Feeling better but doing worse
The effects of Facebook self-presentation on implicit self-esteem and cognitive task performance
Catalina L. Toma

CC Rozen
Professor Fairchild
Social Psychology
Purpose

- This study sought to research the relationships between self-affirmation activities, Facebook self-presentation, implicit self-esteem, and cognitive task performance
- How does Facebook self-presentation relate to implicit self-esteem?
- How does Facebook self-presentation relate to cognitive task performance?
Research Questions & Hypotheses

- **H1a:** Exposure to one’s own Facebook profile self-presentation improves performance on a subsequent cognitive task.

- **H1b:** Exposure to one’s own Facebook profile self-presentation hurts performance on a subsequent cognitive task.

- **H2:** Exposure to one’s own Facebook profile self-presentation raises implicit self-esteem.

- **RQ:** Is increased state self-esteem a mediator of the effect of Facebook profile self-presentation on cognitive task performance?
Key Assumptions

- Examining one’s own Facebook self-presentation is a self-affirming activity.

- The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a reliable measure of state self-esteem.

- Counting down from 1978 by 7s for 2 minutes is a reliable measure of cognitive task performance.
Methods

- Viewed either their profile or someone else’s
- Took the IAT
- Did the cognitive task
Results

- Those who had viewed their own profiles scored higher on the Implicit Association Test (IAT) for self-esteem.
- Those who had viewed their own profiles attempted less numbers in the cognitive task.
- Researchers suggested that self-affirmation decreased the participants’ motivation on the cognitive task, effectively reducing performance.
- Not statistically significant at every level, further research encouraged.
Discussion Question

- The study discussed two schools of thought about how self-affirmation affects performance. Which do you personally identify with?
  - Self-affirmation enhances confidence which leads to greater performance.
  - Self-affirmation decreases motivation to perform well.