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Who Trusts Social Media?

Abstract

Trust is the foundation of all communication, yet a profound question in business today is how can we psychologically understand trust behaviors in our new digital landscape? Earlier studies in internet and human behavior have shown a significant connection between social media use and user personality (Hughes et. al. 2012). Still, the connection between type of online user and their trust values is an under researched area. Today, millions of people globally read newsfeeds and information via their digital networks, but we do not know enough about human behavior related to which specific users of social media actually trust the news they read online. In this study we apply items from five different validated scales to measure trust to investigate to what degree a users' perception of trust varies depending on their gender, age, or amount of time spent using social media. Using a convenience population sample (n=214) significant differences in levels of trusting behavior were found across gender, age, social media newsfeed preferences and extent of social media use. The findings suggest that women and younger users have the highest expectations for integrity, trusting others and expecting others to show empathy and goodwill. Implications of the results are discussed.

Keywords: Social Media, Trust behavior, Integrity, Competence, Concern, Benevolence, Identification.

1. Introduction

Trust has throughout history been an integral part of our private and business lives, both on and offline. Trust philosophically binds us together with an intoxicating energy (Lingis, 2004). Indeed, learning to trust others and being trusted yourself is as important as breathing fresh air every day: all relationships depend upon trust. Nevertheless, the psychological perspectives of digital trust and trustworthy behavior on the internet is a recently new phenomenon within human behavior research. As the use of social media has grown exponentially during the course of the last decade, people can access news on social media sites from almost any computer or hand held device wherever they are in the world. In fact, they would find it hard to imagine a life without it as information about what is going on in the world is at one's fingertips. Instead of waiting to read the newspaper or watch the news on television in order to catch up on current events, people can get instant updates by simply going online and looking at web and social media sites. Nevertheless, since there are hundreds of thousands of social media sites featuring different viewpoints on a variety of subjects, it can be hard to distinguish what information is deemed the most accurate and most trustworthy, and what information is not. Indeed, only 20% of our respondents believe they can unquestionably trust the news that they read on social media. This suggests that understanding who trusts social media newsfeeds will be critical for not only media houses but also for businesses and politics.

We live in an age where distrust is rife, hence it is imperative that we gain a better insight into how trust evolves and is maintained in a digital world. Against this backdrop we need more empirical insights into users and site managers' expectations of future trustworthiness and distrustworthiness. More studies are needed since digital technological advancements are ever evolving and will have increasing impact on how we communicate in both society and business. To fill a gap in the literature relative to perception of trust in the context of social media and news feeds, we conducted an exploratory study combining five different validated measures of Integrity (Mayer & Davis, 1999), Competence and Benevolence (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002), Concern, and Identification (Shockley-Zalabak et al. 2000), to investigate whether gender, age, or the amount of time spent using social media effects one's perception of trust. Our second contribution at a conceptual level is the development and validation of this five factor trust measurement scale. Extrapolating from research on trust and social media offered in our literature review, this study explores the question: who trusts news on social media? We focus on the

following problem statement in order to better understand human behavior and perceptions of online trust.

RQ: Do social media users' perceptions of trust differ significantly with respect to their gender, age, social media usage and social media site preference for newsfeeds?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The concept of trust

Trust can be defined as an implicit set of beliefs that the other party will refrain from opportunistic behavior and will not take advantage of a situation (Ridings et al., 2002). Trust is in fact one of the key determinants of performance in organizations (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). As a result, trust has been an important construct in the social sciences and has received increasing attention by organizational researchers, as in the absence of specific rules in organizations, trust is essential (Cardona, Morley, & Reiche, 2013; Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). Trust is now an established research phenomena connected to online value and information privacy issues, yet trust in newsfeeds in social media platforms is a greatly under-researched area (Bélanger & Crossler, 2001; Ou, Pavlou, & Davison, 2014; Porter & Donthu, 2008; Wang, Min & Han, 2016). Consequently, we aim to fill the gap in the field by firstly offering a literature review of the extant literature in the trust research. Secondly, we aim to fill this gap by collecting and analyzing empirical data on specific variables of trust combined with use of social media newsfeeds. A third contribution is the validation of a 5-factor trust instrument. In this paper, trust is operationalized more specifically as the understanding that an online second party with whom we are in contact with or share news with, will perform actions that are beneficial or at least not detrimental to us. In addition, it is operationalized as considering whether the trust probability is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with that party (Gambetta, 1988). Thus, in social media newsfeed contexts, trust is defined as an individual's confidence in persons or platforms of social media. Sub-dimensions of trust used frequently in prior business research include *Benevolence, Integrity and Competence* (Hwang & Lee, 2012; Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008; McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002). Organizational trust is also defined with the sub-

dimensions *Identification*, and *Concern* (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). Hence, these five constructs within trust research will be applied in this study as the most valid and parsimonious for this specific investigation of who trusts social media. A comprehensive discussion of the five trust constructs is now presented below.

2.1.1 Benevolence

Benevolence is one of the five major pillars used to define trust (Mayer, et al., 1995). According to McKnight and Chervany (2001), Benevolence is defined as “one [who] cares about the welfare of the other person and is therefore motivated to act in the other person’s interest” (p. 33). Based on early trust theory, the concept of trust seems to cluster into several different categories with Benevolence being one of the most common categories (McKnight & Chervany, 1996). In order for Benevolence to be present there must be at least two interacting parties, one being the *trustee*, and the other the *trustor*. Urbano, Rocha, and Oliveira (2013) define Benevolence as the trustee receiving a feeling of goodwill toward the trustor. Whereas Lee, Park, Lee, and Yu (2008) suggest that the “trustee shows consideration and sensitivity to the needs and interests of the trustor” in order for there to be a benevolent interaction (p. 457). Benevolence, as a dimension of trust, includes the notion that two parties willingly serve one another’s interest (McKnight & Chervany, 1996). When people join online virtual communities they often tend to seek social support and friendships in these communities. They perceive care and love as well as emotional, moral, social, and informational support (Liang & Turban, 2011; Ridings & Gefen, 2004). Twitter is an example of individuals providing social support for others when they need it (Gruzd, Wellman, & Takhteyev, 2011). Benevolence has been linked to two personality traits, agreeableness and neuroticism, which are influenced by heredity, environment, time, and gender (Urbano et al., 2013). Agreeableness is being helpful, cooperative, and sympathetic toward others and neuroticism refers to the degree of emotional stability, impulse control, and anxiety of an individual (Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, & Avdic, 2011). Consequently, in social networks, individuals who allow another to draw on resources from other members of the network are, in fact, showing agreeableness and forming a relationship. These can take the form of useful sharing information (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Lee et al. (2008) suggest that Benevolence may increase the quality of relationships by encouraging specific behavior and motivating social relationships to further develop and strengthen (e.g., become closer). Urbano et al. (2013) present two different views of Benevolence. That each person’s view of Benevolence is likely reflective

of their individual personality traits and that in close, long-term relationships, Benevolence has a positive impact as time and commitment growth. This may be evidenced by social media interactions between individuals engaging with one another based on general faith in humanity. Therefore, Benevolence is important in a social media newsfeed setting as without positive reciprocation, there would be no social media sharing.

2.1.2 Integrity

Miller and Schlenker (2011) suggest several important characteristics of Integrity, including honesty, strength, and virtue. According to Mehok (2010), Integrity constitutes a strong moral character built on the foundations of honesty, decency, and respect. Tullberg (2012) states that Integrity is a basic characteristic of social human nature. A more precise manifestation of Integrity is suggested in how a person is seen as having Integrity when there is a consistent display between personal values, social values, and behaviors in ordinary life, especially when in difficult settings (Tullberg, 2012). Integrity can help build up and/or reinforce an individual's sense of self-worth and pride in their personal achievements (Tullberg, 2012).

People's ethical ideologies are portrayed by commitments and morals (Miller & Schlenker, 2011). According to Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson (2009), these ideologies form a complex integrated system that helps form a person's decision regarding what is right and what is wrong (as cited in McFerran, Aquino, & Duffy, 2010; Murphy, 2004). A study among employed business respondents to various ethical statements suggests that people relate more to Integrity in ethical situations (as cited in Tullberg, 2012). Furthermore, Schlenker et al. (2009) state that Integrity has played a major historical role in human nature and has helped build social relationships in communities (as cited in Miller & Schlenker, 2011). Integrity applies to social media news sharing as without such ethical principals in online communities they would not be sustainable.

2.1.3 Competence

Competence plays a major factor in everyday activities. Shockley-Zalabak et al. (2000) defined Competence as having the ability or power to do what needs to be done for someone. Key words associated with Competence are ability, accomplishment, and capability. According to McKnight and Chervany (1996), being able to do something for someone is another definition of Competence, whereas Rosenberg (2012) describes Competence as being able to do something to meet expectations. The significance of Competence therefore stems from the idea of having trust in another person to finish a task. Woodroof (2010) further defines Competence as having the

necessary tools to be able to accomplish a task, such as tools to manage newsfeeds in social media. If Competence is having the ability or power to do what needs to be done, in a social media setting, it is crucial that each user shows competence in the newsfeeds that they write and share.

2.1.4 Identification

According to Foote (1951), relationships are formed from interactions that influence how we identify ourselves within a group or organization (in the context of this study, we suggest that social networks are subsumed within groups and organizations). Strong Identification to a group (e.g., social network) is significant in establishing trust (Borgen, 2001). Identification refers to the extent to which we hold common goals, norms, values, and beliefs associated with belonging to an organization or group (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). Human beings identify themselves with people in their network, and categorize the social world around them to 'regularize their doings' (Foote, 1951). Edwards (2005) further states that individuals who identify with an organization or group feel that shared experiences help establish relationships. Without the link between Identification and relationships, certain aspects of the social world are likely to be viewed with some skepticism (Edwards, 2005). Hence, trust can result from high dependence and identity formation between individuals both on and off-line (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998).

Li and Darban (2012) found that people with high social identity (i.e. in solidarity and conformity with their own social group), higher altruism (related to both kin and reciprocal altruism) and higher tele-presence (e.g. feeling of presence in the virtual environment) tend to be people who need to become a part of a social group. Consequently, they use social networks to a great degree because they perceive encouragement for participation from social networks (Rondas-Cataluna, Ramirez-Correa, & Arenas-Gaitan, 2015).

Edwards (2005) suggests that within social identity theory, Identification and self-concept involve both personal identities and social identities. Components of the theory also suggest that, in order to simplify the social world, human beings categorize people into groups with which they can identify. Individuals become members of these groups by assigning themselves (or being assigned by others) based on their self-concept or social Identification (Edwards, 2005). Individuals with social similarities, such as similar fundamental characteristics like ethnic backgrounds, can influence, create, and maintain the development of trust (McAllister, 1995). At the same time, it is worth noting that children as young as three can accurately assess trust by looking at an individual's photograph (Devlin, 2014). This gives an alternative outlook as to the

significance of Identification in regards to perceptions of trust in a social media context, where photographs may impact levels of trust. Foote (1951) also described Identification as having a “compelling or inhibitory effect ... on the release of varying kinds of behavior” (p. 21).

Within the domain of Identification and the significance it can have in fostering trust, looking at a virtual team setting in comparison to face-to-face interaction can be a productive method (Rusman, Van Bruggen, Sloep, & Koper, 2010) and this is relevant to our present study. After analyzing different scenarios, Rusman et al. (2010) concluded that habitual trust, which is formed through shared history and personal bonding, cannot be formed in virtual teams as it is in the face to face environment. It was also concluded that individuals in virtual teams tend to stick to their initial perceptions of trust (Rusman et al., 2010). Therefore, as Identification measures the extent to which we hold common goals, norms, values, and beliefs associated within an organization or group, these common values are very relevant to online communities.

2.1.5 Concern

Concern is defined as the feelings of caring, empathy, tolerance, and safety that are exhibited when others are vulnerable (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). Research has found that interpersonal care and Concern over self-interests are critical for the development of trust (Clark & Mills, 1979; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). If we take the environment of social media and apply Edmondson’s description of an organization’s social capital involving the culture and network of its relationships, members of these groups describe their environments as caring as well as showing empathy and tolerance (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000).

Emotional ties that link individuals together can provide the basis for trust (McAllister, 1995). When investing in trust relationships, people express genuine care and concern for each other’s welfare; belief in the virtue of relationships is shared and values are reciprocated (Pennings & Woiceshyn, 1987; Rempel et al., 1985). McAllister (1995) states that, as parties in organizations (e.g., social media) continuously exchange information, relationships are formed between those parties. Repeated interactions of parties create an expansion of resources that involve information exchanged, status, and concern. Frequent, long-term interactions therefore create emotions between parties, leading to the formation of attachments based upon exchanged feelings of interpersonal care and Concern (McAllister, 1995). Repeated cycles of exchanging information, communication, and fulfillment of expectations strengthen trust (Rousseau et al., 1998). The

warning here is that both individuals and organizations should be aware of, and guard themselves against, any possible misuse of such trust in social media situations.

Attributions concerning the motives of one's behaviors create the foundation for how an individual trusts (McAllister, 1995). Adding to this observation, care and Concern are important aspects that connect individuals and provide a foundation for trust (Granovetter, 1985; McAllister, 1995). When social and economic dilemmas arise, researchers conceptualize trust as a factor for making choices. Emotional attachments made from earlier interactions involving Concern, caring, empathy, and tolerance for the other party create a form of alliance (Rousseau et al., 1998). Social context (e.g., social media) and previous interactions with others shape how one perceives another's reputation and measurement of trustworthiness (Rousseau et al., 1998). Consequently, as Concern is the exhibition of feelings of caring, empathy, tolerance, and safety that are exhibited when others are vulnerable (Shockley-Zalabak et al, 2000), this trust construct applies to social media news sharing settings, as we need to show empathy and tolerance in such virtual meeting spaces to be committed to an online community.

There are other constructs in the literature relative to trust such as honesty, predictability, and reliability (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996; Johnson & Swap, 1982; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Rempel et al., 1985). However, we followed the model offered by McKnight & Chervany (2001) and suggest that definitions of honesty, predictability, and reliability overlap the definitions found in the constructs of Benevolence, Integrity, Competence, Identification, and Concern, and therefore will not be applied in this study. Our refinement of trust constructs into the 5 factor model above serves to create a more parsimonious instrument to now be used in this present research.

2.2 Social Media

Social media can be defined as relatively cheap and easily accessible electronic tools that enable sharing of and access to information, cooperation towards a common goal, or creation of new friendships or relations (Jue, Marr & Kassotakis, 2010). Thus, as discussed at the start of this literature review, the concept of social media includes social network sites, and social network sites are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to: 1) Create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, 2) Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and 3) Transverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). There are a number of social networking platforms, such as Facebook,

Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, among others. As technology advances, so does the use of different social networking platforms. Indeed, such platforms have experienced outstanding expansion, becoming essential channels of business and marketing (Herrero & San Martín 2017).

When a person joins a social network site they are prompted to create a profile; this includes information such as name, birthday, photographs, hometown, and personal interests, among other things (Strater & Lipford, 2008). They can then make connections with friends and others that are met on the site. The purpose of creating a profile is to connect with family and/or friends or people who share the same ideologies and interests, thus creating an avenue for communication and developing/maintaining relationships (Dwyer, Hiltz & Passerini, 2007). For successful online connections and interactions to occur, trust is important (Coppola, Hiltz, & Rotter, 2004). Usually successful interactions rely on the level of trust that friends have with each other as well as with the service provider (Sherchan, Nepal, & Paris, 2013).

People post personal information on these sites, but can these sites and people on these sites be trusted not to reveal this information to others? This has been a topic for research (Dwyer et al., 2007; Hass, 2006). Findings from another stream of social media and trust research suggest that people spend less time with their loved ones online; instead many spend time monitoring their partners online and stalking ex-partners, leading to mistrust in relationships (Augar & Zeleznikow, 2014). Studies indicate a strong correlation between high Facebook usage and jealousy in relationships; in other words, as Facebook usage increases, so does jealousy. Surveillance of Facebook pages by partners and discovering things (e.g. pictures, posts etc.) that they do not like have led to higher levels of anxiety, jealousy, and mistrust in relationships and marriages (Gershon, 2011; Farrugia, 2013).

Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) assessed the use of social networking sites of college students. Interestingly, they discovered that students spent more time viewing information, reading individual profiles, looking at news feeds and photographs than posting information and communicating with family and friends, all of which were deemed significant reasons as to why college students used social networking sites. According to a study conducted by Correa, Hinsley, and De Zungia (2010), more than half of the people surveyed have two or more online profiles and, when ranking usage of their social media activities on a scale of one to ten (with one meaning rarely/never, and 10 representing very often), the overall score of the survey was 8.03.

Sponcil and Gitimu (2013) recently discovered that lurking behaviors of social networking sites seem to be increasing. In addition, people are using social media news websites more frequently and at increasing rates. This is a cause for concern as it is much easier for people to fall victim to online deception with the number of users that exist on social media and the ease of creating an account (Tsikerdekis & Zeadally, 2014). Another problem associated with the heavy use of social media is how difficult it can be to decipher the difference between trustworthy and non-trustworthy information/websites (Hagar, 2013). According to Hagar (2013), crisis informatics is the interconnectedness of people, organizations, information, and technology during crises and the influx of information on social media at the time of crises has made deciphering trustworthy information more difficult.

College students are using social media to see what is going on in other people's lives, even if they do not communicate with them on a frequent basis (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013). Luhmann (1979) studied trust and how individuals generally assume that better outcomes will be achieved if others are perceived as well-meaning and reliable. He concluded that trust is essential to one's ability to function in the general social world. We proffer that Luhmann's position could be applied to social networks, even though such networks did not exist before 1997. Hence, social behavior and interactions play a major role in our everyday lives, where social media has become an increasingly used tool to communicate and get information. Social network sites as a communication medium may impact people's perception of how much they trust the information that is shared. Our study now explores whether a social media users' perception of trust (Benevolence, Integrity, Competence, Identification, and Concern) varies, depending on their age, gender, frequency of social media usage or usage of different social media news sites.

3. Method

3.1 Design & Instrumentation

Research designs typically fall into one of two major categories: exploratory or conclusive (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003; Malhotra, 2007). Exploratory research designs are more appropriate when the problem needs to be defined more precisely or when the theory has not yet been investigated in a new context (Bertsch, 2009), which is the case of this present study. Such studies often employ small sample sizes based on convenience (for recent examples, see González-

González & Jiménez-Zarco (2015) where $n=27$; Lin & Hwang (2014) with $n=78$; Quintana & Fernández (2015) where $n=18$; Vaterlaus, Barnett, Roche, & Young (2016) where $n=34$). As this present study intends to explore the relationships between perceptions of trust in the context of social media usage for gathering news, we employ a reliable and valid survey instrument in a new context. Such quantitative surveys collect information by asking specific questions and then coding the data in numerical form for appropriate statistical analyses (Tandoc, Ferrucci & Duffy, 2015). The instrument employed in this study is an amalgamation based on existing constructs and measures from McKnight et al. (2002), Mayer and Davis (1999), and Shockley-Zalabak et al. (2000). Specifically, we borrowed items from McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar (2002) to measure Benevolence (5 items, $\alpha = .82$) and Competence (5 items, $\alpha = .86$). From Mayer and Davis (1999) we borrowed items to measure Integrity (5 items, $\alpha = .87$). Survey questions related to the constructs Identification (5 items, $\alpha = .76$) and Concern (5 items, $\alpha = .87$), were borrowed from Shockley-Zalabak et al. (2000). The questions used to measure relevant social media use were borrowed from www.marketest.co.uk (9 items). Additionally, we also added 5 demographic questions, such as age, gender, and news and social media preference. Please see Appendix 1 for copies of all survey items.

3.2 Sampling and data collection

Experiments in laboratory settings are often chosen to investigate patterns of communication online, virtual interactions or internet news reading patterns. Yet external validity can be problematic as participants are captive audiences in such laboratory settings. Hence to maximize validity, this research used a survey methodology, with respondents who volunteered to take part in the study anonymously, in their own time. Our convenience sample comes from university students and staff as they are population of interest: individuals who are typical users of newsfeeds on social media. To reduce the margin of error, we followed advice described by Bertsch and Pham (2012) and took into consideration the arguments of large vs. small sample sizes (Hair, et al., 2003). We set a target of a 3:1 respondent to item ratio in determining the target sample size. Such a ratio is clearly within the thresholds set by Hair, Anderson, Babin, and Black (2010) and employed by many, such as Tande, Lamon, Harstad, Ondracek, and Bertsch (2013). For a more detailed discussion concerning convenience sampling and sample size, see Hair, et al., (2003); Bertsch (2009); and Bertsch & Pham (2012). The respondents were 85 males and 129

females. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 67, years with an average age of 29.5 years and a mode age of 21 years. Categorized by status, the sample of 214 respondents included 64 staff and faculty members and 133 Bachelors and 17 Masters students. Research confirms that university students and staff and faculty form suitable samples for studies involving the internet because they tend to be frequent internet and social media users, this was our fundamental logic for adopting this sample. (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010).

4. Results and Discussion

We followed typical data scrubbing techniques (e.g., identifying missing data and outliers) as those prescribed or followed in the literature (see, for example, Bertsch & Pham, 2012; Croarkin, 2011; Howell, 2012; Osborne & Overbay, 2004). These techniques allowed us to appropriately prepare the data for analysis. When keying the results into SPSS, we reversed scored each of the amalgamated Trust items, so that 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree, in line with previous studies (e.g. Mayer & Davis, 1999). Hence, higher scores indicate higher levels of trust. Data was further split into the specific trust constructs of Benevolence, Integrity, Competence, Identification and Concern. We employed a threshold of $n = 20$ as the minimum number of respondents in any given category (i.e., nominal and ordinal variables) in order to run t-tests between groups (see detailed discussions on the central limit theorem and t-distributions in texts such as Lind, Marchal, & Wathen (2010) or Anderson et al. (2016)). Our two-tailed t-tests were conducted using attributes such as unmatched samples and assuming heteroscedastic variance where Levene's test of equality of variance is greater than 0.05. Data was then analyzed to investigate differing levels of perceived trust in social media newsfeeds by gender, age, social media use and by type of social media platform used. For ease of reading, the next section presents the empirical findings in a specifically data driven approach whilst an in-depth analysis of the findings is presented afterwards in the discussion. Insights into the theoretical and practical implications of the findings are then delineated.

4.1 By gender

An independent-samples t-test was calculated to compare trust dimension scores between women ($n = 129$) and men ($n = 85$). Table 1 summarizes the comparisons by gender. For the

construct of Integrity, women ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .82$) score significantly higher than men ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .90$); $t(212)=2.96$, $p = .003$, 95% $CI [-.59, -.12]$. Women ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .81$) also score significantly higher than men ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .78$) on the construct of Identification; $t(208)=-2.64$, $p = .009$, 95% $CI [-.53, -.09]$. For the constructs of Benevolence, Competence, and Concern, we found no significant differences by gender. Insignificant differences were found for these three constructs in line with the findings for Integrity and Identification: that women expect higher levels of these elements of trust behavior.

Table 1

Mean Trust Dimensions Scores: Comparisons by Gender

Category	Benevolence	Integrity	Competence	Identification	Concern
Male	3.02	3.02	3.08	3.02	3.11
Female	3.11	3.39	3.30	3.33	3.37
Significance	.462	.003**	.087	.009**	.067

** $p < 0.01$

4.2 By age

We divided the data at the mode age. Table 2 summarizes our findings of an independent-samples t-test comparing trust dimension scores by age twenty-one and older ($n = 26$), and twenty and younger ($n = 183$). Few respondents did not disclose their age in the survey ($n = 5$).

Table 2

Mean Trust Dimensions Scores: Comparisons by Age

Category	Benevolence	Integrity	Competence	Identification	Concern
21 and older	3.09	3.23	3.21	3.23	3.25
20 and younger	3.01	3.55	3.48	3.37	3.50
Significance	.639	.033*	.028*	.427	.179

* $p < 0.05$

For the construct of Integrity, the comparison is significant, with individuals twenty-one years old and older ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .80$) scoring lower than those who are twenty and younger (M

= 3.01, $SD = .81$); $t(39.50) = -2.21, p = .033, 95\% CI [-.61, -.03]$. Within the Competence construct, individuals twenty-one and over ($M = 3.21, SD = .89$) scored significantly lower than those who are twenty- and younger ($M = 3.48, SD = .53$), $t(46.76) = -2.26, p = .028, 95\% CI [-.54, -.02]$. No significant differences by age for the constructs Benevolence, Identification or Concern were found.

4.3 By social media use

Two groups were created for how often individuals use social media. The first group includes individuals who use social media a few times a day or more (Group 1, $n = 163$). The second group includes individuals who use social media once a day or less (Group 2, $n = 51$). Table 3 illustrates the summarized findings of an independent-samples t-test comparing trust dimension scores by frequency of social media usage.

Table 3

Mean Trust Dimensions Scores: Comparisons by Frequency of Social Media Usage

Category	Benevolence	Integrity	Competence	Identification	Concern
A few times a day or more	3.11	3.31	3.29	3.28	3.40
Once a day or less	2.98	3.01	2.97	2.98	2.83
Significance	.374	.027*	.029*	.018*	.001**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

For the construct of Integrity, Group 1 ($M = 3.31, SD = .82$), social media users online for a few times a day or more, scored significantly higher than Group 2 ($M = 3.01, SD = .96$), social media users online for once a day or less; $t(211) = -2.23, p = .027, 95\% CI [-.59, -.04]$. Group 2 ($M = 2.97, SD = .97$) score significantly higher than Group 1 ($M = 3.29, SD = .81$) on the construct of Competence; $t(211) = -2.18, p = .029, 95\% CI [-.58, -.02]$. Moreover, the group of individuals who use social media the most, Group 1 ($M = 3.28, SD = .79$), score significantly higher than Group 2 ($M = 2.98, SD = .82$) on Identification. Group 1 ($M = 3.40, SD = .88$) scored significantly higher than Group 2 ($M = 2.83, SD = 1.07$) along the construct of Concern; $t(69.16) = -3.32, p = .001, 95\% CI [-.89, -.22]$. The scores for Benevolence show no significant differences when comparing how often an individual uses social media.

4.4 By social media sites preferences

The survey instrument included several social media use questions. Categorical data was collected for those who identified themselves as users of Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Other, or as I Do Not Use Social Media. Sample sizes that had large enough numbers to test were LinkedIn ($n = 98$), Google+ ($n = 74$), Twitter ($n = 98$), YouTube ($n = 127$), Instagram ($n = 140$), Pinterest ($n = 66$) and Tumblr ($n = 20$). The data identifying people that used sites Google+, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest and Tumblr showed no significant differences in scores between individuals who did or did not use these social media sites for all of the five trust constructs of Benevolence, Integrity, Competence, Identification, and Concern.

4.4.1 LinkedIn vs. non-LinkedIn users

LinkedIn users ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .78$) score significantly higher than non-users ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .89$) for the construct of Integrity; $t(212) = -3.19$, $p = .002$, 95% $CI [-.61, -.13]$. Users of LinkedIn ($M = 3.37$, $SD = .86$) also score higher than non-users ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .85$) on the construct of Competence; $t(212) = -2.57$, $p = .011$, 95% $CI [-.53, -.07]$. Furthermore, LinkedIn users score the highest on Identification ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .73$) compared to non-users ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .84$); $t(208) = -3.39$, $p = .001$, 95% $CI [-.58, -.16]$. Additionally, LinkedIn users ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .84$) score higher than non-users ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .98$) on the construct of Concern; $t(207) = -3.00$, $p = .003$, 95% $CI [-.63, -.14]$. No significant differences were concluded between users and non-users of LinkedIn for the construct of Benevolence.

Table 4

Mean Trust Dimensions Scores: Comparisons by LinkedIn vs. Non-LinkedIn Users

Category	Benevolence	Integrity	Competence	Identification	Concern
LinkedIn users	3.17	3.44	3.37	3.42	3.49
LinkedIn non-users	3.01	3.08	3.80	3.06	3.08
Significance	.142	.002**	.011*	.001**	.003**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

4.4.2 Instagram vs. non-Instagram users

Instagram users ($M = 3.17$, $SD = .78$) scored significantly higher than non-users ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .78$). for the construct of Benevolence; $t(212) = -2.58$, $p = .010$, 95% $CI [-.513, .069]$. Furthermore, Instagram users ($M = 3.37$, $SD = .80$) scored significantly higher than non-users ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .93$). for the construct of Integrity; $t(212) = -3.20$, $p < .002$, 95% $CI [-.62, -.15]$. For the construct of Competence, Instagram users ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .80$) scored significantly higher than non-users ($M = 2.93$, $SD = .89$); $t(212) = -3.69$, $p < .001$, 95% $CI [-.67, -.21]$. For the Identification construct, Instagram users ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .81$) scored significantly higher than non-users ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .75$); $t(208) = -3.05$, $p = .003$, 95% $CI [-.57, -.13]$. In addition, Instagram users ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .90$) scored significantly higher than non-users ($M = 2.90$, $SD = .94$) for the construct of Concern; $t(207) = -4.20$, $p < .001$, 95% $CI [-.82, .30]$. See Table 4 for a summary of Instagram results.

Table 5

Mean Trust Dimensions Scores: Comparisons by Instagram vs. Non-Instagram Users

Category	Benevolence	Integrity	Competence	Identification	Concern
Instagram users	3.17	3.37	3.36	3.35	3.47
Instagram non-users	2.89	2.98	2.93	3.00	2.90
Significance	.010*	.002**	<.001**	.003**	.000**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

4.4.3 Other Social Media Factors

Other Social Media questions we surveyed included what personal information individuals are willing to share on social media sites. The questions included sharing e-mail addresses, name of hometown city, mobile phone number, photos of family, political views, relationship status, and sexual orientation. E-mail, relationship status, sexual orientation, and respondent types (university staff and faculty vs. undergraduate vs. postgraduate student) had a large enough sample group to compare; however, all comparisons were insignificant for all five constructs of Benevolence, Integrity, Competence, Identification, and Concern. In addition, an independent T-test was carried out to compare scores of trust constructs by Students versus Faculty, however no statistically

significant differences were found. For access for data files, please see Warner-Søderholm, Bertsch and Søderholm (in press).

5. Discussion

The goal of this research was to explore whether social media users' perceptions and expectations of trust differ with respect to their gender, age, social media usage, and social media sites preference. Firstly, the results for the trust construct Benevolence, defined as "one [who] cares about the welfare of the other person and is therefore motivated to act in the other person's interest" (McKnight & Chervany, 1996; p. 33), showed that social media preference is a significant factor. From our study, we found that Instagram users score significantly higher than non-users did in the construct of Benevolence: This indicates that Instagram users may believe to a greater degree than non-users that people are willing and motivated to serve and act in other people's interest. In addition, this data suggests that Instagram users may be inclined to believe that most people care about the welfare of others and therefore are motivated to act in the other's interest more than non-Instagram users are.

For Integrity, the results showed that gender, age, social media usage and social media site preference all are significant factors impacting our expectations of honesty and moral character. Females, individuals twenty years and younger, individuals using social media more than once a day, LinkedIn-, and Instagram users score significantly highest in expecting moral behavior. This was compared to respondents who were males, individuals twenty-one years and older, individuals using social media once a day or less, non-users of LinkedIn and Instagram respectably, who expected less integrity. Mehok (2010) states that Integrity constitutes a strong moral character built on the foundations of honesty, decency, and trust. The results of our study suggest that females, individuals twenty- years and over, and individuals using social media more than once a day perceive more Integrity in their social network; this is also evidenced by LinkedIn and Instagram users scoring higher in Integrity than non-users. A previous study of gender differences in trust (Maddux & Brewer, 2005) identified that women have higher levels of trust in both face to face and online relational situations, with out-group members, hence our study offers further evidence to support this earlier research of women's higher trust expectations.

Competence is defined as having the ability or power to do for one that which needs to be done (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000), and individuals twenty-one years and older, individuals using social media sites more than once a day, LinkedIn non-users and Instagram users scored significantly higher than younger individuals, less frequent users, LinkedIn users and Instagram non-users for this construct. These results suggest that younger, less frequent users, LinkedIn users and Instagram non-users to a lesser degree, trust the ability of others to do something for them that needs to be done. These findings support the findings of Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky & Saarinen (1999) that very tentatively suggest that greater experience with social media is associated with lower trust and that reputation and integrity are significant factors in internet behavior.

Results for the construct of Identification indicate that gender, social media usage and preference are all significant factors. Identification is defined as the extent to which we hold common goals, norms, values, and beliefs associated with belonging to an organization or group (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2000). Females scored significantly higher than men on this construct, in addition to that individuals using social media sites more than once a day, and those who use LinkedIn and Instagram, score highest in comparison with individuals using social media once a day or less, LinkedIn non-users and Instagram non-users respectively. These results may therefore imply that women identify themselves more to their social network than men do. Furthermore, it suggests that frequent users of social media have a stronger sense of belonging to their network than less frequent users, and that LinkedIn and Instagram users also have a higher identification with their network than non-users.

Individuals who use social media a few times a day or more, had significantly higher expectations for Concern compared to individuals who use social media once a day or less. Furthermore, LinkedIn users and Instagram users score significantly higher in Concern compared to non-users. This suggests that individuals who do not use LinkedIn, those who do not use Instagram, and those who use social media less often may not believe people are genuinely concerned about others in their network; they may also perceive less Concern towards others when they are vulnerable or less experienced in navigating their network. This supports earlier research that online trust increases almost linearly from early childhood to adulthood (Sutter & Kocher, 2007). Perhaps as more experienced 'heavy users' of social media will often be more senior in age. One conjecture could be that more experienced social media users will be more 'savvy' to which

networks and newsfeeds are reliable and valid, yet younger users take much information at ‘face value’ and have no reason to distrust others.

6. Conclusion

The unprecedented popularity of social media for gathering news raises a number of critical questions regarding who trusts news in social media and what sites we trust. This paper tries to answer some of these questions by looking to extant literature, and by presenting the quantitative results of a distributed questionnaire on trust and social media behaviour with a sample of university students and faculty/staff. In a nutshell, the results of our study showed that younger, female, heavy users of social media are more inclined to trust the content on social media. They believe that most people care about the welfare of others, they are less skeptical about others’ competence, have a stronger sense of belonging to their network and believe people are genuinely concerned about others in their network. Women scored highest in attitudes of Identification, and users twenty and younger are less skeptical about others’ competence, than those twenty-one and over. The university students and staff included in our convenience sample all use some form of social media, yet who trusts social media the most varied across age, gender, frequency and preference of use. Social media site preference is a significant factor in perceptions of Benevolence, whereas perceptions of Integrity differ by gender, age, social media usage and social media site preference. The sample suggests that the sense of Identification to your network differed significantly with gender, social media usage and preference. How often social media are used and which social media sites are used show differences in trust levels and concern about others in their networks. How often social media are used, Instagram usage, LinkedIn usage and age, impact perceptions of Competence.

Women and individuals twenty and younger averaged a higher score compared to men and individuals twenty-one and older in the construct of Integrity. This suggests that women and individuals twenty-one and younger may perceive news from others as more trustworthy than men and older individuals. Interestingly, the data showed that individuals who use social media newsfeeds a few times a day or more scored significantly higher than individuals who use social media once a day or less in the constructs of Concern. This may suggest that people who use social media more often, trust their network and online news more. Moreover, the data suggests that

people who are frequent users of newsfeeds on social media are more genuinely concerned about others' well-being in social media.

Online users allow access to a lot of information about themselves to others (e.g., their personal backgrounds, their contacts, interests, opinions, music tastes, political affiliations, etc.) (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). This information can reduce uncertainty and build trust. As more experienced users share more information about themselves in social media with a greater number of followers, it intuitively makes sense that they build trust over a longer time period and this fits with our findings. If at any time the news information is perceived to be false or misleading however, these postings may lead to distrust in the site or the sender. Therefore, the more we use social media to get to know others, the more we may trust them (Berger, 2014). Hence, in online social media sharing communities, each user is responsible for evaluating and trusting content before accepting the knowledge as true. Thus a better understanding of the role of trust may provide benefits not only for potential consumers/users, but also for the social media and news content providers. When individuals are made aware of the potential triggers and barriers to trust in news in social media usage, they may amend their online presence, and they may be better prepared to deal with not only their own trust expectations, but also the mindsets and trust expectations of others. Hopefully, they will then become more cognizant of the negative trust patterns in relation to age of user, gender, exposure and choice of social media platforms.

To return to our original question 'who trusts newsfeeds in social media', our findings suggest that this would be females, individuals who are twenty or younger, and more frequent social media users, and also those who use Instagram and LinkedIn. We might conjecture that intuitively, this makes sense as 'savvy' experienced social media users who are skilled at finding the news they need, trust the sites they 'tried and tested'. Another conjecture could be that as women are seen to be more intuitively trusting to the people they let into their 'in-group' as posited in earlier research, it makes sense that women would show higher trust to the news they read on the social media websites, as these are sites in their in-group, sites they choose to actually support and endorse. Scholars could investigate further the successful elements and artifacts that positively impact women's trust and trusting behavior and develop such initiatives to increase men's trust levels in a social media context. The growing problem in human behavior related to social media newsfeeds for both international organizations and global politics is knowing when is news 'really real'? What is real news and what is fake news? The Trump Administration is a case in point where

there is low trust between the media and politicians related to what is real news and fake news in social media newsfeeds. Psychologically, low trust damages reputation of both individuals and organizations if not whole nations. The findings of this research add to the existing literature on trust and social media, and offer novel and important theoretical and practical implications.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

Our findings are important for researchers and practitioners alike, because little is known about online trust and social media news. Many researchers have examined social media behavior patterns. With trust at the epicenter of our study, we theoretically extend the trust literature by addressing the gap with deeper insight into individual differences in online trust and social media behavior. We believe that our research conveys important insights and proposes potentially important findings related to computers and human behavior and predicting trust antecedents in social media use such as age, gender, number of hours online and choice of content provider. We have also created and validated a tool for future researchers to measure trust with a parsimonious five factor trust instrument developed from the extant literature on trust we that provided earlier in the paper. Our findings suggest women trust social media more than men in terms of integrity and identification. Younger individuals trust social media more than older individuals in terms of integrity and competence. Individuals who use social media the most trust social media more than those who use social media only once a day or less in terms of integrity, competence, identification, and concern. Those who use LinkedIn trust social media more than those who do not use LinkedIn in terms of Benevolence, Integrity, and Identification. One exception is that Non-LinkedIn users trust social media more than LinkedIn users in terms of competence. Instagram-users trust social media more than non-users in terms of all five trust constructs. This knowledge serves as the foundation for future research efforts on social media and trust. The results of this study may help users navigate online interaction and expectations of ‘truth’ more successfully. In addition, providers of social media site content in business and global politics may consider such factors when posting news stories. More importantly perhaps, we hope that our contribution to research on trust in computer mediated news and online human behavior will lead to further development of trust theory and the use of the trust tool developed and validated in this article. The implications of understanding users’ trusting or not trusting news both off and online will be even more critical for media organizations, companies and consumers in the future.

6.2. Practical Implications

Internet use is capturing more hours each day of people's time with an average user spending 4.25 hours daily on the internet, including 25% of total Internet time spent on a social network (GlobalWebIndex, 2016). On average, a person now has five social networking accounts and is actively using three of them (GlobalWebIndex, 2016). Understanding which social media newsfeeds that we trust to use may then change human behavior and social norms, such as intergroup prejudice and lower conflict in the world (Paluck, 2009). Empirical evidence shows that trust is a social behavior that is impacted by situational variables, rather than being a relatively constant personality trait (Schlenker, Helm & Tedeschi, 1973; Wieselquist et al., 1999). Moreover, trust in the online environment is characterized by greater complexity such as trust in websites vs. trust in technology, and a need for assurances of security and privacy (Pentina, Zhang, & Basmanova, 2013). Therefore, a high level of trust is an important predictor of online disclosure (Lin, Zhang, Song, & Omori, 2016).

We need to bear in mind, as both researchers and practitioners, that users may join or form social relationships with others in order to get things done that cannot be done alone, to gain a sense of identity, to obtain social support, or simply for the pleasure of social interaction (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011). Hence one of the reasons why people are increasingly attracted to social media may consequently be the need for connection and interaction and in that context trust matters. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, people seek to fulfill a sense of belonging through support from relationships with others. After meeting physiological and safety needs, people then strive to achieve a higher level need, i.e., the need that is a sense of belonging. Perhaps social media has provided this opportunity for people to communicate with others and achieve a sense of belonging to different virtual communities (Sawyer & Chen, 2012). Yet the practical implications of not managing trust issues can lead to loss of active online communities.

Consequently, our findings have significant practical implications, suggesting that it is essential to recognize that older, male, and less frequent social media users report lower levels of trust. Moreover, it is also evident that users on some social media sites are less trusting than on others and this knowledge of user profiles can help craft better media sites, for better mutual trustworthiness expectations. Computers have an increasingly important role for human behavior in our new digitalized world and social media is an increasingly important platform for social

networking, entertainment, marketing and newsfeed updates. Consequently, as we live in an age where distrust is rife, we have to have better insight in how trust evolves in human behavior digitally. The extent to which we trust the people and information on social media is increasingly essential to our beliefs, and also our behavior both explicitly and implicitly. If some people have more trust towards social media content and users in the form of benevolence, they are more likely to care about others and thus be motivated to act in the other party's interest. To trust social media in terms of integrity, is to believe that the content or sharer of information is moral, honest, decent and respectful. If so, social media users will believe that information/news sharing is driven by ethical motives, and thus most likely is a reflection of truth to be acted upon. Those who trust social media in terms of Competence are more likely to trust that the information or information sharer is capable and has the power to do what needs to be done. If some users have more trust towards social media in terms of identification, they are more likely to believe that the information and/or persons on social media reflect common goals, norms, values and beliefs to follow in our daily actions. To trust social media in terms of concern, is to care more, have more empathy, tolerance and feel more safe towards people/information. Trust in this sense is cardinal for making choices based on information from social media newsfeeds.

The findings of this paper have several implications which should help practitioners understand the role trust and risk play in the process of individual interaction on SMPs and ultimately improve business performance. Moreover, by having improved insights into trust behavior of university student and faculty/staff, we can help foster a new generation of thought leader's. decision makers, and business experts of today and tomorrow. The results of this study which elucidate the connection between the gender, age, status, and social media presence of the online user and their trust values can have useful implications for market communication and media specialists. If people are now transferring their offline news-read activities and interaction with friends and colleagues to online environments, we need to be able to map their online activities and trust expectations. Our study provides a parsimonious 5-factor trust survey instrument for evaluating large numbers of online consumers of news feeds and their trust levels. Marketers can estimate the online news reading patterns of each user, they can classify patterns of usage, and of Benevolence, Integrity, Competence, Identification, and Concern levels of trust in consumer segments to ensure customer expectations are met. To capture the readership growth of online news feeds and who trusts these sites will contribute to pushing market growth where

growth is possible – otherwise, we are only one click away from losing a user. On a final philosophical note, Lingis (2017), claims that trust is traditionally most inherent in travel as we ask strangers for information and directions. What about ‘digital travel’ we ask? When we ask online strangers and digital communities for information and news recommendations which direct our very ways of thinking? Such application of trust research could potentially contribute to reinventing the way we sustain online relationships and could significantly broaden the scope of our digital behavioural knowledge practices.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

While this exploratory study can be seen to have contributed to the existing literature on social media behavior and trust, it has some limitations. Firstly, the data is based on a convenience sampling, which has its limitations. An N of 214 and convenience sampling is acceptable for an exploratory study. The fundamental logic in adopting this sample is that previous research suggests that university students and staff and faculty form suitable samples for studies involving the internet because they tend to be frequent internet and social media users (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010). Nevertheless, future research should extend the number of respondents and respondent base, with random sampling methods. Data should also be explored to see whether there is a relationship between respondent types (university staff and faculty vs. undergraduate vs. postgraduate student). Findings could indicate that many older respondents are also faculty or staff members. Hence, skepticism to social media could be attributed to a university staff mindset and not just age and this would be useful for universities to explore.

We suggest that further research with larger samples is now necessary in the field of newsfeeds, trust and social media, based on conclusive research designs in order to generate hypotheses, test those hypotheses, and create descriptive or causal results. We hope that our five-factor scale will be able to contribute to such future research. Due to the very nature of exploratory research designs, we recognize that convenience samples are not random samples and suggest that future research employ random sampling techniques in order to test the relationships we discovered. We further recognize that the university setting may not be generalizable onto the greater population within given demographics (age, gender, etc.). We suggest future samples be drawn from two empirical settings: Firstly, a multi-campus or multi-country educational setting, in order to explore whether staff or faculty may have differing perceptions of trust in social media

compared to students across campuses and countries. Time pressures and digital skills could also be investigated as moderating variables. Secondly, empirical data can be collected in settings other than university campuses to further test the relationships we discovered in ‘who trusts social media’. Larger studies may also support our findings for example that older people trust less, no matter whether they are university faculty or business people. Trust building measures linked to artificial intelligence in times of rapid change could also be perhaps the next step. Future research should investigate additional influential factors upon trust such as personality and cultural traits. Also, as recent research suggests that the fastest growing population seeking news-feeds in social media sites such as Facebook is in fact older adults, ages 55 and over (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Smith, 2009), further research should investigate these new group of consumers. This is the nature of pioneering research as it creates new questions. Future studies should examine whether the findings of this present study generalize to other social media sites such as Google+ and snapchat and to even online gaming (Edgren, Alho and Salonen, 2017). Finally, there is no doubt that trust is and will always be the foundation of all communication, both analogue and digitally. It is critical that we understand trust within our new digital media landscape to in order to identify who will trust you and your organization’s social media news feeds? This knowledge will help you build trust and reputation, optimize your communication and news dissemination as trusted ‘real news’ not ‘fake news’.

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APPENDIX 1 – Survey items used in the study

1. What is your gender (please circle one)?

Male Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your current status at university (please circle one)?

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate Faculty/Staff

4. Which of the following social networking website are you a member of? (Check all that apply)

___ Facebook

___ LinkedIn

___ Google+

___ Twitter

___ YouTube

___ Instagram

___ Pinterest

___ Tumblr

___ Other, please specify _____

___ I do not use social media

Please indicate what information you include on your social networking sites

5. Email address

6. Hometown/City

7. Mobile Number

8. Photos of you or your family

9. Political Views

10. Relationship Status

11. Sexual Orientation

12. Other,

13. Please Specify _____

14. How often do you check your social media profile?

- More than hourly
- Hourly
- Couple of Hours
- Few times a day
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- I do not use social media

The following instructions prefaced the trust scale items. The anchors shown below were consistent throughout. Syntax details: aggregate scores of the 5 items per construct.

For the following questions, circle the number that you feel best describes you.

Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Neutral	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

- 15. In general, people really do care about the well-being of others. (Benevolence 1)
- 16. Most of the time, people care enough to try to be helpful, rather than just looking out for themselves. (Benevolence 2)
- 17. The typical person is sincerely concerned about the problems of others. (Benevolence 3)
- 18. In general, most people keep their promises. (Integrity 1)
- 19. Most people are honest in their dealings with others. (Integrity 2)
- 20. I always feel confident that I can rely on people to do their part when I interact with them. (Integrity 3)
- 21. I would characterize people I interact with as honest. (integrity 4).
- 22. People are sincere and genuine. (Benevolence 4)
- 23. People are truthful when they interact with me. (integrity 5)

If you use social media/social networking sites, the word “network” in the following questions means your online social networking. If you do not use social media/social networking sites, the word “network” means your circle of friends and relatives with whom you most interact.

24. People in my network really look out for what is important to me. (Benevolence 5)
25. People in my network are reliable in doing what they say will be done. (Competence 1)
26. People outside my network are reliable in doing what they say will be done. (Competence 2)
27. People in my network are effective in providing helpful advice. (Competence 3)
28. I feel people outside my network provide helpful advice. (Competence 4)
29. I feel confident in the trust I have with people in my network. (Competence 5)
30. I feel connected to people in my network. (Identification 1)
31. I feel connected to people outside my network. (Identification 2)
32. My values are similar to the values of people in my network. (Identification 3)
33. My values are similar to the values of people outside my network. (Identification 4)
34. People in my network listen to me. (Identification 5)
35. People outside of my network listen to me. (Concern 1)
36. People in my network are sincere with their efforts to communicate with me. (Concern 2)
37. I am sincere in communication efforts with people outside of my network. (Concern 3)
38. People in my network are concerned about my personal well-being. (Concern 4)
39. I am concerned about the well-being of individuals that are outside of my network. (Concern 5)