How Do People Share Their Positive Events?: Individual Differences in Capitalizing, Bragging, and Mass-Sharing

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How Do People Share Their Positive Events?

Individual Differences in Capitalizing, Bragging, and Mass-Sharing

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Abstract: Research suggests that sharing positive events with others is beneficial for well-being, yet little is known about *how* positive events are shared with others and *who* is most likely to share their positive events. The current study expanded on previous research by investigating how positive events are shared and individual differences in how people share these events. Participants (N = 251) reported on their likelihood to share positive events in three ways: capitalizing (sharing with close others), bragging (sharing with someone who may become jealous or upset), and mass-sharing (sharing with many people at once using communication technology) across a range of positive scenarios. Using cluster analysis, five meaningful profiles of sharing patterns emerged. These profiles were associated with gender, Big Five personality traits, narcissism, and empathy. Individuals who tended to brag when they shared their positive events were more likely to be men, reported less agreeableness, less conscientiousness, and less empathy, whereas those who tended to brag and mass-share reported the highest levels of narcissism. These results have important theoretical and practical implications for the growing body of research on sharing positive events.

Keywords: sharing, personality, gender, narcissism, empathy

The majority of research on the social sharing of emotions has focused on sharing negative events. However, most life events are positive (Gable & Haidt, 2005) and individuals often share these positive events with others (Derlega, Anderson, Winstead, & Greene, 2011). A growing body of correlational, longitudinal, and experimental research suggests that sharing positive events has important ramifications for one's emotional and social well-being. For example, sharing a positive event with others can lead to increased positive affect even beyond the experience of the event itself, increased life satisfaction, and enhanced relationships (Gable, Gonzaga, & Strachman, 2006; Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004; Langston, 1994; Reis et al., 2010). However, the salubrious outcomes associated with positive event sharing depend on enthusiastic responses from the listener (e.g., Gable et al., 2004), which may be contingent on the way an event is shared. Yet, little is known about the specific ways individuals share their positive events with others, and less is known about individual differences in who is most likely to share their positive events.

The current study builds on research on the social sharing of positive emotion (e.g., Bazarova, Taft, Choi, & Cosley, 2013; Choi & Toma, 2014; Rimè, 2009) by investigating patterns in how positive events are shared with others and by exploring individual differences in who shares their positive events in particular ways. We explored how individuals would capitalize (share with close others), brag (share with someone who may become jealous or upset), or mass-share (share with many people at once using communication technology) in response to a variety of positive events. Because people likely share a positive event in multiple ways, we used a person-centered approach (via cluster analysis) to explore patterns of typical positive event sharing. We then examined associations between sharing and several individual difference variables that have been associated with emotions and social experiences in prior research (gender, narcissism, empathy, and Big Five personality traits).

Positive Event Sharing

Sharing positive events with close others has commonly been referred to as capitalizing (Langston, 1994). Capitalizing often occurs with a close other or loved one, and capitalizing with a loved one who can share in your

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happiness can help accentuate the good feelings about the event (Gable et al., 2004, 2006; Langston, 1994). While some interpersonal interactions are driven by compassion and the well-being of others, people may share to gain approval and maintain a positive self-image, regardless of any negative consequences this may have on others (Crocker & Canevello, 2015). These self-image-based motives may manifest in the sharing of positive events through bragging about positive experiences and achievements to others, regardless of whether or not others may become jealous or upset (e.g., someone telling a classmate who failed an examination that they received an A). Not surprisingly, bragging about a positive event regardless of the adverse impact this may have on others is often perceived negatively (Brown, Uebelacker, & Heatherington, 1998). These negative perceptions may result in non-supportive responses to these bragging attempts (Miller, Cooke, Tsang, & Morgan, 1992), which in turn can hinder the typical benefits of positive event sharing. Advances in technology also enable people to share positive news with others through social networking sites (SNSs). SNS usage is common and the events shared on Facebook (the most popular SNS currently; Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015) are mostly positive (Choi & Toma, 2014). However, mass-sharing positive news on SNSs like Facebook may be less intimate than talking with someone in-person or one-on-one, which is supported by research suggesting social media use and online interactions may not lead to emotional benefits or intimacy (Gentzler, Oberhauser, Westerman, & Nadorff, 2011; Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011).

Individual Differences in Sharing

Gender

Gender may be related to how positive events are shared. Women typically rely on social support more than men (Tamres, Janicki, & Helgeson, 2002), which may make them more likely to capitalize on their positive events with close others. However, men tend to be more comfortable with boasting compared to women, and bragging is perceived as more masculine (Brown et al., 1998; Miller et al., 1992), whereas women tend to present themselves more modestly (Daubman, Heatherington, & Ahn, 1992). Accordingly, men were expected to report bragging more than women in the current study. Although gender differences in mass-sharing positive events have not been examined specifically, women spend more time on Facebook than men (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012) and women are more likely to cite mass-sharing general information as a reason for using Facebook (Smith, 2014). Thus, it was hypothesized that women may also share more positive events with others via mass-sharing.

Narcissism

Narcissism is marked by a grandiose sense of self, and highly narcissistic individuals interact with others in strategic ways to elicit positive feedback and maintain their positive self-views even at the cost of others (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). This insensitivity may entail more inconsiderate forms of sharing (i.e., bragging). Research suggests that narcissism is also linked to SNS use to engage in self-promotion (Marshall, Lefringhausen, & Ferenczi, 2015). Thus, those higher in narcissism may attempt to present a positive self-image by indiscriminately sharing their positive events – not just by capitalizing, but also by bragging or mass-sharing.

Empathy

Empathy, or the ability to value and imagine others' feelings and thoughts, is related to increased sensitivity in interpersonal contexts (Hall, Andrzejewski, & Yopchick, 2009). This increased sensitivity could generalize to sharing positive events via reduced bragging, as some individuals feel threatened or experience envy when faced with the success of others (Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Tesser, Millar, & Moore, 1988). Empathetic individuals may also be less likely to mass-share because they cannot adjust the framing of their positive event for specific individuals (e.g., sharing in a more sensitive manner to those personally affected by the news) and sharing on SNS promotes social comparison and envy (Fox & Moreland, 2015; Tandoc, Ferrucci, & Duffy, 2015). Thus, while the link between empathy and positive event sharing is relatively unexplored, it was expected that individuals high in empathy would engage in less bragging and mass-sharing.

Personality

The Big Five personality traits include extraversion (increased sociability/energy), openness (preference for novelty), neuroticism (heightened focus on threat/emotional instability), agreeableness (greater modesty and concern for others), and conscientiousness (higher levels of discipline and responsibility; McCrae & John, 1992). Although the relationship between personality characteristics and sharing positive events has not been explored, we expected personality to relate to sharing because of its strong links to social behavior (DeYoung, Weisberg, Quilty, & Peterson, 2013). Furthermore, prior research suggests that personality relates to support-seeking regarding negative events (Penley & Tomaka, 2002), thus we expected that personality may also relate to tendencies to engage in social behaviors after positive events.

Extraverted individuals spend more time interacting with social partners (Srivastava, Angelo, & Vallereux, 2008), experience more positive events (Zautra, Affleck, Tennen, Reich, & Davis, 2005), and feel more positive in response

to good events (Ng & Diener, 2009). Therefore, it is possible that extraverted individuals' increased social affiliation and positive experiences may create more opportunities for sharing positive events with close others.

Conscientiousness and agreeableness may also relate to the way that individuals share. In particular, they may be less likely to engage in bragging and mass-sharing. More agreeable individuals tend to be sensitive to the feelings of others (Thompson, 2008) and experience greater distress when publically outperforming others (Exline & Zell, 2012). Conscientious individuals experience better relationship outcomes, potentially due in part to their tendency to provoke less conflict (Roberts, Jackson, Fayard, Edmonds, & Meints, 2009). Those who are more conscientious may also be more deliberate (McCrae & John, 1992), and therefore may consider the implications of their actions before sharing with others, which may hinder insensitive forms of sharing such as bragging. This may also generalize to mass-sharing, as increased use of Facebook for self-presentation is related to less conscientiousness (Seidman, 2013).

The relationship between neuroticism and openness and sharing positive events is less clear-cut. One study found that people higher in neuroticism and openness anticipate feeling greater distress when publically outperforming others (Exline & Zell, 2012), similar to those high in agreeableness. Therefore, these individuals may avoid behaviors like bragging that create a direct social comparison. Additionally, some evidence suggests that neuroticism is related to increased use of Facebook to communicate with others (Seidman, 2013), which may lend itself to more mass-sharing over other forms of positive event sharing. However, given minimal research, examining associations between neuroticism and openness and sharing positive events was exploratory.

The Current Research

Despite the high overall frequency of positive events that people experience (Gable & Haidt, 2005), and the importance of communicating these positive events to others for relationship and well-being outcomes (Gable et al., 2006; Langston, 1994; Reis et al., 2010), little is known about how positive events are shared or about individual differences in positive event sharing patterns. The current study had two main aims to address these gaps in the literature. First, we sought to examine *how* individuals share their positive events. Research suggests that capitalizing with close others can improve personal and relational well-being (Gable et al., 2006; Langston, 1994), whereas mass-sharing positive events may not provide the opportunities for these same benefits (Gentzler et al., 2011; Kalpidou et al., 2011), and bragging may be met with negative perceptions by others (Brown et al., 1998; Miller et al., 1992). Therefore, the current study examined if individuals reported sharing their positive events in these ways and whether individuals could be profiled based on their patterns of positive event sharing. We adopted a person-centered analytic approach by using cluster analysis to identify groups of people who tend to share in specific ways. Given the lack of research examining how different forms of sharing may co-occur, this aim was descriptive and we did not have any specific predictions regarding the type of profiles that would emerge.

The second aim was to examine individual differences in sharing positive events. We first tested initial associations among each sharing type and several individual difference variables (gender, narcissism, empathy, and the Big Five personality traits). In addition to these variable-level associations, we also examined how these individual difference variables differentiated sharing profiles that emerged in the cluster analysis. Our hypotheses were as follows:

Gender

Based on research suggesting women rely on social support more than men (Tamres et al., 2002) and share more in general on SNS (Smith, 2014), we expected that women would be more likely to capitalize and mass-share. Based on research on gender-related norms related to self-presentation (Brown et al., 1998; Daubman et al., 1992; Miller et al., 1992), we expected that men would be more likely to brag.

Narcissism

Narcissistic individuals attempt to elicit positive feedback and maintain positive self-views, even at the cost of the feelings of others (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), thus we expected narcissistic individuals to share their positive events indiscriminately by engaging in greater levels of capitalizing, bragging, and mass-sharing.

Empathy

Research suggests that empathy is related to increased interpersonal sensitivity (Hall et al., 2009), thus we expected that more empathetic individuals would be less likely to brag to others and/or mass-share where the message cannot be adjusted for individuals who may be envious or upset.

Personality

Based on research suggesting more positivity and increased social interactions (Ng & Diener, 2009; Srivastava et al., 2008; Zautra et al., 2005), we expected extraversion to be related to greater capitalization. We also expected agreeableness and conscientiousness to be related to less mass-sharing and bragging. This prediction was based on the link between agreeableness and increased sensitivity

to the feelings of others (Thompson, 2008), along with the increased deliberateness and awareness that is associated with conscientiousness (McCrae & John, 1992). Given only preliminary research on neuroticism and openness, we did not have specific predictions regarding these personality characteristics and sharing types.

Method

Participants

Participants were 251 college students at a large, public university in the mid-Atlantic who completed an online survey for course credit. Participants' average age was 19.51 years (*SD* = 2.26; range = 18–46) and they were primarily women (74.9%) and White/Caucasian (89.3%, 4.1% Bi-Racial, 2.1% Black/African-American, 1.9% Asian, 1.3% Hispanic or Latino, .9% Native American, and .4% other).

Measures

Sharing Positive Events: Positive Events and Responses Survey (PEARS; Gentzler, Palmer, & Ramsey, 2016)

Participants indicated how they would respond in various ways from 1 (= *not at all likely*) to 5 (= *very likely*) after experiencing eight hypothetical positive events (e.g., planning a successful party, getting a good grade, winning a small lottery). This measure includes a variety of responses (e.g., reflecting on positive affect, thinking negatively about the event), but for this investigation we analyzed the three sharing-related subscales. In response to each of the eight events, participants reported on how likely they would be to engage in capitalizing, bragging, and mass-sharing. *Capitalizing* indexed sharing with a close friend or family member (e.g., "How likely would you be to tell a good friend or family member what happened?"). *Bragging* included sharing with someone who might become jealous or upset (e.g., "How likely would you be to tell a classmate who you know did poorly on the exam about your good grade?"). *Mass-Sharing* was specified as sharing with many people at once via communication technology ("How likely would you be to tell a lot of people at once [e.g., post it as your Facebook status]?"). Responses for each sharing type were averaged across the eight events to create a total score for each sharing type (with a total of eight items each). Consistent with previous research (Gentzler et al., 2016), each subscale demonstrated adequate internal consistency (capitalizing: α = .74; bragging: α = .81; mass-sharing: α = .82).

To ensure that we fully captured how participants would share these events, across this sample and several other studies using the PEARS (*N* = 1,041), participants also answered an open-ended question about each vignette to report what else they would do in response to the event. Although only a subset of participants provided an additional response (*n* = 545), no participants indicated that they would share in ways that did not fit under our definitions of capitalizing, bragging, or mass-sharing.

Narcissism: Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16; Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006)

Narcissism was assessed using this 16-item scale, which is designed to test subclinical levels of narcissistic personality. Participants were asked to choose between a narcissistic statement (coded as 1) and a non-narcissistic statement (coded as 0). Total scores were created by summing the number of narcissistic statements endorsed (α = .73).

Empathy: Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006)

This 20-item scale assesses cognitive and affective components of empathy using a 5-point scale from 1 (= *strongly disagree*) to 5 (= *strongly agree*). Responses were averaged across the 20 items (α = .85).

Personality: Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008)

This 44-item measure assesses each facet of the Big Five traits: conscientiousness (α = .74), agreeableness (α = .81), neuroticism (α = .80), openness (α = .76), and extraversion (α = .85). Items were rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (= *strongly disagree*) to 5 (= *agree strongly*), and averaged for each scale.

Results

Descriptive Analyses

Means and standard deviations for the variables of interest are reported in Table 1. Preliminary frequency analyses indicated that all participants would be at least somewhat likely to capitalize in response to the positive events. The majority of participants indicated that they would be at least somewhat likely to brag and mass-share in response to at least one of the events. Only 13.6% of participants indicated that they would not brag and only 12.1% of participants indicated that they would not mass-share in response to any of the positive events. Initial correlations indicated that all sharing types were positively related to one another (see Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

	Mean (*SD*)	Capitalize	Mass-share	Brag
Capitalizing	4.22 (0.57)	–	–	–
Mass-sharing	2.62 (0.88)	.26***	–	–
Bragging	2.28 (0.75)	.20**	.57***	–
Openness	3.25 (0.60)	.09	−.06	.05
Conscientiousness	3.65 (0.56)	.12	−.23***	−.24***
Extraversion	3.27 (0.78)	.17**	−.02	.04
Agreeableness	3.90 (0.63)	.17**	−.25***	−.31***
Neuroticism	2.97 (0.72)	.07	.12	.07
Narcissism	4.53 (3.12)	.05	.23**	.15*
Empathy	3.76 (0.50)	.39***	−.07	−.21**

Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Cluster Analysis

Person-centered analyses such as cluster analysis create groups or profiles of individuals based on their similarity to one another on a set of indicators, which allows for the analysis of co-occurring variables. First, a hierarchical cluster analysis utilizing the Ward's method and the squared Euclidean distance was conducted with the standardized scores of capitalizing, bragging, and mass-sharing. The dendrogram suggested a 5-cluster solution best fit the data. Next, a *K*-means cluster was conducted by specifying five clusters (see Figure 1). The cluster solution was replicated using the split-half method to create clusters using a random 50% of the sample. The total variance accounted for by the cluster solution was 63.2%.

The first cluster, *Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers*, was composed of individuals who capitalized and mass-shared above average (n = 91, 36%). *Non-Exclusive Sharers* were above average on all types of sharing (n = 47, 19%). *Non-Sharers* endorsed all sharing types below average (n = 15, 6%). *Braggers* bragged above average and mass-shared at about the mean (n = 28, 11%). *Capitalizers* capitalized slightly above the mean, but bragged and mass-shared below average (n = 70, 28%).

Initial Variable-Centered Associations

In line with our hypothesis, an independent samples t-test indicated that women (M = 4.34, SD = .54) reported more capitalizing than men (M = 3.89, SD = .53), $t(249) = -5.74$, $p < .001$. However, contrary to hypotheses, there was no significant difference in mass-sharing, $t(249) = -1.23$, $p = .22$, between women (M = 2.66, SD = .88) and men (M = 2.51, SD = .86), and there was no significant difference in bragging, $t(249) = -1.10$, $p = .25$, between women (M = 2.32, SD = .78) and men (M = 2.20, SD = .69).

Initial bivariate correlations between each type of sharing and each individual difference variable were mostly in line with hypotheses (see Table 1). As predicted, narcissism was related to more mass-sharing and bragging, empathy was related to less bragging, extraversion was related to greater capitalizing, and agreeableness and conscientiousness were both related to less bragging and mass-sharing. Although not hypothesized, agreeableness and empathy were both related to greater capitalizing.

Individual Differences in Cluster Membership

Next, we sought to explore how individual differences relate to different patterns of sharing. There were gender differences in cluster membership ($\chi^2 = 29.96$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .35$). In line with hypotheses, adjusted residuals indicated that the Braggers cluster consisted of more men. The Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers and Non-Exclusive Sharers clusters consisted of more women (see Figure 2).

Results from MANOVAs and Tukey's post hoc tests suggested differences in narcissism, $F(4, 218) = 4.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, (Figure 3A) and empathy, $F(4, 218) = 12.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$, (Figure 3B) across the sharing profiles, $\Lambda = .76$, $F(8, 434) = 8.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Post hoc analyses supported our hypothesis that narcissistic individuals share their positive events in indiscriminate ways. Specifically, Non-Sharers reported less narcissism than Braggers ($p < .001$), Non-Exclusive Sharers ($p < .01$), and Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers ($p < .01$). Capitalizers reported less narcissism than Braggers ($p < .05$). In line with our hypothesis, post hoc analyses indicated that profiles marked with higher than average levels of bragging were related to less empathy. Braggers reported less empathy than all other profiles, (p's < .001, for Non-Sharers $p < .01$) and Non-Exclusive Sharers reported less empathy than Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers ($p < .05$).

There were also differences in reports of personality, $\Lambda = .64$, $F(28, 672.06) = 3.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, (Figure 3B), specifically agreeableness, $F(4, 209) = 9.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$, and conscientiousness, $F(4, 209) = 4.04$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. In line with predictions, individuals with sharing profiles marked by higher than average levels of bragging also reported less agreeableness and conscientiousness. Braggers reported less agreeableness than Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers ($p < .001$), Non-Sharers ($p < .05$), and Capitalizers ($p < .001$). Non-Exclusive Sharers also reported less agreeableness than Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers ($p < .01$) and Capitalizers ($p < .01$). Capitalizers reported more conscientiousness than Non-Exclusive Sharers ($p < .05$) and Braggers ($p < .01$). However, contrary

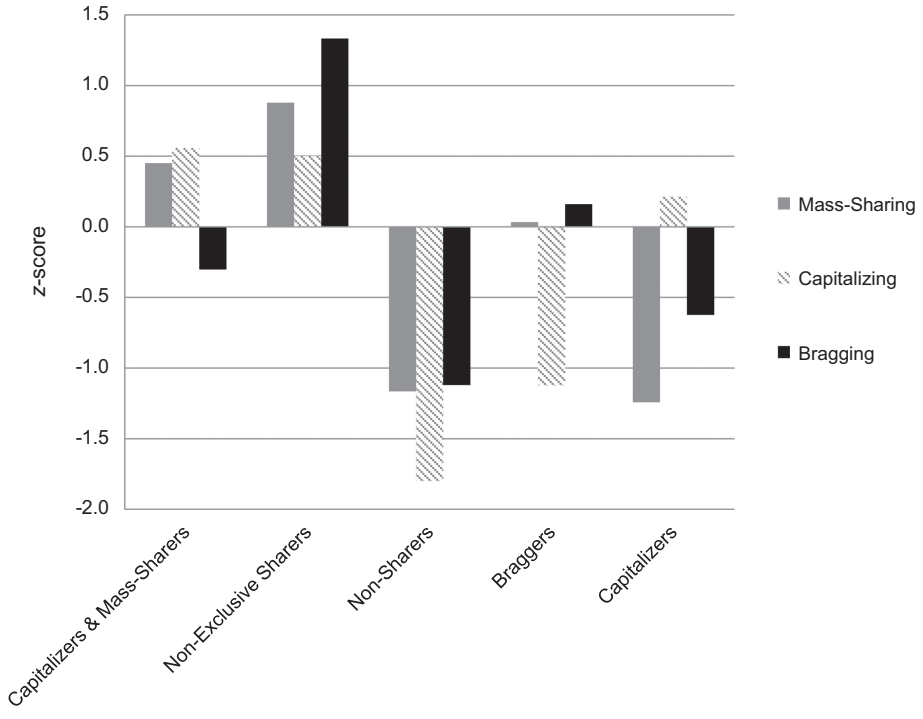

Figure 1. Final cluster solution.

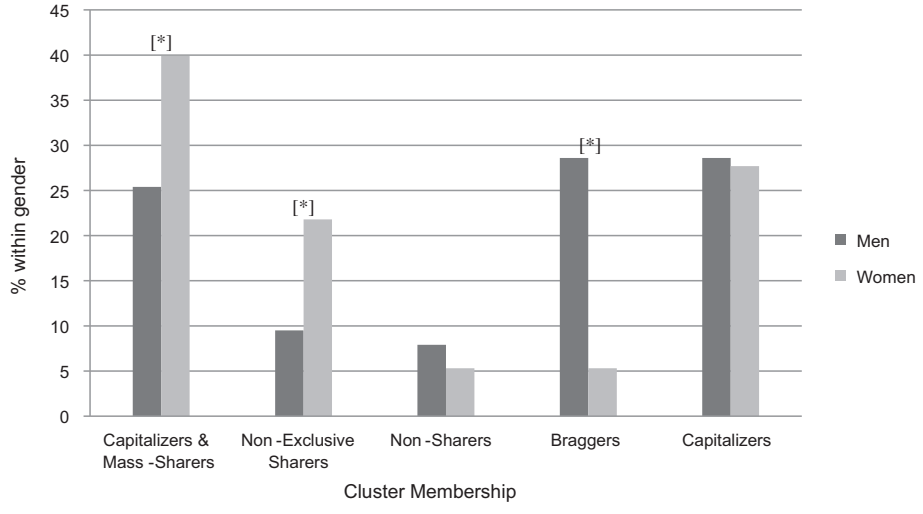

Figure 2. Gender within each cluster. An * indicates a significant difference in the observed gender distribution based on the standardized residual.

to hypotheses, there were no significant cluster differences in reports of extraversion, $F(4, 209) = 1.08$, $p = .37$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. There were also no significant cluster differences in neuroticism, $F(4, 209) = 2.14$, $p = .08$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, or openness, $F(4, 209) = 1.78$, $p = .13$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$.

Discussion

This study expands on a growing body of positive event sharing research. Sharing positive events with others can lead to increased positive affect, life satisfaction, and enhanced relationship well-being (Gable et al., 2004, 2006; Langston, 1994; Reis et al., 2010). However, we provide preliminary evidence that individuals often share their positive events in ways that can inhibit positive outcomes and impair interactions with others, such as bragging (e.g., Brown et al., 1998; Miller et al., 1992). We also provide evidence that there are individual differences in the way positive events are shared with others. Using cluster analysis, we found meaningful profiles of sharing tendencies, and these clusters systematically differed by

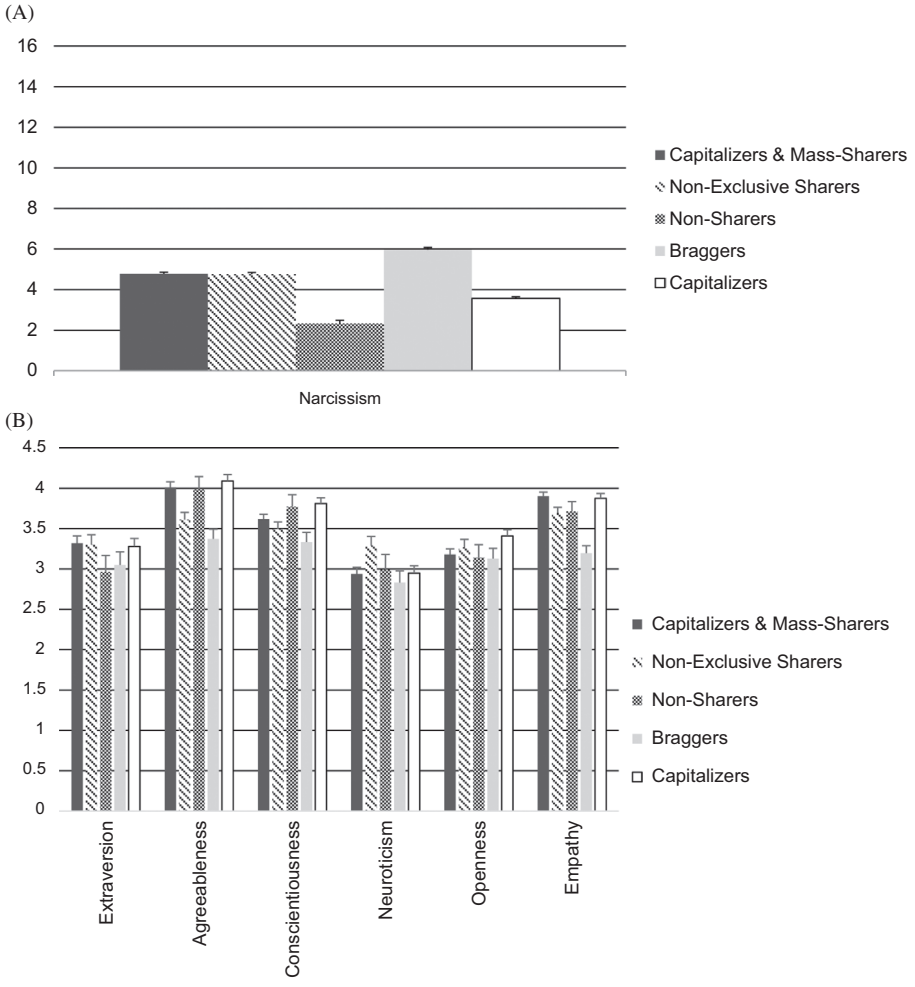

Figure 3. MANOVAs examining mean differences by cluster membership. Error bars represent the standard error. Figure (A) presents mean differences in narcissm across sharing profiles. Figure (B) presents mean differences in personality and empathy across the sharing profiles.

gender, conscientiousness, agreeableness, empathy, and narcissism. This may have practical implications when designing interventions aimed at increasing positive social interactions and when encouraging people to share their positive events with others. Certain individuals who are prone to share in less adaptive ways (e.g., bragging) may need more coaching to help them share their positive events constructively and maximize opportunities to build social and emotional well-being.

Sharing Profiles

To our knowledge, research to date has not examined multiple forms of positive event sharing in the same study, and the majority of participants had sharing profiles with above-average levels for more than one type of sharing. Two profiles emerged for individuals who would mostly capitalize (Capitalizers) or who would capitalize and mass-share (Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers) in response to their positive events. These two profiles comprised over half of the sample, suggesting that people most often engage in these two sharing types, but are less likely to brag. Notably, no distinct profiles emerged for those who only mass-shared, suggesting that those who mass-share their positive events usually share in other ways as well.

Individual Differences in Sharing

Initial associations indicated that women capitalized more than men, and that gender was unrelated to bragging and mass-sharing. However, when examining gender differences in the clusters, a different pattern of results emerged. Specifically, men were more likely to belong to the Braggers group, whereas women were more likely to belong to the Non-Exclusive Sharers group. This suggests that men might not brag more often, but that bragging is more likely to be their primary mode of sharing, whereas women who brag may also capitalize and mass-share. Additionally, women were more likely to belong to the Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers group than were men. This is consistent

with previous research suggesting that women rely on social support more than men (Tamres et al., 2002) and spend more time on Facebook (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012).

Consistent with our hypotheses, bragging, even when in conjunction with other forms of sharing, was related to more undesirable traits (i.e., lower levels of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and empathy, and higher levels of narcissism). Although no distinct profiles emerged for those who only mass-shared, initial correlations suggested that mass-sharing was related to less agreeableness, conscientiousness, and more narcissism. Additionally, Capitalizers & Mass-Sharers reported more narcissism than those who belonged to the Capitalizers group, suggesting that the addition of mass-sharing into a sharing repertoire may be linked to more narcissism. This is in line with research suggesting that narcissistic individuals are more likely to post accomplishments on websites like Facebook (Marshall et al., 2015). Conversely, Non-Sharers reported the lowest levels of narcissism when compared to all other profile types.

Interestingly, although extraversion was related to capitalizing in the initial correlations, the sharing profiles did not differ on extraversion, despite its strong linkage with social affiliation (Srivastava et al., 2008). While prior research suggests that extraverted individuals may experience more positive events (Zautra et al., 2005), our study suggests that it may not relate to how positive events are shared. Sharing profiles also did not differ on openness or neuroticism. Despite the relationship between these personality characteristics and interpersonal communication (e.g., Exline & Zell, 2012; Seidman, 2013), neuroticism and openness may not predict deciding whether or not to share positive experiences with others. Prior research suggests that neuroticism is related to increased use of Facebook to communicate with others because it allows time to perfect a message (Ross et al., 2009). However, the current findings suggest that this preference for SNS over other forms of communication may not generalize to sharing positive events, possibly because sharing good news is not expected to produce conflict and may require less planning.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study offers novel information about sharing positive events, it has several limitations that should be noted. We measured self-reported sharing in response to hypothetical vignettes, which provides information about how individuals would share independent of confounding individual differences in their own positive experiences. However, future research should validate these findings with other methodologies such as experience sampling or others' reports (e.g., friends or romantic partners).

More empirical research is needed on these different forms of sharing. While the benefits of capitalizing (Gable et al., 2004, 2006; Langston, 1994; Reis et al., 2010) and negative consequences of bragging (Brown et al., 1998; Miller et al., 1992) are more established, less is known about the consequences or benefits of sharing positive events with others en masse or via communication technology. Additionally, we operationalized bragging as sharing with someone who may become jealous or upset (e.g., sharing a positive experience with someone who did not experience that good fortune) to avoid transparency in what we were asking to prevent self-presentation effects. However, this is inconsistent with other studies that define bragging as sharing in a boastful way (e.g., Miller et al., 1992). In addition, we did not assess the motivation or reasons underlying bragging (to present a positive image of oneself vs. a lack of regard for the feelings of others), which may account for some of the significant associations (e.g., empathy) in the current study. Research on bragging about positive events is limited, but future studies should further distinguish among the motivations underlying why people share in this way to better understand why people brag. We also only assessed three ways that individuals may share, and there likely are other ways people share events that could be investigated in future research.

Research should further explore how sharing methods mediate individual differences in relational outcomes and the responses that are elicited from others when people share. For example, conscientiousness is related to better relationships (Roberts et al., 2009), and this may partly be due to more adaptive sharing of positive events. The impact of sharing on well-being may also differ based on the individual or the context. For example, bragging may be perceived as more acceptable for men (Miller et al., 1992), and context may impact when specific types of sharing are appropriate (e.g., is it still "bragging" if someone asks how you did on an exam as opposed to telling someone unprovoked?).

Conclusion

The current study is one of the first to examine systematic differences in *who* is likely to share their positive events and *how* they are shared. Investigating ways of sharing in conjunction with one another as opposed to specific types of sharing in isolation provides a better, more ecologically valid representation of positive event sharing (given that people tend to engage in more than one type of sharing). While positive event sharing can contribute to increased emotional and social well-being (e.g., Gable et al., 2004, 2006; Langston, 1994; Reis et al., 2010), some forms of sharing may be less beneficial (e.g., bragging). Understanding who shares in these ways informs future research

questions and potential routes to intervene to improve people's personal and relational functioning. Practically, this may be especially important information when designing interventions with a capitalizing component or when encouraging people to share their positive events. If certain people are prone to share in less adaptive ways, they may need more coaching than others to help them share in the most beneficial way (i.e., capitalize).

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