Faculty social networking interactions: using social domain theory to assess student views

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ABSTRACT

As educators consider using social networking sites, like Facebook, for educational innovations, they must be aware of possible vulnerabilities associated with the blurring of social and professional boundaries. This research uses social domain theory to examine how students rate the appropriateness of various faculty postings, behaviors, and responses on Facebook when used for educational purposes. Results were consistent with expectations described by social domain theory. Principal Component Analysis found scenarios inter-correlated within three major components, with the extracted components showing face validity for conventional, personal choice, and moral domains. Students generally found faculty Facebook postings related to conventional issues more appropriate than postings related to personal choice and moral issues. The introduction of a privacy setting was also an important consideration for some scenarios. Older students and females were more likely to find some conventional postings and personal choice intrusions by faculty more inappropriate than younger students and males. Furthermore, students who disagreed that faculty should be more accessible on Facebook were more likely to find conventional and personal choice scenarios inappropriate, suggesting they would prefer a firm boundary between faculty use of Facebook and their own social use of Facebook.

Keywords: Social Networking, Higher Education, Social Domain Theory

INTRODUCTION

An explosion in the use of online social networking suggests that student life is undergoing social and moral transformation and creating the need for objective analysis in order to develop guidelines of acceptable online academic behavior (Fougler, Ewbank, Kay, Popp, & Carter, 2009; Manafy, 2010). Current popular social networking services include Facebook, MySpace, Instant Messaging, and Twitter, among others. As professors consider the option of using online social networking platforms for educational innovations, they must weigh the benefits of such innovations against the potential vulnerabilities. Social networking platforms hold great promise for educational innovation through their use of online interactions among college students, creating an alternative to more passive learning (Fabos, 2008; Twu, 2009).

Despite the promise, the use of online social networking platforms can be a minefield of problems if university faculty fail to understand the many ways that social networking activities transcend classroom walls, muddy the boundaries between university and non-university jurisdictions, and lead to lack of clarity about what constitutes legitimate professional authority and responsibility (Fougler, et al., 2009). Both students and faculty are vulnerable to mistakes and violations of acceptable behavior if the blurring of boundaries creates uncertainties about appropriateness (Jordan, 2009). One theory that may help in the exploration of issues involved with online social networking is Turiel's (1983; 2002) social domain theory, which provides a foundation for describing and distinguishing moral and nonmoral domains in complex social issues. It has been used extensively in studies of student views of teachers' authority and its jurisdictional limitations (Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana & Bitz, 1996). The purpose of this exploratory research, therefore, is to use social domain theory to ascertain students' views of faculty online social networking interactions so that it's findings might inform educators' decisions regarding the "if" and "how" of integrating social networking in the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the use of social networking includes studies showing both benefits and pitfalls. Several studies indicate that students use social networking sites to maintain or strengthen their offline social networks (Agarwal & Mital, 2009; boyd & Ellison, 2007; Connell, 2009; Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield, 2006; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Smith & Caruso, 2010). Large and ongoing surveys commissioned by the Educause Center for Applied Research (ECAR) found students use social networking sites mostly for social and personal purposes, such as staying in touch with friends and sharing photos, music, videos, or other work (Smith and Caruso, 2010). Research based on content analysis of students' postings shows highly intimate online communications, with topics such as family issues, risk-behavior admissions, the use of sexual and profane language, and candid discussions (Williams & Merten, 2008).

Use of social networking sites for educational purposes is more limited than use for social purposes, with less than 10% of students in the ECAR study reporting using the sites to communicate with instructors about coursework. Some students report they would like to see greater use of social networking sites in their courses (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010; Smith and Caruso, 2010), while sizeable minorities react negatively to using it for educational purposes (Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis, 2007 ; Chu & Meulemans, 2008; Connell, 2009; Hewitt & Forte, 2006). Critics cite several concerns, ranging from security issues to the misuse of

information as it crosses the porous online boundary between public and private life (Brandenburg, 2008; Connell, 2009). One in eight college women report having been stalked, so the possibility that social networking might facilitate cyberstalking by miscreant faculty or fellow students is one concern (Kirkland, 2010). High-profile college-campus incidents that result in disciplinary action or unintended consequences may also hinder students from granting access to their online profiles beyond their intimate social circles. Past campus incidents include athletic suspensions or dismissals for inappropriate verbal and photographic postings (Armour, 2006; Brooks, 2007; Drew, 2010), academic suspensions for postings of inappropriate photographs of selves, other students, or dignitaries (Gruss, 2007; Iyengar, 2006), and loss of prospective jobs for posting risqué online persona (Finder, 2006).

Attempts to train future K-12 faculty about violations of safety and privacy found divergent views among faculty-in-training about appropriate boundaries. One study that used case studies based on Turiel's (1983) social domain theory as a training device indicates a lack of clarity exists about what constitutes legitimate teacher conduct and authority on social networking sites (Fougler, et al., 2009). Concerns about student-teacher online relationships have led several school districts at the K-12 level to regulate or ban teachers from using online social networks for educational purposes (Affleck, 2010; Bowean & Mack; 2010; Garrow, 2010; Kieffer, 2010). Reports of university faculty gaffes or misuse are fewer, but universities have issued guidelines on the use of social networking when representing the university (EWU Board of Trustees, 2010).

RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Social domain theory (Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 1995, 2002, Turiel, 1983, 1998) has been used to demonstrate that individuals have different types of social interactions and that these varied interactions lead to the development of different domains of social knowledge. Specifically, people think about moral matters, conventional matters, and personal matters in different ways (Davidson, Turiel & Black, 1983; Nucci, 1981; Smetana, 1988; Smetana, 2006). Moral issues are acts that pertain to others' rights or welfare (such as notions of harm, fairness, and rights). In a university setting, a moral issue might involve the decision of whether to cheat or not on a test. Conventional issues refer to the arbitrary and agreed-upon uniformities in social behavior that are alterable and context-dependent (such as social roles, institutional organization, and matters of social efficiency) (Nucci, 1996; Willard, 1997). For example, it may be a norm at most universities for a student to find a seat and remain in that seat during the entire class period. Furthermore, professors may prohibit late arrival to the classroom in order to facilitate uninterrupted and heightened attention on the subject matter in a lecture. The expectations here are context-dependent in that students give legitimacy to these issues in a classroom setting, but may not be willing to respond to similar norms in a different setting, such as at a football game. Personal issues have consequences only to the actor and are thus viewed as beyond societal regulation and moral concern (such as control over the body, and preferences and choices regarding personal appearance, friends, and hobbies) (Nucci, 1996, 2001). A personal issue might be the choice for a student to wear a beard, long hair, shorts, and sandals to class.

Some issues involve domain overlap; these issues raise moral concerns as well as concerns about social conventions or personal choice, and are known as multifaceted issues (Nucci, 1989). A multifaceted issue in a university setting might involve rules against setting off fire alarms in dormitories. Here, there is a moral issue of using emergency resources to respond to a prank when those resources might be needed for a legitimate emergency elsewhere, as well as the conventional

issue of disrupting student residents who need to respond by leaving the dormitory. One additional subset domain involves issues that are considered prudential, or prudentially advisable, and include decisions about safety, health, and comfort. Examples in this category are decisions about smoking, alcohol, and unsafe driving (Smetana and Asquith, 1994). Evaluations of these prudential issues might be considered overlapping in moral, conventional, and personal domains, and their domain evaluation is somewhat age-dependent (Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

Both the age of students and the jurisdictional boundaries of the authorities involved are relevant when understanding student judgments of social domains. Research has examined age-related changes and the ways in which people reason about moral and nonmoral concerns and found patterns of development and understanding consistent with limitations on both authority and jurisdiction as students age (Nucci, 2001). Numerous studies have assessed reasoning about role-related authority, especially that of the scope and limits of parent and teacher authority (Laupa, 1991; Laupa, 1995; Laupa & Turiel, 1993; Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana & Bitz, 1996; Smetana, Campione-Barr, and Daddis, C., 2004; Smetana and Chuang, 2001; Smetana & Daddis, 2002). These studies, involving children and adolescents, indicate that as students age, they are more likely to judge teachers' legitimate authority as limited to the boundaries of the school context. For example, among high-schoolers, issues such as drug and alcohol use are viewed as personal/prudential decisions that are outside of school jurisdiction (Nucci, Guerra, & Lee, 1991), unless the use occurs within the confines of the school (Smetana & Bitz, 1996). Considering the more mature ages of college students, as well as the increased independence from the parental domicile, such issues are even more likely to be viewed as personal/prudential decisions outside the bounds of university authorities. It is a reasonable expectation that college students would view university authority as extremely limited to mostly conventional issues and a few moral issues that involve university matters.

The uncertainties created by the blurring of online boundaries create ambiguities about the proper role of faculty on social networking sites (Jordan, 2009). Technology leaders have gone so far as to state that "privacy is no longer a social norm" (Mark Zuckerberg, in Manafy, 2010), thus blurring any reasonable expectation of privacy in many settings. Given that social networking sites are currently used by students primarily for social purposes, and that those social interactions include content that might be considered risqué or inappropriate in formal settings, educators might find themselves exposed to information about students normally kept outside official university boundaries. Conversely, faculty may find themselves exposing information that the university expects them to keep private. If such information is posted in the profile of the faculty member, the posting itself may be a violation of policy, and in addition, may impact educational effectiveness by creating a response bias in students familiar with the preferences of faculty. Even if privacy and group settings are used to create some boundary between social and educational use, profile information is far more accessible online than in other contexts.

In summary, a multitude of uncertainties, ambiguities, and contingencies must be considered when examining how students assess faculty behaviors, requests, posts, and responses when using social networking platforms for educational purposes. While hypothesizing exacting relationships about such assessments is difficult for purposes of this research because social domain theory typically uses scenarios and in-depth interviews for its methodologies (Nucci, 2001), several expectations about college-student views might be suggested to guide this exploratory research. It is not unreasonable to expect that college students would view a fairly narrow scope of online activities as legitimate concerns of faculty when using social networking sites for educational purposes. In particular, those activities related to conventional matters of

organization and educational proficiency would be viewed with the most legitimacy, while most moral issues (other than those related to education itself) and personal issues would be viewed as beyond faculty purview most of the time, particularly if they are handled in a manner that neglects concerns about privacy. Furthermore, there may be enough uncertainties that some students prefer to place their own boundary on their social networking by avoiding the use of social networking sites for educational purposes altogether. In addition, there may be a few issues that are viewed differently due to different life experiences, so age and gender may play a role in the assessments.

METHODS

Sample

A survey that included several social-networking-usage questions, demographic questions, and brief scenarios was created, and then discussed in-depth with several students. These discussions led to several corrections, so that the final scenarios were generated based on student feedback. The final survey was uploaded to an online survey service and administered to two undergraduate business classes at a medium-sized state university in the northwestern United States. The classes were chosen based on their relatively large size and experience using a "blended" learning platform.

The convenience sample included 110 students. The gender reported was 48% female and 52% male. Respondents reported an average age of 27, with an age range from 20 to 47. Reported GPA averaged 3.3, which is representative of typical class GPA averages for the program, given that students must have a 2.75 GPA to be accepted into the program. Summary statistics for respondents are listed in Table 1 in the Appendix.

Measures

The questionnaire had three main parts. First, respondents read a short introduction that guaranteed anonymity and conveyed the voluntary nature of completing the survey. Second, subjects were asked their opinion about the usage of Facebook for educational purposes. Next, they were presented with 9 brief scenarios that described fictional behaviors of faculty while using Facebook for educational purposes. They were asked to rate the behaviors using a seven- point Likert-type rating scale, with "Extremely Inappropriate" anchoring a score of "1" and "Completely Appropriate" anchoring a score of 7. They were asked to rate each scenario in two different conditions – if the behavior occurred when Facebook was open to all contacts on their accounts, and if the behavior occurred when Facebook was open only to those listed in a "group" set up for members of an online class. After rating the scenarios, the respondents were again asked their opinion of faculty using Facebook. Third, the survey inquired about the subject's age, gender, estimated GPA, and international-student status. The scenarios are listed in Table 2 in the Appendix.

Analysis

No *a priori* hypotheses were presented for analysis, however, the statistical technique of principal components analysis was used to find social domain commonality within the scenarios. With social domain theory as the research foundation, it was expected that issues would be

understood on the basis of fit with specific social domains. Through a process of reasoning based on certain criteria (rule contingency, rule alterability, rule generalizability, act generalizability, and act severity), researchers have determined that people make a conceptual distinction among conventional, moral, and personal issues (Nucci, 2001). Based on these distinctions, scenarios can be evaluated for common patterns of conceptualization that match the domains. In essence, some commonality within scenarios elicits responses that result in a combination of those scenarios into the same social domain. A technique that is used to analyze groups of correlated responses that represent one or more common domains is principal components analysis (PCA) (Henriques, 2010). PCA is used to find optimal ways of combining responses into a small number of subsets in order to explain a maximal amount of variance (Suhr, 2005). Principal components analysis (with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization), therefore, was the technique used to determine how the scenarios grouped into specific social domains.

In addition to principal components analysis, several correlations and t-tests were used to determine if student assessment of faculty behaviors within specific domains correlated with gender, age, and opinions of using Facebook for educational purposes.

RESULTS

Summary statistics for student responses to the scenarios are shown in Table 3 in the Appendix for two conditions: when a student's Facebook interactions are open to all the student's contacts, and when the interactions are open only to a class in a Facebook group.

For the open-to-all-contacts condition, students rated the appropriateness of the scenarios in the following order, from least appropriate to most appropriate: lip ring comment, drinking violation comment, professor reports reputation of other professors, party information request, racism assignment, Jesus statement, assignment change announcement, test preference poll, excellent students comment. The least variation in response occurred for the "lip ring comment" (sd=1.277), and the most variation occurred for the "professor reports reputation of other professors" comment (sd =2.405). The order changes for the open-only-to-class condition, where the "Jesus statement" moves from being the 6th least appropriate scenario in the open-to-all condition to the 4th least appropriate scenario. Except for the "Jesus statement", all scenarios became more appropriate when students answered in the open-to-class-only condition than in the open-to-all condition. This result suggests that when a moderate privacy barrier is created, students recognize it as a minor remedy for generally inappropriate online interactions. In both conditions, all scenarios, except the three dealing with class information, are rated on the "inappropriate" end of the scale.

The results for the principal components analysis are shown in Table 4 in the Appendix. The table lists the correlations of the ratings for each scenario with the components extracted. The principal components (PCs) were named for the items most strongly correlated with them (shown underlined in the table). The first principal component represents the conventional domain with high correlations for the ratings of the following scenarios: "assignment change announcement" (r=0.782), "excellent students comment" (r=0.799), and "test preference poll" (r=0.906). These activities can be considered typical organizational or motivational strategies of faculty. The second PC, named the personal choice domain, is associated with activities that normally involve personal choice by students, but the scenarios describe some type of faculty intrusion into that choice. Its highest correlations are with ratings for the following scenarios: "party information request" (r=0.744), "professor reports the reputation of other professors" (r=0.823), and "lip ring

comment" (r=0.742). The third PC is named for the moral domain and shows the strongest correlations with ratings for scenarios about "reporting drinking violations" (r=-0.566) and "exposing one's religion as a professor" (r=0.813). The "racism assignment" scenario does not have a correlation above 0.5 with any domain, suggesting it might be a multifaceted issue evaluated by students as belonging in the conventional and personal domains. The relatively even distribution of correlation coefficients for the ratings of the "drinking violation" scenario in each of the three domains also suggests it may be evaluated by students as belonging to conventional, personal, and moral domains. Interestingly, the "racism assignment" has a mean on the "inappropriate" end of the scale (m=2.74), even in the condition where interactions are exposed to class members only (m=3.93).

To determine if the naming of the principal component domains had face validity, a brief survey was administered to 10 additional students subsequent to administering the first survey. In this survey, written explanations of conventional, personal, and moral domains were given to the students. The 9 scenarios for this research were then listed, and students were asked to indicate if they thought the scenario involved "mostly conventional", "mostly personal", or "mostly moral" issues. If they thought it involved several domains without one dominating, they were asked to list which domains were relevant to that scenario. Students were nearly unanimous in their assessments of the scenarios, and those assessments were nearly the same as the numerical results using PCA. Students also agreed that the "racism assignment" and "drinking violation" scenarios were multi-faceted issues, with "racism assignment" scenario belonging to the conventional and personal domains, and "drinking violation" scenario belonging to all three domains. The only disagreement occurred with the "Jesus statement". Three students thought it was a personal issue, while 7 students thought it was a moral issue. Discussion indicated that the 7 students who chose the moral domain were concerned that such a statement might violate freedom of religion rights and were concerned that if they saw that another student "liked" the comment, they might feel obligated to "like" the comment as well, or risk falling out of favor with the professor. The three students who thought it was a personal issue indicated that they believed the professor had a right to express their religion, which they viewed as a personal choice.

Of some interest are the average means for the scenario ratings that correlate most highly with each PC domain. For the three scenario ratings that most highly correlate with the conventional PC domain, the average of the means is 5.416 (falling on the appropriate end of the scale), while the averages of the means for the personal choice PC domain and moral PC domain are 2.117 and 2.349, respectively (falling on the inappropriate end of the scale). In general, these results suggest that faculty interactions that involve behaviors that fall within the conventional domain are viewed as more appropriate than those that fall in the personal choice and moral domains. These findings are in alignment with previous literature (Laupa, 1991; Laupa, 1995; Laupa & Turiel, 1993; Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana & Bitz, 1996; Smetana, Campione-Barr, and Daddis, C., 2004; Smetana and Chuang, 2001; Smetana & Daddis, 2002), as well as with the expectation of social domain theory that forms the research foundation.

The remaining statistical analyses were completed by using principal components scores, as suggested by Suhr (2005). To determine if age and grade point average have any effect on appropriateness ratings of scenarios, Pearson correlations were computed for "age" and "GPA" for each PC score. Results are shown in Table 5 in the Appendix. The only significant correlation is "age" with the "personal choice PC", and it is negative ($r=-0.217$; $p<0.01$). As age increases, ratings of the appropriateness of interference with "personal choice" decreases, a result also in alignment with previous research (Nucci, Guerra, & Lee, 1991; Smetana & Bitz, 1996). One

additional correlation was computed to determine if student agreement that faculty should be more accessible on Facebook related to their ratings of scenario appropriateness in each domain. Results suggest that the less students agreed that faculty should be accessible on Facebook, the more likely they were to rate scenarios in the conventional domains and personal choice domains as inappropriate ($r=0.346$, $p<0.01$; $r=0.412$, $p<0.01$, respectively).

To determine if gender had an effect on appropriateness ratings, t-tests were performed on each PC, then on the ratings for each scenario. Results are shown in Tables 6 and 7 in the Appendix, respectively. Results are significant for the Conventional PC Score and Personal Choice PC Score. The t-test results for each scenario rating show significant differences between men and women for the following scenarios: racism assignment, drinking violation comment, professor reports reputation of other professors, test preference poll, and lip ring comment. For all these scenarios, women rated the scenarios as significantly more inappropriate than men.

In summary, results were consistent with expectations described by social domain theory and previous research. Principal Component Analysis found scenarios inter-correlated within three major components, with the extracted components showing face validity with conventional, personal choice, and moral domains. Students generally found faculty Facebook postings related to conventional issues more appropriate than postings related to personal choice and moral issues. Privacy concerns are somewhat more complex, with the introduction of a privacy setting an important consideration for some scenarios, such as the "racism assignment." Older students and females were more likely to find some conventional postings and personal choice intrusions by faculty more inappropriate than younger students and males. Furthermore, students who disagreed that faculty should be more accessible on Facebook were more likely to find conventional and personal choice scenarios inappropriate, suggesting they would prefer a firm boundary between faculty use of Facebook and their own social use of Facebook.

DISCUSSION

As social networking technology evolves, and its functionality increases, faculty are left with the decision to embrace a technology that seems increasingly relevant to students, or to avoid it in favor of a more educationally-dedicated platform. For students, the familiarity and ease of use associated with social networking sites may justify expanding the use of such sites for educational purposes. The hesitations, concerns, and mistakes of such expansion, however, must also be be considered as the blurring boundary created by the digital realm transforms cultural, social, and professional expectations. This research was driven by such concerns and sought some guidance through the use of social domain theory as an analytical tool for exploring student assessments of faculty postings, responses, and behaviors when using Facebook for educational purposes.

Results suggest that social domain theory does offer some limited, but clarifying, guidance. Through principal components analysis and the use of 9 fictional scenarios rated for appropriateness by students, the research found high inter-correlations among issues designated as belonging to conventional, personal choice, and moral domains. A subsequent test for face validity found strong indications that the designations for the extracted components were in agreement with student designations for the domains relevant to issues in the scenarios. Furthermore, as suggested by social domain theory, appropriateness ratings for faculty involvement in conventional issues were found to be higher than those for personal choice and moral issues, which were found to be highly inappropriate. Faculty involvement in conventional issues tended to be designated as even more appropriate when the use of Facebook included a

privacy barrier in the form of a group setting allowing only class members to see postings. Older students and females were more discriminating about appropriate behavior than younger students and males. Such findings are all in alignment with expectations posited by social domain theory and previous research (Laupa, 1991; Laupa, 1995; Laupa & Turiel, 1993; Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana & Bitz, 1996; Smetana, Campione-Barr, and Daddis, C., 2004; Smetana and Chuang, 2001; Smetana & Daddis, 2002). In addition, students who disagreed that faculty should be more accessible through Facebook were more likely to find conventional and personal choice scenarios more inappropriate, suggesting that they wished to be free of a faculty presence on Facebook, regardless of the faculty's purpose.

Perhaps of more interest are findings related to the scenarios that did not fit as neatly into designated domains. The "racism assignment" scenario might be representative of a situation into which faculty might easily venture, unaware of potential controversy, and blinded by the normalcy of requiring such an assignment in a classroom setting. In-depth discussions with students about that scenario revealed their reluctance to post their opinions about controversial topics, both in plain view of all their contacts and in plain view of just their classmates. In assessing this scenario, several students acknowledged they were stymied by the fact that they saw the conventional aspect of a required assignment as important to their success in class, while also believing their views of the topic and willingness to discuss them in front of others were a personal choice, hence the inappropriateness rating.

The complexity of their assessments was also evident in the "drinking violation" and "Jesus statement" scenarios. Several students were sympathetic to the conventional and moral issues present in the "drinking violation" scenario and acknowledged that faculty would be in a "tight spot" if they were required by their position to report illegal activities if they saw them. On the other hand, the scenario was seen as a personal choice outside the jurisdiction of university personnel. These students believed faculty should "use their better judgment," and viewed reports to the authorities as inappropriate. For the scenario involving a professor posting their religious beliefs, nuanced thinking was also evident. For those students who viewed the scenario mostly as a personal issue, they were influenced mostly by the public nature of most profile postings. They believed the professor had a right to religious expression, particularly when open to the broader public. When in the setting opened only to the class, they saw the posting as involving other domains because it did not fit the professional boundary expected once a professor enters the educational realm.

As a whole, this research adds to the growing body of literature that suggests faculty must use online sites for educational purposes with care. Simple, direct, and unaltered migration of in-class activities into an online format may not be wise. The lack of social and nonverbal clues, combined with blurred boundaries, may be a challenge for faculty and students alike when conducting open or closed online discussions. Discussion closed to outsiders, and aligned with equally closed personal boundaries, may be the "safest" route to transitioning to an online format involving social networking platforms. Such a sterile approach might be unappealing to those who see the benefits of learning in an easygoing, collaborative environment. For those who venture into this broader setting to achieve innovative and exciting educational outcomes, caution is still advised. End-of-class assessments of appropriateness of various assignments, discussions, and online behaviors would assist faculty in honing their online skills and "personalities" so that vulnerabilities are minimized. Over time, social transformations associated with the blurred boundaries of educational integration may render a clearer picture of what constitutes appropriate activity, but in these embryonic stages, continued assessment is advised.

This research includes methodological innovations, as well as several limitations. First, the use of principal components analysis allowed for the collection of large amounts of data through the survey technique. This methodology was an efficient method for data collection and involved the use of objective statistical analysis. The collection of additional data from a smaller sample to test for face validity also allowed for a richer discussion of conceptualization about social domains. The combination of techniques provided a firmer foundation on which to rest conclusions than the use of either method alone, in isolation. Analysis of scenario data often involves in-depth discussions with smaller numbers of respondents, along with arduous content analysis. The methodology for this research is a possible alternative for other scenario studies. That said, future research on the same topic would benefit from using a wider range of scenarios, along with the in-depth discussions and content analysis. In addition to such methodologies, methods that compare faculty responses with student responses would highlight potential vulnerabilities of online education by finding where differences between faculty and students exist. What faculty view as appropriate may diverge significantly from what students view as appropriate, and *vice versa*. Studies with larger and more varied samples would also lead to more generalizable conclusions. This research study was limited to mostly students enrolled in business disciplines with a narrow experience in online education; students in other disciplines and with more online experience may think differently. Further study is warranted with broader samples. Last, data collected from ongoing end-of-class assessment would offer an additional means of learning how to deal with the nuanced concerns of appropriate faculty online behavior.

In conclusion, the use of new technologies for education opens great possibilities for adapting to diverse learning populations. The possibilities and diversity of responses, however, also offer the potential for missteps and mishaps along the way. Ongoing experimentation is ever important, but it also begs the question of how to proceed in ways that best benefit our students, our faculties, and our constituents interested in favorable educational outcomes. In understanding the educational outcomes, the social domain must not be neglected, as truly educated citizens must understand how to function as members of society as well as how to be readers of great books.

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APPENDIX

Table 1

Summary Statistics and Frequencies for Respondent Sample

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age	108	20	47	26.94	7.102
Reported GPA	108	2.7	4.0	3.34	0.381

Table 2

Facebook Scenarios Depicting Fictional Faculty Behaviors*

1. After a reading an article on affirmative action, your professor requires you to post your thoughts on racism.
2. Your professor announces on the Wall that (s)he made a mistake in the assignment, and problem number 12, not number 13, is due on Monday.
3. Your professor takes a poll to determine if more students prefer the test on Tuesday or on Wednesday.
4. Your professor posts a wall message that says congratulations on being excellent students and finishing a difficult class
5. You post a message that says "End of quarter – time to party! Your professor comments on your Facebook, "I could use a break from all the grading. Where's the action?"
6. You posted that your family and friends are coming to take you out for your 21st birthday party next month. Your professor sees your Facebook profile picture, which shows you obviously drinking alcohol and being pretty tipsy. Your professor comments that you should be reported to the dean of students for underage-drinking disciplinary action.
7. You and several students have a thread of discussion going about what classes to take next quarter and who to take them from. Your professor jumps in and tells you who has a bad reputation as a professor.
8. Your professor posts a comment that your lip ring looks unprofessional.
9. Your professor posts the affirmation, "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior," with the option for you to "like" or "comment"

*Likert-scale ratings: 1=Extremely Inappropriate 7=Completely Appropriate
Scenarios were rated in conditions of 1. Openness to all contacts; and; 2. Openness to only class contacts

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Student Ratings of Each Facebook Scenario*

			Open to All		Open to Class	
Scenario	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**St.**	**Mean**	**St. Dev**
Racism Assignment	1	7	2.74	1.896	3.93	2.278
Assignment Change Announcement	1	7	4.09	2.245	4.83	2.299
Drinking Violation Comment	1	7	1.94	1.835	1.98	1.798
Party Information Request	1	7	2.56	1.940	2.69	2.143
Excellent Students Comment	1	7	4.78	2.405	5.39	2.216
Prof Reports Reputation of Other	1	7	2.09	1.754	2.13	1.686
Profs	1	7	4.67	2.162	5.20	2.086
Test Preference Poll	1	6	1.70	1.277	1.94	1.503
Lip Ring Comment	1	7	2.78	2.159	2.63	2.199
Jesus Personal Savior Statement						

* 1=Extremely Inappropriate; 7=Completely Appropriate

Table 4
Rotated Component* Matrix for Facebook Scenarios

Scenario	**Dominant Component Domain**		
	Conv	**Pers**	**Moral**
Racism Assignment	.487	.429	-.179
Assignment Change Announcement	.782	.158	.122
Drinking Violation Comment	.408	.436	-.566
Party Information Request	.202	.744	-.023
Excellent Students Comment	.799	.192	-.053
Prof Reports Reputation of Other Profs	.128	.823	.285
Test Preference Poll	.906	-.023	.204
Lip Ring Comment	.024	.742	-.069
Jesus Personal Savior Statement	.323	.208	.813

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations for Age and GPA with Principal Component Scores

	Age	GPA	More Faculty Access
Conventional PC	-0.132	-0.044	0.346**
Personal Choice PC	-0.217*	-0.021	0.412**
Moral PC	-0.050	0.049	-0.120

**p0.01; *p<0.05

Table 6
T-Test Results for Gender Differences of Each Principal Component Score

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F
Conv PC Score	Female	50	14.181	6.668	4.820*
	Male	56	15.823	5.576	
Pers PC Score	Female	50	7.669	3.456	3.766*
	Male	56	9.815	4.800	
Moral PC Score	Female	50	2.621	2.504	0.244
	Male	56	1.966	2.342	

*p<0.05

Table 7

T-Test Results for Gender Differences of Each Facebook Scenario Rating

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F
Racism Assignment	Female	52	2.27	1.573	10.732**
	Male	56	3.18	2.072	
Assignment Change	Female	50	4.28	2.365	1.627
	Male	56	3.93	2.139	
Drinking Violation	Female	50	1.64	1.367	9.785**
	Male	56	2.21	2.147	
Prof to Party Request	Female	52	2.42	1.923	0.000
	Male	56	2.68	1.964	
Excellent Student Comment	Female	52	4.35	2.520	3.520
	Male	56	5.18	2.241	
Prof Reports Reputation of Other Profs	Female	52	1.73	1.206	8.795**
	Male	56	2.43	2.096	
Test Preference Poll	Female	52	4.42	2.396	6.044*
	Male	56	4.89	1.913	
Lip Ring Comment	Female	52	1.42	.893	11.398**
	Male	56	1.96	1.513	
Jesus Comment	Female	52	3.00	2.187	0.561
	Male	56	2.57	2.131	

*p<0.05; **p<0.01