**The more I open-up, the more you “like” me:**

**Self-disclosure and Intimacy as predictors of responsiveness in closed Women’s groups on Facebook**

Fifteen years since the outbreak of Facebook, it is safe to say that online social networks have penetrated the lives of most people around the world, integrated into a wide variety of aspects of their daily life and areas of activity. As a result, we have witnessed the proliferation of studies on numerous aspects of this wide phenomena, part of which are dedicated to the existence, characteristics, and patterns of usage of closed Facebook groups. Miron and Ravid (2015) examine the privacy settings of Facebook groups in Israel, considering the issue in an educational context, rather than in the legal-ethical arena. Among the multitude of virtual communities operating in the Israeli online space, there is a prominent number of closed Facebook groups founded by women, operated by women, and targeting an exclusively female audience. Some of these closed women’s groups have tens of thousands of members. A wide scope of activities is conducted in their frameworks. Some groups are designed for members that know each other in daily life (for example, based on a shared living environment). Many other groups have members that do not know each other at all, outside of the group.

The current study focuses on closed women’s groups on Facebook, looking at two very large (more than 100k members each) Israeli groups as a case-study. The activity carried out within their framework is broad. The dynamics characterizing these groups, the kind of topics discussed within their frameworks, as well as the features of responsiveness to these posts, all indicate that we are witnessing a new social-psychological and cultural settings. In this unique environment, numerous practices of socialization, intimacy, and self-disclosure, that are not usually seen in spheres of activity among strangers, are a routine part of the overall activities, making these closed women's’ groups worth studying and understanding.

Therefore, this study wishes to identify the relationships between levels of self-disclosure expressed in the posts, levels of intimacy with regard to the type of topics raised and discussed, and the scale and nature of responsiveness to these posts.

**Theoretical Background**

**Conceptualization of a Community**

By definition, a community is a social group in which two or more people identify and interact with each other. Humans are constantly connected to groups that unite them with others who share experiences, loyalties, and interests. Group members do not give up their individuality, but at the same time see themselves as part of an “us.” The subjective and experiential component of the community is recognized by Anderson (2006) who coined the term “imagined communities.” According to Anderson, it is impossible to define a community by means of any objective and real distinction related to a connection between the individuals that comprise it. The networks that make up a community are the result of a subjective perception of individuals who see themselves as part of a community. Hence, most communities do not exist in reality, but are simply an idea around which a group of people is united.

Simmel (1903/2002) describes the abandonment of small villages and relocation to large cities in the late 19th century. This process of urbanization led to a type of alienation that did not exist among people living in small, isolated village communities. Tönnies (1957) distinguishes between two concepts that express distinct types of public spaces that developed in the late 19th century: *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. He argues that these societal models express distinct styles of relationships. *Gemeinschaft* is based on face-to-face relationships, ongoing acquaintance, and shared beliefs that create a social place where interpersonal relationships develop based on deep emotions, intimacy, fellowship, and humanity. In contrast, *gesellschaft* is based on cost-effectiveness, purposefulness, and a sense of mission.

**The Transition to Online Groups**

Rheingold (1993) coined the term “virtual community.” He describes these as a type of social group existing only the Internet. They form when enough people actively participate in public discussions and invest sufficient emotion in them that a fabric of interpersonal relationships is created in cyberspace. In this definition, Rheingold emphasizes the need for long-term interaction between people who have an emotional attachment to each other. Casual visitors are not part of the community. Wellman (1998) argues that online communities are “online social networks” and avoids the term “virtual.” In contrast to Rheingold’s (1993) concept of virtual communities, online social networks are not fundamentally different from offline communities. They function as networks of interpersonal relationships that provide mutual support, and enable an exchange of information, socialization, a sense of belonging, and social identity. In a later work, Rheingold (2000, p. 49) acknowledges that the term “virtual” may be problematic and that “Virtual communities might be real communities, they might be pseudo-communities, or they might be something entirely new in the realm of social contracts.”

The debate about virtualization characterizes dichotomies that were prevalent among researchers when the Internet entered the lives of the masses in the mid-1990s, such as dichotomies of online versus offline, and real versus virtual. However, it is possible that the difficulty in defining communities and networks is not rooted in their transition to the digital environment. Rather, it seems that the concept of community has been a topic of thought and research among social scientists in general and sociologists in particular since the early 20th century.

According to Granit and Nathan (2000), the development of online communities reflects post-modern sociological and cultural processes because they enable individuals to express their personal narrative and identity as they perceive it within a social reality that allows and accepts this without question. Boyd and Ellison (2007) offer a general definition of social networking sites as online platforms that allow people to create a public or semi-public profile, share this profile with others, and form relationships on the basis of this profile. According to Riegner (2007), a social network is a space created to connect people via web-based tools such as email, chats, and blogs. The goal of this participation is to connect with people who have similar interests, such as hobbies, networking, or business topics. Similarly, according to Pallis et al. (2011), a social network is a site where individuals meet to create relationships. Each user in the online arena creates a list of other users with whom s/he is connected and, using a variety of tools, brings them together to build a community, interact, contribute, share knowledge, and participate in a variety of activities. The functional components of online social networking are also noted by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), who describe social networking sites as applications that allow users to communicate by creating informative personal profiles, inviting friends and acquaintances to access these profiles, send email, and chat with others on the Internet. Personal profiles can contain a wide range of information, text, images, videos, audio files, and blogs.

Boyd (2011) claims that social network users see these as spaces where they may initiate and maintain social relationships with friends and acquaintances, flirt with friends of friends, and create romantic relationships. Alternatively, they may establish business relationships or discuss social and political issues. The users’ motivation is to share information with those who are interested (as well as with those who are not), and especially to see and be seen.

Online social networking platforms allow for the creation of private, intimate spaces in which Internet users can choose a precise level of personal exposure. However, members may not, in fact, have real control over the disclosure of information regarding the identity and scope of recipients.

Facebook is an online social network that provides a platform for its users to open online groups and invite other users to join them. A person opening such an online group must choose one of the privacy settings options: public, closed, or secret. Full and updated details about the privacy settings for groups are provided on Facebook’s page at https://www.facebook.com/help. It is important to note that there are many distinctions regarding participation and exposure to content, and these are frequently changed by Facebook. The company provides updates to its users, but it is not certain that all users notice subtle changes in the privacy clauses. There has been criticism of these frequent changes in relation to users’ ability to control their privacy (see for example D’Arcy & Young, 2012).

A public group is open to all Facebook users without limitations on participation or posting messages. A closed group only allows members to participate, but Facebook users who are not members can know about the group’s existence. A secret group is brought to the attention of selected users privately and only they have access to its contents.

**Self-disclosure**

Self-disclosure is expressed in a person’s willingness to reveal details relating to his or her personal situation, life events, and aspirations (Deci & Ryan, 2011). Disclosure serves a number of purposes, such as increasing mutual understanding (Laurenceau, Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 1998) and building trust between partners in a relationship (Rubin, 1975). Disclosure enables a person to recognize and integrate meaning into processes and experiences he or she has undergone (Frattaroli, 2006). Processes of self-disclosure are regulated by norms of reciprocity. There is a sense of social commitment to respond with a similar level of intimacy to self-disclosures made by others (Rotenberg & Chase, 1992). Reciprocity in self-disclosure is especially important during the early stages of a relationship and during which people are becoming acquainted.

Wallace (1999) argues that self-disclosure is an important component of online discourse. It has been found that people report a greater degree of self-disclosure in online relationships than in offline relationships (Parks & Floyd, 1996). Alongside the lack of nonverbal cues, the asynchronous nature of most social networking activities affects people’s level of intimate disclosure (Suler, 1996; Walther, 2004). One of the most attractive features of social networks is that users can share updates about their status, feelings, thoughts, and actions with friends and strangers (Jones, Millermaier, Goya-Martinez, & Schuler, 2008; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). On the other hand, public disclosure of personal information can be problematic in terms of identity theft, stalking, and harassment (Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Nosko, Wood, & Molema, 2010). Studies show that on the one hand, participants are cautious regarding their privacy and are aware of these dangers (Al-Saggaf, 2011; Boyd & Ellison 2007; Jones et al., 2008; Young, 2009). At the same time, intimate self-disclosure in cyberspace is quite common (Jones et al., 2008; Valenzuela et al., 2009) and it is highly difficult for users to refrain from sharing personal information (Edwards & Brown, 2009). It has been found that the anonymity of online social networks enables and encourages “lonely” people in particular to share intimate information (Bonetti, Campbell, & Gilmore, 2010).

The nature of social networks encourages self-disclosure (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007). For example, the Facebook status update box asking “What’s on your mind?” invites participants to share information. Social networks provide a user-friendly platform that easily allows for sharing of photographs, status updates, and other information (Schumaker & Van Der Heide, 2011).

Interestingly, it has been found that women display a higher degree of self-disclosure (Dindia & Allen, 1992), have more developed communication skills (Korkut, 2005), and are more likely to express and share their feelings and empathize with one another (Ridley, 1993). The 10th world wide web user survey conducted by the Graphic, Visualization, & Usability Center (GVU) (1999) found that women are more likely to use the Internet for educational purposes, communication, and sharing of personal information. Similarly, a comprehensive study (Weiser, 2000) shows that women use the Internet primarily to make and maintain interpersonal relationships and as a source of knowledge. In contrast, men use the Internet primarily for entertainment and pleasure. Other studies find that women are more likely than men to use the Internet primarily to create social interactions (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000, 2003)

“The profile of the most disclosive Facebook users in terms of amount, therefore, includes those who want to maintain their existing relationships, as well as those who want to get attention, perhaps because of their diminished social cohesion and agreeableness offline” (Hollenbaugh & Ferris, 2014, p. 55).

**Intimacy**

**בצהוב: מהמאמר הקודם (שם היה בהתחלה של החשיפה ולא אינטימיות בנפרד)**

According to Rheingold (1993), a new type of fascinating and meaningful relationship has developed on the Internet as a result of its limitations. This medium provides a place where people are more willing to open up and be intimately exposed than they are without computer mediation. One means of achieving a state of intimacy in interpersonal relationships is through self-disclosure. Intimacy is the capacity to share one’s happiness, excitement, longing, fears, and needs, and the to hear these emotions from others (Cassidy, 2001). This plays a significant role in social relationships (Collins & Miller, 1994). Intimacy is a dynamic, evolving process through which people learn about each other (Reis & Shaver, 1988). It has been found that sharing personal information is essential in romantic relationships and for creating intimacy between partners in a dialogue (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006). It is an important component in personality development and encourages rapport (Derlega, Winstead, Wong, & Greenspan, 1987).

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2015) the quality or condition of “being intimate”, and it includes three different meanings: (1) the state of being personally intimate; intimate friendship or acquaintance; familiar intercourse; close familiarity; an instance of this; (2) euphem. for sexual intercourse; (3) Closeness of observation, knowledge, or the like.   
 Intimacy is a concept that seems to be valued in modern society, as Chambers (2006,) explains: “The economic, cultural and political destabilization of traditional community values coincide with the ascendance of intimacy, privacy and the project of the self." (p. 14). Bauman (2003) suggests that in individualistic Western societies, people tend to feel lost, as their lives are not organized around traditional social structures (e.g., religion or community).  
 Zelizer (2009) identifies three different dimensions of intimacy: physical, informational, and emotional. Scholars (Plummer, 2003; Marar, 2012) define intimacy as related to the act of mutual sharing of inner thoughts and feelings. Marar (2012) claims that intimacy is intrinsically reciprocal as it involves knowledge of each other and mutuality.   
 Some authors contemplate that intimacy through social media ceases to be intimacy and becomes something else (e.g., Sibilia 2008; Madianou & Miller 2013). Other scholars have seen that the opinions towards digital forms of intimacy are as potentially ‘diminished and dangerous corruption[s] of the real thing’ (McGlotten 2013). Lambert (2016) suggest that people are still learning to negotiate intimacy in digital spaces. Jamieson (2012) introduces the term “practices of intimacy” to refer to “practices which enable, generate and sustain a subjective sense of closeness and being attuned and special to each other.”

**Responsiveness**

Users' behaviors in social media platforms can be divided into three levels: consuming, contributing, and creating (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). Each level demands different amount of cognitive efforts from the user. Consuming involve reading and watching without contributing to or creating contents at all. Contributing is the interactions among users and with contents, involving participation in online groups and commenting on posts. Creating involves producing and publishing content. Thus, effort from the other. users use more cognitive effort when creating a post than consuming a post. In Facebook these users' behaviors within discrete levels of engagement in which clicking 'like' is the lowest, 'share' require more cognitive effort and user commitment and at the top level the 'comment' (or creating a new post) and require the highest cognitive effort.

ממאמר הקבוצות הקודם שלנו:  
 Engagement has been conceptualized as having a behavioral and emotional structure (Jacques, Preece, & Carey, 1995). In the context of interaction between the audience and the content, Jenkins, Ford, and Green (2013) argue that engagement has benefits for both sides in the communication process, the audience and the industry. Quesenbery (2003) adds that users’ engagement in the digital environment is strongly correlated with their level of satisfaction with the technological platform. Emotional engagement involves three levels of processing. The first is the immediate and direct level, which includes positive or negative emotions (such as laughter or excitement). The second level involves deeper meta-cognitive and psychosocial processes (Frijda, 1986; Gross, 1999; Lazarus, 1991). The third level involves further reassessment of media-related experiences that are particularly meaningful in the long-term (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010).

**Research Hypotheses**

Following the literature review above three main hypotheses were formulated for this study:

H1: A positive correlation will be found between the level of Self discourse and the level of responsiveness

H2: A positive correlation will be found between the level of intimacy and the level of responsiveness

H3: Intimacy will mediate the correlation between self-disclosure and responsiveness

**Study 1**

Our first study was aimed to examine the dynamic of writing and reacting, of self-expression and responsiveness, in a large closed women group. This group is characterized by its declared orientation - sexuality and intimate relationships. Not only does its name clearly states what this orientation is all about, the “about” section, as well as recurrent comments (made by the group administrators, as well as by regular group members) trace the way for a rather homogenous type of discussion topics. We assumed that a closed group that emphasizes and encourages self-disclosures and reactions in an extremely intimate orientation, would be a natural environment to examine this study’s hypothesis.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

433 posts from this group have been coded. Most posts were personal (62.1%). 54.2% of the posts were non-anonymous in nature. The average number of comments was 81.21 (125.05), the average number of likes was 127.18 (282.11), and the average number of “special likes” (a ‘heart’ and/or one of the emoticons options ) was 70.02 (167.24). Most posts were emotional (64.1%) and most comments to them were positive (68%). Examining the Facebook profiles of all posts writers, we have found out that 81.2% of them were fully or partially closed.

**Research Variables**

**Independent variables. *Self-disclosure*.** This was measured using the Self-Disclosure Index (SDI) (Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983). SDI is a 10-item scale measuring self-disclosure in a range of personal issues (habits, feelings, emotions, relationships). Using a Likert scale ranging from 0 (not discussing the issue at all) to 4 (fully and completely discussing the issue), participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements (e.g., “Things I have done which I am proud of,” “What is important to me in life”). Internal reliability of the scale was high (α = .915).

**Mediated variables*: Level of intimacy.*** The variable was measured by classifying the post into three levels according to the content of the post - a low, a medium and a high intimacy level. A post that included technical details or advice was defined as a post with a low level of intimacy, a post that included a personal attention to the writer but not an in-depth level was defined as having a medium level of intimacy and a post that included personal information about the post writer and her life was defined as having a **high** level of intimacy.

**Dependent variable: *responsiveness.*** Based on the literature review (with a slight change to make it more relevant for this case-study), this variable has been divided into three consecutive levels: a high level of responsiveness (commenting on posts), a medium level of responsiveness (using ‘special’, emotion-expressing likes), and a low level of responsiveness (using regular likes). Each level gets its relative weighting, accordingly: 3 for comments, 2 for special likes, and 1 for regular likes.

**Results and discussion**

To examine the correlation between the level of self-disclosure and the level of responsiveness (H1) a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted and no significant correlation was found (r = .080, p > .05) (See Table 1).

To examine the correlation between the level of intimacy and the level of responsiveness (H2) a Spearman correlation analysis was conducted and a positive correlation was found (r = .445, p < .001) In other words, we have found that the higher level of intimacy a post was characterized with, the more responses, regular likes, and ‘special likes’ it would get (See Table 1).

To examine the mediating role of intimacy in the relationship between self-disclosure and responsiveness, we used Hayes’ (2018) PROCESS bootstrapping command with 5,000 iterations (model 4). The analysis treated self-disclosure as a predicting variable, intimacy as the mediator, and responsiveness as the dependent variable. Results show that the 95% confidence interval for the direct effect between self-disclosure on responsiveness did include 0 (95% CI [-145.43, 297.41] with 5,000 resamples *F* (2,385) = 2.59, p > .05, Rsq=1.3%).. However, the indirect effect of self-disclosure on responsiveness through group intimacy did not include 0 (95% CI [4.08, 180.23] with 5,000 resamples. In other words, the model indicates no direct effect of self-disclosure on responsiveness, but an indirect effect of self-disclosure on responsiveness through group intimacy (see Figure 1).

Table 1. *Correlations between study variables (N=433)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Responsiveness | Intimacy |
| Self-Disclosure | .08 | .449\*\*\* |
| Responsiveness |  | .167\*\*\* |

\*\*\*p<.001

Figure 1. *Model of Self- exposure responsiveness Significance*

\*p < .05, \*\*\*p < .0001

**Study 2**

In order to enlarge the corpus of this research, as well as to analyze the phenomenon at stake beyond the boundaries of a sharply defined women’s group, a second study has been done. In this study we examined a much larger amount of posts (1070) from another large, closed Facebook group, designated for women only. Unlike study 1, this time we deliberately picked a group with a wide-varied spectrum: all discussion topics that are related to women and/or are of interest to women, are welcome (as stated in the ‘about’ section of the group’s page). We assumed that comparatively analyzing the results of such two different groups (regarding their overall orientation) would contribute to a much better understanding of the phenomenon.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

1070 posts from a large closed women’s group on Facebook (with no clearly defined orientation for writing and discussion topics) have been coded. Most posts were personal (70.7%). Almost all posts were non-anonymous in nature (99.7%). The average number of comments was 56.12 (99.11), the average number of likes was 90.67 (274.65) and the average number of “special likes” was 46.53 (172.92). Most posts were emotional (60%) and most comments to them were positive (63.3%). Examining the Facebook profiles of all posts writers, we have found out that 88.1% of them were fully or partially closed.

**Results and discussion**

To examine the correlation between the level of self-disclosure and the level of responsiveness (H1), a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, and a positive correlation was found (r = .261, p < .001). In other words, the higher level of self-disclosure was found in the post, the more responses it would get (See Table 2).

To examine the correlation between the level of intimacy and the level of responsiveness (H2), a Spearman correlation analysis was conducted, and a positive correlation was found (r = .223, p < .001). Thus, the higher level of intimacy a post was characterized with, the more responses it would get (See Table 2).

To examine the mediating role of intimacy in the relationship between self-disclosure and responsiveness, we used Hayes’ (2018) PROCESS bootstrapping command with 5,000 iterations (model 4). The analysis treated self-disclosure as a predicting variable, intimacy as the mediator, and responsiveness as the dependent variable. Results show that the 95% confidence interval for the direct effect between self-disclosure on responsiveness did not include 0 (95% CI [301.85, 570.45] with 5,000 resamples *F* (2,904) = 40.49, p > .001, Rsq=8.2%). Moreover, the indirect effect of self-disclosure on responsiveness through group intimacy also did not include 0 (95% CI [43.17, 142.14] with 5,000 resamples. In other words, the model indicates direct effect of self-disclosure on responsiveness and an indirect effect of self-disclosure on responsiveness through group intimacy (see Figure 2).

Table 2. *Correlations between study variables (N=1070)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Responsiveness | Intimacy |
| Self-Disclosure | .336\*\*\* | .328\*\*\* |
| Responsiveness |  | .223\*\*\* |

\*\*\*p<.001

*Figure 2.* Model of Self- exposure responsiveness Significance

\*p < .05, \*\*\*p < .0001

**General Discussion**

ממצאי שני המחקרים שלפנינו מלמדים כי קיים קשר חיובי בין רמת החשיפה העצמית בכתיבת פוסטים בקבוצות הנשים הסגורות שנבחנו, לבין היקף התגובתיות ועומק ה ENGAGEMENT שלה, ביחס לאותם פוסטים, אם כי הוא מתקיים בתנאים מסוימים בלבד: בכל הנוגע לקבוצת הנשים העוסקת בנושאי שיחה כלליים, נמצא כי ככל שכותבות הפוסטים נחשפו יותר, כך עלו מספר התגובות, מספר הלייקים הרגילים, ואף מספר הלייקים המיוחדים, מביעי הרגש, להם זכו. דווקא בקבוצת הנשים המכוונת לשיח אינטימי ומיני, לא נמצא קשר שכזה. ייתכן כי הדבר נובע מהעובדה שבקבוצה בעלת אוריינטציה ברורה של שיח חושפני, עצם הבחירה לנהוג בהתאם לכללי המשחק המקובלים אינו מתגמל ביתר תגובתיות, ואילו בקבוצה המאפשרת סוגים שונים של שיח, לרבות שיח אינסטרומנטלי בנושאים לא אישיים, הבחירה לכתוב באופן חושפני נתפסת בעיני חברות הקבוצה כהזמנה לכתיבת ביטויי אמפתיה, עניין ומעורבות.

רמת האינטימיות שאפיינה את בחירת נושאי הכתיבה, נמצאה קשורה בקשר חיובי וברור לרמת התגובתיות בשני המחקרים גם יחד. ככל שעלתה רמת האינטימיות, כלומר, ככל שנושאי השיחה היו אישיים יותר, כך עלו מספר התגובות, מספר הלייקים הרגילים ומספר הלייקים מביעי הרגש. משתנה האינטימיות נמצא גם מתווך בין רמת החשיפה העצמית לרמת התגובתיות בשני סוגי הקבוצות, היינו עליה ברמת החשיפה העצמית הובילה לעלייה ברמת התגובתיות באופן בלתי ישיר, בתיווך רמת האינטימיות. במילים אחרות, כאשר רמת החשיפה העצמית עלתה סביב נושאי שיחה אישיים, זוהתה רמת התגובתיות גבוהה בשתי הקבוצות גם יחד. ממצאים אלו תואמים ממצאי מחקרים קודמים שהראו כי שיח אישי בין הצדדים יוצר אינטימיות ביניהם (Greene, Derlega, & Mathews, 2006) וכי האינטימיות היא מרכיב חשוב בשיח המעודד קרבה בין הצדדים (Derlega, Winstead, Wong, & Greenspan, 1987).

ניתוח ממצאי המחקר מלמד, בדומה למחקרים רבים אחרים בתחומים משיקים, כי בהיבטים מסוימים, דפוסי התנהגות חברתית המוכרים מהמרחב הלא מקוון, באים לידי ביטוי גם במרחב המקוון. יחד עם זאת, העובדה שגילויי אינטימיות, חשיפה עצמית ותגובות מלאות רגש ואמפטיה מתקיימים בין זרים, ללא כל מפגש פנים אל פנים מלווה, מלמדת כי בכוחו של המרחב המקוון להעשיר את עולמנו בהזדמנויות חדשות לביטוי עצמי, לחיברות ולהעצמה. במובן זה, נראה כי קבוצות הנשים הסגורות בפייסבוק עשויות לתרום תרומה ממשית לעולמן של החברות בהן.

למחקר זה מספר מגבלות. ראשית, שני הסטאדיס בדקו כל אחד רק שיח בקבוצה אחת כמקרה בחן ויכול להיות שלא מדובר במקרה מייצג ולכן יש לחקור עוד קבוצות ולבחון האם ממצאי המחקר משוחזרים ומציגים תמונה דומה. שנית, ניתוח המשתנים "רמת חשיפה אישית" ו"רמת אינטימיות" נקבע לפי החלטת החוקרים ואולי ראוי כי מחקרי המשך ינסו לפתח מדד טוב יותר למדידת משתנים אלו או לפחות יהיו מספר שופטים אשר ידרגו את המשתנים.

לסיכום, מחקר זה מנסה להבין טוב יותר את הקשר בין פתיחות השיח בקבוצות סגורות ואת השפעתו על התגובתיות של חברי הקבוצה וללמוד על המכניזם שמסביר את הקשר המתואר. במחקר נמצא כי שני משתנים משפיעים על הקשר הזה - מאפייני הקבוצה וכן רמת האינטימיות שיוצר השיח הפתוח. נראה כי ראוי שמחקר זה ישמש כמחקר גישוש ראשוני לצורך בחינה מקיפה יותר של שאלת התגובתיות בקבוצות סגורות כפונקציה של פתיחות ושיח אינטימי וממצאיו מוסיפים לספרות הקיימת בנושא בפתיחות השיח במרחב המקוון והשפעתו על הקהל.

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