Chapter 6
Happiness or Addiction:
An Example of Taiwanese College Students' Use of Facebook

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ABSTRACT

The psychological consequences of Facebook use remain controversy since most previous studies used vague and non-psychological-theory-driven indicators. To better understand the potential consequences of Facebook use, this study developed the Facebook Psychological Involvement Scale (FPIS). With 682 Taiwanese university students as subjects, this study analysed the reliability and validity of the scale using structural-equation-modeling (SEM). Results showed that FPIS had strong reliability and validity. Besides, the correlations between FPIS and internet addiction/positive-psychological states (PPS) were significantly stronger than those of usage time and number of Facebook friends, indicating that FPIS is a more effective predictor of the psychological consequences of Facebook usage.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social network sites (SNS) allow users to create an individual profile and extend their social network by connecting to old acquaintances and adding new friends (boyd & Ellison, 2008). The most popular SNS in recent years is Facebook (Hew, 2011). 89% of social network site users had a Facebook account (Brenner, 2012).

Although there have been a number of studies on the psychological consequences of Facebook usage (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008), a significant challenge currently facing researchers is how to conceptualize the measurement of Facebook usage levels (Skues, Williams, & Wise, 2012; Yu, Hsu, Yu, & Hsu, 2012). Most previous studies have considered Facebook usage time (FUT) and number of Facebook friends (NFF) to be indicators of Facebook usage levels (Orr, et al., 2009; Pollet, Roberts, & Dunbar, 2011; Ross, et al., 2009; Wilson, Fornasier, & White, 2010). However, FUT is difficult to measure accurately as it can easily be confused or combined with total time spent online. Besides, the amount of time an individual spends

on Facebook also does not indicate the frequency of usage. While Internet users often have multiple sites open simultaneously, they may simply log onto some of these sites without engaging intensively with them. As an example, let us assume that User A spends a total of 4 hours on the Internet and logs onto Facebook as soon as he turns on his computer. In reality, however, he may only check Facebook just after starting the computer and just before shutting down, without continuously using Facebook in the interim. This is to say that User A has not engaged in intensive use of Facebook. In contrast, User B may go online for only two hours but use Facebook intensively during this period of time. This user would be more involved with Facebook but technically use Facebook for a shorter amount of time. As FUT is also subject to retrospective memory and memory bias, it is difficult to measure with complete accuracy and does not indicate a user's degree of psychological involvement.

Concerning the psychological consequences of Facebook usage, we feel that the link between Facebook usage and positive psychology is worthy of further research. Integrating previous research on feelings of happiness and well-being, positive psychology comprises three categories: the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life (Seligman, 2002). A majority of previous studies have explored the link between Facebook usage and subjective well-being (SWB). However, the conventional definition of SWB relates to self-perceived satisfaction with life (Diener, 1984) and does not involve the dimension of social interaction, which is the key function of Facebook. Compared to SWB, positive psychology is broader and includes maintaining social interaction and building a sense of community; nonetheless as of yet there have been no studies on the relationship between Facebook usage and positive psychological states (PPS).

Besides the correlation between psychological involvement and internet addiction is worthy of further study. Psychological involvement in Facebook and internet addiction should be two related but different latent constructs, which indicates that they should have discriminate validity.

In summary, we studied Facebook usage motivation and personal involvement (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2008) to construct the Facebook Psychological Involvement scale (FPIS). This study then employed methods based on structural-equation-modeling (SEM) to analyze how FPIS and various Facebook usage behaviors are relevant to PPS and internet addiction. SEM embeds latent variables into factor regression and analysis and represents a statistical revolution in the social sciences. Moreover, test validation and reliability indexes can be improved using SEM-based statistical indexes (Yu et al., 2013).

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

1. The FPIS has strong reliability and validity.
2. The correlation between FPIS and PPS is higher than the correlation between Facebook usage and PPS.
3. The correlation between FPIS and internet addiction is stronger than the correlation between Facebook usage and internet addiction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Psychological Involvement in Facebook

Zaichkowsky defined personal involvement as "A person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The concept of personal was later broadly

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