Facebook use and well-being: a 14-day observational study

82 young adults

Participants had a Facebook account and a touchscreen smartphone. Recruitment used flyers around Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Five prompts per day

Random timing within daily windows. Surveys measured Facebook use and current affect on 0-100 scales.

4,589 observations after attrition and response-rate exclusions. Average text-message response: 83.6%.

Kross et al. (2013), PLoS ONE 8(8): e69841. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0069841. Methods and Results, pp. 1-2.

More Facebook use predicted worse subsequent affect

B = 0.08

$\chi^2 = 28.90$ $p < 0.0001$

Within-person, time-lagged multilevel model. The model controls for affect at the preceding prompt and excludes overnight lags.

A higher affect score means feeling more negative. The estimate is an association between self-reported 0-100 scales.

The reverse path was not statistically significant: B = -0.005, p = 0.82.

Kross et al. (2013), PLoS ONE 8(8): e69841. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0069841. Results, affective well-being, p. 2.

Average use predicted lower follow-up life satisfaction

Reported statistic	Value
Unstandardized B	-0.012
Standardized β	-0.124
t (73 df)	-2.39
p	0.02

Between-person OLS regression

Average Facebook use over 14 days predicted follow-up life satisfaction, controlling for baseline life satisfaction and average emotion levels.

This estimate compares participants. It is distinct from the within-person affect model.

Kross et al. (2013), PLoS ONE 8(8): e69841. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0069841. Results, cognitive well-being, p. 3.

Causal effects and wider generalization remain unresolved

The authors call for experiments that manipulate Facebook use to establish definitive causal relations.

Scope	Young adults in one local sample. Other age groups and social networks require further study.
Magnitude	The authors describe the observed effects as relatively small. Statistical significance does not establish a large practical effect.

Discussion prompt: what randomized or objective-use evidence would change your interpretation?

Kross et al. (2013), PLoS ONE 8(8): e69841. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0069841. Discussion, Future research and Caveats, pp. 4-5.