Using social presence to enhance student connections
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Large & Local Context

Problem of Practice
Students have consistently asked for ways to connect with peers; feel isolated and disconnected.

Cycle Zero & One

Cycle Zero
- Typical MALM Student
  - Work/Career: ✔
  - Age: ✔
  - Demographics: ✔
- Full time employment 99%
- Salary $69,045
- 34.85 years old
- 10.5 years full-time work experience

Cycle One - Pilot Survey

Social Presence: the degree to which learners feel socially and emotionally connected with others in an online environment

Social Context
Online Communication
Professional Connection

Other Thunderbird programs have these social structures.

Program Structures
Academic Structures
Social Structures

Master of Applied Leadership and Management (MALM)

ASU Arizona State University
THUNDERBIRD School of Global Management
A unit of the Arizona State University Knowledge Enterprise

Typical MALM Student is/has:
- 99% Full time employment
- $69,045 Salary
- 34.85 years old
- 10.5 years full-time work experience

Typical General Grad Student is/has:
- ✔ Work/Career
- ✔ Age
- ✔ Demographics
- ✔ Work/Career
- ✔ Age
- ✔ Demographics

Work/Career
Age
Demographics
**Literature Review**

- Media ecology theory (MET) says you cannot escape media. It connects us all.
- Social Capital theory (SCT) says relationships can be transactional through socialization.
- Social Presence Theory (SPT) says that through SCT you start to form a presence among online communities.

**Pilot Survey results (n=17) & (n=33)**

.800 and above Cronbach’s alpha (reliability) on each subconstruct & overall. **2.85 vs. 4.95** Mean for Professional Connection (SS vs. OMGM)

**Less Variance** among OMGM students for SD’s

**Intervention & Methods**

**Research Questions:**

- How can a program implemented social structure showcasing MALM student talent, achievements, and careers **boost student attitudes** of the program?
- How and to what extent can a program implemented social structure help **enhance social presence** of students within the program?

**Action Research, Seq. Mixed Methods...**

- Semi-structured Interviews
- Focus Group
- Pre-test & post-test
- Google Analytics
- Other
- Qualitative Analysis: Kuckartz (2013) Thematic Analysis
- SPSS
- Means, Medians, Standard Deviations
- Frequency Charts
- Cronbach Alphas (reliability)
- Paired-T Test

**But Gina... how is this different than social media?**

- Talent Profile
- Optional
- Secure
- Adds to MALM profile
- Controlled
- Monthly Email
- New & Current students

**MALM Talent Community Webpage**

- **The End**

**Stronger** social presence indicators among OMGM students rather than SS students. SS Program doesn’t have social structures.

**Online Master of Global Management**

- 200+ students
- Online
- Graduate level
- In-Person Student orientation
- International trip

**Online Sociology MA Program**

- 200+ students
- Online
- Graduate level
- In-Person Student orientation
- International trip

200+ students

Online

Graduate level

In-Person Student orientation

International trip

Online Master of Global Management Online Sociology MA Program