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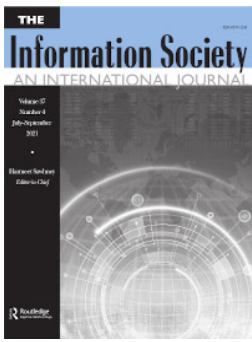
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Saying no to Facebook: Uncovering motivations to resist or reject social media platforms

Mijke Slot and Suzanna J. Oprea

Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Literature on people's motivations for using social network sites is plentiful, yet articles on people's intrinsic motivations for *resisting or rejecting* them are scarce. This article explores people's motivations for nonuse. A survey was carried out among 210 Facebook nonusers (113 resisters and 97 rejecters) between 18 and 35 years of age. Exploratory factor analysis of the survey data indicated that their motivations for nonuse can be grouped into five categories: platform specific issues, disinterest, time management issues, privacy issues, and social pressure. Overall, resisters were found to be sturdier in their (negative) beliefs than rejecters.

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Facebook; motivations; nonuse; rejecters; resisters; social networking sites

Introduction



With almost 2 billion monthly active users in 2017 and approaching 2.5 billion in the fourth quarter of 2019, the popularity of Facebook in the Global North seems overwhelming (Clement 2020a; Fiegerman 2017; Kiss 2012). In the Netherlands, a country with about 17.4 million inhabitants, Facebook is the second most used social networking site (SNS) after WhatsApp. Around 10.4 million inhabitants are active on Facebook and almost 70 percent of them are on it every day (Van der Veer, Boekee, and Hoekstra 2020).

In studies examining people's motivations for SNS use, socially-oriented motives stand out: Users want to feel connected, be updated about social events, and build and strengthen social relationships (Baumer et al. 2013; Dunne, Lawlor, and Rowley 2010; Chen 2011; Quan-Haase and Young 2010; Shao 2009). On the other hand, while Facebook is still growing, especially in Africa and Central Asia (Kassa, Cuevas, and Cuevas 2018), in many countries in the Global North, such as the Netherlands, the growth in user base has slowed down or came to a halt. Importantly, an increasing number of users are leaving Facebook (Frier 2018; Hedenrona 2013; Olson 2013), and apparently due to growing privacy concerns, aggravated by recent data-related scandals (Frier 2018;

Scott 2014; Van Hoek 2014). In particular, young Facebook users have “moved on” to SNS such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok (Gaudin 2013; Marks 2013; Olson 2013; Van der Veer, Boekee, and Hoekstra 2020).

Much less is known about the motivations of people for stopping SNS use. Only in recent years, researchers have started focusing on nonusers of media and SNS (e.g., Acar et al. 2012; Acquisti and Gross 2006; Baker and White 2011; Birnholtz 2010; Brubaker, Ananny, and Crawford 2016; Hargittai 2007; Portwood-Stacer 2013). Despite the growth in the number of studies on motivations for nonuse, the existing body of knowledge is still relatively small compared to the vast literature on motivations for use, especially in the uses and gratifications (U&G) framework. It is an important area for further investigation though, because, in addition to filling a big gap in the scholarly literature, the insights into motivations of nonusers can inform the provision of services and development of digital divide and other public policies.

To further this goal, in this article we analyze the motivations of young Dutch adults for not using Facebook. We focus on people between ages of 18 and 35 because this is the age group which uses

CONTACT Mijke Slot  slot@eshcc.eur.nl  Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture, Erasmus University Rotterdam, P.O. Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands

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Facebook the most – approximately 80 percent of them have an account (Van der Veer, Boekee, and Hoekstra 2020).

Previous research on nonuse (Wyatt 2003) has shown that people who have used a technology before and have stopped using it (rejecters) have different motivations as compared to people who choose not to use this technology in the first place (resisters). In effect, nonusers are not a homogeneous group. Accordingly, we pursue following research questions:

1. *What are the motivations of young Dutch adults for not using Facebook?*
2. *To what extent do young Dutch adults' motives for not using Facebook differ between rejecters and resisters?*

It needs to be underlined that Facebook cannot be used as a proxy for general SNS use, because it differs in functionalities and characteristics from other SNS. Yet considering the fact that Facebook is still the most dominant SNS in the Global North, it is a valuable case to study. Any generalizations from this study on Facebook to other SNSs should be made with caution, nonetheless – this study at best can serve as a starting point for research on other SNSs.

In the remainder of this article, we will first provide a literature review in which we discuss previous research on SNS nonuse, and we identify two common design flaws in these studies – they treat the nonusers as a homogeneous group and when they do identify subgroups they focus on only one of them. On our part, we develop six categories of nonuse based on the findings reported in the existing literature. Next, we discuss the methodology of our study – a survey that was filled in by a panel that is representative of the Dutch population between ages of 18 and 35. Thereafter, we discuss our findings and end with a concluding discussion.

Literature review

Over the last ten years, as noted earlier, research on nonusers of media and SNS has grown, with most studies informed by the U&G approach (e.g., Acar et al. 2012; Acquisti and Gross 2006; Baker and White 2011; Birnholtz 2010; Brubaker, Ananny, and Crawford 2016; Portwood-Stacer 2013). While this literature has provided a valuable basis to build upon, studies have two common flaws. One, many studies lack a clear definition of nonuse and treat all nonusers as one homogenous group (e.g., Acar et al. 2012;

Baker and White 2011; Guo et al. 2012), threatening the internal and external validity of the findings. Two, researchers who do distinguish different types of nonusers often focus on just one category. Birnholtz (2010), for example, analyses the motivations of youngsters who had an account but have stopped using social messaging services. Portwood-Stacer (2013) studies a nonuser group whom she calls refusers. In practice, she includes people who discursively construct themselves as abstainers – these can both be refusers and rejecters, thus, limiting generalizability.

Though the U&G approach is generally used to study people's motivations to use certain media (e.g., to go online, engage in SNS-conversations, to create user-generated content, see Dunne, Lawlor, and Rowley 2010; Quan-Haase and Young 2010; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008; Smock et al. 2011), it can also be used to explore consumers' motivations for nonuse of certain media. The U&G approach views consumers as active and conscious decision makers who are capable of attuning their media use to their psychological needs. These psychological needs can both motivate Facebook use (e.g., need for connectiveness) as well as nonuse (e.g., need for privacy). Accordingly, we now review the existing findings on nonuse.

Different types of nonusers

At first, nonuse was often related to the digital divide and the research focused on people who did not have access to the internet (Norris 2001; Rice and Katz 2003; van Dijk 2006; Wyatt 2003). However, use/nonuse is not a binary (see, for example, Baumer et al. 2013; Hargittai 2002; Livingstone and Helsper 2007; Selwyn 2004; Warschauer 2003). Rather, we can distinguish different types of nonusers.

As early as 1995, in their survey on internet adoption, Katz and Aspden found a significant portion of former users, whom they called “cyberspace dropouts” (Katz and Aspden 1998). In the field of Science and Technology Studies, nonusers have received most attention. For example, Wyatt (2003) distinguished four types of nonusers – resisters, rejecters, excluded, and expelled – in a typology based on experience (past use versus never used) and motivations (intrinsic versus extrinsic) (see Figure 1). Here intrinsic motivations relate to voluntary nonuse, and extrinsic motivations relate to in-voluntary nonuse.

Wyatt's (2003) elegant framework is for nonuse of technologies in general. Consequently, it is applicable

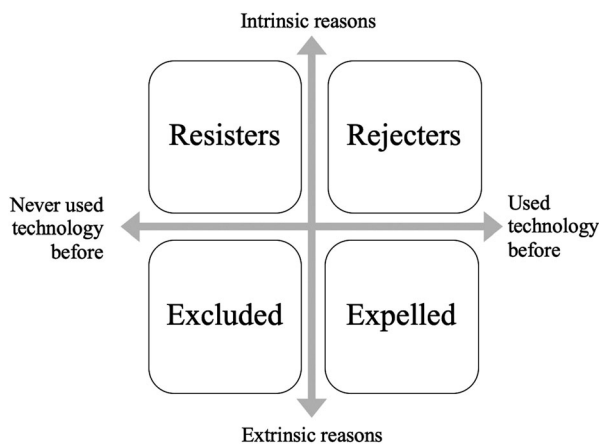


Figure 1. Four categories of nonusers (based on Wyatt 2003).

for the nonuse of SNS in general, and Facebook in particular. We discuss the four categories of nonusers in more detail below.

People who have never used Facebook can either be driven by intrinsic motivations (i.e., resisters) or extrinsic motivations (i.e., excluded). Whereas the resisters have abstained from Facebook use by choice, excluded users simply cannot gain access, e.g., they lack the financial means to afford the devices (desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone) or internet connection, they live in a country where Facebook is blocked (e.g., China, North Korea). Nonusers who have used Facebook before, but quit using it may be driven by intrinsic (i.e., rejecters) or extrinsic forces (i.e., expelled) forces. Rejecters have quit using Facebook by choice, but expelled users are banned by Facebook itself for reasons such as uploading inappropriate content.

Different motivations for nonuse

To map people's intrinsic motivations for nonuse, a systematic literature review was conducted using combinations of the following search terms: nonuse, quit(-ing), reject(ing), refuse(ing), use(ing), stop using, social media, media services, Facebook, uses and gratifications, motivations, and reasons. A total of 25 articles from media and communication and psychology were selected that either mentioned nonuse as their main focus or as a sub-theme of motivations for using social media. Since some motivations to quit or use various social media could possibly overlap, both articles about Facebook and other SNS were considered.

We focused specifically on the motivations as reported in the results sections of these articles and classified them into six categories of nonuse: the perceived costs, related to (1) privacy issues, (2)

distraction and productivity issues, and (3) platform-specific or provider-specific issues, and the perceived lack of benefits as reflected by (4) disinterest, (5) social factors and (6) outside pressure.

Motivations related to perceived high costs for users

In their study on the decline of Friendster, Garcia, Mavrodiev, and Schweitzer (2013) conclude that it is important to consider perceived costs and perceived benefits when analyzing SNS use. In effect, in the case of Facebook, if people find that the benefits are too low or the costs are too high, they will be more likely to quit Facebook or will not create an account in the first place.

Under perceived costs, we grouped privacy issues, distraction, and productivity issues, and platform-specific or provider-specific issues. All these issues require users either to give up something crucial (such as privacy or productivity at work) or require users to put in a lot of effort (e.g., learn a particular interface or adapt to a changed system).

Privacy issues. One important motivation for the nonuse of SNS is privacy-related concerns (Acar et al. 2012; Acquisti and Gross 2006; Baker and White 2011; Baumer et al. 2013; Guo et al. 2012; Stieger et al. 2013). Although the cited studies differed in focus and methodology, they all found that compared to users of SNS, nonusers are more concerned about privacy loss. Baumer et al. (2013) report that one in four SNS nonusers are worried about privacy. Acar et al. (2012) report that nonusers are hesitant to share their personal information (i.e., real name and picture) because they do not want to live a "global aquarium" and are genuinely concerned that Facebook does not respect the privacy of its users. Gross and Acquisti (2005) link privacy concerns to: (1) the hosting website (users are concerned that the site owner does not take appropriate measures to protect their privacy), (2) the contacts of the user (users are hesitant to share private information with friends or are afraid the information will end up with people in their extended network), and (3) third parties (users are afraid third parties – such as future employers – might get legal or illegal access to their information). A more recent study shows that especially in older age groups (65+), privacy concerns are a barrier to social media adoption and use (Quan-Haase and Elueze 2018).

Distraction and productivity issues. Distraction is also a motivation for nonuse (Baker and White 2011; Baumer et al. 2013; Birnholtz 2010; Brubaker, Ananny, and Crawford 2016; Guo et al. 2012; Portwood-Stacer 2013; Stieger et al. 2013). Nonusers often see Facebook as a waste of time or an undesirable disrupter of concentration (Guo et al. 2012; Stieger et al. 2013). This distraction, in turn, is often linked to a decrease in productivity (Portwood-Stacer 2013). In interviews of students who stopped using instant messaging services, Birnholtz (2010) found that they were continuously contacted by others and had a hard time refusing conversations or to end them.

Platform-specific or provider-specific issues. A complex user interface or changes in an interface can motivate to quit (Acar et al. 2012; Stieger et al. 2013). Some users find the service too commercial – has many advertisements (Acar et al. 2012). Finding a substitute that better gratifies users' needs has also been identified as an motivation for resisting or rejecting Facebook (Acar et al. 2012; Baumer et al. 2013, Guo et al. 2012; Portwood-Stacer 2013). Political motivations or ideological choices have also been found to influence the decision to actively opt out of a certain technology or service. For instance, Portwood-Stacer studied the resistance discourse among active abstainers of Facebook and found that refusing to participate on SNS is a “positional good” – it sets the nonusers apart from the users and gives them a certain status.

Motivations related to perceived lack of benefits for users

People can decide not to use Facebook because they do not see the added value of the platform, or because they already use a different platform that works for them (disinterest). When people do not have contacts to connect with on a platform such as Facebook, or when they do not receive valued updates from their connections, the benefits are too low to motivate creation or keeping of a profile (social factors). Lastly, pressure from others who are important for them in a personal or professional context could reduce people's benefits to levels that motivate nonuse (outside pressure).

Disinterest. In previous research, disinterest has been primarily found among people who have never used a SNS before (resisters). Respondents said that they do not see the point in using a SNS, because, in their experience, other ways of communicating work just as well – if not better (Baker and White 2011; Satchell and Dourish 2009). Nonusers often describe SNS

conversation as banal, uninteresting, or trivial (Baumer et al. 2013).

Social factors. Previous research identifies four different social factors for SNS nonuse. First, a lack of social connections can be a motivation not to create an account on Facebook, or to leave it (Guo et al. 2012). Second, users do not like to be pressured to communicate constantly (Stieger et al. 2013). They dislike narcissism on Facebook and do not want to engage in narcissistic behavior themselves (Portwood-Stacer 2013), or simply dislike the idea of being “rated among friends” (Baker and White 2011). Third, status updates of friends might also be a reason to quit Facebook. Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais (2009) found that the use of a SNS such as Facebook can cause envy or jealousy. Avoiding pictures or messages from contacts to save a relationship or because of a conflict or breakup is also a reason to leave (Baumer et al. 2013; Gershon 2011; Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais 2009). Fourth and last, users might be demotivated to use SNS because they do not like to engage with people they hardly know (Stieger et al. 2013).

Outside pressure. Baker and White (2011), for example, found that the disapproval of peers or parents could serve as a *secondary* reason to stop using SNSs. One-seventh of the respondents of Baumer et al. (2013) reported outside social pressure as a reason for stop using Facebook, e.g., friends did not approve Facebook use or the boss at that new job urged them to stop using Facebook. A more intimidating reason to stop using Facebook is experiencing stalking (Baumer et al. 2013). In theory these motivations could be considered external motivators, but because users still made their personal decision to quit or not use Facebook, this was still counted as an intrinsic motivator.

In this literature review we showed that in the light of the limitations of the U&G research, it is necessary to develop more nuanced categories of nonusers who are motivated by intrinsic reasons for not using Facebook. To this end, we will utilize the distinction made by Wyatt (2003) between resisters and rejecters. Further, on the basis of a systematic literature review we developed six main categories of possible motivations.

Method

Data collection and sample

Prior studies used samples which were either small (e.g., $n = 69$ in Baker and White 2011, $n = 88$ in

Acquisti and Gross 2006) or comprised of only students (e.g., Acar et al. 2012; Baker and White 2011; Birnholtz 2010), making them less representative of the population. To tackle this problem, our analyses are based on a sample of 227 nonusers aged 18 to 35 from an online panel representative of the Dutch population. We focused on this age group because among adults they are the most likely to have used Facebook and/or be familiar with Facebook through their social contacts who are using it (Clement 2020b; Van der Veer, Boekee, and Hoekstra 2020).

Participants were recruited from an online panel of SSI, a global market research company. SSI used a dedicated panel that is representative of the Dutch population between 18 and 35. First, a pretest was conducted to determine the percentage of nonusers in the population and, consequently, an estimate was made of how many people needed to be approached with the questionnaire to reach the desired 200 non-user respondents. It turned out that approximately 18 percent of the 500 panelists selected for this pretest could be considered nonusers of Facebook. After this initial phase, 1,011 panelists were invited in October 2014 to participate in the main study, consisting of an online survey created by the researchers in Qualtrics. In the eventual study, we were able to use the survey data of 227 nonusers (101 rejecters and 126 resisters) from the 1,011 respondents that filled in our questionnaire ($M_{age} = 27.83$, $SD_{age} = 5.25$; 59.0% female, 40.5% male, 0.4% other). The rejecters ($M_{age} = 26.30$, $SD_{age} = 29.03$) were slightly younger than the resisters ($M_{age} = 29.03$, $SD_{age} = 5.00$) ($t(216) = -3.94$, $p = .000$), but there was no difference in gender composition between the two groups ($\chi^2(2, n = 227) = 3.38$, $p = .185$).

All 1,011 respondents filled in questions about their demographics (gender, age, educational background), and questions about their Facebook use. The respondents who filled in that they had an account and were currently using it, were also filtered out of the sample by the research company ($n = 766$). Only respondents who (1) had an account but were not using it, (2) who did not have an account but had one before, or (3) never had an account, could continue with the survey ($n = 245$). In a follow-up step, they were asked for the reasons they did not use Facebook. The nonusers who *did not* have intrinsic reasons for quitting – for example because they were banned from Facebook or lost access to the internet, were excluded from the sample by the researchers ($n = 18$).

In the questionnaire, nonusers who *did* have intrinsic reasons for quitting were asked to write a short

description of the most important reasons why they did not use Facebook (anymore). After this they were directed toward a segment with 32 closed-ended questions. Each closed-ended question contained a statement, referring to a motive for nonuse that was derived from the motivational literature discussed earlier (see Table A.1). Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with the statements using a Likert scale ranging from 1 *Strongly disagree* to 5 *Strongly agree*. They were also given the option of refraining from providing an answer. Each time a respondent indicated *No answer*, this was coded as a missing value in the dataset.

Analytic approach

In order to address our second research question – To what extent do motives for not using Facebook differ between resisters and rejecters? – the data from the 32 closed-ended questions were analyzed in four different steps. In Step 1, one-sample t-tests were used to determine which of the 32 listed motives mattered to our participants. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 provides the means for each of the 32 motives for the combined sample (see Column 2), and the resisters and rejecters separately (see Column 5 and 8). Means that are marked with one or multiple stars are significantly different from 3, being *Neutral*. Motives with a significantly lower mean are unimportant to the respondents, whereas motives with a significantly higher mean are important to the respondents. There were 23 motives which were important to resisters, and 17 motives which were important to rejecters.

In Step 2, a factor analysis was conducted on the 23 items that were important to either the resisters or the rejecters. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy resulted in a value of .839, indicating that factor analysis was appropriate. Furthermore, with the exception of two items, all communalities were higher than .50 (most of which higher than .60), indicating that a sample size between 100 and 200 was sufficient for obtaining reliable results (MacCallum et al. 1999 cited in Field 2013) and, thus, that the sample size of 210 met the bar. The principal components analysis revealed the presence of five factors with an Eigenvalue exceeding 1 (7.181, 2.836, 1.628, 1.515, and 1.125 respectively). Each factor represents a different cluster of motives. Factor 1 clusters respondents' concerns about the Facebook platform (e.g., finding it too complex and

Table 1. Item means and one-sample t-tests (test value = 3) for the combined sample, and the resisters and rejecters separately.

	Combined sample			Resisters			Rejecters		
	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Item1	3.90***	11.23	192	4.05***	9.01	96	3.74***	6.91	95
Item2	4.30***	19.17	199	4.45***	15.69	103	4.13***	11.69	95
Item3	3.83***	9.98	190	4.08***	9.81	95	3.58***	4.81	94
Item4	3.78***	8.75	183	3.93***	6.88	89	3.64***	5.50	93
Item5	2.71**	-2.93	183	3.12	0.81	89	2.32***	-5.95	93
Item6	3.13	1.35	164	3.44**	2.95	71	2.88	-1.04	92
Item7	3.71***	8.39	169	3.97***	8.23	76	3.49***	4.26	92
Item8	3.75***	8.43	178	3.94***	7.30	84	3.59***	4.78	93
Item9	3.02	0.21	174	3.16	1.01	85	2.89	-0.78	88
Item10	2.38***	-5.85	183	2.52**	-2.96	93	2.23***	-5.72	89
Item11	2.38***	-5.69	175	2.54**	-2.78	90	2.20***	-5.72	84
Item12	2.38***	-5.56	181	2.72	-1.60	84	2.09***	-6.88	96
Item13	2.70**	-2.75	185	3.01	0.07	90	2.41***	-4.24	94
Item14	4.33***	21.10	198	4.48***	17.91	104	4.16***	12.39	93
Item15	4.09***	13.67	195	4.27***	12.44	98	3.90***	7.51	96
Item16	3.54***	5.31	181	3.58***	3.88	88	3.49***	3.60	92
Item17	3.33***	3.48	173	3.66***	4.66	79	3.05	0.43	93
Item18	3.80***	10.06	192	4.04***	9.87	99	3.54***	4.72	92
Item19	3.99***	12.49	187	4.06***	9.10	93	3.93***	8.55	93
Item20	4.03***	13.01	181	4.15***	9.80	88	3.92***	8.62	92
Item21	3.42***	4.22	177	3.67***	4.60	86	3.18	1.36	90
Item22	3.79***	9.66	187	3.91***	7.38	92	3.66***	6.29	94
Item23	2.83	-1.64	184	3.22	1.40	90	2.45***	-4.21	93
Item24	2.77*	-2.20	180	3.13	0.81	91	2.39***	-4.88	88
Item25	2.63***	-3.46	183	2.80	-1.20	89	2.47***	-3.99	93
Item26	3.68***	7.53	181	3.85***	6.56	87	3.52***	4.19	93
Item27	3.18 [†]	1.94	184	3.47***	3.55	91	2.89	-0.88	92
Item28	3.31***	3.34	171	3.60***	4.38	81	3.04	0.37	89
Item29	3.13	1.29	184	3.37*	2.53	94	2.88	-0.91	89
Item30	3.68***	7.88	196	4.01***	8.82	101	3.32**	2.67	94
Item31	4.16***	17.58	191	4.24***	12.21	96	4.08***	12.88	94
Item32	3.99***	13.14	183	4.19***	12.74	89	3.81***	7.00	93

****p* ≤ .001.

***p* ≤ .01.

**p* ≤ .05.

[†]*p* ≤ .10.

difficult to use), Factor 2 respondents' concerns about the quality of online interactions (e.g., finding them less interesting than real-life interactions), Factor 3 respondents' concerns about the different types of online interactions (e.g., disliking people's online self-representations), Factor 4 respondents' concerns about online privacy (e.g., worrying about information being shared with third parties), and Factor 5 respondents' concerns about real-life consequences of Facebook use (i.e., experiencing decreased productivity).

Table 2 contains the factor loadings as obtained with Varimax rotation. With the exception of items 2, 7, 20, and 26, all items loaded onto a single factor. Though the difference in factor loadings was substantial for Item 2 (i.e., .42 vs. .65), it was only marginal for Item 7 (.45 vs. .43), Item 20 (.54 vs. .58), and Item 26 (.50 vs. .51). For this reason, each of the latter items was assigned to the factor that matched its content best. Factor 1 was composed of items 6, 7, 27, 28, and 29; Factor 2 of items 8, 14, 19, 30, 31, and 32; Factor 3 of items 17, 18, 20, 21, and 22; Factor 4 of

items 1, 2, 3, and 4; and Factor 5 of items 15, 16, and 26. Factors 1, 2, and 4 had a very good internal consistency (.80 < α > .90; i.e., .87, .82, and .84 respectively), and Factor 3 had a respectable internal consistency (.70 < α > .80; i.e., .76). Though the internal consistency of Factor 5 was undesirable (.65 < α > .70; i.e., .67), it fell within the minimally acceptable range (DeVellis 2003). Additional analysis showed that the reliability of Factor 5 – nor that of the other four for that matter – could not be improved by deleting one of its items.

The results section shows the outcomes of Step 3 and Step 4 of the data analysis. In Step 3, one-sample t-tests were conducted to determine which of the clusters of motives mattered to the participants. Table 3 provides the means for each of the 5 Factors for the combined sample (see Column 2), and the resisters and rejecters separately (see Column 5 and 8). Means that are marked with one or multiple stars are significantly different from 3, being *Neutral*. Again, motives with a significantly lower mean are unimportant to the respondents, whereas motives with a significantly higher mean are important to the respondents. In Step 4, we conducted independent-samples t-tests to determine whether each cluster of motives mattered more to the resisters, the rejecters, or both equally.

Findings

First, we present the most important motivations indicated by the survey participants. We discuss them in order of importance because it sheds light on which motivations from literature stand out, and which are of less relevance. The motivations that were deemed important by the respondents and were underlying their reason for their nonuse were grouped into five clusters. Based on the sample means provided in Column 2 of Table 3, the order of importance is as follows: (1) Disinterest ($M=4.03$, $SD=0.80$), (2) Privacy issues ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.93$), (3) Social pressure ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.00$), (4) Time management issues ($M=3.75$, $SD=0.90$), and (5) Platform specific issues ($M=3.32$, $SD=1.09$). As can be seen, these groups are very similar to the categories that were created based on the literature. The main difference is that outside pressure is missing as a category.

In this top-5 of most important motivations, both motivations from the perceived lack of benefits and the perceived high costs category are present. Disinterest, the number one motivation, shows the importance of the lack of perceived benefits for users. This is followed by privacy and distraction and productivity motivations

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), varimax solution.

	Factor 1 <i>Platform specific issues</i>	Factor 2 <i>Disinterest</i>	Factor 3 <i>Time management issues</i>	Factor 4 <i>Privacy issues</i>	Factor 5 <i>Social pressure</i>
Item1				.76	
Item2		.42		.65	
Item3				.68	
Item4				.71	
Item6	.78				
Item7	.45				
Item8		.66		.43	
Item14		.57			
Item15					.74
Item16					.82
Item17			.65		
Item18			.64		
Item19		.40			
Item20		.54			
Item21			.58		
Item22			.69		
Item26	.50		.56		
Item27	.74				
Item28	.70				
Item29	.81				
Item30		.67			
Item31		.67			
Item32		.74			

Note. Factor loadings below .40 were suppressed and omitted from the table (cf. Bollen 1989). Items 5, 9 to 13, and 23 to 25 were excluded from the analyses as they were deemed irrelevant motivators for resisting or rejecting Facebook (i.e., mean score < 3 or *n.s.* in both column 5 and 8 of Table 1).

– both present in the perceived high costs category. The list ends with social factors – a lack of benefits for users, and platform or provider specific motivations – a high costs category. This is an indication that both categories are important drivers for users to stop using Facebook, or not creating an account.

For each motivational category, we will discuss the differences between resisters and rejecters. This will enable us to address the second research question. In general, what stood out was that all the aforementioned categories were important to both resisters and rejecters, except for the last one. Whereas concerns about the platform mattered to resisters ($M=3.53$, $SD=1.19$), they did not seem to matter to the rejecters ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.91$). This is a surprising result, since at first sight it might seem that resisters do not have adequate insights into the use of Facebook to determine (for example) whether they will be less productive once they start using it. Apparently, they do have an idea based on what they see and hear from other users.

After discussing each motivational category, we will link it to the existing literature. In the concluding section, we will reflect on our findings and discuss implications for future research.

Disinterest

The results from the independent-sample t-test revealed that issues grouped under the heading

disinterest were more prevalent among resisters ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.81$) than among rejecters ($M=3.83$, $SD=0.73$) ($t(205)=3.64$, $p=.000$). This cluster consisted of six items: Item 8, 14, 19, 30, 31, and 32. Looking at the overall sample, respondents agreed most with Item 14 “I would rather do other things” ($M=4.33$, $SD=0.89$), followed by Item 31 “Other ways of communicating work just as well or better” ($M=4.16$, $SD=0.92$), Item 19 “I am annoyed by the way in which people present and glorify themselves on Facebook” ($M=3.99$, $SD=1.09$), Item 8 “I deem the posts and information on Facebook of too low quality in general” ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.20$), and Item 30 “I do not understand the usefulness of Facebook” ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.20$).

This finding is in line with previous literature, albeit only one article (Baker and White 2011) mentions disinterest as the most important motivation. Administering a qualitative questionnaire with one open-ended question, Baker and White asked Australian students the reason for not using online social networking sites. The students primarily reported a lack of motivation – they did not see the point in using Facebook and preferred to use other means of communication (for example face-to-face communication).

There is also noteworthy difference between our results and previous literature. For example, in a study of people who have never had a SNS account, respondents explained their nonuse saying that other

Table 3. Scale means and one-sample t-tests (test value = 3) for the combined sample, and the resisters and rejecters separately.

	Combined sample			Resisters			Rejecters		
	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Factor 1 <i>Platform-specific issues</i>	3.32***	4.16	203	3.53***	4.56	104	3.09	0.96	98
Factor 2 <i>Disinterest</i>	4.03***	18.51	206	4.21***	15.61	108	3.82***	11.07	97
Factor 3 <i>Time management issues</i>	3.75***	11.84	201	3.99***	11.18	105	3.49***	5.84	95
Factor 4 <i>Privacy issues</i>	3.99***	15.28	205	4.19***	12.73	108	3.77***	9.14	96
Factor 5 <i>Social pressure</i>	3.83***	11.87	202	3.97***	9.94	105	3.67***	6.87	96

Note.

*** $p \leq .001$.

** $p \leq .01$.

* $p \leq .05$.

† $p \leq .10$.

ways of communicating work just as well (Satchell and Dourish 2009). In our research, both resisters and rejecters have indicated this to an important motivation for their nonuse.

Privacy issues

Concerns about online privacy were more prevalent among resisters ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.98$) than among rejecters ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.83$) ($t(204) = 3.31$, $p = .001$). This cluster consisted of four items: Item 1, 2, 3, and 4. Looking at the overall sample, respondents agreed most with Item 2 “I like to keep my private life to myself and do not want to share it publicly” ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.96$), subsequently followed by Item 1 “I am concerned that Facebook will not protect my personal data well enough” ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.11$), Item 3 “I am concerned that the content I share with my network will end up with people outside of my network (for example friends of my friends)” ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.15$), and Item 4 “I am concerned that other organizations, such as future employers or advertisers, will have access to my data” ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.21$).

When we compare our results with previous studies, we see important similarities. Privacy issues seem to be a driver in the decision to stop using Facebook. For instance, Baumer et al. (2013) reported that one quarter of their respondents mention privacy concerns. Also, other scholars place privacy issues in the center of their research (Acar et al. 2012; Acquisti and Gross 2006; Baker and White 2011; Baumer et al. 2013; Guo et al. 2012; Stieger et al. 2013). Using an open-ended questionnaire and qualitative analysis of the responses, Baumer et al. (2013), for example, found that privacy concerns were prominent among approximately one quarter of their respondents. Given

the specific nature of our questionnaire items, we can specifically say that the privacy concerns among our respondents relates to their reluctant attitude toward sharing their life’s details with others.

Time management issues

Concerns about time management were more prevalent among resisters ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.01$) than among rejecters ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.96$) ($t(201) = 2.20$, $p = .029$). This cluster consisted of three items: Item 15, 16, and 26. Looking at the overall sample, respondents agreed most with Item 15 “I believe that the time I spend on Facebook is at the expense of the time I want or have to spend on other important activities” ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.11$), subsequently followed by Item 26 “I believe that Facebook is at the expense of my relationships in real life” ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.22$), and Item 16 “I believe Facebook distracts me too much, which has a negative impact on my productivity (such as school or work)” ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.37$).

The time-consuming nature of SNS as a reason to quit is also in line with previous research (Baker and White 2011; Baumer et al. 2013; Stieger et al. 2013). In their qualitative research on the reasons why users left the mobile dating service Brubaker, Ananny, and Crawford (2013) found that most of their respondents considered the use of the application too time-consuming and a waste of time. Also, Facebook was seen as a waste of time or an unwanted distraction (Guo et al. 2012; Stieger et al. 2013).

This distraction is often linked to a decrease in productivity (Birnholtz 2010; Portwood-Stacer 2013). In interviews with students who had stopped using instant messaging services (IM), Birnholtz found that after using these services for a while, they found them

to be too distracting. They were continuously contacted by others and had a hard time turning down conversation overtures or to end them. In effect, they did not have control over when to engage in a conversation. Further, Birnholtz found that many users who stopped using IM found a replacement in Facebook, since it enabled them to keep in touch with a larger group of people more easily. Similarly, users might stop using Facebook and switch to other, less time-consuming ways of communicating.

Social pressure

Concerns about social pressure were more prevalent among resisters ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.92$) than among rejecters ($M=3.49$, $SD=0.82$) ($t(200) = 4.14$, $p = .000$). This cluster consisted of five items: Item 17, 18, 20, 21, and 22. Looking at the overall sample, respondents agreed most with Item 20 “I do not like to constantly evaluate and ‘like’ other people’s posts” ($M=4.03$, $SD=1.07$), subsequently followed by Item 18 “I do not want to present myself online, thus also not on Facebook” ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.10$), Item 22 “I do not like to keep in touch with people I hardly know through Facebook” ($M=3.79$, $SD=0.11$), Item 21 “I do not like to be confronted with status updates or pictures of my friends and (ex) partners” ($M=3.42$, $SD=1.31$), and Item 17 “I feel pressured to answer to messages on Facebook, while I do not want to” ($M=3.33$, $SD=1.27$).

This motivational category is also found in other research on nonuse. Stieger et al. (2013), for example, note that users might be demotivated to use Facebook because they do not like to engage with people they hardly know – fake friends. Baker and White (2011) conducted a study in which secondary school students aged 13 to 18 years who did not use SNSs filled an open-ended questionnaire. Amongst other reasons, their respondents indicated that they did not like the idea of being “rated among friends”. Also, other research shows that seeing status updates of friends or (ex)partners might cause jealousy (Baumer et al. 2013; Gershon 2011; Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais 2009). This motivation seemed to be of less importance for our respondents though.

Platform-specific issues

Concerns about the Facebook platform were more prevalent among resisters ($M=3.53$, $SD=1.19$) than among rejecters ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.91$) ($t(193.64) = 3.00$, $p = .003$). This cluster consisted of five items:

Item 6, 7, 27, 28, and 29. Looking at the overall sample, respondents agreed most with Item 7 “There are too many commercials on Facebook” ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.11$), subsequently followed by Item 28 “I do not agree with the rules of Facebook” ($M=3.31$, $SD=1.21$), Item 27 “I disapprove of the Facebook organization” ($M=3.18$, $SD=1.25$), and Item 6 “Facebook is changing its website too often, which makes it (for example) complicated for me to retrieve things” ($M=3.13$, $SD=1.21$) and Item 29 “I would like to make a statement (for example political or ideological)” ($M=3.13$, $SD=1.37$).

In previous studies on platform-specific features, Acar et al. (2012), for example, have shown that user interface can be a reason to quit. Users might find a particular website or app too complex to operate. This could also be due to design changes (Stieger et al. 2013). Users might also find the service too commercial (too many advertisements) (Acar et al. 2012), or the quality of the content too low (Guo et al. 2012). As mentioned earlier, research also shows that political motivations or ideological choices could influence the decision to actively opt out of a certain technology or service (Portwood-Stacer 2013; Satchell and Dourish 2009). In our study, political discourse is deemed less important by our respondents.

Conclusion

Since the end of 2013, the fast increase in the number of Facebook users in the Global North seems to have come to a halt, and some news outlets even report a decrease in Facebook use. This decline in Facebook use is mainly attributed to data scandals and privacy concerns in the media and in scholarly literature. However, previous research treated all nonusers as a homogenous group or only focused on one subcategory, and further only included students or was based on a small sample (i.e., $n < 100$) – raising questions about the validity of their claims. Making a distinction between resisters and rejecters of Facebook and studying the motivations of a population representative sample of the Netherlands, a country for the Global North, our study shows that previous claims about SNS nonuse need to be nuanced.

Relevance of motivations

First, the results showed that not privacy concerns, but disinterest was the most mentioned reason for abstaining from Facebook. Furthermore, not only users who never had an account on Facebook

reported that they are not interested – it is also the most important reason for former users to quit. In that respect, our study builds in a nuanced way on contributions of Satchell and Dourish (2009) and Baker and White (2011), who assume that this motivation is mainly of people who never had an account on a SNS.

Although privacy concerns are most often mentioned in the media as reasons for people quitting or abstaining from Facebook, they were not the most important consideration for our respondents. Respondents seemed not that worried about privacy-related risks such as identity theft or stalking. They mostly indicated privacy concerns on a more general level, e.g., nonusers do not want to share their private life with others. The motivation-related items in this category furthermore followed the layered definition of privacy as given by Gross and Acquisti (2005). Nonusers were concerned that Facebook will not protect their data and that they will be disclosed to other parties such as friends of their friends and external organizations.

When the third category of motivations, the time-management issues, is taken into account, it carried a strong resemblance to the distraction and productivity issues category as reported in literature. Findings here revealed similar motivational aspects as mentioned by the research of, for example, Brubaker, Ananny, and Crawford (2016), Birnholtz (2010), and Stieger et al. (2013).

The fourth category of nonuse, social pressure, seemed to be multi-layered and reflected many aspects that were also noted in the literature. What our study did not find, in contrast to the findings of Guo et al. (2012), was the lack of social connections as a motivation to quit Facebook. Nonusers in our study did not mention that they quit Facebook for lack of having enough friends (with an account) on it.

Findings reported in the literature with regard to the fifth category, bringing together platform specific issues, also needs to be looked in a nuanced way. In our study, the nonusers did not consider Facebook to be too complex. Also, nonusers did not seem to bear the heavy ideological meaning that Portwood-Stacer (2013) found in her study of critical resisters. Her respondents used nonuse as a positional good to set themselves apart from users. Our respondents were mainly put off by the number of commercials on the Facebook platform.

In the case of the last category, outside pressure, our findings did not fall in it. Both groups often not agree with the statements corresponding to this

category. The reasons for this discrepancy between theory and empirical evidence can only be speculated upon. First, outside pressure might not be experienced often. Previous research by Baker and White (2011) showed that outside pressure was only mentioned as a secondary reason for quitting SNSs in general. Also, research by Baumer et al. (2013) showed that outside pressure was not mentioned often by their respondents (one-seventh reported something related to outside pressure). Second, a related reason might be connected to the average age or general educational level of our respondents – Baker and White focused on teenagers in their research, who might be more sensitive to outside pressure by peers. Baumer et al. do not reveal the average age of their group of nonusers but do indicate that their overall respondents had an above average educational profile (over 40% consisted of people with an academic background). It might be interesting for follow-up research to further explore the influence of age and education on motivations.

Relevance of different nonuser categories

Since in literature the distinction between resisters and rejecters within the nonuser category is often not systematically made, our study provides a valuable addition to the discussion on SNS nonuse. As our study shows, we should always be mindful that there is not just one type of nonuser. Our study shows that resisters (i.e., users who never had an account on Facebook) seemed to be more extreme in their opinions and feel more concerned than the rejecters (i.e., former users of Facebook who have stopped using it). These differences were visible in all categories, showing the importance of making a distinction between different types of nonusers. Differences in intrinsic motivation for nonuse between resisters and rejecters may be culture specific, and follow-up research in other countries should be carried out to uncover these possible differences. Since adoption and use of Facebook in the Netherlands is widespread, the resisters are a minority group. They all know what Facebook is, though, and based on their answers in the survey they can also imagine what Facebook use would mean for them. Therefore, one might suggest that they are even more aware of their reasons *not* to create an account. In a country where the use of Facebook is ubiquitous, conscious choose not to be on the platform maybe fed by a more extreme opinion about the site and its (possible) impact on our social lives.

The findings from our first exploration of motivations can be used by researchers from different fields of study, such as sociology and psychology, for example, to determine how social capital is related to motivations for nonuse, whether the motivations can be related to age, or social characteristics of the user, or to determine to what extent resisting or rejecting is contributing to people's well-being.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

It is important to address four research limitations before we offer suggestions for follow-up research. First, it needs to be taken into account that the motivations to resist or reject Facebook might be different in the Global South and should be studied separately.

Second, it could be further explored whether there are differences in motivation within the age group that we studied – 18-year-olds might differ from 35-year-olds in the way they use SNS, and they might be more accustomed to newer platforms such as Instagram.

Third, in our study we broadly categorized nonusers into resisters and rejecters. While they should also be used to study nonusers in other social media platforms, the categorization of nonusers needs to be further refined.

Finally, quantitative research provides an indication of the most important motivations for nonuse. The underlying *arguments* for the various motivations are not made visible by a survey though and should be further studied in qualitative follow-up research. The motivations could be different for different SNS at different points in time.

Final reflection

Motivational categories can be grouped by the underlying characteristics costs and benefits (Garcia, Mavrodiev, and Schweitzer 2013). Both seem to be represented in the motivations put forward by our respondents. While disinterest and social pressure mainly concern the perceived lack of (social) benefits of Facebook, privacy issues, time-management issues, and platform-specific issues are connected to the perceived high costs of use. It might specifically be the latter motivations that could be more easily influenced by the SNS, since they are directed at the individual relationship a user has with the SNS, and not necessarily involve a more complicated social setting. We already see movements in this direction, such as improved privacy transparency and the possibility for

people to monitor and restrict the time they spend on social media. Nonetheless, the commercial nature of SNSs, and their revenue model built upon data collection and use, for example, by means of tracking and advertising, can be a serious impediment to improvements in these areas. SNS such as Facebook do not necessarily have their users' best interests at heart.

In addition to the perceptions on undesirable outcomes for the individual, SNS like Facebook are increasingly under scrutiny for undesirable outcomes for society. In the past SNS could claim that they were mere "neutral" platforms, however scandals like Cambridge Analytica have spiked discussions on privacy, filter bubbles, fake news, and the political use of SNS as means of propaganda. SNS need to take their responsibility as important players in the way (young) people make sense of the world. In 2014, when this survey was sent out, SNS scandals were not as prominent on the public agenda. It will be a valuable endeavor for future research to see whether recent developments have further influenced the willingness of people to use, or stop using, SNS.

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Table A.1. Items and content.

Item	Content
Item1	I'm concerned that Facebook will not protect my personal data well
Item2	I like to keep my private life to myself and don't want to share it publicly
Item3	I'm concerned that the content I share will end up with people outside of my network (e.g. friends of friends)
Item4	I'm concerned that other organizations, such as future employers or advertisers, will access my data
Item5	I find the use of Facebook too complex
Item6	Facebook is changing its website too often, which makes it complicated for me to retrieve things
Item7	There are too many commercials on Facebook
Item8	I deem the posts and information on Facebook of too low quality
Item9	I have an alternative to Facebook that works better for me
Item10	My family and/or friends do not want me to use Facebook
Item11	An organization (e.g. my employer) does not want me to use Facebook
Item12	I was intimidated through Facebook (e.g. bullied or stalked)
Item13	I'm concerned to be intimidated through Facebook (e.g. bullied or stalked)
Item14	I would rather do other things
Item15	I believe the time I spend on Facebook is at the expense of the time I want/have to spend on other activities
Item16	I believe Facebook distracts me too much, which negatively impacts my productivity (such as school/work)
Item17	I feel pressured to answer to messages on Facebook
Item18	I don't want to present myself online, thus also not on Facebook
Item19	I am annoyed by the way in which people present and glorify themselves on Facebook
Item20	I don't like to constantly evaluate and 'like' other people's posts
Item21	I don't like to be confronted with status updates or pictures of my friends and (ex)partners
Item22	I don't like to keep in touch with people I hardly know
Item23	I don't have a lot of friends
Item24	Not many of my friends have a Facebook profile
Item25	I feel social pressure from my surroundings to not use Facebook
Item26	I believe that Facebook is at the expense of my real-life relationships
Item27	I disapprove of the Facebook organization
Item28	I don't agree with the rules of Facebook
Item29	I would like to make a statement (for example political/ideological)
Item30	I don't understand the usefulness of Facebook
Item31	Other ways of communicating work just as well/better
Item32	I don't find Facebook interesting enough