



Facebook Use and Mood

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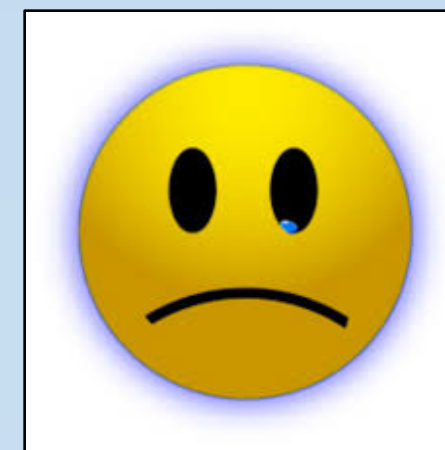


Abstract

This research examined whether the use of Facebook negatively affected mood. Participants actively used Facebook for 20 minutes and then completed a Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (“PANAS”) to determine their mood. Results showed no significant difference in mood between participants that used Facebook, browsed online, or had no computer use. In addition, there was no significant difference in mood between males and females in any of the groups.

Background

Some researchers are concerned that people who use Facebook may suffer from negative outcomes. For example, when Sagioglou and Greitemeyer (2014) compared participants that spent time on Facebook to those that spent time browsing the internet or spending no time online, they found that participants had lowered mood post-Facebook use. In addition, a correlational study by Steers, Wickham & Acitelli (2014) found decreased mood post-Facebook use that correlated with social comparisons and there was some indication that it was more pronounced for men than for women.



Our Research

Hypothesis: Facebook use results in decreased mood, and affects men more than women.

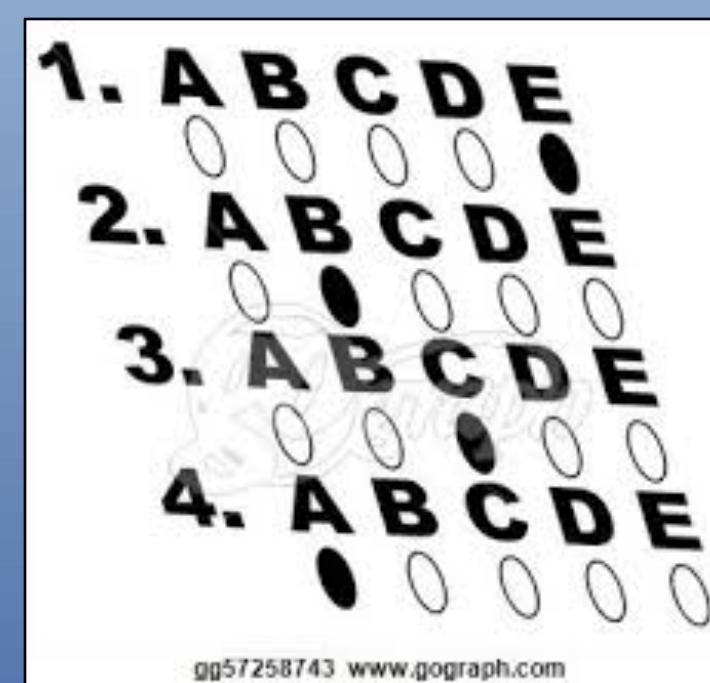
Method: Participants accessed an online link to the experiment. Two groups performed an online activity of either using Facebook or just browsing online, and then took a PANAS test to determine mood. The third group took the PANAS test only.



1. Facebook



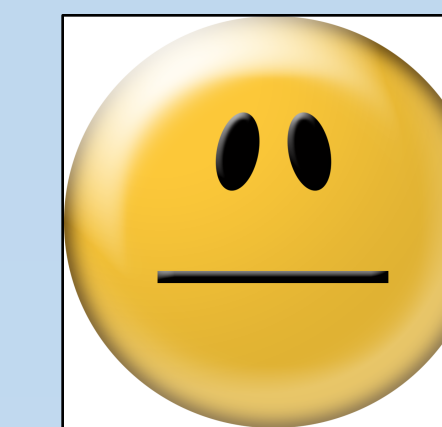
2. Online Browsing



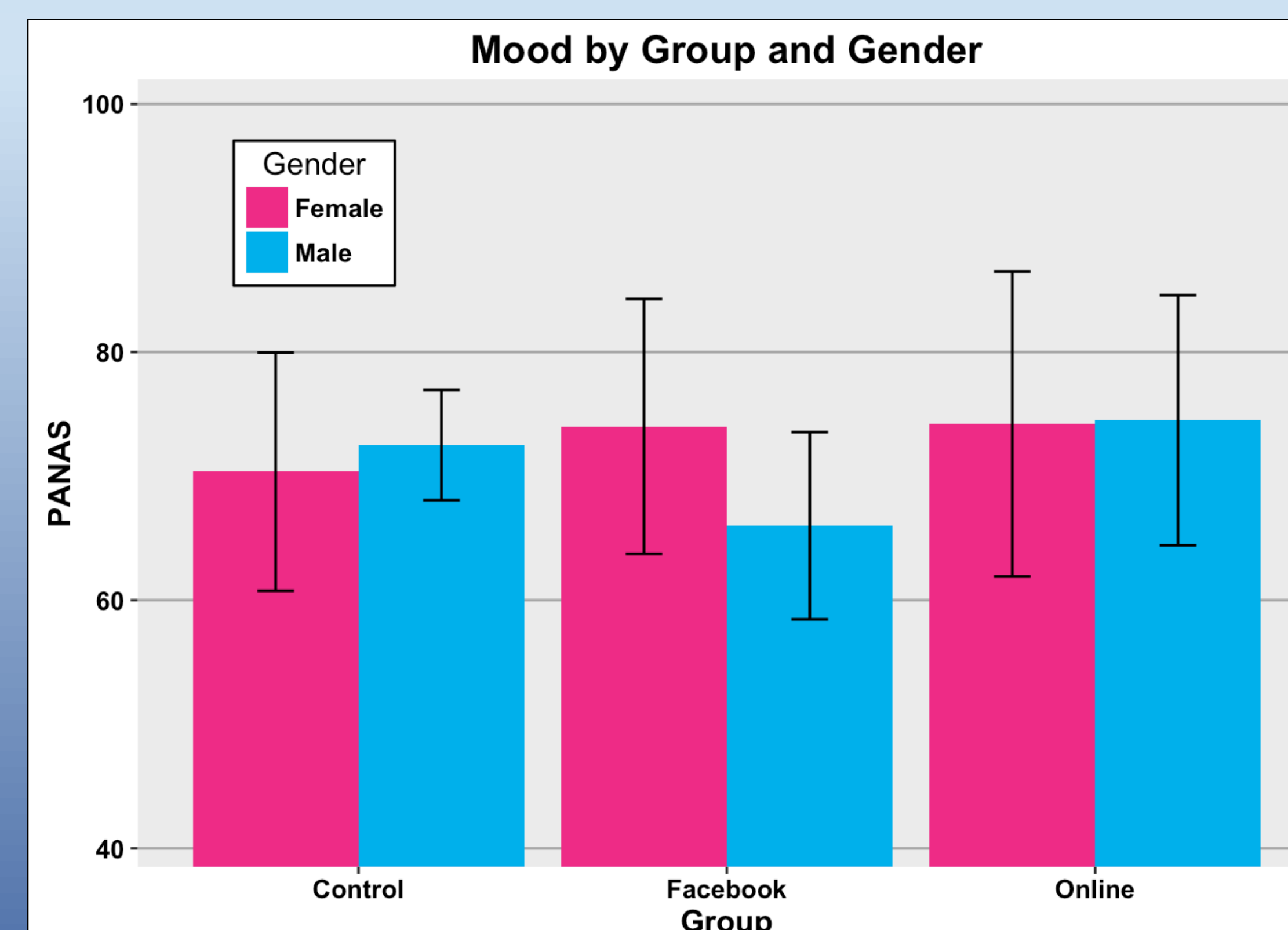
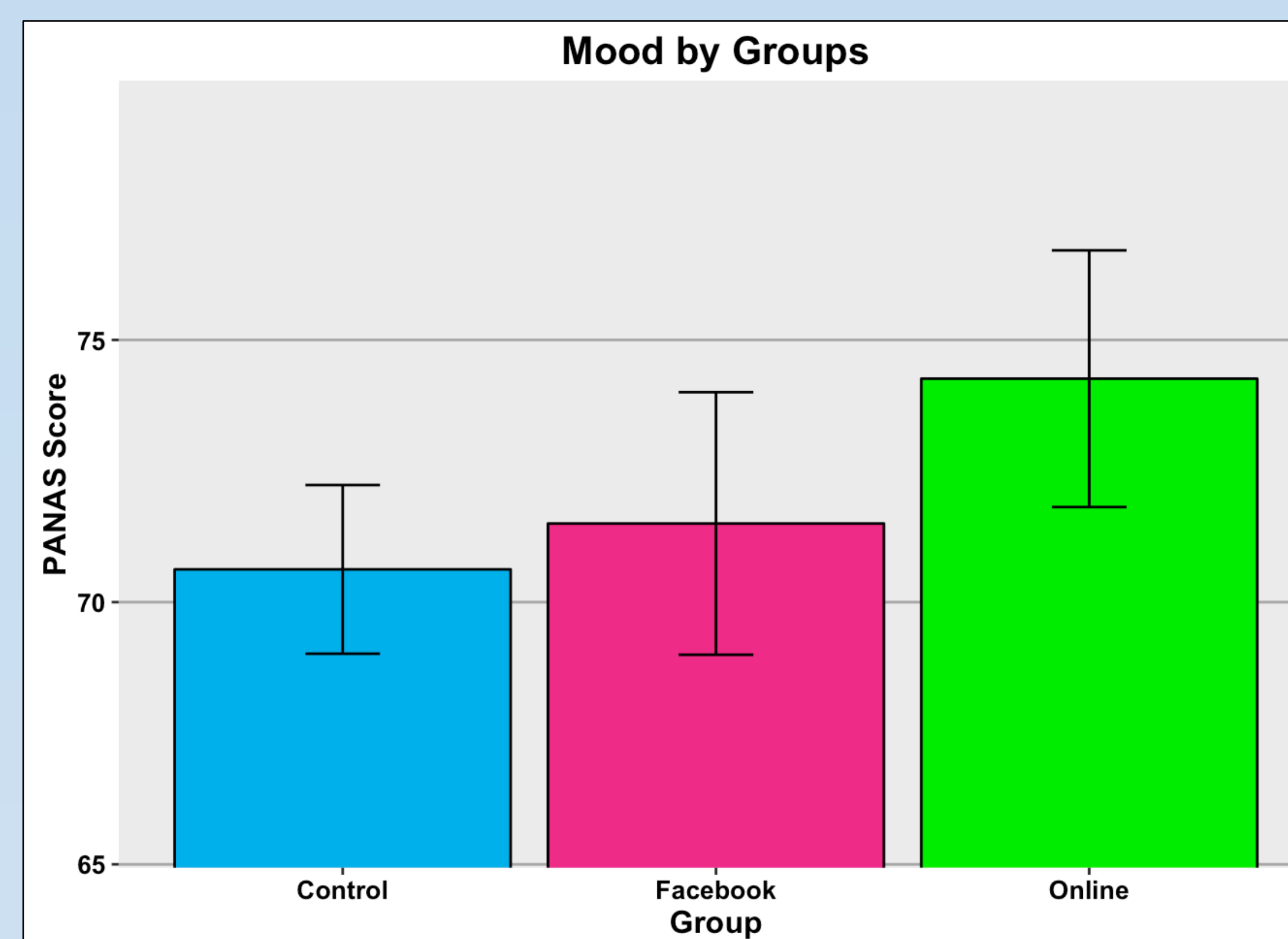
3. Control

Results

A two way between groups ANOVA showed that there was no effect of Group, $F(2,65) = 0.9$, $p = 0.43$. In addition there was no effect of Gender, $F(1,65) = 0.3$, $p = 0.57$. Finally, there was no interaction between Group and Gender, $F(2,65) = 1.0$, $p = 0.39$.

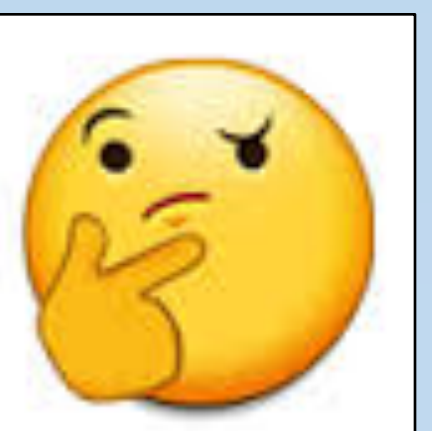


Our experiment did not replicate the experiment of Sagioglou and Greitemeyer (2014). We did not find that the use of Facebook resulted in decreased mood. In addition, we did not find that males had more diminished mood as a result of Facebook use than females did.



Conclusion

We believe that our inability to replicate the Sagioglou and Greitemeyer (2014) experiment was due to:



- Lack of compliance of research participants for assigned activity.
- Sagioglou & Greitemeyer’s (2014) failure to take into account previous time spent online by participants. Participants likely had spent time on Facebook prior to their 20 minute Facebook activity which could have biased the results.
- Participants in the Sagioglou & Greitemeyer (2014) experiment having knowledge that the experiment was focused on emotions. This knowledge may have caused participants to be more focused on their emotions during the experiment and may have biased the result.

We recommend that further research on this topic be performed with the following parameters:

- Conduct the experiment in a lab where the subjects can be monitored for compliance with instructions.
- Limit participants’ knowledge that the experiment is focused on their emotions.
- Limit online computer use immediately prior to the experiment.

References

- Sagioglou, C., & Greitemeyer, T. (2014). Facebook’s emotional consequences: Why Facebook causes a decrease in mood and why people still use it. *Computers in Human Behavior* 35, 359-363.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.03.003>
- Steers, M.N., Wickham, R.E., & Acitelli, L.K. (2014). Seeing everyone else’s highlight reels: How Facebook usage is linked to depressive symptoms. *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, 33, 701-731.

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