

No Facebook for Me: Examining the Reasons People Choose Not to be on Facebook

Martin S. Fiebert

Department of Psychology, California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840, USA

Jamie Wang

Department of Psychology, California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840, USA

Christopher R. Warren

Department of Psychology, California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840, USA

ABSTRACT

For several years, research has investigated a number of variables associated with behavior on social networking and the proclivity toward its use. The present study explores some of the reasons people choose not to join one social networking site, Facebook (FB). A convenience sample consisting of 91 women and 58 men, none of whom were on FB, responded to a 13-item survey offering possible reasons for their not participating. Responses disclosed four core concerns: privacy, preference for personal interactions, superficiality of FB, and time constraints. For these reasons subjects chose either to leave or not to join FB. Age and gender were analyzed as well, illustrating minimal differences.

Keywords: Negative response to SNS, Facebook Research, SNS fatigue, impression management concern.

INTRODUCTION

Facebook is the most widely used social media. More than 1.45 billion people worldwide engage in daily use on FB; more than 241 million are active users in North America alone (Statistica, 2018). For the past several years, the Facebook Research Group at California State University, Long Beach, has examined variables in FB behaviors (e.g., Dorethy, Fiebert & Warren, 2014; Fiebert, Tilmont & Warren, 2013; Liner & Fiebert, 2017). The present investigation focuses on the reasons why individuals choose NOT to participate in FB.

Some studies have indirectly addressed this question. Two have examined the issue of “social-network fatigue,” which contributes to diminished satisfaction resulting in diminished use. (Ravindran, Kuan, Chua, & Hoe Lian, 2014; Bright, Kleiser, & Grau, 2015). In another study, Feng and Xie (2014) reported that parents’ concerns about privacy reduced their children’s use of SNS. Zhu & Bao (2017) found that subjects reduced their participation on WeChat, a Chinese social network site with more than 800 million monthly users, because of privacy and time concerns and impression management. However, no research has examined reasons why individuals refuse entirely to participate or have abandoned FB.

Data was collected before the public revelations of FB’s breach of tens of millions of their users’ personal information in mid-March, 2018 (Kirkpatrick, 2018). Therefore the information did

not affect the results of this investigation, which, in part, actually confirms at least one reason why individuals chose not to engage in FB.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred and forty-nine individuals, 91 women and 58 men, between 18 and 85 constituted the convenience sample that completed a survey on their reasons for not participating in FB. Eighty-seven subjects were under the age of thirty, twenty were between the ages of thirty and fifty, and forty-two were above the age of fifty. Subjects were obtained from among college students during Fall 2017 and winter 2018, and from among other friends, their families and acquaintances.

Instrument

A survey consisting of thirteen items rated on a seven-point Likert scale was developed to assess a range of reasons individuals might refuse to participate in social media, in this case FB (see Figure 1). Subjects also provided information on their age, gender and, in the case of stopping - the length of participation before cancelling. The survey was completed in approximately ten minutes. With regard to survey reliability, a Cronbach alpha of .708 was obtained indicating acceptable internal-consistency reliability.

RESULTS

Subjects in our sample, male and female, of all ages, chose two items as their top reasons for not participating in FB: Item 12, "I don't need validation of my actions/life with a FB 'like'" (M=6.03, SD=1.61), and item 9, "I prefer to interact with my friends face-to-face or by e-mail and not with FB" (M=5.95, SD=1.54).

The third most reason selected by subjects was, in effect, privacy in item 1, concern that others would have access their personal information (M=5.79, SD=1.69). The fourth reason was how much time FB required. Item 8, "FB is time consuming," (M=5.44, SD=1.54) and item 2, "I am too busy for FB", (M=5.26, SD=1.69).

To assess gender and age differences, a series of one way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were completed. With regard to gender, a significant difference, $F(148)=10.31$, $p=.002$ was found on item 4, which showed men more likely than women to agree with the statement "Facebook's interactions are superficial." Men were also more likely than women to agree on item 10, $F(148)=10.98$, $p=0.001$, that they don't agree with FB's terms and conditions.

With regard to age, a significant difference was found on item 6, with older subjects admitting that they were not entirely comfortable with technology, and item 7 which revealed that more younger subjects use other social media to connect with friends.

DISCUSSION

This study is the first to examine some of the reasons why individuals choose not to be on certain social networking, such as FB. The data collected illustrate individuals are primarily unmotivated toward FB use because 'likes' on social media do not appeal to them. There did not seem to be major differences across genders or ages for most items on the scale, which implies use, or non-use, is somewhat homogenous in nature.

In terms of limitations, obtaining an adequate sample was a major challenge. The initial goal was to select a sample of 200 subjects, 100 women, 100 men, of which at least 100 were above the age of fifty and 100 below the age of thirty. However, only 149 subjects were obtained.

This suggests that most people in Southern California are on FB, or that FB users only know other FB users.

Despite the difficulty in obtaining a broad sample, the data collected show that individuals, of both genders and all ages don't participate because they see FB as superficial, time-consuming, vulnerable to privacy violations, and lack the immediacy of personal interactions. It is unclear whether subjects who reject FB actually engage with their friends in more intimate and meaningful relationships. Some individuals may be social isolates or cultural outliers who reject other means of technological communication. Further study is needed to elucidate this question.

This data set, as previously mentioned, was obtained prior to the revelations of FB's violation of many of their users private information. These revelations most likely did not impact these findings. It is more likely that as technology evolves, so might the preferred method to connect with others and the concerns with doing so.

The significant findings of this study related to gender and age appear to be straightforward and understandable and suggest indirect validity for the scale's ability to assess an individual's motivation for avoiding FB. Further ways to assess the resistance to technological means of connecting to others should be explored.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to thank the following CSULB students for assistance for data collection and analysis: Eric Cortez, Chantel Hernandez, Elias Lucio, Colin Mahler, and to Dr. Margo Kasdan for editing.

References

Bright, L. F., Kleiser, S. B., & Grau, S. L. (2015), Too much Facebook? An exploratory examination of social media fatigue, *Computers in Human Behavior*, 44, 148-188.

Dorethy, M. D., Fiebert, M. S., & Warren, C. R. (2014), Examining social networking site behaviors: Photo sharing and impression management on Facebook. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(2), 11-116.

Feng, Y., & Xie, W. (2014), Teens concern for privacy when using social networking sites: An analysis of socialization agents and relationships with privacy-protecting behaviors, *Computers in Human Behavior*, 33, 153-162.

Fiebert, M. S., Tilmont, L., & Warren, C. R. (2013), It's your birthday! Greetings as a function of gender and relationship status on Facebook. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(2), 206-208.

Kirkpatrick, D. (2018), The Facebook Defect, *Time*, 191(5), 38-44.

Liner, L., & Fiebert, M. S. (2017), Facebook profile pictures: Gender differences in frequency and type of profile pictures posted within a one-year period among older adults. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 4(2), 101-104.

Ravindran, T., Kuan, Y., Chua, A., & Hoe Lian, D. G., (2014), Antecedents and effects of social networking fatigue, *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 65 (11), 2306-2320.

Statistica. Stats. Retrieved June 18, (2018), from <https://Statistica.com/247614/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users>.

Zhu, Y., & Bao, Z. (2017), The role of negative network externalities in SNS fatigue: An empirical study based on impression management concern, privacy concern, and social overload. *Data Technologies and Applications*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/DTA-09-2017-0063>.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. Facebook Research Form

Age _____ Gender M ___ F ___
 Were you ever on Facebook? Yes ___ NO ___ If yes, how long? ___
 I am not on Facebook because: _____

1: Strongly disagree	2: Moderate disagree	3: Slightly disagree	4: Neither	5: Slightly agree	6: Moderately agree	7: Strongly agree
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	------------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I do not want others to have access to my personal information.							
2	I am too busy for Facebook.							
3	A third party/authority figure(s) prevents me from being on Facebook.							
4	Facebook interactions are superficial.							
5	I am concerned information about me on Facebook could be misused.							
6	I am not technologically savvy and/or lack resources to access Facebook.							
7	I use other forms of Social media to connect with friends (e.g., Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.).							
8	Facebook is time consuming.							
9	I prefer to interact with my friends face-to-face or by e-mail and not with Facebook.							
10	I do not agree with Facebook's terms and conditions.							
11	I am uncomfortable with photographs of myself being posted by others on Facebook.							
12	I do not need validation of my actions/life with a Facebook "like".							
13	I object to Facebook's economic and political policies.							