



# Exploring Social Support, Motives and Well-Being in LGBTQIA+ Online Spaces

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## BACKGROUND

- Gender and sexual minorities...
  - Have higher access to affirming online spaces than all other environments, including home, school, and work<sup>1</sup>
  - Experience disproportionately high rates of cyberbullying and related forms of harassment and online victimization<sup>2-6</sup>
  - Are motivated to seek identity, foster social support, and obtain information in online spaces<sup>7</sup>
- Online social support found to have a positive relationship with self-esteem, self-identity, and life satisfaction<sup>8</sup>
- Gaps in knowledge in measuring platform-specific motives in gender and sexual minority communities, assessing LGBTQIA+-specific benefits for using social media, and assessing how time in online LGBTQIA+ spaces contributes to well-being

## CURRENT STUDY

- Investigate social media motives in frequent users of different social media platforms
- Assess if social support and LGBTQIA+ benefits mediate the relation between time in LGBTQIA+-specific spaces and digital well-being

## METHOD

- U.S. gender and sexual minorities ( $N = 332$ ; Age:  $M = 34.30$ ,  $SD = 11.17$ , Range = 18-68)
  - 80.1% cisgender; 5.7% transgender; 12.7% non-binary
  - 59.0% bisexual; 21.9% lesbian/gay; 9.3% asexual
- 15-minute online survey through CloudResearch Connect with items assessing:
  - Frequency of Platform Use
  - Social Media Motives<sup>9</sup> (Adapted)
  - % Time Spent in LGBTQ+-Specific Social Media Spaces
  - Social Media Social Support<sup>10</sup> (Adapted)
  - LGBTQIA+ Specific Social Media Benefits<sup>11</sup> (Adapted)
  - Digital Well-Being

## MOTIVATION RESULTS

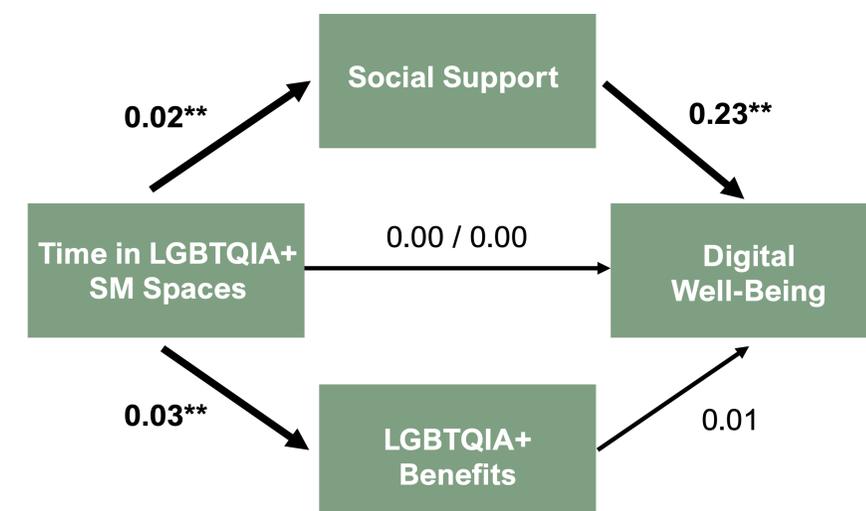
	* $p < .0056$	** $p < .0011$
Dating		
Social Recognition		
Culture/Trends		
New Friendships		
Monitoring Others		
Self-Expression		
Social Connectedness		
Information/News		
Entertainment		

\* $p < .05$  and \*\* $p < .01$ , Bonferroni-adjusted for 9 contrasts

**Frequent social media users (i.e., multiple times a day) scored higher than non-frequent users (i.e., once a day or less) on specific motives on these platforms:**

- Twitter: Higher on nearly all motives (except dating)
- Instagram, TikTok, Facebook: Higher on multiple motives
- Reddit: Primarily information/news and entertainment

## WELL-BEING RESULTS



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

**A parallel mediation analysis indicated:**

- Time in LGBTQIA+-specific spaces predicted social support from social media and LGBTQIA+ benefits
- Social support but not LGBTQIA+ benefits predicted digital well-being
- Social support from social media mediated the relation between time in LGBTQIA+-specific SM spaces and digital well-being, whereas LGBTQIA+ benefits did not

## DISCUSSION

### Summary

- Frequent social media users were motivated to use some platforms for a wide range of uses (i.e. Twitter), while others were more specified (i.e. Reddit)
- Spending more time in LGBTQIA+ social media spaces may result in better digital well-being outcomes for gender and sexual minorities, depending on the amount of social support received in online settings. LGBTQIA+ specific benefits did not help to explain this relationship

### Limitations & Future Directions

- Cross-sectional design
- LGBTQIA+ subgroup analyses not performed due to sampling limitations
- Single-item measure of digital well-being
- Future work:
  - Examine motivations tied to well-being outcomes
  - Further examine variables that buffer negative impacts on digital well-being

Scan to access full measures, demographic information, and references:



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