but depending on their socializing needs they may share news to gratify these needs. Prior to sharing news they will most likely verify the content.*

Those scoring high on Neuroticism showed less sharing behavior, though between sharing intention and a high score on Neuroticism a significant correlation was found. Which is in contrast with the actual sharing behavior. A possible reason for this may be that the intention to share is there for respondents scoring high on Neuroticism, but their neurotic nature ultimately prevents them from actually sharing content. When we look at the verification behavior we see the opposite of what the hypothesis proposed, they did show less verification behavior, but the intention once again shows a contrasting result. The neurotic nature of the respondents may cause a bit of internal struggle between intention and actual behavior. In previous research Neuroticism was found to be related to more social media use (Correa, Hinsley, & de Zúñiga, 2010), but also to higher levels of regret about posts (Moore & McElroy, 2012). So while those scoring high on this dimension are more likely to spend more time on Facebook they would probably be less inclined to share content, this to avoid regret. And when they do share news on their profile they would want to verify the content beforehand, again to avoid regret. The results did show that those scoring high on Neuroticism were less inclined to share news, but also showed that they were less likely to verify the content. **H6** can therefore only be confirmed for sharing behavior, but not for verification behavior.

H7 *Due to their curious nature individuals scoring high on the Openness to Experience personality type will be more likely to share news items, but will also be less likely to verify the content beforehand.*

Due to their curious nature and more Social Media use (Correa, Hinsley, & de Zúñiga, 2010), those that score high on Openness to Experience were proposed to be more likely to share news. But because of their lack of regret (Moore & McElroy, 2012) and less knowledge about Social Media and CMC in general (Ross et al, 2010) they would be less likely to verify what they share. Those with Openness to Experience as personality type were indeed more likely to share news on their profile, though they also showed more intention of verifying the content beforehand which is in contrast with what was proposed. They might be more likely to verify the content they post because in their explorations on the internet they have come across verification tools and realized the importance of verification. Because they are open to new experiences they have likely seen more websites and have thus gathered more information about what kind of website is trustworthy. They know that sites with certain layouts or commercial content are more or less trustworthy than other websites. Or they have seen articles about false news and realized that they should verify what they share to prevent this from happening. **H7** can thus only be partly confirmed, only the sharing part is in line with the results.

5.2 Conclusion

The research question in this thesis is: *Why do people share news using Social Media and what is the role of verification in this process?*

This research tried to determine what influences people to share news on their Facebook profile. It looked at the effect certain personality trait might have on gratification needs, sharing intention and prior social media sharing experience. As well as the influence that personality might have on one's sharing and verifying behavior.

Information seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status Seeking all had a significant effect on the sharing intention of the respondents. One's gratification needs were thus a good indicator of one's sharing behavior.

However, hypotheses based on the five personality types from the Five-Factor Model (Costa and McCrae, 1992) were somewhat inconclusive. While hypothesis 3 and 5 could be fully rejected, the other three hypotheses could not fully be confirmed. Between the first verification questions and the extra verification questions some contrasting results were

found. This may be influenced by the scores number of people actually seeing the first verification questions. For Agreeableness we see more intent to share news and also to verify this content beforehand, while it was proposed that they would show less intention to share news. Neurotic individuals did indeed show less sharing behavior, but also less verification behavior. The intention to share and verify was there, the actual behavior was not shown though. Those more Open to Experience did show more sharing behavior, but also more verification behavior which was the opposite of what was proposed. Gratification needs were thus a better indicator for sharing behavior than personality.

Generally speaking we can say that individuals do not show a big intention to share news (from outside the SNS environment) on their Facebook profile. People may be more likely to share news content that is already within a SNS environment, which is somewhat easier than sharing content from outside this environment.

When we look at the verification process of people we see that when they do decide to share content on their profile they do not show very much verification intention. Both on the verification questions only seen by those who decided to share an article and on the verification questions seen by everyone low verification intention was shown. Different verification steps seem to have a certain amount of importance within the respondent group. The *source of a news item* and *similar content in other places* seem to be important steps in verifying content for most people. And this verification is mostly done using Google.com and its extensions Google Translate and Google Image. Specific verification tools are unknown to most people, these tools might be more applicable to journalists and the like.

So why do people share news? To gratify certain needs they have, no matter what personality they have. Verification is a process that is still generally overlooked by the public, though when specifically asked about it people do know what they find to be more important in their verification process.

5.3 Limitations of this research & implications for future research

Like with most studies, with this research came some limitations. When we started looking at the data from our survey we soon became aware that the articles had not been shared by a lot of people. This meant that most people had not seen the verification questions with each article. Luckily we had thought of that whilst forming the survey and we added three additional verification questions to still get responses concerning verification. But when one did not intent to share an article they also did not see the question that asked them why they would share the article. In future research it might be better if there was a question where

those that did not decide to share the articles could provide a reason for their decision, much like how those that did decide to share the article could provide a reason for this. This could either be a text based question or a question with possible reasons provided. Another solution may be to start with the verification question before asking the participants whether or not they would share the article. This way more data about the verification process could have been collected and maybe a more natural process would have been simulated this way.

The articles used in this research came from an environment outside Facebook and most respondents did not show intent to share an article from an outside environment. This response might have been different if they had come across the article within the SNS environment. The steps one has to go through to post a news item from an outside environment onto Facebook can be seen as a little bit of a hassle for some people, while sharing something on Facebook itself can be done with just one click. Future research may use both news items from outside and within the SNS environment to see if this indeed affects the sharing intention.

Another limitation of this work was the personality type division. While each personality type had enough people having a high score on the type there were some uneven distributions in the numbers. This meant that some personality types were underrepresented for certain questions. In future research one can maybe only use a certain amount of people from each category and discard the excess in respondents within a category. Another limitation of the personality types was that one could have a high score on more than one personality type. Which is normal, no one is just extraverted, they might also have a very open to experience personality. While this is normal it caused for some skewed results for certain questions. The response of one respondent with high scores on multiple personality traits could show up more than once. This is hard to control for, since it's a natural result maybe future research can look into cases with multiple personality types scoring high and see which mean score was in fact the highest and only use that trait for the respondent.

Not a lot of work has been done into verification, which is why we tried to do so in this research but more research is definitely needed. For future research it might also be interesting to compare verification behavior with gratification needs and prior social media experience.

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Appendices

Appendix A. The four articles used and their real source.

Article 1.

South Korean PM Chung Hong-won resigns over ferry



South Korean Prime Minister Chung Hong-won has resigned amid criticism of the government's handling of the sinking of a passenger ferry.

He said the "cries of the families of those missing still keep me up at night". Mr Chung will stay in his post until the disaster is under control.

The Sewol ferry with 476 people aboard - most of them students and teachers - sank off South Korea on 16 April.

Officials have confirmed 187 died, but scores are missing presumed drowned.

Furious relatives have repeatedly criticised what they see as the slowness of the recovery operation.

"The right thing for me to do is to take responsibility and resign as a person who is in charge of the cabinet," Mr Chung said in a brief televised statement.

"On behalf of the government, I apologise for many problems from the prevention of the accident to the early handling of the disaster."

He added: "There have been so many varieties of irregularities that have continued in every corner of our society and practices that have gone wrong. I hope these deep-rooted evils get corrected this time and this kind of accident never happens again."

President Park Geun-hye accepted her prime minister's resignation but did not set a last day in office. The PM would leave his post once the ferry disaster was under control, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported.

South Korea ferry

Grim recovery

Unanswered questions

Harrowing messages

Panic and hope



On behalf of the government, I apologise for many problems from the prevention of the accident to the early handling of the disaster"

South Korean Prime Minister Chung Hong-won

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-27176844>

What's behind epidemic of financial industry deaths?



A rash of eight financial-industry suicides so far in 2014 has mental-health professionals trying to understand what's behind it.

In late winter many people suffer from depression, but for bankers this is usually offset by finding out how large their bonuses will be.

However, compensation across the entire financial sector is down from years past as large firms deal with new rules pinching their bottom lines.

The other, more pressing matter for mental health pros is: Why are such a large proportion of these self-murders public affairs?

While there are no definitive theories on suicide location, many in the suicide-prevention field believe it deserves more research.

Six of the eight mysterious deaths have been from a building or in front of a train. Half of them were at work or en route.

"Our world has become so social — and the barriers of privacy have been [so] broken down. Perhaps that could be a reason for the public displays, especially for those in their 20s," says Carolyn Wolf, executive partner and director of the mental-health law practice at Abrams Fensterman in Midtown.

Alternatively, Dr. John Draper, project director of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, suggests it has more to do with access to means than anything else.

"If you live or work in a high-rise or have access at work to harmful items — like a gun — then that could be most lethal means available, without any further meaning to location."

But talk to any financial pro, and he or she will tell you the culture around the trading desks has changed. While markets are up, head counts and compensation are down, and the struggle to make one's mark is more intense.

Mysterious London Banker death officially ruled a suicide

London authorities probe two mysterious banker deaths

Rash of finance-pro suicides baffles experts

"Our world has become so social — and the barriers of privacy have been [so] broken down. Perhaps that could be a reason for the public displays, especially for those in their 20s,"

Executive partner and director of the mental-health law practice
Carolyn Wolf

<http://nypost.com/2014/03/22/whats-behind-epidemic-of-industry-deaths/>

Kanye West: 'I Am The Next Nelson Mandela'



Kanye West is under fire today for claiming that he will soon be a bigger cultural and civil rights icon than Nelson Mandela.

In an interview with WGCI radio in Chicago, the notoriously self-promoting rapper said that the 95-year-old South African leader's recent death will finally allow people to focus more of their attention on West's own accomplishments.

In the studio to promote his new music video Bound 2, the conversation soon turned to the day's biggest news out of South Africa. West was asked who he thought on the world stage today could possibly replace Nelson Mandela in terms of leadership, and his unconventional answer left heads spinning.

"I am the next Nelson Mandela," West responded. "I'm only 36 years old, and when I look at everything I've accomplished, it's the only comparison that makes any sense. By the time I'm 95, I'm going to be a bigger hero than he ever was.

"Nelson Mandela did a lot of good work, don't get me wrong. But I think I'm on track to do something even bigger. I liberate minds with my music. That's more important than liberating a few people from apartheid or whatever.

"Not to say Mandela wasn't for real. I have mad respect. I just think we need to keep things in perspective here. Anyone can be replaced. And I think I'm well on my way towards being the next great black leader. I'm already worshiped around the world. And there's more to come."

[Kanye west: 'I'm More Important' Than Rosa Parks](#)

[Robert Mugabe Blasts 'Coward' Nelson Mandela](#)

[Sarah Palin Arrives in South Africa for Mandela Memorial](#)

" I liberate minds with my music. That's more important than liberating a few people from apartheid or whatever. "

Kanye West

<http://dailycurrant.com/2013/12/06/kanye-west-i-am-the-next-nelson-mandela/>

Record Store Day boosts vinyl sales



This year's Record Store Day, on 19 April, saw a surge in vinyl sales, with an increase of 133% on the previous week, industry figures reveal.

Led by a reissue of The Stone Roses' debut album, vinyl sales grew by more than 62% compared to 2013, with 12-inch single sales growing by 15.4% alone.

However, 7-inch vinyl sales fell by 28%, partly because fewer records were released in the format.

The figures are in keeping with the US, where week-on-week sales grew by 91%.

Nielsen Entertainment called it "the most successful Record Store Day ever for vinyl", with LP sales up 58% over the same week last year.

Record Store Day was created in the US in 2007. Now in its seventh year, it champions independently-owned record stores in the UK and US and celebrates vinyl recordings.

In the UK, the Stone Roses' eponymous album was the biggest-selling vinyl album of the week, in a chart populated with classic bands such as the Jimi Hendrix Experience and the Ramones - both of whom also featured in the US chart.

"The vinyl format, whilst still popular with baby-boomers that grew up with it and nurtured in recent years by events such as Record Store Day, increasingly also appeals to an engaged audience of younger artists and consumers alike, who appreciate its iconic heritage as part of Rock and Pop culture," said Gennaro Castaldo, spokesman for the British Phonographic Industry (BPI).

"LP sales doubled in volume last year to 780,000 units - the highest annual total in over 15 years, and with sales up again this year, we're close to seeing the greatest demand for vinyl recordings in nearly two decades."

Related Stories

[Record Store Day names 607 releases](#)

[One Direction announce vinyl single](#)

[Vinyl record sales at 10-year high](#)

"LP sales doubled in volume last year to 780,000 units - the highest annual total in over 15 years, and with sales up again this year, we're close to seeing the greatest demand for vinyl recordings in nearly two decades."

Gennaro Castaldo

<http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-27159534>

Appendix B. The Mini-IPIP 20-item personality measure (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird & Lucas, 2006)

Instructions: On the following pages, there are phrases describing people's behaviors. Please use the rating scale below to describe how accurately each statement describes you. Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then fill in the bubble that corresponds to the number on the scale.

Item	Factor	Text
1	E	Am the life of the party
2	A	Sympathize with others' feelings
3	C	Get chores done right away
4	N	Have frequent mood swings
5	O	Have a vivid imagination
6	E	Don't talk a lot (R)
7	A	Am not interested in other people's problems (R)
8	C	Often forget to put things back in their proper place (R)
9	N	Am relaxed most of the time (R)
10	O	Am not interested in abstract ideas (R)
11	E	Talk to a lot of different people at parties
12	A	Feel others' emotions
13	C	Like order
14	N	Get upset easily
15	O	Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas (R)
16	E	Keep in the background (R)
17	A	Am not really interested in others (R)
18	C	Make a mess of things (R)
19	N	Seldom feel blue (R)
20	O	Do not have a good imagination (R)

Note. E = Extraversion; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness; N = Neuroticism; O = Openness to Experience; (R) = Reverse Scored Item.

Appendix C. Gratification needs and prior experience measure (Lee & Ma, 2012).

Variable	Description	Item
Information seeking	Measures the extent to which news shared in social media can provide users with relevant and timely information	It helps me to store useful information
		It is easy to retrieve information when I need
		To keep up to date on the latest news and events
Socializing	Measures the extent to which news sharing helps to develop and maintain relationships with acquaintances in social media	I can interact with people when sharing news
		To keep in touch with people
		It is effective to exchange ideas with other people
Entertainment	Measures the extent to which sharing news in social media serves as a means for entertainment and leisure purposes	It helps me pass time
		To combat boredom
		It helps me to relax
Status-seeking	Measures the extent to which sharing news in social media helps one to attain status among peers	It helps me feel important when sharing news
		It helps me to gain status when sharing news stories
		It helps to look good when sharing news stories
Prior social media sharing experience	Measures the extent to which users shared content in any social media platform	How often do you use social media to write blogs?
		How often do you use social media for micro-blogging?
		How often do you use social media to share pictures and videos?
Intention to share news	Measures how likely respondents intended to share news in a social media platform in the future	I intend to share news stories on social media in the future
		I expect to share news stories contributed by other users

I plan to share news stories on
social media regularly
