



## Four facets of Facebook intensity – The development of the Multidimensional Facebook Intensity Scale☆☆☆



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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to create a short and valid questionnaire: the Multidimensional Facebook Intensity Scale (MFIS). In Study 1 ( $N = 512$ ), we used exploratory structural equation modeling to explore the basic dimensions of everyday Facebook use. The results suggested four factors: persistence, boredom, overuse, and self-expression. The MFIS also had good reliability in terms of internal consistency and temporal stability. In Study 2 ( $N = 566$ ), confirmatory factor analysis was conducted in order to assess the factor structure revealed in the previous study. The four-factor first-order and the second order model appeared to be adequate contrasting to the one factor model. Based on target coefficient the four-factor second-order model appears to be the most adequate. In Study 3 ( $N = 531$ ), the convergent validity of the MFIS was examined in relation to Facebook addiction, Facebook passion, Online Sociability and different personality dimensions. The MFIS can predict Facebook-related activities as liking and posting better than previous Facebook scales. The results suggest that this questionnaire is able to reliably differentiate between different aspects of Facebook use intensity.

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### 1. General introduction

People spend a lot of time on Facebook. The number of daily users is 890 million who spend 21 min on Facebook on average. From these two numbers, we can calculate that users spend 35,559 years on Facebook every day. If we paid 5 USD for 1 h of Facebook use, it would cost 1,557,500,000 USD per hour. Facebook is valuable, not only in a financial sense, but it has other more overarching values in the everyday life of the users who differ concerning how they are related to Facebook. In the present study, we intend to explore these individual differences by measuring self-reported Facebook use intensity and attitudes towards it in a more specific way than before.

Facebook use can be measured with different self-reported measures. At the dawn of Facebook research, these scales focused on the time one passed on Facebook (per day or week), the number of Facebook friends, Facebook group memberships, and some of the Facebook activities as reading and writing posts by using unidimensional measures (e.g. Bijari, Javadinia, Erfanian, Abedini, & Abassi, 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Firstly, Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) measured Facebook intensity in terms of Facebook attitudes which go beyond the above-mentioned aspects.

They intended to grasp the magnitude Facebook is integrated in respondents' everyday life (with items as "Facebook is part of my everyday activity" or "I would be sorry if Facebook shut down"). This scale has some items which are less informative eight years later in those countries where Facebook has become widespread (i.e. "I feel I am part of the Facebook community.") This scale provided the basis of many further studies (Cavallo et al., 2012; Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011; Kwan & Skoric, 2013) and several attempts were made to complement or modify it (Glynn, Huges, & Hoffman, 2012; Ross et al., 2009).

Afterwards, Joinson (2008) made a multidimensional Facebook use scale on the basis of qualitative data by using open-ended questions referring to the motivation of Facebook use. He identified seven dimensions as social connection, shared identities, photographs, content, social investigation, social network surfing, status updates. One year later, Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) investigated Facebook use by focusing on the time users spend on Facebook and concerning their activities on the site (chat, photo upload, sharing). Finally, participants of this study filled out a 54-item questionnaire referring to their last week Facebook activity. In this case the authors did not identify clearly distinctive factors concerning Facebook use.

Several questionnaires were created to measure Facebook motivations. They are mainly oriented towards why someone uses Facebook instead of measuring Facebook use intensity. Aladwani (2014) created a 34-item questionnaire which has eight factors referring to the different motivations of Facebook use. These factors were the following: connecting, sharing, relaxing, branding, organizing, monitoring,

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expressing, and learning. This comprehensive model grasps the main motivational dimensions of Facebook use. However, it did not refer to the Facebook use characteristics or Facebook attitudes directly and it had weaknesses in terms of factor structure. Ross et al. (2009) created a 28-item questionnaire which has three factors (general Facebook use, attitudes towards Facebook, online sociability) without unified response options. This scale also has methodological shortcomings. Furthermore, Mazman and Usluel (2010) created a motivational Facebook scale which basically focused on Facebook activities and its educational aspects. This scale has good factor structure, but it has a narrowed scope of the scale in terms of education.

In sum, concerning Facebook use, previously mainly unidimensional measures were implemented in research. In the field of Facebook motivation, several attempts were made in order to create a psychometrically appropriate scale which can grasp all relevant dimensions. Only a very few of them has good factor structure (Mazman & Usluel, 2010) or appropriate internal consistencies (Aladwani, 2014). However, in the case of Facebook intensity, as far as we know, there is no available multidimensional measure. The Facebook Intensity Scale (Ellison et al., 2007) was created almost a decade ago and it has been a short and appropriate measure until recently because it grasps not only the time one spends on Facebook or the number of friends but the strength of involvement in Facebook activities. However, after almost one decade it might be useful to reexamine the Facebook use intensity and focus on its multifaceted nature.

Facebook intensity can be distinguished from Facebook habits—time spent on Facebook, number of Friends, and number of group memberships—because the latter does not necessarily reflect on the emotional connectedness to Facebook use. One may spend hours on Facebook passively or one may have 4000 friends with several group memberships, but it does not necessarily highlight the given person's involvement in Facebook. Studies examining such Facebook habits may not uncover the emotional bond between the individual and Facebook (Aghazamani, 2010; Alhabash, Park, Kononova, Chiang, & Wise, 2012; Bijari et al., 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Rosen, Carrier, & Cheever, 2013; Ross et al., 2009). Therefore, we assume that the notion of Ellison et al. (2007) can uncover deeper layers of Facebook involvement and the reexamination of the facets might be relevant considering changes of Facebook and the huge number of diverse users who integrated Facebook use into their everyday life.

We distinguish Facebook intensity from motivations (Aladwani, 2014; Bijari et al., 2013; Joinson, 2008; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Pempek et al., 2009; Sheldon, 2008; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011; Tosun, 2012; Yang & Brown, 2013). Motivations mainly reflect on why one uses Facebook, while Facebook intensity grasps the level of involvement in Facebook use. It is possible that one has several motivations to use Facebook, but the given person will use it with low intensity. Furthermore, it is possible that one has a unique motivation, but the Facebook intensity will be high.

We distinguish Facebook addiction from Facebook intensity in terms of pathology: Facebook intensity is not necessarily a problematic behavior, however it is not true for Facebook addiction (Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg, & Pallesen, 2012; Masur, Reinecke, Ziegele, & Quiring, 2014). We assume that they are positively related, but supposedly, the prerequisite of Facebook addiction is high Facebook intensity, but not the other way around: Facebook addiction is not the prerequisite of Facebook intensity.

In sum, several aspects of Facebook use have been examined thoroughly. However, as it has been demonstrated, Facebook intensity goes beyond these aspects of use. It refers to the strength of involvement in the activity itself and it intends to grasp the magnitude of the integration of Facebook into one's everyday life. This construct complements the previous ones (habits, motivations, addiction). However, in the new era of Facebook—by following the footsteps of Ellison

et al.'s (2007)—it might be timely to discover the facets of Facebook intensity.

As several new features have been added and built into Facebook, more and more people find it useful to integrate it into their lives. For instance, it is possible to use Facebook as a “workplace” or as a marketing tool. The “Events” function can be used to arrange appointments, meetings, or concerts. Also, it can have relevance in education: study groups can be created to help a teacher in managing classes. Facebook has become one of the most important group organizing and maintaining platforms among co-workers, friends and those who have similar hobbies. Moreover, it could facilitate the communication between the members of formal and informal groups. Facebook users can also play games. This multifaceted usability can lead to more diverse psychological relatedness to Facebook than it was previously conceptualized by Ellison et al. (2007). Therefore, different aspects of Facebook intensity might deserve scientific investigation.

Based on previous studies, the goal of the present research was the creation of a comprehensive Multidimensional Facebook Intensity Scale (MFIS) which (a) can measure the most important facets of Facebook use, (b) which is short, and (c) which has good psychometric properties both in terms of validity, internal consistency and temporal stability.

### 1.1. Overview of the studies

In the following studies, we intended to establish the most important dimensions of normal Facebook use. In Study 1, we used exploratory structural equation modeling to identify the facets of Facebook intensity and we measured the temporal stability of the identified scales. In Study 2, we performed confirmatory factor analysis to confirm its factor structure. In Study 3, we investigated its convergent validity with other variables measuring Facebook use and basic personality traits. In Study 4 we investigated incremental validity of MFIS compared to a previous Facebook Intensity Scale regarding self-reported Facebook behaviors.

## 2. Study 1

Similar to Ellison et al. (2007), we interpret Facebook intensity—regarding all dimensions of the MFIS—as attitudes which refer to the emotional connectedness to Facebook and we intended to create such items which can reliably measure how much Facebook is integrated into the everyday activities of the given individual. We aimed to create a scale which is relevant to general Facebook users, and which does not focus on the pathologic or addiction-related aspects of Facebook use. On the basis of previous studies, we identified four main facets of Facebook use which can describe the intensity of Facebook use of a given individual.

The first factor refers to the users' *persistence to use Facebook*. Those who have high score on this dimension check Facebook before going to bed and for them Facebook is one of the most important sites on the Internet. These individuals look for Internet connection in order to access Facebook. In the case of Facebook persistence, an emotional bond is established between the given person and Facebook. We do not assume that Facebook persistence is necessarily related to very positive affects towards Facebook or that those users see Facebook use as wasting time (Giannakos, Chorianopoulos, Giotopoulos, & Vlamos, 2013). Persistence includes mainly affective and behavioral aspects. The affective dimension is related to negative feelings if Facebook is not available for the user, while checking it before going to bed or looking for Internet access for using Facebook is mainly related to the behavior dimension. We assume that persistence reflects on a solid Facebook use habit.

The second factor refers to the individual's goal to use Facebook in order to relieve *boredom*. In previous studies (e.g. Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2008; Pempek et al., 2009), fighting boredom or passing time was one of the motivations that contributed to the intensive use

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