Undergraduate Students and Risk-taking Behavior When Peer Influence is Present on Social Media

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Peer influence is an important area to study because it can greatly impact risk-taking in young adults. The current research evaluated peer influence and social media on risk-taking behavior. Twenty-one undergraduate students completed the Iowa Gambling Task (IGT). Prior to completion all students had their picture taken. The test group participants were told their photos would be posted to the Carroll College Facebook page along with their IGT score. Control group participants were told their photos would be used only for score reference. The IGT measures risk-taking by having participants try to gain as much money as possible after selecting cards from one of four decks. The first two decks give participants low monetary reward and a lower risk of financial penalties. The third and fourth deck give participants high monetary reward but higher risk of financial penalty. Time to complete the task, total net gain, and deck selection are measured. The goal of the research was to see if young adults would make high risk selections (high risk desk) when they were aware their peers could view their IGT scores on the Carroll College Facebook page. In contrast to our hypothesis, we found no significant effect between participants in the peer scrutiny condition compared to the control condition on the gambling task.

**GOALS OF THE STUDY**

**Hypothesis:** Riskier decisions will be made by participants under the assumption that their score will appear on social media to be viewed by their peers when compared to the group that were told only the researchers would view their scores.