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Gratifications associated with Snapchat usage among young people: Uses and gratifications analysis

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**Gratifications associated with Snapchat usage among young people:
Uses and gratifications analysis**

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Program of Study Committee:
Su Jung Kim, Major Professor
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The student author and the program of study committee are solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alternations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2017

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an everyday media diet for media users, especially young generations. Previous studies have focused on the use of Facebook and Twitter, but there is a dearth of research on newer social media such as Snapchat despite its fast growth and adoption in recent years. This study applies the uses and gratifications approach to Snapchat in order to identify what activities younger users are likely to do while using Snapchat, to investigate what kinds of gratifications are associated with Snapchat usage among young people, as well as to test whether there are gender differences in gratifications of Snapchat usage. An online survey completed by 1,749 respondents identified five different gratifications, namely, convenience, attention seeking, escape, information seeking and socialization. Some of the study's prominent findings are: young people usually use Snapchat to chat with friends, share photos and videos, make a story and apply a filter; there are gender differences in the gratifications of escape, socialization and convenience. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed, as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, more news in the media has shown a decreasing trend of younger people that are using popular social media such as Facebook or Twitter. However, they are quickly adopting newer social media, one of which includes the self-destructing app Snapchat (Utz, Muscanell & Khalid, 2015). The data from the Pew Research Center showed that 9% of smartphone users adopted Snapchat in 2013 (Duggan, 2013). The number almost doubled (17%) in 2015 (Duggan, 2015), indicating the increasing popularity of Snapchat among smartphone users.

Snapchat is unique that it shares time-limited (disappear after a specific number of seconds) photos or videos once opened, affording a higher level of privacy for its users. According to recent market research, college students are addicted to their smartphones and making frequent interaction with Snapchat (Sashittal, DeMar & Jassawalla, 2016). However, only few research exists on Snapchat use in general. This study will focus on the use of Snapchat by young people, especially for college students, with a particular focus on the gratifications college students seek while they are using Snapchat.

There has been some research on people's gratifications for sharing information on Facebook, as well as participation in an online photo and video sharing community. Despite the enormous growth and usage of newer social media such as Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat, there is few relevant research that analyzed young people's gratifications for using those newer social media. For example, using the EBSCO database to search for "Snapchat," there are 483 results shown, including 261 from

newspapers, 180 from magazines, 24 from trade publications, 9 from reviews and only 18 from academic journals. Using the Web of Science database to search for "Snapchat," there are only 18 results, and the subject among most of them is about business such as brand building using Snapchat.

The goal of this study is to focus on the young segment of Snapchat users, identifying what activities are they likely to engage in while using Snapchat. Then, this study investigates what gratifications are associated with Snapchat usage among young people and applies the uses and gratifications theory to analyze it. Also, this study tests whether there is a gender difference in gratifications of Snapchat usage. Considering the lack of research on Snapchat, this study makes two major contributions to the body of knowledge. First, it suggest that the uses and gratifications theory has a high theoretical utility in explaining the relationship between Snapchat use and gratifications obtained. Second, it is one of the first to focus on the gender differences with Snapchat usage by applying the uses and gratifications theory.

This study begins by providing an introduction to Snapchat, and then summarizes the extant literature on the uses and gratifications theory. Additionally, it examines categories of gratifications and the associations between Snapchat use and different types of gratifications. Next, it describes the method used in this study, followed by results section, which give the detailed data to answer the research questions and hypotheses. At last, theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed, as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Snapchat Use

Background

Snapchat is an image-based mobile application to enable people to easily talk with friends, view live stories, and explore news. This app was created by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy and Reggie Brown at Stanford University and is headquartered in Venice, California.

Snapchat was initially released in September, 2011. Given the app's increasing popularity for its photo- and video-sharing function, the Pew Research Center began to track the number of Snapchat use for the first time in 2013 (Duggan, 2013). At the time of the first report, it was estimated that 9% of cellphone owners use Snapchat. Later, in the social media update in 2015, Duggan (2015) reported that 17% of adult smartphone owners use Snapchat. From 2013 to 2015, the social media report from the Pew Research Center paid much attention to Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter. Among these, Snapchat has shown the most rapid growth in recent years. According to the Wall Street Journal (Macmillan & Rusli, 2014), it estimated that the base of active users of Snapchat grew from 10 million to over 70 million, which from mid-2012 to early 2014, and increased to 100 million in early 2015. Wired Online (Wohlsen, 2015) reported that the number of Snapchat users are currently large than that of WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube. In addition to the adoption of the app, its usage level has also spiked. The data from Business Insider showed that more than 400 million 'snaps' (a term for photos

or videos sent via Snapchat) were received on Snapchat every day as of December 2013

(Shontell, 2013).

Major features

Piwek and Joinson (2016) identified that the process of sharing on Snapchat works

as follows: the sender shares a photo or video using the smartphone app of Snapchat and

then chooses how long (between one to ten seconds) the photo or video will be viewed

from the receiver's smartphone. During this time, the sequence of photo or video can also

be sent. When the sender makes a photo or video to the receiver, the photo or video will

automatically vanish from the sender's device. The only message that exists on the

sender's smartphone is a timestamp of when the photo or video was sent. Meanwhile, the

receiver has a choice to view the information, however, the viewing time is limited to a

certain duration set by the sender. After the receiver views the photo or video for this

particular duration, the photo or video will disappear from the receiver's device (p. 359).

Furthermore, it is possible for the receiver to take a screenshot on his/her device and save

the photo or video, but the sender will be notified (Vaterlaus, Barnett, Roche & Young,

2016).

Based on the feature of Snapchat- the ephemeral nature of messages, many

researchers hypothesized that people may like to share some private and sensitive content

via Snapchat, especially sexual content, which is called sexting. Nevertheless, Roesner,

Gill and Kohno (2014) found that adult Snapchat users mainly use it to send funny

pictures, selfies, or snaps from other people. Only 1.3% primarily used it for sexting, at

the same time, nearly 15% of participants occasionally used it for sexting. Only small

portion of participants used it as joke sexting, which means "sending sexual or pseudo-

sexual material as a joke" (p. 72-73).

Major differences from other social media

Ephemerality is a unique feature of Snapchat, which makes it different from other

social media. In addition, Snapchat can only be used with mobile applications (available

on Apple iOS and Google Android enabled devices), whereas it cannot be used on a Web

browser or Mobile Web (unlike Facebook and Twitter). This means that people can only

use Snapchat on their cell phones, tablets instead of laptops, or desktops. However, how

the feature of ephemerality makes Snapchat different from others? The result is that it

supports a range of purpose, including self-expression, supporting relationships,

recording memories and self-presentations (Litt & Hargittai, 2014; Van House, 2009).

The second unique feature of Snapchat is its portability. Schrock (2015) indicated

that Snapchat is a platform to share photos and videos "on the go", which means it

depends on the mobile portability. Such portability means individuals could share their

photos and videos regardless of time or place, which is convenient for using (Bayer,

Ellison, Schoenebeck & Falk, 2016).

The age group is also a difference between Snapchat and other social media

platforms. According to the Pew Research Center, there are 41% young adults (18-29

years old), which is the largest age group among all Snapchat users (Duggan, 2015).

Also, the Business on Tapp (Silberman, 2015) showed that the target audience of

Snapchat is young people. Furthermore, the data from Snapchat official website shown

that Snapchat attracts about 100 million users on a monthly basis, also, 60% of them are

between 19 to 34 years old.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Origins

The initial piece on the uses and gratifications research was published in *The Public*

Opinion Quarterly in 1973 by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch. The theory is an approach to

find out how and why audience actively seek out a media to fulfill their specific needs

(Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973).

The basic assumptions of uses and gratifications including: "(1) the audience is

conceived of as active; (2) in the mass communication process much initiative in linking

need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member; (3) the media

compete with other sources of need satisfaction; (4) many of the goals of mass media use

can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves; and (5)

value judgements about the cultural significance of mass communication should be

suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms" (Katz et al.,

1973, p. 510-511).

Katz et al. (1973) helped to develop the uses and gratifications theory, provided the

theoretical background and key concepts and demonstrated that audience gratifications

can be derived from at least three distinct sources. Each of them is media content, media

exposure, and the social context. Also, Katz et al. (1973) figured out that mass media use

suffered from a duration with the social and psychological needs are lack of a relevant theory, that's why the recent research started to relate the media use with motivations' study.

Core questions of uses and gratifications

Ruggiero (2000) inducted the history of the uses and gratifications theory from the 1970's to 2000. The early research focused more on the effects of mass media before the uses and gratifications theory came out. Later, the media effects research started to identify motivation and selection of audiences based on the new mass media, such as radio, film, television, etc. Then, the research started to focus on social-psychological mode, and audience based, consisted into the uses and gratifications approach (McQuail, 1994). In recent years, researchers began to relate the uses and gratifications approach with social media.

The driving question of uses and gratifications is: Why do people use media and what do they use it for? The key concept of uses and gratifications is "active audience", which means audience can choose media by themselves. Levy and Windahl (1985) provided a good description of active consumer of media: "it postulates a selective orientation by audiences toward the communication process" (p. 74). In a nutshell, it suggests that people's media usage is motivated by their certain need. For example, if people want to improve their English skills, they will find some classic English movies to watch, learning from the conversations occurred in the movies. Or, they will use news websites, like, BBC or CNN to improve their listening and speaking skills. Since these

media could satisfy their needs, then they choose the media by themselves. It is an active

process, not a passive one.

Findings from previous research

Since people could select media based on their different motivations to satisfy their

needs. This paper lists several different motivations based on the traditional media and

social media.

<u>Uses and gratifications with traditional media</u>

The research studied on traditional media from the uses and gratifications approach

included the functions of reading, radio audience, motives for listening to serious music,

television viewing and motivations on different media genres (Ruggiero, 2000). In the

context of television viewing, Greenberg (1974) found several motivations why British

children watch TV: 1) companionship: the need for someone to be accompanies with

others; 2) escape: the need to use television to get away from what they were doing and

the rest of the family; 3) enjoyment: the need to enjoy the content from television and the

process of watching; 4) habit: the need for a settled or regular tendency; 5) pass time: the

need to use television to pass the time away; 6) relaxation: the need to get free from

tension and anxiety.

Rubin (1983) analyzed the motivations of viewing television into two types. The

first type is users who use television as a tool to entertain and kill time; the second type is

users who use television to seek information and not want to escape from the reality.

Later, Rubin (1984) concluded these gratifications into two broad types: ritualistic and

instrumental. Ritualistic media use refers a more or less habitual (time-consuming) use of a media to gratify a diversity of needs or motives, such as companionship, relaxation, arousal and escape.

Papacharissi and Mendelsom (2007) revealed that the most salient motivations for watching television were reality entertainment and habitual pass time. Meanwhile, they found that people were more likely to watch television to fulfill companionship needs. Also, Farquhar and Meeds (2007) found that television viewers were primarily associated with two motivations, which are surveillance and arousal. They judged these two motivations were more important than entertainment, escape and some of social interaction motivations.

Agyekwena (2006) related uses and gratifications with television in his study, which found watching television could satisfy the needs for informational needs, personal identity, entertainment, social interaction and integration. In his article, he divided television programs into several genes, including news, sports, soap operas, quiz programs, music and carton. He found that people respond to different genres with different motivations. Also, the programmers of television can target specific groups of people with particular genres to anticipate their needs. However, when viewers derive gratifications from music programs, their motivations include, cognitive needs, diversion, social utility, identification, social modeling, relationships and withdrawal.

In addition, a few researchers paid their attention on the reality television program. Nabi, Stitt, Halford and Finnerty (2006) suggested that voyeurism was the key

distinguishing gratification between reality-cased and fictional programming. Indeed, many other predictors of enjoyment, such as social relationship, social comparison, self-awareness, happiness, dramatic challenge and negative outcome were also as different as television programs that between reality and fiction. Ebersole and Woods (2007) used uses and gratifications to examine motives for viewing reality television programs, which found five factors can be used to explain program choice preference: mood change, entertainment, pass time, personal identification with real characters, and vicarious participation.

Barton (2009) explored the gratifications of viewing reality television programming. The results concluded it into: 1) vicarious participation: The viewers feel like a participant in the program; 2) perceived reality: The viewers want to watch a program, which presents real people in real situations; 3) pass time: The viewers want to use program as a background; 4) personal utility: The viewers want to relax and be entertained; 5) social utility: The viewers want to use the program as a topic in social interactions. Vincent and Basil (1997) tested 1,209 college students with uses and gratifications approach. The result found that with the year in college increased, students' media use and surveillance needs were also increased.

Table 1 is a summary of main gratifications regarding traditional media usage.

Table 1
Gratifications based on traditional media study

Motivation	Definition
companionship	Need someone or something to accompany with
escape	Get away from what they were doing
enjoyment	Enjoy the content from television
habit	Settled or regular tendency
pass time	Use television to pass the time away
relaxation	Get free from tension and anxiety
participation	Feel like a participant in the program
social utility	Use the program as a topic in social interactions
education	The program is informative, respondents learn from it
social relationship	Build any relationship between two or more individuals

Uses and gratifications with social media

With the emergence and growth of social media, we see a growing number of

studies that examine the uses and gratifications of social media. As an audience-centered

approach, this theory has specific relationship with social media, which means

individuals seek the media to fulfill their gratifications and leads to their ultimate need

(Whiting & Williams, 2013). People sharing photos and videos to fulfill their intrinsic

needs, as well as extrinsic ones (Nov, Naaman & Ye, 2010). On the one hand, sharing

photos and videos on social media could help them to fulfill social interaction needs, like,

communicating, self-expression, self-presentation, and maintaining social relationships

(Malik, Dhir & Nieminen, 2016). On the other hand, sharing photos and videos on social

media could also help to obtain some functional needs, such as feedback, escape, utility

and inclusion (Chen, 2008).

Based on the other social media, Ng (2016) identified several gratifications related

to social media: 1) convenience: the state of being able to proceed something with little

effort or difficulty; 2) self-presentation: the intention to maintain and build a good social image by using social networks; 3) enjoyment: the process of taking pleasure; 4) perceived risk, trust and control; 5) social influences: the degree to which users interact with others online and perceive their presence. In a similar vein, Utz et al. (2015) also found social media gratifications such as distractions or procrastination, keeping in touch with friends and family, being part of the information loop, communicating with partner, flirting or finding new love interests and meeting new friends. Lastly, Whiting and Williams (2013) found out that gratifications such as social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility and convenience utility are associated with social media.

Most studies that examined uses and gratifications of social media were concerned about Facebook. Malik et al. (2016) examined gratifications of photo-sharing activities on Facebook and found the following gratifications such as attention seeking, affection seeking, entertainment, information sharing, disclosure, habitual pastime, social influence and social interaction. Attention seeking means the needs of getting attention and significance from others. Affection seeking refers to the gratification of getting or/and expressing feelings by encouraging, appreciating, or showing care. Entertainment can be described as relaxation, enjoyment and fun when engaging in an activity or with other people. Information sharing means expressing one's feelings, desires, situation and interests with others, Disclosure refers to sharing personal or private information about oneself or close people. Habitual pastime can be described as regularly and unintentional

activity or performed behavioral pattern. Social influence refers to the combination of various feelings, with an intention to be a part of group or society. And social interaction means communicating with others to build and maintain relationships.

Comparing Facebook and Snapchat, Stanley (2015) found that undergraduates use Snapchat than Facebook more frequently. He also found a gender difference in uses and gratifications of Facebook. A case study from Time magazine indicated that one of the most notable features from Pinterest is its exceedingly unbalanced female to male ratio (Marcus, 2015). Female is as four times as male on Pinterest, which is a larger gender difference than any other social media platform (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart & Madden, 2015).

Furthermore, Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009) surveyed 1,715 college students to examine the relationship between users' gratifications and their civic and political participation in Facebook groups offline. The result revealed that there were four primary needs for participating social media: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking and information. In addition, Bayer et al. (2016) highlighted that Snapchat could help people to reduce self-presentational concerns with close ties.

Table 2 is a summary of main gratifications related to social media.

Table 2
Gratifications based on social media study

Motivation	Definition
convenience	No time and place limitations, portability
self-presentation	Maintain and build a good social image
attention seeking	Get attention and significance from others
information seeking	Seek some information
information sharing	Share information with others to express oneself
pass time	Unintentional and regularly performed behavioral pattern
relaxation	Get relaxed when they use social media
communicating	Use social media as a communicating platform
affection seeking	The need for expressing encourage and showing care
social relationship	Build any relationship between two or more individuals

Based on what have mentioned in the previous research, the gratifications applied in this study includes: 1) information seeking; 2) information sharing; 3) passing time; 4) relaxation; 5) convenience utility; 6) attention seeking; 7) habit; 8) escape; 9) self-presentation; 10) affection; 11) socialization; 12) surveillance.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESES

From what has been discussed above, this study poses the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ 1: What activities are young people likely to do when using Snapchat?

The most significant and unique feature of Snapchat is ephemerality. Roesner et al. (2014) found that people mainly use Snapchat for sharing funny pictures, selfies, or snaps from other people. This study investigates the content young people most likely to use on Snapchat, such as chatting with a friend, photo- or video-sharing, following stories of organizations, broadcasting own stories, etc.

RQ 2: What gratifications are associated with Snapchat usage among young people?

From the review of previous research, this study identified 12 most prevalent categories of gratifications associated with social media use, including information seeking, information sharing, passing time, relaxation, convenience utility, attention seeking, habit, escape, self-presentation, affection, socialization and surveillance. After asking which gratifications young people seek when they use Snapchat, this study will rank the gratifications from the highest to the lowest.

H1: There will be gender differences in gratifications of Snapchat usage.

Gender differences in social media use were found in previous research. The data from Business Insider (Shontell, 2013) showed that many top social networks, like Facebook, have a strong skew toward female users. Women in the U.S. are more likely to use Facebook than men by about 11 percent. This study expects that the same pattern will

be observed in Snapchat and also test the gender differences in Snapchat user's

gratifications.

More specifically, Stanley (2015) found a gender difference in uses and

gratifications of Facebook. Females were shown to monitor the lives of family, friends

and others. Males had higher gratifications to attract attention from others and meet new

people. From those findings, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1-a: Males are more likely to use Snapchat for satisfying their gratification of

attention seeking than females.

H1-b: Females are more likely to use Snapchat for satisfying their gratification of

socialization than males.

H1-c: Females are more likely to use Snapchat for satisfying their gratification of

escape than males.

CHAPTER 4. METHOD

This study aims to find out what activities young people are likely to engage in when they use Snapchat. Another focus of this study is the gratifications of Snapchat use and the gender differences in some of the gratifications. To understand young people's Snapchat usage behavior and gratifications, this study uses an online survey to collect data. Given that the subject of this study is millennials who are prone to completing tasks online, online survey seems the most appropriate method for data collection. The theoretical population in this study is young generations who have used Snapchat. The target population is students at Iowa State University (ISU) who have used Snapchat and are between 18 to 30 years old. Respondents are recruited via email with a link to participate in the online survey.

Survey Questionnaire

A pretest of the survey questionnaire was conducted to 20 undergraduate students. Participants were asked to provide their feedback on question wording, comprehension, interpretation for questions they think were not well constructed. Additionally, they were asked to evaluate the overall aspects of the survey including the survey content, time taken to complete the survey, the level of satisfaction and difficulty.

After making improvements based on the pretest results, the survey questionnaire is divided into four parts: 1) preliminary question, 2) Snapchat usage habits, 3) gratifications of using Snapchat, 4) demographic information.

Preliminary question

The preliminary question asks whether people have used Snapchat or not. Since this

study focuses on the gratifications young people seek when they use Snapchat,

respondents whose answer is "no" (i.e. those who have never used Snapchat before) are

excluded from the study.

Snapchat usage habits

The questions in this section include history, usage frequency, activities respondents

do on Snapchat, and respondents' preferences on various activities (e.g., message sharing,

photo sharing and video sharing, etc.). Except for the number of friends participants have

in their Snapchat contact list, all questions in this section are close-ended.

Gratifications of using Snapchat

The questions in this section are designed to investigate the gratifications

respondents seek and obtain from using Snapchat. Questions use a five-point Likert scale

from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) with a list of gratification questions.

Respondents should select the button that best describes their level of agreement or

disagreement with each gratification. Table 3 describes all items this study adopted for

each gratification from previous studies.

Table 3
Items adopted for each gratification

Gratifications	Items: I use Snapchat to …	Source
information seeking	Get information about off-campus events	Park et al. (2009)
	Learn about on-campus events	Park et al. (2009)
	Get useful information about product or services	Park et al. (2009)
information sharing	Share information	Ma et al. (2016)
	Present information on my interests	Ma et al. (2016)
passing time	Occupy time	Whiting & Williams
	Relieve boredom	(2013)
relaxation	Enjoy the pleasure of talking to people	Leung & Wei (2000)
	Gossip or to chat	Leung & Wei (2000)
convenience utility	It is easy to access	Bayer et al. (2016)
	It is portable	Bayer et al. (2016)
attention seeking	Get attention from others	Park et al. (2009)
	Create a sense of importance	Park et al. (2009)
habit	Be a part of my everyday activity	Ma et al. (2016)
	Become part of my daily routine	Ma et al. (2016)
	Feel anxious if I don't use it	Chen (2008)
escape	Get away from pressure and responsibilities temporarily	Chen (2008)
	Help me deal with daily trouble	Chen (2008)
	Get away from what I am doing or should be doing	Chen (2008)
self-presentation	Build and maintain a good social image	Ng (2016)
	Avoid participating in some activities that have negative effects on personal image	Ng (2016)
affection	Get appreciation by others	Malik et al. (2016)
	Get the feeling of encouragement	Malik et al. (2016)
	Show care	Malik et al. (2016)

Table 3 continued

Gratifications	Items: I use Snapchat to …	Source
socialization	To connect with people who share some of my values	Ma et al. (2016)
	To connect with people who are similar to me	Ma et al. (2016)
	To meet new people	Ma et al. (2016)
surveillance	Get news about my family members or friends	Chen (2008)
	Know who is online now	Chen (2008)

Demographic information

This section requests respondents to provide their demographic and other

background information. The questions in this section include close-ended questions

collecting information on respondents' age, gender, race, college, education level and

household income.

Data Collection

The online survey was conducted from Jan 31, 2017 to Feb 8, 2017. A total of 2,164

respondents participated in the survey. Among those respondents, 1,899 respondents

completed the entire questionnaire. The completion rate is 88%, while 2 of them

disagreed with informed consent, 125 have never used Snapchat before, and 23

respondents were over the age of 30. After dropping out these respondents, a total of

1,749 respondents were the final sample included in the analysis.

Analytic Procedure

RQ 1 asks what activities young people are likely to engage in when using Snapchat.

To answer this research question, the frequency of activities available on Snapchat is

measured using the following ten categories: chat with friends, share photo, share video, make a story, follow stories of organizations, discover new stories, send money, apply a filter, save to memories and others (specify). RQ 1 is answered by calculating the percentage of different activities young people do when they use Snapchat, and then ranking the percentage from the highest to the lowest.

RQ 2 asks what gratifications are associated with Snapchat usage among young people. This study uses a Likert scale on 12 gratifications with 29 items, which to calculate the value of mean and standard deviation. Then, a factor analysis is conducted on all items to see whether factor loadings are consistent with the 12 gratifications this study intends to measure. Later, it computes factor scores and compares the rank, giving an idea regarding why young people use Snapchat and which gratifications they seek the most.

H1 states that there will be gender differences in gratifications of Snapchat usage. More specifically, there are three sub-hypotheses (H1-a: attention seeking, H1-b: socialization, H1-c: escape). The explanatory variable is gender, and the response variable is each gratification that corresponds to each of the sub-hypotheses. A series of t-test are conducted to find out whether there are statistically significant differences in gratifications of Snapchat usage (i.e., attention seeking, socialization, and escape) between male and female participants. Because the directionality is predicted, one-tailed t-tests are used for H1.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS

The results section starts with the demographic information and Snapchat usage

habits, followed by the results for each research question and hypothesis.

Demographic Information

Table 4 describes gender, race, college, education level and household income of the

sample in this study. The age of the respondents ranges from 18 to 30 years old with an

average age of 20 (M=20.26, SD=2.02). Regarding gender, more female student

participate in the survey than did male students. Undergraduate students are the dominant

group contributing to this online questionnaire comparing to graduate students. Among

these students, about the half are from the Engineering College and the Liberal Arts and

Sciences College. The distribution of the level of household income shows a polarization

pattern, with a quarter of participants coming from household income less than $20,000,

and another quarter from household income of $100,000 or more.

Table 4
Demographic information (N=1,749)

	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	727	41.57
	Female	1,022	58.43
Race	White	1,572	89.98
	Black or African American	30	1.72
	American Indian or Alaska Native	7	0.40
	Asian	62	3.55
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5	0.29
	Other	71	4.06

Table 4 continued

	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
College	Agriculture and Life Sciences	313	17.94
	Business	202	11.58
	Design	96	5.50
	Engineering	426	24.41
	Human Sciences	257	14.73
	Liberal Arts and Sciences	425	24.36
	Veterinary Medicine	26	1.49
Education level	Undergraduate	1,604	92.34
	Graduate	133	7.66
Household income	Less than $20,000	446	26.31
	$20,000 to $40,000	189	11.15
	$40,000 to $60,000	186	10.97
	$60,000 to $80,000	209	12.33
	$80,000 to $100,000	241	14.22
	$100,000 or more	424	25.01

Snapchat Usage Habits

On average, respondents in this study have used Snapchat for about 3.53 years, meaning that the participants are familiar with Snapchat and how to use it. More than the half of the respondents have used Snapchat over 3 years, including 31.28% who have used Snapchat between 3 to 4 years and 22.76% who have used more than 4 years. More than a quarter of the sample (27.56%) reported that they have been a Snapchat user between 2 and 3 years. There is a small proportion of participants who reported 1 to 2 years (13.26%) and less than 1 year (5.15%).

The results based on the frequency of Snapchat usage show that one third of participants (34.90%) use Snapchat over 20 times on a daily basis. The second highest number (21.51%) is respondents who use Snapchat between 5 to 10 times a day, followed

by participants who reported using it less than 5 times a day (19.85%). In addition,

12.24% are between 10 to 15 times and 11.50% use it between 15 to 20 times a day. This

results indicate a polarized pattern, which means young people either used Snapchat

frequently or rarely.

Since this study attempts to find out what activities young people usually do on

Snapchat, Table 5 shows the order of Snapchat activities from the highest to the lowest in

terms of the frequency of the activity.

The results show that most popular Snapchat activities young people usually do

include chatting with friends, photo sharing, making a story, applying a filter, video

sharing and saving to memories. In addition, the two most frequently mentioned activities

in the "other" category are following friend's stories (N=13 out of 54) and sending nudes

or streaks (N=15 out of 54).

Table 5
Activities young people engage in on Snapchat

Activity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Chat with friends	1,527	87.31
Photo sharing	1,483	84.79
Make a story	1,031	58.95
Apply a filter	1,026	58.66
Video sharing	977	55.86
Save to memories	932	53.29
Follow stories of organization	675	38.59
Discover news stories	571	32.65
Others	54	3.09
Send money	11	0.63
Total	1,749	100

Gratifications of Using Snapchat

One of the main foci of this study is to learn about gratifications associated with

Snapchat usage among young people. Respondents are asked to provide the level of

agreement to 29 gratifications statements derived from previous studies. Table 6 presents

the name, mean, standard deviation of each item.

Table 6
Descriptive statistics for 29 items

I use Snapchat because…	*M*	*SD*
I can get information about off-campus events	2.74	1.21
I can learn about on-campus events	2.64	1.16
I can get useful information about product or services	2.60	1.11
I can share information	4.04	0.86
I can present information on my interests	3.81	1.01
It occupies time	4.16	0.86
It relieves boredom	4.18	0.84
I enjoy the pleasure of talking to people	4.18	0.81
I can gossip or chat	3.74	0.97
It is easy to access	4.29	0.72
It is portable	4.38	0.69
I can get attention from others	3.45	1.07
It creates a sense of importance	2.99	1.09
It is a part of my everyday activity	3.64	1.18
It becomes a part of my daily routine	3.53	1.21
I feel anxious if I don't use it	2.02	1.04
I can get away from pressure and responsibilities temporarily	3.09	1.17
It helps me to deal with daily trouble	2.43	1.07
I can get away from what I am doing or should be doing	3.40	1.15
It helps to build and maintain a good social image	3.16	1.10
It avoids participating in some activities that have negative effects on personal image	2.56	0.98
I can get appreciation by others	3.10	1.08
I can receive encouragement from others	3.38	1.06
I can use it to show care	3.63	0.98
I can connect with people who share some of my values	3.60	1.01
I can connect with people who are similar to me	3.71	0.95
I can meet new people	2.61	1.21

Table 6 continued

I use Snapchat because…	*M*	*SD*
I can get news about my family members or friends	3.66	1.08
I can know who is online now	2.48	1.07

These original statements are used to conduct a principal component factor analysis

with varimax rotation in order to identify a group of dimensions that are tied together.

The criteria for choosing a factor to be retained are: (1) an eigenvalue greater than 1.0, (2)

a screen plot, and (3) prior studies that used similar factor items. In addition, the

threshold limit for the factor loading is kept at .60, at least three items are necessary to

form a factor and no cross-loaded items include. Thus, the survey items that do not fulfill

the minimum threshold limit are deleted from the pool.

Out of the 29 statements, five factors are identified for gratifications young people

obtain when they use Snapchat, with 60.15% of the total variance explained. Factor

scores are computed by calculating a mean of each item that belongs to each factor. Table

7 shows the rotated factor loadings of the five factors identified.

Table 7
Rotated factor matrix

Factor	Gratification Items "I use Snapchat to …"	Factor				
		1	2	3	4	5
Convenience	It is easy to access	.78				
	It is portable	.74				
	Enjoy the pleasure of talking to people	.70				
Attention seeking	Get appreciation by others		.79			
	Get attention from others		.74			
	Create a sense of importance		.70			

Table 7 continued

Factor	Gratification Items	Factor				
	"I use Snapchat to …"	1	2	3	4	5
Escape	Get away from pressure and responsibilities temporarily			.78		
	Help me deal with daily trouble			.74		
	Feel anxious if I don't use it			.64		
Information seeking	Learn about on-campus events				.82	
	Get information about off-campus events				.80	
	Get useful information about product or services				.76	
Socialization	To connect with people who share some of my values					.76
	To connect with people who are similar to me					.74
	Get news about my family members or friends					.60
Eigenvalue		10.35	2.37	1.98	1.66	1.10
% of variance explained		35.68	8.16	6.84	5.71	3.76

The first factor includes "easy to access", "portable" and "enjoy the pleasure of talking to people". This factor is named as "Convenience", it solely explains 35.68% of the total variance. The second factor, which consists of "get appreciation by others", "get attention from others" and "create a sense of importance", is labeled as "Attention seeking" and explains about 8.16% of the total variance. The third factor is made up of "get away from pressure and responsibilities temporarily", "help deal with daily troubles" and "feel anxious if do not use it". This factor is named as "Escape" and contributes to 6.84% of the total variance. The next factor includes "learn about on-campus event", "get

information about off-campus events" and "get useful information about product or service". This factor is named as "Information seeking" and about 5.71% of the total variance is explained by this factor. The last factor consists of "connect with people who share some of my values", "connect with people who are similar to me" and "get news about my family members or friends", which is labeled as "Socialization" and about 3.76% of the variance is explained by this factor.

Table 8 lists the name, mean, standard deviation of each factor. Convenience and socialization are the most salient factors with the highest mean score compared with others. Attention seeking is also an important factor, whereas escape and information seeking are less crucial than the other three.

Table 8
Descriptive statistics for 5 factors

Factor name	*M*	*SD*
Convenience	4.29	0.63
Attention seeking	3.18	0.94
Escape	2.52	0.91
Information seeking	2.66	1.01
Socialization	3.66	0.82

Gender Difference in Gratifications

Based on hypotheses, the relationship between gender and the gratifications obtained reveal that there are significant differences between male and female participants in some of the gratifications revealed. To identify gender differences, two sample t-tests comparing the mean scores of the five gratifications identified from the factor analysis are conducted. As shown in Table 9, there is no significant gender difference in the *Attention seeking* ($t=1.28$, $df=1,747$, $p=.101$). However, there is a

significant gender difference in *Socialization* (*t*=5.18, *df*=1,487.9, *p*<.001). Females

(*M*=3.74) obtain a higher level of gratification than males (*M*=3.54) when it comes to

using Snapchat for socializing. Also, the similar pattern emerges in the gratification of

Escape (t=3.90, *df*=1,747, *p*<.001). Again, females (*M*=2.59) have a higher level of

gratification than males (*M*=2.42).

Additionally, two other factors are compared with the mean scores by males and

females. There is a significant gender difference in *Convenience* (*t*=3.24, *df*=1,413.6,

p<.01). Females (*M*=4.33) obtain a higher level of gratification than males (*M*=4.23).

Also, the similar pattern found in the gratification of *Information seeking* (*t*=1.86,

df=1,747, *p*=.064).

Table 9
Two sample t-test: Gender differences in gratifications

Gratification	*M* of females	*M* of males	Sig.	t-test	*df*
Attention seeking	3.21	3.15	.50	1.28	1,747
Socialization	3.74	3.54	.01	5.18***	1,487.9
Escape	2.59	2.42	.74	3.90***	1,747
Convenience	4.33	4.23	.04	3.24**	1,413.6
Information seeking	2.70	2.61	.09	1.86	1,747

Note. ** *p*< .01
    *** *p*< .001

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study applies the uses and gratifications approach to identify what activities younger users are likely to be involved while using Snapchat, to investigate what kinds of gratifications are associated with Snapchat usage among young people, as well as whether there are gender differences in gratifications of Snapchat usage. Following are the main findings of this study.

The findings show that on average, respondents have used Snapchat for more than 3 years, and more than the half of the participants are using it over 15 times daily. What these numbers tell us is that young generations are comfortable with using newer social media like Snapchat and make frequent interaction with the app, which is confirmed with previous research (Utz et al., 2015). This is also consistent with the finding from the study by Sashittal et al. (2016) that college students cannot without their smartphones and are heavily engaged in Snapchat.

It is not surprising that young people usually use Snapchat to chat with friends, share photos and videos, make a story, apply a filter, and save to memories. As for Snapchat, it is a social media outlet that allows users to share time-limited photos or videos, so that all activities related to photos and videos sharing are the basic and main functions Snapchat provide to their users. The results also suggests that Snapchat is not only for the filters and photo tags, it has become a good way to maintain friendship and save memories of family and friends.

The findings for the second research question reflect that young people usually use Snapchat to fulfill their gratifications of convenience (e.g. easy to access, portable, enjoy the pleasure of talking to people), attention seeking (e.g. get appreciation by others, get attention from others, create a sense of importance), escape (e.g. get away from pressure and responsibilities temporarily, help to deal with daily trouble, feel anxious if do not use it), information seeking (e.g. learn about on-campus events, get information about off-campus events, get useful information about product or services) and socialization (e.g. connect with people who share some of their values, connect with people who are similar to them, get news about family members or friends).

Originally, this study investigates 12 gratifications: 1) information seeking, 2) information sharing, 3) passing time, 4) relaxation, 5) convenience utility, 6) attention seeking, 7) habit, 8) escape, 9) self-presentation, 10) affection, 11) socialization, and 12) surveillance. However, the results shows a five-factor solution that is mentioned above. The other seven gratifications are not found could be due to the fact that this study only focuses on young people who are between 18 to 30 years old and the items based on each gratification are not comprehensive and exhaustive.

In addition, by ranking the mean value of those factors, convenience ($M=4.29$), socialization ($M=3.66$) and attention seeking ($M=3.18$) can be viewed as the salient gratifications that are associated with Snapchat usage among young people. Nevertheless, information seeking ($M=2.66$) and escape ($M=2.52$) are not considered as crucial as the other three.

The findings show that the gratifications of convenience, socialization and attention seeking get highest rated. The numbers indicate that young people are using Snapchat because it is portable, they can connect with others and get attention at the same time, which is consistent with the previous social media research (Park et al., 2009; Bayer et al., 2016). Interestingly, information seeking and escape are not as much important as the other three in Snapchat usage study. The reasons could be due to the following: First, Snapchat has some unique features compared to other social media, such as ephemerality and portability (Schrock, 2015). Young people use Snapchat as an application that sharing photos and videos regardless of time or place (Bayer et al., 2016), rather than seeking information or getting away from pressure and responsibilities temporarily. Second, based on the results for the first research question, young people usually use Snapchat to chat with friends, share photos and videos. They have many other platforms and options to fulfill their needs of seeking information about on-campus or off-campus events and getting away from what they are currently doing (Duggan, 2015). Third, since this study assumes that each gratification influences Snapchat usage independently, however, one gratification could influence another and indirectly influence the results (Chen, 2008).

This study supports the hypothesis from the previous research that many top social networks, such as Facebook, have a skew toward female users (Shontell, 2013). For example, females were prone to monitor the lives of family, friends and others (Stanley, 2015). To verify this assumption, this study uses two sample t-tests to compare the mean scores of the five gratifications identified from the factor analysis.

The results in this study reveal that there are gender differences in the gratification of socialization, escape and convenience, which supports the second sub-hypothesis (i.e., females are more likely to use Snapchat for satisfying their gratification of socialization than males) and the third one (i.e., females are more likely to use Snapchat for satisfying their gratification of escape than males). However, the results fail to support the first hypothesis that males are more likely to use Snapchat for satisfying their gratification of attention seeking than females.

One alternative explanation for the non-significant result could be due to the fact that Snapchat is different from other social media in that, its users are predominantly young people (Duggan, 2015). Pittman and Reich (2016) found that "young people may be lonelier than other age groups, and that the current generation may be the loneliest ever" (p. 155). In this case, males and females are equally prone to seek attention from others among young people, which could help attract more eyesight or focus (Ma et al., 2016). Thus, there is no gender difference found in the gratification of attention seeking.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study results have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the current study is one of the few that applies the uses and gratifications theory to analyze the gratifications associated with Snapchat usage among young people.

First, the findings of this study suggest that the uses and gratifications theory has a solid theoretical utility in explaining the relationship between Snapchat use and the gratifications obtained. As a newer social media, the gratifications associate with

Snapchat usage (i.e., convenience, escape, attention seeking, information seeking, and socialization), and the fact about activities young people usually do on Snapchat (i.e., chat with friends, share photos and video, apply a filter) could be well modeled by the uses and gratifications approach. This is essential to understanding what Snapchat young users usually engage in and how they feel about this social media platform.

Additionally, the current study is one of the first to focus on the gender differences with Snapchat usage by applying the uses and gratifications theory, which prove that there are gender differences in gratifications of convenience, escape and socialization. This study focuses not only on the gender difference in Snapchat, but also the gender difference in the gratifications of Snapchat using. An innovate finding in this study is that there is no gender difference found in the gratification of attention seeking and information seeking, which establishes a new perspective to study Snapchat and builds a theoretical foundation for future research. For example, the future researchers could attempt at understating the gender differences with Snapchat usage among other age groups or reconfirming the findings in this study.

On a practical level, there are several implications for researchers interested in the field of snapchat study. First, understanding these gratifications could help the content providers or producers on Snapchat to develop new solutions for users and provide more accurate information. The results show that young people use Snapchat to get away from the pressure, follow information about on/off-campus events, and connect with people who are similar to them. On the basis of these results, content providers should find a

way to encourage its users to produce more relaxing and funny stories, provide updates on on/off-campus information frequently, and add a new function called "people you may like", which some other social media already have. This function means Snapchat will recommend their users to follow others who are sharing the similar values with them, which could satisfy the users' gratification of socialization.

Second, understanding the activities young people usually do on snapchat could help organizations or individuals to target their audience in a short time, as well as attract potential audiences. The results in this study show that young people usually use Snapchat to share photos and apply a filter. Because of that, the organizations could pay more attention to developing photos with filters, which can target their audience more accurate and effective. For example, Instagram official account always posts pictures with their own filters, which is an effective and useful way to attract current users and potential audiences.

Third, based on the gender differences, the current company could well understand the needs from the different genders. They can use it as a hint to cater the taste for both of their male customers and females, which can help to increase the loyalty for current consumers and promote the brand. For instance, addressing the convenience concerns of females users by simplifying the "send out message" or "make a story" settings could definitely satisfy the current female users and attract more potential users.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the aforementioned contributions, this study has limitations too. First, this study adopts 12 gratifications, but only five of them are found, which may indicate the items related to each gratification are not comprehensive and exhaustive. Future studies could use more than three items under each of gratifications, extending the coverage of gratifications associated with Snapchat usage.

Second, the online survey used in this study was only sent out to Iowa State University students and the respondents who are not between 18 to 30 years old were filtered out. Due to the fact that students in Iowa State University cannot represent all Snapchat users, the results might not be generalized to a larger population. Also, this study only focuses on the young people between 18 to 30 years old, however, people who are under 18 years old is also another large group using Snapchat. Future research could expand to different age or demographic groups, thus the results might be more generalized and accurate.

Third, this study only pays attention to limited aspects related to Snapchat, such as activities young people use on Snapchat, gratifications they seek and whether there are gender differences among those gratifications. Nevertheless, there still are many other aspects that can be explored in future research. For example, finding out the relationship between activities young people do on Snapchat and their gender, or proposing a hypothesis to test the relationship between the frequency of usage and gratifications young people seek on Snapchat. Furthermore, comparing the Snapchat with similar social

media platforms, such as Pinterest or Instagram, to see if there are similar patterns of

gratifications or gender differences.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Informed Consent

Dear student:

My name is Dina Chang, a graduate student in the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University. I am conducting a study about the gratifications associated with Snapchat usage among young people. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for protection of human subjects at Iowa State University. In order to participate in this study, you must be 18 years or older. Participation in this study is voluntary and all data collected will be confidential.

If you agree to participate in this study, it will take approximately 7 minutes to complete. During the study, you will be asked to complete a survey on your Snapchat usage and how much you agree with a list of statements about Snapchat. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to get in touch with me: Dina Chang, +1-515-203-5817, dchang@iastate.edu, 101 Hamilton Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, +1-515-294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, +1-515-294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Thank you in advance for participating in this study.

Dina Chang, Graduate Student
Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50010
dchang@iastate.edu

Section 1

Q1 Have you ever used Snapchat?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section 2

Q2 How long have you been using Snapchat?
- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 2 years
- ☐ 2 to 3 years
- ☐ 3 to 4 years
- ☐ More than 4 years

Q3 How often do you use Snapchat on a daily basis?
- ☐ Less than five times
- ☐ 5 to 10 times a day
- ☐ 10 to 15 times a day
- ☐ 15 to 20 times a day
- ☐ More than 20 times

Q4 What activities do you usually engage in on Snapchat? (Check all that apply)
- ☐ Chat with friends
- ☐ Photo sharing
- ☐ Video sharing
- ☐ Make a story
- ☐ Follow stories of organizations
- ☐ Discover new stories
- ☐ Send money
- ☐ Apply a filter
- ☐ Save to memories
- ☐ Others (Specify:_____)

Q5 Among message sharing, photo sharing and video sharing, which one do you most prefer?
- ☐ Message sharing
- ☐ Photo sharing
- ☐ Video sharing
- ☐ No preference

Q6 How many friends are in your Snapchat contact list?
_____ friends

Section 3

Q7 Check the box that best describes your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.

I use Snapchat because:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I can get information about off-campus events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can learn about on-campus events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can get useful information about product or services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can share information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can present information on my interests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It occupies time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It relieves boredom	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I enjoy the pleasure of talking to people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can gossip or chat	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is easy to access	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is portable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can get attention from others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It creates a sense of importance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

It is a part of my everyday activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It becomes a part of my daily routine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel anxious if I don't use it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can get away from pressure and responsibilities temporarily	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It helps me to deal with daily trouble	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can get away from what I am doing or should be doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It helps to build and maintain a good social image	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It avoids participating in some activities that have negative effects on personal image	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can get appreciation by others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can receive encouragement from others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can use it to show care	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can connect with people who share some of my values	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can connect with people who are similar to me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can meet new people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can get news about my family members or friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I can know who is online now	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 4

Q8 Gender:
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Q9 Age: _____

Q10 Race:
- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Other

Q11 College:
- ☐ Agriculture and Life Sciences
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Design
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Human Sciences
- ☐ Liberal Arts and Sciences
- ☐ Veterinary Medicine

Q12 Education level:
- ☐ Undergraduate
- ☐ Graduate

Q13 Household income:
- ☐ Less than $20,000
- ☐ $20,000 to $40,000
- ☐ $40,000 to $60,000
- ☐ $60,000 to $80,000
- ☐ $80,000 to $100,000
- ☐ $100,000 or more

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL SHEET

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
2420 Lincoln Way, Suite 202
Ames, Iowa 50014
515 294-4566

Date: 12/19/2016

To: Dina Chang   **CC:** Dr. Su Jung Kim
101 Hamilton   116 Hamilton

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Gratifications Associated with Snapchat Usage Among Young People

IRB ID: 16-590

Study Review Date: 12/19/2016

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
    - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
    - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**

- **You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application.** Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

    Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

    Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. **Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.**

Please be aware that **approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.