Department of Informatics and Media

Self-censorship by Facebook users – exploration of social considerations

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to assess the issue of the presentation of identity based on considerations of possible negative consequences experienced by Facebook users because of their posts. In other words, the purpose of the thesis is to study the way self-censorship on Facebook affects the online presentation of the identity. In order to fulfil the purpose of this study, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted on Facebook users in order to gather useful responses that can help answering the research questions. The main research question is \textit{How is the online identity created on Facebook affected by the users’ considerations experienced before they post a content?} and the sub-question which will help answering the main question is \textit{How is the online social pressure experienced by Facebook users?}. The main results gathered by conducting the presented study were that Facebook users are controlling their online posts, by selecting them through various filters, in order to avoid misinterpretation of the message, negative feedbacks, and unpleasant situations. In addition, findings revealed that Facebook users are perceiving this platform as being superficial given the fact that individuals, when acting online, are so focused on creating a positive self presentation and attracting the appreciation of their followers, that they are distorting the offline reality, by creating an illusion in which the negative aspects of everyday life are denied. In conclusion, the generated image of identity presented on Facebook is based on a complex process of filtering the content through various possible scenarios in order to avoid unpleasant situation that the posted information could occur. Further researches conducted based on this topic could focus on issues concerning the removed content by users for various reasons, the envy between the individuals created by Facebook, issues related the users’ safety, or related to the addictiveness of the individuals to the online presence.

\textbf{Keywords:} Facebook, identity, self-censorship, negative consequences, online, social pressure.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the introduction of the topic, focusing on the presentation of the topic and on the exposition of the research problem. Thus, in the introduction are presented aspects related to the topic such as the purpose of the thesis, the relevance of the topic, as well as why is the study important for the Media and Communication studies. In addition, the theoretically developed research questions together with the hypotheses are presented and explained.

Chapter 2: Background

The second chapter is giving an overview of the general aspects which will be developed further in a more specific manner. Thus, Facebook is presented as a tool for online identity development and the development of online identity in relation with social acceptance is also exposed in the Background.

Chapter 3: Previous Research

This chapter is dedicated for the presentation of previous studies related to the main topic. Thus, there are presented previous researches conducted on self-presentation on Facebook, as well as Goffman’s (1956) theory of the presentation of self in everyday life is presented, applied in different studies related to the online identity presentation. The aim of this chapter is to localize relevant gaps in the literature in order to complete the Media and Communication studies with new researches which addresses the issue of online self presentation.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

This chapter is introducing the main theoretical concepts that will be further used in the presentation and analysis of the results. Thus, Goffman’s (1956) theory of presentation of the self in everyday life will be developed and explain, together with the strategy adopted by the researcher in order to fit this theory in the online context.

Chapter 5: Methodology

The Methodology chapter addresses the research method used in this study, together with the explanation and motivation of the choice. Study limitations are also exposed regarding the chosen research method, as well as some potential ethical issues which could have influenced the respondents’ answers. In order to get a better understanding of the further
presented results, in the Methodology chapter are also introduced the subjects’ recruitment process and data collection, as well as the structure of the interview design.

Chapter 6: Results & Analysis

This chapter addresses the main results obtained by conducting the research. Thus the results are divided and structured in chapters, as well as further analysed based on the theoretical concepts introduced in the Theoretical framework chapter (see p. 21).

Chapter 7: Concluding discussions & Further research

The last chapter of the thesis is drawing some final conclusions based on what it was presented beforehand, as well as answering the research questions and elucidating the hypotheses. Further research suggestions are finally presented.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Presentation of the research problem

Social media platforms, like Facebook, allow people to act in various roles, and all the roles are mapped onto single profiles that are observed by different people who are associated with different social roles (Trottier & Fuchs 2014, p.15). Therefore, users started to give away more conscious acts of self-staging as their presence and popularity was increasingly measured by their online manifestation (ibid.: p. 15). Dijck (2013) claims that the self became a product of marketing and promotion, users turning the online social value to real awards in the offline world (p. 202). Thus, this paper studies the online identity presentation influenced by considerations of negative consequences that Facebook users might experience because of their posts. In this respect, the concept of self-censorship on Facebook will be researched and developed. In order to conduct this research, Goffman’s (1956) theory of The presentation of self in everyday life will be developed in the online environment, adapting it to Facebook’s features. This theory is based on the idea that people are acting in their everyday life as they are on a stage, performing an act in front of others. Its compatibility with the online environment in general, and with Facebook in particular will be further discussed and developed in the Previous research chapter (see p. 15) and in the Theoretical framework chapter (see p. 21).

The research problem is based on a gap discovered in the literature. The identity development on Facebook was studied before in various ways. Thus, this topic was addressed focusing on the ways individuals are using Facebook, the ways individuals are presenting the online self, or consequences of Facebook use. However, this study will contribute to the online identity presentation, by applying Goffman’s (1956) theory on Facebook, and addressing the reasoning behind the individual’s online behaviour and online presentation of the self. More specifically, this thesis is studying the online presentation of the identity based on considerations of possible negative consequences experienced by the users because of their Facebook posts.

The topic is relevant for the Media and Communication Studies because in this thesis is researched the new media and its effect on people’s behaviour. SNSs like Facebook are also part of the new media and they are affecting the way people interact with each other. Thus, the research is covering an essential aspect of Media and Communication Studies: the use of Facebook in online identity presentation.
1.2. Theoretically developed research questions and hypotheses

Further, the hypotheses will be presented and explained, continuing with the main research question on which the structure of the thesis was constructed, as well as a complementary sub-question which will help answering the main research question.

The topic of the thesis and the research are based on two hypotheses formulated considering my own assumption. Observing the behaviour of my 409 Facebook friends, I assumed the following:

**H1: Facebook users are choosing the content posted on their profiles based on the fear of receiving negative feedbacks from their online friends.**

My assumption is that Facebook users are mostly posting online content that is generally accepted by their followers in order to avoid unpleasant situations, e.g. negative comments or misinterpretation of the post. Chin and Lu (2015) write that the identity of the person posting on Facebook positively affects readers’ willingness to click the ‘Like’ button, thus affecting their behavioural intention and actual behaviours. In addition, the two authors claim that readers’ attitudes and intention toward clicking the ‘Like’ button, as well as the actual behaviour, can be influenced by whether or not they share the Facebook poster’s opinions or whether or not they support their right to have different opinions (p. 589). Thus, I assume that Facebook users’ behaviour can be influenced by their followers and the choice of posted content could be based on the fear of negative feedbacks, or the fear of being judged by other users on the basis of the posted content. Chin and Lu (2015) found that negative and positive comments from others regarding Facebook users’ ‘Like’-clicking behaviour might affect their intention and actual ‘Liking’ behaviour in the future, i.e. a Facebook user might worry that his/her online behaviour could trigger negative comments from others, thus affecting the person’s clicking intention (p. 590). Therefore, the pressure exercised by the online audience towards someone’s posts could affect the development of the online identity. There is a potential risk that one’s online identity will be shaped by placing a great amount of emphasis on what others would like to see rather than on what the person that posts would like to show in the online environment.

**H2: The online presence of an individual enhance the feeling of social pressure.**

This hypothesis relies on the idea that when an individual is active or just present in the online environment, he might experience a social pressure besides the one naturally experienced in the offline society. Because of the fact that Facebook is almost constantly present in some people’s lives, my assumption is that the users can experience social pressure by knowing that they are easily reachable by their followers. LaMendola (2010) writes that
“[i]n an online world, social presence symbolizes the imprint of humanity and the embodied need for our kind to associate” (p. 116). However, Fox and Moreland (2014) claim that Facebook, being conveniently accessible through mobile devices makes users feel tethered to the site. In addition, because Facebook affords constant accessibility and updating, users fear missing out on social information if they do not check the site regularly (p. 173). Thus, users feel pressured by friends, relatives, and romantic partners to engage in relationship maintenance on the site. The authors also claim that connectivity can be great among friends and relatives, but it can create problems when users do not want to connect to others (ibid.: p. 173).

The research will focus on the way people use Facebook in order to present and express their identity. The focus will be especially on the selection process of the content which will be uploaded online. In order to understand this selection process, first I will address the fears and concerns Facebook users are dealing with and which could influence their future posts. Thus, the main research question is:

**RQ1: How is the online identity created on Facebook affected by the users’ considerations experienced before they post a content?**

This question’s aim is to find out if Facebook users are dealing with fears and concerns when they post something online, as well as the way these concerns can affect the online identity presentation. By answering this question, this research could bring a great contribution to the existing literature regarding the process of online identity creation by knowing how people decide on what content to post on Facebook.

**RQ2: How is the online social pressure experienced by Facebook users?**

Facebook allows users to create a profile where they can post information about themselves ranging from their occupation, their religious and political views to their favourite movies and musicians, and both users and their ‘friends’ can post web links, pictures and videos of interest. In addition, Facebook also offers the facility to send private and public messages to other users and even engage in real time instant messaging (Batey, Hughes, Lee & Rowe 2012, p. 561). Thus, I assume that all these features and possibilities for people to interact with each other can have benefits, as well as negative consequences. I would like to explore the online social pressure by answering the question introduced above.
Chapter 2: Background

2.1. Facebook as a tool for online identity development

The emergence of Internet and new media made possible the development of social media. SNS are fulfilling the need of establishing social connections between people. Fuchs and Trottier (2015) define social media and web 2.0 as terms that have been used in recent years to describe the information, communication, community, and collaboration features of blogs, SNS, video hosting platforms and sites, wikis, and microblogs (p. 113). SNS successfully integrate different media, information, and communication technologies. Firstly, users are allowed to generate profiles that display information by means which they describe themselves. Secondly, users can display and build connections between them which appears in their ‘Friends lists’. Thirdly, SNS facilitate communication between its users (Trottier & Fuchs 2014, p. 6). The same authors claim that they “are just like all computer technologies cognitive systems because they reflect and display dominant collective values of society that become objectified and confront users” (ibid.: p. 6).

Nowadays, social media is an indispensable tool in the life of virtually every person in the developed world. Facebook is the most used social media platform with 1.09 billion daily active users on average for March 2016 (http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/). “Founded in 2004, Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what’s going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them” (http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/). When people started discovering social media more, understanding the manner in which they can use it, a change in the initially envisaged aim of these SNS has occurred. Dijck (2013) writes that at the beginning, SNS like Facebook had the role of self-expression and of making connections between friends. However, gradually, users started developing a certain behaviour on social media, understanding the art of online self-promotion and they began exploiting the advantages of SNS for this end. Moreover, people developed a new level of interaction between each other. They learned how to interpret and understand their friends’ posts, as well as to create and promote content that is advantageous for their social or professional lives. Many users present a remarkable difference between one’s professional persona, addressed mainly to co-workers and employees, and one’s self-communication towards ‘friends’ (p. 200). Lauer (2011) also
claims that nowadays people use new media as a source of self-expression and pleasure in constructing identities, histories, and webs of affiliation (p. 579).

Dijck (2013) describes the new interface layout which is a vertical bar, indicating a chronological order from the present to the past. On left side of the page are available information such as events, pictures, posts to friends, updates, and other personal information (p. 204). Every piece of data uploaded on Facebook is automatically transferred onto the Timeline in order to open it in the new format. The Timeline is encouraging the user to mix the expression and the promotion of the self in a uniform format. Also, it is organized as a narrative biography, providing a chronological overview on one’s life from the moment it has joined Facebook up to present day. People can reveal standard milestones of their lives since they were born up to present (ibid.: p. 205). Thus, the platforms’ architecture changed from databases of personal information into tools for personal storytelling and narrative self-presentation (ibid.: p. 200). When Facebook has switched to Timeline, all the private information posted only for the Facebook friends have turned into ‘public’. For users who took their online profile seriously, this transfer implied a balancing act between self-expression and self-promotion. For each and every shared information one had to decide to whom to make it accessible: to friends, a wider circle or the general audience. Every classification of the public for the users’ posts implied not only a decision about the private reassembling of one’s past life, but also a conscious effort of shaping one’s public identity (Dijck 2013, p. 205). Lauer (2011) claims that ‘we give and give off more evidence about ourselves than perhaps at any previous time’ (p. 579). By building a profile, each Facebook user is able to post notes, photos, links, and videos to be shared with ‘friends’ and other members who are connected to an individual’s online social network. Also, the ‘Home Page’ allows each Facebook user to be constantly updated on the most recent postings and interactions of and among friends (Bevan et. all. 2011, p. 1828). All the presented features allow Facebook users to construct an image or identity in order to communicate to the greater online community (ibid.: p. 1828).

Brent, Davies, and Musango (2015) write that Facebook is a SNS that incorporates a vast array of features that display a rich set of network interactions and relationships. However, the connections established on Facebook are primarily present in offline, as real-life networks and relationships, although the possibility of connecting with people outside the established networks is a distinguishing feature of the platform. Essentially, offline social relationships are extending onto a virtual platform in a way that codifies, externalises and collates an individual’s family, friends, acquaintances and wider connections (p. 56). In addition to the
online connections and relationships, when communicating a message by online content, much more attention is being paid by the user. The impossibility of using body language and to observe the reactions of the interlocutor, as well as the manner in which people communicate and interact with each other in a virtual context require the post or communicated message to be written in a more complex and careful way. Resnyansky (2014) claims that a correct and successful message should fulfil the following criteria: it needs to be consistent, standard-based, complete, verifiable, timely, and situation-specific. Also, the message should be adapted for diverse audiences, locations, and circumstances, and tailored to the needs of specific communities (p. 59).

Molema, Nosko, and Wood (2009) write about issues regarding security and privacy on Facebook. Considering the vast array of information that can be shared, as well as the number of users. Thus, there are concerns that involve potential threats to personal safety from the abundance of information that is assumed to be available and accessible about an individual on their online profile. Some of the concerns mentioned by the authors are related to identity theft if users provide too much information, personal safety for vulnerable users who could be stalked, and concerns like social risk as a function of self-identification with minority or stigmatized groups (p. 407). “One of the primary goals of social networking sites is to encourage disclosure of personal information with others online” (ibid.: p. 407). These issues concerning the identity of the users might influence their posts and encourage the self-censorship. Dijck (2013) sais that people are using key terms denoting routine human social activities such as, ‘liking’, ‘connecting’ and ‘following’ (p. 202). The personal and behavioural data have changed from a product of connectedness and online sociality to a valuable resource in the exploitation of platforms (ibid.: p. 202). Nowadays adding friends no longer refers to people you know, but people you may or should know according to an algorithm’s computation (ibid.: p. 202). The ‘liking’ has turned into a provoked automated gesture that yields precious information about people’s desires and predilections. ‘Following’ is an action that discloses and connects people’s interests and allows for the detection of trends (ibid.: p. 202). In addition, researchers predict that friendship networks like Facebook will grow predominantly by adding instrumental relations rather than emotionally close friendships (Greenfield, Manago & Taylor 2012, p. 371).

Facebook in general and the way this social platform works in particular it is an important issue for this study considering that the research is conducted on Facebook users. Also, its limitations and implications in the online identity development gives the reader a better understanding of the topic and its relevance in nowadays society.
2.2. The development of online identity in relation with social acceptance

In the late 1990’s, the virtual environment began to converge with the offline one. This convergence was starting to take place and together with it, the possibility to include pictures of one’s offline life, family, and interests. This marked a big step in the evolution of the use of Internet. The online environment started to be more and more based on images and people increasingly incorporated their offline life into their online identities (Miller 2011, p. 167). Miller (2011) also claims that when people were able to upload pictures on Internet, the online environment came even closer to the offline one. The consequence of this was that ‘cyberspace’ and online identities were not perceived anymore as separate realms of existence from the material world (p. 164). There was also a move towards how Internet works and how the notions of identity were constructed, aspects that incorporated both online and offline life (ibid.: p. 164).

Zhang, Jiang and Carroll (2010) claim that ‘identity is constituted through the social or symbolic interchange, through shared values and visions, through shared heritage, and the soil becomes essentially vivid prop for this’ (p. 77). Social identity is important because, on the other hand, it enables individuals to define and locate themselves in social environments, as well as motivate and regulate their social behaviours. Another characteristic of social identity is that it helps individuals to cognitively segment and order the societal environment by systematic means. The classification of the ‘other’s’ roles help people understand the world itself, and sets a basis for future interactions (Zhang, Jiang & Carroll 2010, p. 76). A community is playing an important role in individuals’ lives because belonging to one is providing individuals with certain elements that build their identity. Community identity helps individuals define who they are and gives them guidelines for proper social interaction in the community life (ibid.: p. 77). The identity constructed on Facebook is the visual self, manifested through peer photographs and aimed at implicit identity claims. The purpose is to express an image with which the user wants to identify himself by ‘showing without telling’ (Miller 2011, p. 172) the extent and depth of social ties. The cultural self displays consumption, lifestyle, tastes, and preferences through photographs in an act of self-definition by consumerist proxy (ibid.: p. 172).

According to Miller (2011), there are four elements of online environments. Firstly, the degree of anonymity that is possible in the online environment creates a sense of freedom that is not attainable in the offline world. Secondly, people can manifest whatever identity they choose, considering that online identities are based primarily on self-descriptive text that
can be crafted in any manner desired by the user. Thirdly, multiple selves can be explored in parallel, creating an environment of identity shifting, hybridity and fluidity. And finally, the virtual world creates new possibilities for identity creation which does not exists in the offline (ibid.: p. 163). When it comes to anonymity on the Internet, Miller (2011) claims that this is not a desire of the mainstream Internet users who usually integrate aspects of offline life into the online context. He is also arguing that anonymity is not possible to a great degree in virtual environments because people tend to use clues such as style and grammar to make assumptions about others in terms of education, class or gender. Moreover, the Internet itself is a panoptic technology where anonymity is more under threat than in regular, offline daily life (ibid.: p. 166-167).

Bevan et all. (2011) claim that individuals who maintain an online identity felt more connected with their peers and possessed an overall higher level of happiness and social contentment. In addition, establishing social connections is positively linked with establishing a social identity, and Facebook users successfully do this by indicating membership of certain groups and subcultures (p. 1829). “A Facebook profile then, is the product of not only self-generated information, but of a combination of that and the inferences made from indirect sources of online communication” (Bevan et all. 2011, p. 1829). Farquhar (2013) writes that Facebook users tend to desire social acceptance and that they seek this acceptance by presenting themselves in the best light possible (p. 447). He also argues that in a desire of social acceptance, people tend to align themselves with particular groups while trying to avoid identification with other groups (ibid.: p. 448). The author writes about Facebook users exaggerating their identities towards a certain category. He explains this as being a possible attempt to ensure that the correct identity ‘interpretation’ occurs. The exaggeration can be thought of as over-emphasis on certain aspects of one’s identity to ensure correct categorization (ibid.: p. 452).

Dijck (2013) writes about social media used for self-expression, communication and self-promotion (p. 200). He claims that Facebook and LinkedIn are rather than platforms that are facilitating online identity formation, sites that creates struggles between users, employers and platform owners in order to control individuals’ online identities (201-202). The author is making a comparison between Facebook – which is a SNS that facilitate personal self-presentation (ibid.: 204) – and LinkedIn – which is a platform that helps the professional self-promotion of the individuals (ibid.: 207-208). Another aspect highlighted by Dijck (2013) is the changes made during the evolution of these social platforms, the reasons for these changes and also how people are using them nowadays (ibid.: p. 204-205). The main
questions are his article are: How are public identities shaped through platform interfaces? How do these features enable and constrain the sculpting of personal and professional persona? And what are the consequences of imposed connectivity and narrative uniformity on people’s online identities? (ibid.: 199). Frisen and Wangqvist (2015) write about the way the online context distinguishes from other everyday contexts with regard to the conditions for identity explorations, self-presentations, and social interactions. They also claim that online contexts may be described as important settings for identity development, in addition to offline contexts such as home and school (p. 139).

Greenwood (2013) investigates the links between fame appeal and participants’ Facebook and Twitter use. She claims that psychologists have noted that in addition to a growth in entertainment media content, such as reality TV shows – which focuses on personal achievement and competition – there is also an omnipresent invitation to post, tweet, and broadcast the self ‘en masse’ via personalized new technologies. This tendency of promoting the self may both reflect and fuel a societal shift toward individualistic values and a quest for fame (p. 222). The author writes about the superficial and self-oriented social media use, about the narcissistic tendencies and the apparent rise of narcissism over time, associated with both desire for fame and self-promotional social media behaviours such as posting photos and curating one’s profile. She also claims that the need of social media use is fulfilling some psychological needs, such as the desire to feel seen and valued, and to feel meaningfully embedded in social networks. These needs can also manifest in individual’s attitude about the appeal of fame – from being seen and admired, to having elite access to resources, to having the power and ability to help others (ibid.: p. 223). The article investigates how attitudes about fame are related to the frequency and nature of individuals’ Facebook and Twitter use (ibid.: p. 225).

Considering that the thesis is focusing on the social construction of the online identity and the reasons for self-censorship on Facebook, information about online identity development based on social acceptance and by mentioning certain limitations and issues that might affect Facebook users are relevant for this topic.
Chapter 3: Previous research

3.1. Self-presentation on Facebook

Chen and Marcus (2012) investigate how young adults use SNSs, and factors that might impact their self-presentation on these social platforms – such as general disclosiveness, cultural heritage and personality. They are using a non-experimental survey-based method and intend to provide insights on the individual difference variables that determine how individuals disclose information about themselves in online SNS environments such as Facebook (p. 2091). The study investigates relations between modes of self-disclosure, personality, and the self-disclosure of information in general. The findings show that individuals low on extraversion disclosed the least amount of information online, and individuals with both low on extraversion and idiocentrism disclosed the most audience-relevant information and the least honest information online (ibid.: p. 2097). Seidman (2012) studies the use of Facebook to fulfil belonging and self-presentational needs. The findings revealed that high neuroticism and low conscientiousness were the best predictors of self-presentation. Conscientious individuals are cautious in their online self-presentations. Neurotic individuals may use Facebook as a safe place for self-presentation, including hidden and ideal self-aspects. The author claims that the opportunity to express these self-aspects motivated the greater use of Facebook as a tool for personal disclosure (p. 405-406). Concluding the findings, the author argues that focusing on motivations for Facebook use, rather than frequency of specific behaviours, may aid in understanding the relationship between personality and Facebook use. In addition, in many cases, motivations mediated the relationship between personality and behaviour (ibid.: p. 406).

Joo et. all (2014) investigate possible predictors of positive self-presentation on Facebook at individual, interpersonal, and cultural levels, drawing on the conceptual frameworks of strategic self-presentation and self-enhancement (p. 414). On the individual level, they examined whether public self-consciousness would have a positive association and private self-consciousness would have a negative association with positive self-presentation. At the interpersonal level, the authors tested whether relative presence of actual friends in one’s Facebook connections would have a negative association with positive self-presentation (ibid.: p. 414). And finally, at the cultural level, the authors investigated whether North American individuals would engage in positive self-presentation to a greater extent than East
Asians. In addition, it was explored the possibility of moderating role of culture in the effects of public vs. private self-consciousness and audience composition on positive self-presentation (ibid.: p. 414). The results revealed that culture had a significant effect on positive self-presentation. The findings show that culture was a significant moderator for the relationship between public self-consciousness and positive self-presentation, and also for the relationship between actual-to-total Friends ratio and positive self-presentation (ibid.: p. 419).

Molema, Nosko, and Wood (2009) have conducted a study with a sample of 400 randomly selected personal profiles from 8 Canadian Facebook networks. The results of the descriptive summaries revealed 15 most consistently disclosed pieces of information such as described personally identifying information (i.e. birth date, gender, profile pictures), social connections (i.e. groups joined, friends available), education information, or playful communications (i.e. messages, gifts, or applications). The 15 least frequently included items were described key personal information (zip/postal code), phone numbers, home address, city or town, website, and former name. In addition, the results showed that the investigated users were also limited regarding the amount of educational experience. Thus, two important outcomes are highlighted by the authors. First, people were choosing to display approximately 25% of possible information for others to view. This indicates either a reticence to invest heavily in developing online profiles, or active decisions to limit disclosure. Second, pieces of information such as land and mobile phone numbers were not readily apparent. Therefore, users are demonstrating some discretion regarding what kinds of revealing information they are willing to share (p. 408).

Zywica and Danowski (2008) investigates two competing hypotheses from the literature – firstly, the Social Enhancement hypothesis which supports the idea that those more popular offline augment their popularity by increasing it on Facebook; and secondly, the ‘Social Compensation’ hypotheses that users attempt to increase their Facebook popularity to compensate for inadequate offline popularity (p. 1). After introducing concepts like popularity studies, personality and self-esteem, Internet use, self presentation and the ‘real me’, the authors talk about popularity indicators on Facebook. Related to this issue, they claim that a Facebook profile can contribute to a user’s online popularity. They have a great freedom to express themselves by messaging their friends, by gathering connections on Facebook which are visible for their virtual friends, by joining groups, and other features that facilitate online interactions and connections that are ranked in popularity standards (ibid.: p. 9). They found that different subtypes of users behave differently. On one hand, those who are more sociable and with high self-esteem are more popular both online and offline,
supporting the Social Enhancement hypothesis. On the other hand, those who are less sociable, have lower self-esteem, and are less popular offline, support the Social Compensation hypotheses because they are popular on Facebook and think that is important. Also, a higher percentage of low self-esteem users revealed more information about them online, they expressed more of their facets online, posted exaggerated information, and admitted to having done something to look popular on Facebook (ibid.: p. 19). Ang et. all (2010) examine the relationship of narcissism and extraversion on adolescents’ self-presentation in four Facebook profile features. Considering that Facebook afford remarkable self-presentation opportunities that fulfil the self-regulatory needs of narcissists, it is likely that such sites tremendously appeal to narcissists, whereas extraverts are likely to rely as much on other forms of social communication as they do on SNS (p. 181). The results revealed that narcissism could only account for self-presentation through self-generated content, and not through system-generated content. Also, more narcissistic adolescents select profile photos which are indeed physically appealing to self-present on Facebook (ibid.: p. 183). Ahn, Kim, and Lee (2013) explore the relationship between personality traits and self-presentation on Facebook (p. 162). The study relate narcissism to self-presentational information at Facebook Wall and self-presentational behaviours at News Feed. Thus, the results indicate that the six personality traits helped better explaining self-presentation at Facebook (ibid.: p. 166).

This subchapter addresses different perspectives approached by researchers when it comes to the self-presentation on Facebook. Thus, strongly related to the topic of the thesis – which examines self-censorship on Facebook influenced by considerations of negative consequences experienced by the users because of their posts – above are presented different approaches of this topic, emphasizing issues related to online self-presentation and censorship.
3.2. The presentation of online self in everyday life – Applications of Goffman’s (1956) theory online

Hogan (2010) claims that in the era of social media, people leave data traces which mediates the pats in their lives. Also, others are able to interact with the data left online. Thus, the world is not merely a stage but also a participatory exhibit (p. 377). The present article studies the differences between actor and artefact. The author is defining the first as performing in real time for the audience that monitors the actor, while the second is the result of a past performance and lives on for others to view on their time (ibid.: p. 377). In the article, the author presents a review of Goffman’s dramaturgical approach and its extensive use within social media studies (ibid.: p. 378). Hogan (2010) explains Goffman’s concept of ‘front region’ and ‘back stage’ as – in the front region – people are trying to present an idealized version of the self according to specific role; in the back stage – people are not trying anymore to keep up appearances (p. 378). The ‘front’ is explained by the author as a continual adjustment of self-presentation based on the presence of others (ibid.: p. 378). When it comes to Goffman’s theory applied in the online context, Hogan (2010) claims that this theory is frequently considered being useful for understanding online presentation of self (p. 379). The author claims that once a performance has been recorded, the nature of the performance has altered. It can be considered still a presentation of the self and it continues to signify an individual. However, it is not necessarily bounds the specific audience who were present when the performance took place. Instead, there is a possibility to be taken out of a situation and replayed in a completely different context (ibid.: p. 380). The conclusion of this study highlights a key distinction between exhibitions and performances. Thus, the performances are subject to continual observation and self-monitoring as the means for impression management, while exhibitions are subject to selective contributions and the role of a third party – third party being a curator that has the capacity to filter, order, and search content (ibid.: p. 384).

Farquhar (2012) examines identity presentation and interpretations using Goffman’s performance of self as a theoretical framework (p. 446). The study is focusing on the role of uploaded images in the online identity development (ibid.: p. 446). The author claims that Facebook users tend to desire social acceptance by presenting themselves in the best light possible (ibid.: p. 447). In this study, the author uses Goffman’s theory in order to answer the following research questions: How do Facebookers use imagery to convey identity? and How do Facebookers interpret imagery of other users to develop identity impressions? (ibid.: 449). The conclusions of this study show that it is rare for a picture to receive negative comments.
from other Facebook users. This lack of negative response to images is highlighted by the author as being a confirmation of a successful presentation (ibid.: p. 469). In a similar way, Papacharissi (2002) studies how individuals used home pages to present themselves online in the article called The presentation of self in virtual life: Characteristics of personal home pages (p. 643). The study presents an exploratory look at self-presentation through personal home pages (ibid.: p. 644). The author claims that Goffman (1956) conceptualized the presentation of self in everyday life as an ongoing process of information management and distinguished between the expressions one gives and the expressions given off, specifying that expressions given off are more theatrical and contextual, usually nonverbal, and presumably unintentional. The author also claims that the impressions formed of a person become a result of his/her expertise in controlling the information given and given off (ibid.: p. 644). Papacharissi (2002) argues that a Web page provides the ideal setting for this type of personal information exchange between individuals, allowing maximum control over the information disclosed. The absence of nonverbal or other social cues restricts the information exchanged to the specific facts the Web page creator wants to communicate (p. 644). The conclusions of the study are that Web authors used both direct textual expression and indirect expressive elements, including hyperlinks, images, animations, colour, and font type to construct what Goffman referred to as the ‘front’ or performance. Papacharissi (2002) defines the front as the expressive equipment employed by an individual during self-presentation, and includes a ‘setting’, or an array of background items that supply the scenery and stage used to emphasize the human actions played out. The author compares Goffman’s perspective of presentation of self with the way Web users are publishing elements to set the stage for their individual performance, creating a virtual front to define the terms of this performance (p. 654). He is also comparing the face-to-face situations when people meet for the first time and go through the social rituals of exchanging likes and dislikes, writing that similarly, in the online environment, by listing links on a Web site seems to be the equivalent of that social ritual (p. 655). The conclusion highlighted by the author at the end of this study is that personal home page authors try to present an online portrait of themselves and some are making a conscious effort to create and affiliate with online communities (ibid.: p. 657).

Giddens (2009) provides some critics related to Goffman’s (1956) work called The presentation of self in everyday life writing that the author uses anthropological method, but he is not really acting as an anthropologist (p. 290). In addition, Giddens (2009) writes that the book presumes and draws upon tacit knowledge in which the author and reader have to collaborate. “Goffman’s territory is a universal one, since much of what he has too say
applies to all cultures” (ibid.: p. 290). The author of this study also criticises Goffman’s style by calling it flat. He claims that Goffman uses many colourful quotations, selecting them plainly considering its effects on the reader (ibid.: p. 290). The style is characterized by Giddens (2009) as “dry as dust” (p. 291) and he is highlighting Goffman’s limitations when it comes to his approach of everyday life, comparing it with a theatre. Thus, the theatre is criticised as being all about make-believe and is meticulously prepared beforehand and on stage, actors present themselves as characters interacting with other players (ibid.: p. 291). Giddens (2009) highlights the concept of ‘back region’ comparing it with the kitchen in a restaurant, hidden from the view of customers, where people are able to express feelings of frustration, rage that they must carefully conceal in their front-region performances (p. 929). Goffman’s (1956) theory has been influential in almost every social science discipline, especially sociology, social psychology, anthropology, and linguistics. Its impact has extended through theatre studies and media and cultural studies (ibid.: p. 929). As a conclusion, Giddens (2009) writes that “no individual possesses more than minuscule fraction of the knowledge upon which social continuity and order depend; yet somehow it all more or less holds together, even now that our independence with others is in many mays worldwide” (p. 295).

Considering the fact that this research is based on Goffman’s (1956) theory, this subchapter presents different applications of The presentation of everyday life, as well as providing some critics regarding this popular theory among studies related to identity development.
Chapter 4: Theoretical framework

4.1. Presentation of the theoretical concepts

In the book called ‘The presentation of self in everyday life’, Goffman (1956) argues that people are presenting the self differently to others compared to how they act when alone, i.e. without a public. In order to answer the main research question: How is the online identity presentation affected by the considerations experienced by Facebook users before they post a content?, I used Goffman’s (1956) theory transposed in the online environment.

Therefore, as other researchers have previously argued (see Previous Research, p. 15), Goffman (1956) transposes the social life into a dramaturgical context, using different concepts which are replacing real situations with notions used in the world of theatre. Thus, the author is using the metaphor of stage, i.e. when an individual is presenting himself in front of others (p. 13). In this research’s case, the stage is represented by Facebook itself, this social platform being the tool used by the user in order to present themselves in front of others. The performer is the individual, i.e. when he is interacting with others (ibid.: p. 13). Transposed in the online environment, the concept performer represents the user. Performance “refers to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (ibid.: p. 13). On Facebook, the performance is represented by the user’s profile i.e. when updating information of the profile, the user is performing in front of his ‘Facebook friends’. The audience is formed by people in front of whom the performance is effectuated by the performer. Transposing this concept in the online environment, the audience is represented by the ‘Facebook followers’ which are able to react, to judge, and to interpret the performance. Goffman (1956) is using the concept front as being the part of the individual’s performance which usually functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance, i.e. when a person is surrounded by other people, he/she is acting in a different way than when she/he is alone (ibid.: p. 13). On Facebook, the front is the representation of the user as a whole. The setting is presented – geographically speaking – as the place where the performance is happening, i.e. the performers cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place, finishing their performance at the moment when they leave. Although, there are exceptional circumstances when the setting follows along with the performers (ibid.: p. 13). Online, the setting is represented by the use of Internet i.e. the performer is able to interact only if he is
connected to the Facebook account. Goffman (1956) introduces the concept manner, which refers to the stimuli that worn the audience of the interaction role the performer will expect to play in the on-coming situation (ibid.: p. 15). And finally the backstage is introduced referring to the back region defined as "a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course" (p. 69). On this concept I will focus very much in the analysis and in the online environment represents the ‘unseen’ part of the Facebook profile. More specifically, in the backstage, the user is thinking his posts, he knows the precise message behind his post, he is dealing with concerns such as the possible misinterpretation of the message, or how will the audience react on his future posts and so on. Thus, the backstage is revealing what the user is willing to communicate, what he thinks about other users, but also what is he avoiding in the online performance.

Further, I will introduce Goffman’s (1956) central ideas and prepositions on how identity is performed, integrating the presented context in the online environment and presenting its compatibility with the research conducted further in the thesis.

4.2. Reality of the performer vs reality of the audience

The reality of the performer in relation with the reality of the audience supports the idea that when an individual is interacting with other people, the performer’s beliefs are influenced by the others’. Sometimes the performer’s beliefs gets very much influenced by the interlocutor’s image of reality, thus changing his own reality according to the audience. The presentation of such a situation can be so faithful, that the audience can be totally convinced by this act, and only a specialist could have any doubts about the ‘realness’ of what is presented. However, it is very important to get back to the individual’s own beliefs in the impression of reality that he tries to generate in those among whom he finds himself. However, there can be a situation where the performer is not convinced at all by his own routine. He is able to control the whole act without even believing in it, and he doesn’t care about its audience beliefs either. This kind of performer can be called cynical (Goffman 1956, p. 10). The concept of reality of the performer versus the reality of the audience will be further developed in the research by analysing the way an individual is influenced by others’ performances. In this respect, in the chapter Results and analysis (see p. 32) it will be tested weather a Facebook user’s performance is influenced by the other users and if the audience’s opinions and expectations are influencing the performance in any way.
4.3. Social doubt and false front

The audience is aware that the impression the performer seeks to give may be true or false, genuine or spurious, valid or ‘phony’. This social doubts are very common and the observers often pay special attention to features of the performance that cannot be easily manipulated. Thus, they are free to judge the reliability of the cues that are likely to be misrepresented in the performance (Goffman 1956, p. 38). In the online environment, more specifically on Facebook, this concept will be applied in order to find out whether the followers are doubting the performer’s Facebook posts and its reflection of the offline environment. Since on Facebook it is presented an image of the offline reality, this concept will be used in the analysis of the compatibility of the online identity with the offline one and to understand how is the audience perceiving ones online identity presented on Facebook. It is very common for the audience to judge the reliability of what it is presented in the performance. It is most likely for Facebook followers to doubt the realness in the offline context, of what it is presented online.

The false front can be defined as being a representation that has a discrepancy between fostered appearances and reality. Together with this false representation of the reality, the performers found themselves in a precarious position because at any moment their performance, an event can badly contradict what they have openly declared. Such situation can bring them immediate humiliation and sometimes permanent loss of reputation (Goffman 1956, p. 38). The most important consequence of such action is that a false impression maintained by an individual at one level of his performance, is a threat to the whole relationship with the audience at any level. For a discreditable disclosure in one area of the individual’s activity will throw doubt on the many areas of his activity (ibid.: p. 42-43). This concept will be further used in order to answer the first hypothesis: Facebook users are choosing the content posted on their profiles based on the fear of negative feedbacks from their online friends. This hypothesis is supporting the idea that Facebook users are creating their online identity in a way that attracts positive feedback and appreciation. In this respect, the concept of false front will be applied in order to understand the validity of their ‘online front’ and to what extent is this representation reflecting the reality.
4.4. Stereotypical thinking

Goffman (1956), claims that there has to be some coherence between setting, appearance, and manner because these abstract standards can have different significance and the observer has to stress the similarities. The audience is able to categorise a situation based on its past experience (p. 16). In other words, the audience is set to categorize the performer’s actions based on past experiences gained by observing others. This stereotypical thinking is dividing the society in different categories and than every act is placed in one of them. The abstract stereotyped expectations tend to institutionalize a given social front. Thus, the front becomes a ‘collective representation’ and a fact in its own right (ibid.: p. 17). Thus, this concept will be adapted to the online environment by analysing whether on Facebook, the audience is categorizing the online performances and if this categorization is influencing in any way the presentation of individuals’ online identities.

4.5. Socialized performance

When in presence of others, the individual, typically uses signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that he might otherwise not use when he is alone (Goffman 1956, p. 19). The performance of a routine presents through the front some rather abstract claims upon the audience. The claims are likely to be presented to them during other routines as well. Thus, the performance is ‘socialized’ in a way and modified to fit the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented. So, the tendency in this socialization process is for the performers to offer their observers an idealized impression (ibid.: p. 22-23). Therefore, when the individual presents himself in front of others, he will "tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behaviour as a whole" (ibid.: p. 23). In the analysis this concept will help in the analysis of the online performances in order to find out how much is the online identity influenced by the other users.

4.6. Personal front

When attending a performance, it is easy to assume that the content of the presentation is an expressive extension of the character of the performer. In such cases, the function of the performance is seen in these personal terms. This limited view can obscure important differences in the function of the performance for the interaction as a whole. Often a performance serves mainly to express the characteristics of the task that is performed and not the characteristics of the performer. Further, the personal front of the performer is not
employed so much because it allows him to present himself as he would like to appear. It is commonly found that the definition of the situation projected by a particular participant is a whole projection that “is fostered and sustained by the intimate co-operation of more than one participant, and, moreover, that each member of such a troupe or cast of players may be required to appear in a different light if the team’s overall effect is to be satisfactory” (Goffman 1956, p. 47). This concept is used further in the research by analysing if the online identity it is a representation of what the performer wants to show in front of others or it is the reality. By finding out what the performers are avoiding to show online it will be highlighted the image that the performer wants to create in font of his followers.

4.7. The concept of region

The concept of region refers to any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception. They fluctuate depending on the degree to which they are bounded and also according to the media of communication to which the barriers to perception occur (Goffman 1956, p. 66). When it comes to decorum in a region, this is divided in two sub-groups: the moral one – which refers to rules regarding non-interference ad non-molestation of others, also rules about sexual propriety and so on – and the instrumental decorum – such as care of propriety, maintenance of work levels (when it is about the demand of an employer to his employees). The personal front, also called ‘manner’ is important with regard to politeness. The part called ‘appearance’ will be important with regard to decorum (ibid.: p. 67). The backstage is the place where the performer has the capacity to express something beyond itself, it is the place where the illusion and impressions are openly constructed (ibid.: 69). Given the fragility and the expressive coherence of the reality that is dramatized by a performance, there are facts that would discredit, disrupt, or make useless the impression that the performance fosters (ibid.: p. 87). And finally, the concept of region which emphasizes the limitations of the online environment which creates barriers of perceptions depending on the way the performer is communicating his act.

4.8. Motivation of the theoretical choice

As the second subchapter of the Previous research (see p. 15) have shown, Goffman’s (1956) theory of Self presentation in everyday life is highly applicable in studies related identity construction, both online and offline. In addition, in order to argue the compatibility of this theory in the online environment, I will introduce Trottier and Fuchs’ (2014) perspective regarding the identity presentation on Facebook. They claim that Facebook
allows an integrated sociality having a triple capacity of cognition, communication, and cooperation (p. 15). In other words, users are able to create content, which can receive comments from other users, and the content can be manipulated and used by the latter. All the features of cognition, communication, and cooperation presented by the two authors allow people to interact at many levels and to stimulate the offline identity in a virtual environment, i.e. social media users are able to express their preferences, ideas, thoughts, in such ways that the auditorium is able to understand people’s personalities and identities (ibid.: p. 15). Social platforms like Facebook are based on the creation of personal profiles that describe various roles of one’s life is defined by Trottier and Fuchs (2014) as being a feature called ‘integrated roles’. The public life and the private life, and also the workplace and family life have nowadays porous boundaries. Social media platforms, like Facebook, allow people to act in various roles, and all these roles are mapped onto single profiles that are observed by different people who are associated with different social roles (ibid.: p. 15).

Goffman’s (1956) theory explains the general process of the construction of identity in front of others. This theory is suitable to be employed in the analysis of the online construction of identity, as well. The reason for not relying on a more specific theory as the starting point for my research rests in the fact that Goffman’s (1956) theory covers the aspects touched upon in the study conducted for this thesis. A more specific theory would have reduced the possibility to carry out effective research on this topic.
Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter will provide an explanation of the research method used in order to conduct the study of this thesis. This will be done in four main steps. Firstly, the research method will be introduced, alongside the motivation of the choice. Secondly, the research design and process will be explained, focusing on two subchapters which will address the protocol followed in the research process, as well as the recruitment of the subjects and data collection which will be used further in the research. Thirdly, the study limitations will be presented in the end.

5.1. Research strategy: Qualitative study

A qualitative study will be used in this research, considering that "[q]ualitative research methods were developed in social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena" (Myers 1997, p. 2). The motivation for choosing a qualitative study over a quantitative research method is that "qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live" (ibid.: p. 3). Considering that the research conducted in this thesis focuses on Facebook users’ behaviour regarding the presentation of their online identity based on considerations regarding negative consequences, a qualitative research method allows the researcher to evaluate and to interpret more deeply the studied issue. Also, the chosen research method facilitates a closer connection between the researcher and the subjects in order to get a better understanding of their concerns and struggles when it comes to the analysed topic. "Qualitative research methods involve the systematic collection, organization, and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or observation. It is used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context" (Malterud 2001, p. 438). Considering the fact that the present study is willing to assess the online presentation of identity based on the fear of negative consequences experienced because of the use of Facebook, a qualitative study is an appropriate research method. As Malterud (2001) explains, the qualitative study is based on the collection, organization, and interpretation of material derived from talk or observation (p. 438).
5.2. Research design and process: Semi-structured interview

In order to gather the necessary information to conduct the present study, the interview is the most appropriate research tool because it allows the researcher to have a private and close discussion with the respondent. Given the sensitivity of the topic, focus groups were not an option as a research method for this study. Thus, the semi-structured interviews were applied instead. Paine (2015) claims that both structured and semi-structured interviews allow direct and indirect questioning (p. 457). The same author argues that the interview produces both ‘gut’ reactions and reflective responses. Being challenging, it is likely to be interesting and thus elicit thoughtful and creative responses (ibid.: p. 475). Paine (2015) writes that the interview is graphic and participatory, so that participants see the results of the interview being built up before them, thus allowing them to look back and reflect on their answers. Also, the continuous summarising of the discussion into key words by the participants themselves reduces the possibility of the researcher mis-representing the data during later analysis. And finally, allows the interview data to be transcribed in a format that correlates with the design of the tool itself. This simple layout assists review during analysis (ibid.: p. 475).

5.2.1. Semi-structured interview protocol

An interview guide was constructed (see Appendix, p. 66) and depending on the subject’s answers and attitude towards the questions, sub-questions were added for a better understanding of the interviewee’s thoughts and experiences. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, but also because of the diversity of the respondents, some were openly providing answers to the addressed questions, others proving to be more reserved – giving short and inconsistent answers. Thus, in order to balance the quality of the answers, I have added more sub-questions when the respondent was providing short and inconsistent answers.

The design of the semi-structured interviews is created in order to establish some user-patterns and to gather information which will help answering the research questions and the hypotheses. Thus, the first questions are meant to establish user-patterns regarding the reasoning and the way people are using Facebook. Thereby, I seek to obtain an in-depth understanding of the behaviour of Facebook users and how the online identity presentation can be affected by the reasoning of using this social platform. The focus is on the nature of the shared information in the online environment.

In order to answer the first hypothesis, Facebook users are choosing the content posted on their profiles based on the fear of receiving negative feedbacks from their online
friends., the respondents were asked questions regarding the process of creation of the online identity, as well as on the thoughts and motivations behind posting online content. Thus, these questions can help in understanding the ways users perceive this SNS and how they are using it for their own benefit in presenting their online identities.

Further, questions related to the fears and struggles experienced by users while active online were addressed. The responses to these questions will help answering the first research questions, namely How is the online identity created on Facebook affected by the users’ considerations experienced before they post a content?. In order to provide an answer regarding the creation of the online identity, the researcher will focus especially on what users avoid to share online and the underlying reasons of their decisions, more precisely, the fears that drive them in this regard.

In order to answer the second hypothesis, namely The online presence of an individual enhance the feeling of social pressure., the users were asked about how others’ posts can affect an individual’s online image. Also, it is of great relevance to assess how users are avoiding unpleasant situations created by other users through the content posted by the latter.

The sub-question is How is the online social pressure experienced by Facebook users? is meant to help answering the main research question by providing insights regarding the way Facebook users are experiencing their constant presence in the online environment. The focus of these questions is on the way social pressure is influencing the online presentation of the identity and implicitly the users’ posts.

5.2.2. Recruitment process and data collection

Given the objectives of the study, as well as the available time and resources, the research is focused on Facebook users. Considering that the hypotheses were formulated based on my Facebook friends’ online behaviour, but also that the topic addresses sensitive aspects of the Facebook usage, the respondents were chosen from my ‘friend list’. Thus, from a number of 409 Facebook ‘friends’, were chosen randomly – via Random.org – 20 subjects for the semi-structured interview. I considered the sample relevant considering the fact that my online connections has very different backgrounds, different cultures, and diverse professional experiences. In addition, my relationship with them differs very much, few of them being close to me but with the majority I have a very distant connection. Therefore, considering the diversity of my Facebook ‘friends’, I considered the sample relevant for my research, especially because of the sensitive interview design which requires open answers and details
from different experiences of the respondents. In order to achieve this, I considered that it is easier to obtain honest answers having previous connection with the respondents.

The respondents age is between 19-29 and the interviews were conducted both in English and Romanian, depending on the preference of the subjects. The reason for taking the interviews in two languages is because I tried to avoid the limitation of the answers because of potential language barriers. The answers were recorded, translated, and typed out in order to be used in the research. The origins of the respondents are: Romanian, Swedish, Turkish, French, and Greek. From the gender point of view, the subjects were mostly women. Approximately 6 men were questioned.

The process of conducting the interviews took approximately 1 month. Because of the geographical distances between me and the respondents, many interviews were done via Skype. The information gathering process was stopped when the information from the respondents started to overlap and it was hard to obtain original and different responses. The 20 semi-structured interviews included in the research have relevant and diversified information, which proved to be very helpful for answering the research questions and the hypotheses.

5.2.3. Ethical considerations

Important to be mentioned are some potential ethical issues, considering the fact that the respondents had previous connections with me. Thus, the answers could be influenced in this regard – in a positive way – in the cases where the respondents were more open and they were exposing their experiences without any constraints; or – in a negative way – when the respondents were sharing their experiences without developing them because they were ashamed by my presence or of the fact that we might meet again and they didn’t feel comfortable with the situation. In addition, the sensitivity of the topic might influence the respondents’ answers because during the interview I tried to find out private information about the subjects’ online behaviour and the reasoning behind their online actions. In this regard, feelings like shame, guilt, or just the need to protect their image could have influenced the respondents’ answers.

Having in mind deeper considerations regarding the human nature, as Diefenbach (2009) argues, there is a possibility that some internalised norms and cultural scripts deeply embedded in humans’ personality and attitudes are strongly influencing the worldviews, reasoning, and social actions (p. 880). “People quite often state and see as their opinion what is basically nothing more than stereotypes and statements prepared in the catacombs of
media, public and professional opinion makers or somewhere else 'in the society’” (ibid.: p. 880). Also, some potential ethical issues that can affect the results are possible because of the nature of the qualitative studies. Thus, Diefenbach (2009) claims that qualitative research and social sciences are more vulnerable to the possible downsides of subjectivity that may influence the research negatively. This is mainly due to the fact that social sciences cope with issues that are close to the researcher’s own experiences and daily life. In addition, researchers are somehow touched by the issues they are investigating (p. 877).

5.3. Study limitations

As it was mentioned before, the study is limited from the beginning because of the fact that it is not basing its conclusions on a larger sample of subjects. On one hand, this study was limited by the budget, time, and resources available to the researcher. On the other hand, it has limited by the small number of participants in the study, of the unclear geographical positioning and because the social groups, age differences and other important characteristics that are not necessarily fulfilled.

When it comes to the method used in the research, the limitation is given by the fact that the semi-structured interview implies a direct answer to the questions. Thus, respondents can be influenced by factors such as: different feelings experienced during the interview, language issues which could deteriorate the quality of the reception of information or difficulty in expressing themselves.
Chapter 6: Results & Analysis

This chapter is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of the findings. Thus, the answers of the interviews will be presented and structured in subchapters. The respondents’ answers will be transposed in the general concepts used by Goffman (1956) when he is explaining the identity presentation in front of others using the metaphor of stage. Thus, in the online environment, the Facebook is the stage, the backstage is the way the users are thinking the performance – assuming that they are hiding some information by not exposing them on Facebook and developing the concept of self-censorship based on various ‘social norms’ which might influence their freedom of expressing their honest opinion. The performance is the individual’s Facebook profile, while the audience is composed of Facebook friends. However, when the performer is watching another person’s performance, then he become the audience and the other Facebook user is the performer (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21).

6.1. Considerations before posting content on Facebook regarding possible negative consequences

This subchapter is relevant in answering both the main research question, How is the online identity created on Facebook affected by the users’ considerations experienced before they post a content? and the first hypothesis namely, Facebook users are choosing the content posted on their profiles based on the fear of receiving negative feedbacks from their online friends. Considering that in the online presentation of the self, the concept of backstage (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21) is not very obvious and easy to discover, the findings could cover some gaps found in the literature mentioned at the beginning (see Previous Research, p. 15).

6.1.1. The selection process of future posts

An important stage when it comes to the online performance of an individual is the way the act it is prepared. The general concept of setting (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21) is defined in this case by Facebook, which is different from the offline because of the lack of spontaneity, the possibility of thinking and preparing what will be performed, and also the fact that what it is performed, it is stored and available for the audience until the performer decide to remove the content. Goffman (1956) claims the performance (see Theoretical
Framework, p. 21) is finished in the moment when the performers leave the act. However, in the online case, the performance is remaining online, and this case is defined by Goffman (1956) as being an exceptional case because the setting follows along the performer (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21). Thus, this subchapter addresses topics like how are users choosing the content when post something on Facebook, what are they usually posting, and how should a content be like in order for them to post it on Facebook.

When asked about how should a picture look like in order for them to post it, most of the respondents answered that they have to look good, decent, to hide the defects, and to be perfect. The characteristics presented by the subjects are highlighting the concept of socialized performance (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24), considering that the users are trying to emphasize their qualities in order to get appreciation from their audience:

A1: "I have to look good on it, to not show defects, to be perfect".

A2: "I have to look good! Nobody wants to post a picture in which he/she is not looking good”.

Other respondents were stressing the fact that the picture that they are posting online has to be decent, and not very revealing regarding their preferences, or their private lives. This aspect can also be defined by the concept of socialized performance (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) because the performers are trying to incorporate the officially accredited values of the society in order to not be judged in a negative way:

A3: "I don’t know. Well, I have to look decent, in the way that I have to look good, but also that I don’t have a very short skirt or I am not in the swimsuit. A picture that doesn’t show a lot about me or what I like. It needs to be simple picture, that is not very invasive from this perspective”.

On the opposite side, some subjects answered that the picture has to show their character and their preferences:

A4: "First of all it has to characterize me, if it is a picture of me I have to look good, and if it is a picture with nature of something I have to like it and after I want to show others what I like”.

Another characteristic that a picture has to fulfil in order to be posted by the respondent is to be as recent as possible and maybe modified using a filter. This attitude towards the performance is interesting because, as much as the performer wants his act to present the front as accurate as possible, on the other hand, he is modifying a little bit the content in order to highlight some qualities in front of the audience, this action identifying itself with the concept of socialized performance (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24):
A5: "It has to be recent, fresh and maybe a bit modified with a filter”.
However, not all the respondents want their pictures to be perfect, some of them accurately expressing the offline front and even showing pictures of them after a surgery:
A6: "Well I think it has to be either something that it is a bit fun, or it could be like when I finished surgery I post a picture like ‘look, I look like I’ve been beaten up’, but otherwise it’s always like, the picture has to look at least decent. The quality and for the vanity of myself it has to be a nice picture of me for me to upload it”.

Another category of posts noticed among the respondents’ answers is the one in which the users wants the content to be in the interest of their followers and on which they would react. In this respect, two concepts developed by Goffman (1956) are applicable: the personal front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) because as the author claims, it allows the performer to present himself as he would like to appear:
A9: “[...] I don’t want “the light” to be on me I want the “light” to be on what I do. I post pictures from events, I attend many events, I post pictures from all kinds of meetings, I don’t know, from interesting things that my partners, collaborators and costumers are doing [...]”.
A10: ”Usually, pictures with friends, when we are having a good time, or something nice that I was visiting, or something on which people will react on [...]”.
A11: "[...] It has to be an important content for me and for the others, for example an event or something informative or it has to be a personal picture from a vacation for example. To be something more special”.

In general, users prefer to post pictures that are revealing their interests and occupations:
A12: "I post a little bit of everything. I post with my friends, with different locations, places that I like to spend my time in, or places where I am not going very often and I want to memorize them through pictures”.

When the respondents were asked about how they choose the moment to post something, what are they feeling in the moment when they post a content on Facebook, most of them said that they have to feel good and the picture has to show that and to express their feelings:
A13: "I share information that I’m interested in, that makes me feel good, for instance a picture with coffee or flowers to express good feelings. Lately I haven’t posted many pictures of myself, the frequency of my posts decreased because it seems like everybody is anti-Facebook now, but yes, if I post something it is important for
me to look good in the picture, for me to like the picture, and to express good feelings”.

The latest answer (A13) is revealing the fact that some users are considering that Facebook is not that popular anymore, and this fact makes them limiting their posts, especially when they are present in the picture. Thus, the performer is limiting his performance because of the social pressure which make the individuals to follow some social norms depending on what it is popular and in trend and what is not socially accepted anymore.

This subchapter gives an overview regarding users’ habits and behaviour online, as well as how they are developing their online identity. Moreover, it gives an understanding of the post ‘behind the scene’, respondents explaining the reasoning behind the posted content. Analysing the findings, the struggles and thoughts from the backstage (see Theoretical Framework, p. 27) are revealed and explained.

6.1.2. Content that users avoid to post on Facebook

There is a category of content that users are avoiding to post on Facebook for various reasons. This chapter addresses the selection of the future posts which is also happening in the backstage (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21) where the performer is preparing his online performance. Also, since Facebook is a SNS which allow the audience to contribute to an individual’s performance through pictures in which they can tag someone, or comments that can include a person, this chapter deals with these situations as well, analysing the way the respondents are controlling others’ contribution to their performance.

Firstly, it will be presented the situations and posts that users don’t like to post on Facebook and the reasoning behind it. As many respondents have claimed, the way an individual is performing in the online environment is very important because of the freedom of the audience to interpret a Facebook post. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the performer has to carefully choose in backstage (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21) what it is going to be presented in the front. Thus, most of the respondents said that they don’t like to post pictures from parties, especially if in the photo appears bottle of alcohol or other elements that could harm their image:

**A1:** "Mostly pictures from parties and stuff, where you can see 1000 of bottles and stuff, like people looking at these pictures can think that you are misbehaving. I don’t care about my friends, but again, if you’re looking for a job or something, they are
looking at your pictures, sees that and ‘oh, this girl is partying all the time, or she is drunk or whatever’ [...]."

A2: "Party pictures, with alcohol and other things like that which can put you in a bad light, or it could affect your professional life”.

Another category of pictures that most of the respondents avoid to post on Facebook are selfies. In this case, the performer has gained some past experiences being the audience of others, thus developing a **stereotypical thinking** (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) which allows him to categorize different situation based on his experiences. In this case, seeing others’ online behaviour and being disturbed by it, they are shaping their own performance in order to not be perceived in the same way. Therefore, some respondents are categorizing the selfies as being useless and selfish, somehow identifying the performer with such behaviour with the mentioned characteristics:

A3: "[...] or selfies, I hate selfies. If I post a picture of myself, someone took it, or I asked a person to take a picture of me and something else. Taking selfies is just so selfish, you are taking pictures of yourself, by yourself to show people how beautiful you are. So, no selfies and no misbehaving pictures”.

Or pictures when they are wearing indecent clothes, or swimming suits. In this case, the concept of **socialized performance** (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) is developed by tending to incorporate and exemplify officially accredited values of the society, trying to be decent and generally accepted:

A4: "For sure pictures in swimsuit, I don’t consider them appropriate for Facebook. This has to be kept in your intimacy, not posted on Facebook, or personal pictures, you need a limit”.

Another type of pictures that many respondents are not posting on Facebook are those in which they don’t like how they look like, or they consider them disadvantageous for various reasons. In this case, the **socialized performance** (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) is applied by hiding the content that the performer doesn’t like, not posting it on Facebook, and thus highlighting in front of the audience only the qualities that are advantageous for them:

A5: "Yeah, in which I don’t look very flattery, that I am avoiding. [...] If I don’t like a photo, I don’t keep it for myself either. Or too silly or too weird pictures that I am taking to send as a joke to my friends in private messages, I wouldn’t post them”.

A6: "Embarrassing pictures, not necessarily pictures that I am ashamed of, but pictures that are not advantageous for me at all. But if I have a teacher in my friends
list, for example, I am thinking twice before I post something, like do I want him/her to see these pictures of me or it would be better to avoid that situation...”.

Many respondents have answered that they avoid pictures that could lead to misunderstandings or which encourages the followers to interpret them in a wrong way. However, the online performance is much more limited than the offline, because the performer is not physically available in order to explain the meaning of what it is presented, thus there are high chances of misinterpretation of the message:

A7: "I don’t like to post pictures that can be interpreted in a negative way, or it could make others to associate me with alcohol for example. I don’t think they are appropriate pictures for Facebook, because for people it is easy anyway to interpret you in a wrong way and it is better to avoid pictures that could encourage this attitude towards you. I also avoid pictures with others smoking, pictures in which I make silly faces, I don’t like to post them. I like to post decent pictures on Facebook”.

A8: "[...] I would try to avoid pictures that I feel it could be viewed out of context maybe, well let’s say if someone takes a picture with you while some neo-Nazis are having a ride, I would avoid that kind of pictures as well. Stuff that would make me look bad and I feel I don’t deserve that because it is out of context picture wise [...]”.

Some respondents have answered that they are avoiding to perform in the online environment the negative aspects of their offline self, such as bad feelings, worries, or troubles. They claim that the online audience is only interested in the good aspects when someone is performing, and they consider that there is no reason to present the negative aspects of the offline self. In this sense, the concept of false front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 23) it is developed because there is a discrepancy between the fostered appearances shown in the online performance and the reality experienced offline. Thus, on Facebook are revealed only good feelings and a false image of the reality, because there is performed only the good aspects from the individuals’ lives. Another concept that fits this situation is the personal front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) because the performer present himself as he would like to appear, eliminating the bad parts of his offline life. In addition, the concept of socialized performance (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) is also developed because the performer is showing what the audience is expecting to be shown:

A9: “Because nobody is interested in what, let’s say what worries or troubles I have. I mean, when I see sad posts this makes me sad too. So then it is not my purpose to make other people sad. I rather be positive”.

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A10: “[...] Anyway, I avoid to post pictures which aren’t relevant for the people that are following me. I choose to be friend with people that are relevant for my profession, and then it’s obvious that I can’t “spam” those people with personal content since I add them for professional reasons in the first place in my friends’ network”.

Only some of the respondents have mentioned that they are avoiding very personal pictures like pictures with their boyfriend, or with their kids – because of security reasons, and they have also mentioned that they don’t like to post milestone pictures from their lives:

A11: “Very personal pictures, pictures with my boyfriend, or when I will have kids, I will not post pictures with them for sure. With the boyfriend is because I don’t need others confirmation for what I have at a personal level, and with the kids because of security and safety reasons. And other pictures that I wouldn’t post and I am annoyed by others when they are posting are pictures from the graduation, or that you are working I don’t know where, pictures that I finished my master, or that I started my master programme, pictures that I got a good grade, these I think it is also showing that you are not doing things for yourself. And I do all these for myself so I don’t post them on Facebook”.

Some respondents have claimed that they are not posting pictures with others without their consent. Moreover, they are avoiding to post online information such as pictures or videos with kids because they cannot protect their privacy yet. The performers are considering that it is unfear to ‘start’ the performance of an individual since they are not aware yet regarding how they are going to perform when they will grow up:

A12: “Pictures with others that I don’t know if they want to post them, of course. I never post with others. Pictures with children like my nephew my nice and stuff like that”.

A13: “[...] I also deleted pictures with my brother because I didn’t find it fair for him to be on Facebook if he didn’t agree on this. It’s not like he can have a well established idea on his age, since his only 7 years old, but somehow I felt that it’s not fair for him and I did delete those [...]”.

In addition to what was mentioned above, for different reasoning, the respondents confirmed that they are not only controlling their online behaviour by selecting in the backstage (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21) what should be shown on Facebook, they are even controlling their offline behaviour in order to not risk to appear online via others’ performances. They also mention in some cases the fact that they don’t want to be tagged in
posts by other performers in order for others to not contribute in any ways to their online performance:

**A14:** “For example, if I go to a party I don’t stay for pictures, I go away from that spot. So, somehow you have to avoid in “real life” these kind of situations, you can tell your friends “Please, don’t check in with me.” Or, I don’t know, with people you are meeting or collaborating to let them know beforehand that you don’t want to appear there. And as an extra-filter to have it activate it on Facebook also[…].”

The first part of the chapter revealed various situations that the respondents are avoiding to make public by posting them on Facebook. However, another perspective has to be researched regarding unwanted situation in the online environment. When talking about unwanted situations, I refer to the situation where other performers are actively contributing to an individual online performance by posting information in which they are tagged. Thus, most of the respondents have answered that they have activated the filter which does not allow others’ posts in which an individual is tagged to appear public on the Timeline until the tagged person is giving his acceptance:

**A15:** “I have a filter, no one can post anything with me, or about me visible, without my permission. No one can post something stupid on my wall. You never now what people might post. Is not that I don’t trust my friends, I just don’t like taking photos of myself, if I do it myself, that’s okay, but usually I’m not in the mood of photographs, and I don’t like when people take photo of me, without me knowing, looking very weird and they post it on Facebook. I might think is not flattering, I might think it is not decent. So, you cannot do that”.

**A16:** “And I think that everybody is using them, after all. I also use them, and I think it’s absolutely normal for you to be the last filter of the content that includes you, not others”.

Some respondents answered that they rarely accept others’ active contribution to their online performances to appear on their Timeline:

**A17:** " Usually I don’t like to post pictures in which I am tagged. This is something that I don’t like and it is very rare when I accept to share this pictures on my Wall”.

**A18:** "For example when I am with my friends at a barbeque or when I want to be relaxed, or to sit shirtless for example, or when I have alcohol around me or people smoking, I don’t think these are proper pictures for Facebook and I don’t like when people are tagging me in this situations. It happens to go for example in a weird pub
for instance to have a drink, this not something that I want to show, especially because it didn’t represent me”.

By analysing A16, it can be noticed that some respondents are focused on how their online performance is developed and they feel the need of representing a certain image of themselves on Facebook. Thus, even though going to the barbeque and being in a relaxed posture as ‘shirtless’, as the respondent argued above, is part of the offline self of the individual, he is not feeling comfortable by identifying himself in the online performance with that specific image. This fact is also highlighting the concept of personal front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) which allows the performer to present himself as he would like to appear in front of the audience.

Some of the respondents have confessed that they had the filter on before, but they are not using it anymore. In this case, the performer trusts are audience and their active contribution to the performance:

A19: ”I don’t have the filter anymore. I think I used that for a while, but I don’t have it anymore because most of the people that I have, I haven’t really had problems with pictures or comments that I got, and most of the people that are tagging me in pictures and comments are people that I trust that they don’t tag me in content that I don’t want to be tagged in. Because it didn’t happen to me this far except for the spam things”.

Another category is summing those respondents who never used the filter option and who are not afraid of others’ posts that includes them:

A20: ”No, my tagging option is free, because I don’t have anything to hide. [...] I feel like people who have this they need to hide; they need to be sure that their friends can see only what they want them to see. In my case I am not ashamed of anything that I am doing, so if somebody will tag me somewhere, I am like ‘well... you are free to tag me, so people know I am there’”.

A very limited number of respondents have brought up situations in which they are afraid for their safety more than for their image. The answer of one respondent who was asked about what kind of pictures he doesn’t like when others are posting with him or related to him was:

A21: ”[...] Or pictures which has personal information, for example I’ve seen that some people who find an ID or a wallet, they are posting it on Facebook without censuring the address or the personal number, these I don’t think are okay. I mean
you have the right for the intimacy and especially that they are posted without your
consent. With this I strongly disagree [...]”.

To conclude this chapter, it can be noticed that Facebook users are confronting
various fears when it comes to their online performance. These fears are guiding their
performance, by limiting it to certain extents in order to not be affected by it, but has
consequences on their attitude towards their audience as well, observers who have the power
to contribute actively on the individual’s performance. However, it can be noticed that mostly
the respondents are afraid for their image and to not be put in a shameful situation, more than
fears regarding their safety.

6.1.3. Considerations regarding possible misinterpretation of the performance and of
receiving a negative feedback on the online performance from the Facebook audience

This subchapter presents the respondents’ answers regarding to the fears experienced
in backstage (see Theoretical Framework, p. 21) by them when active on Facebook. These
fears are related to the misinterpretation by their online audience of what it is performed, as
well as the fear of receiving some negative feedbacks on their performance. Thus, when
asked if they are considering these negative situations when performing online, most of the
respondents have answered:

A1: "Yes, of course. Nobody would want to have a bad or mean feedback. But this is
another interesting think because you are trying to please more others than yourself.
You are trying to attract their attention in a positive way and to attract positive
comments and maybe you ate not even that kind of person like it is shown on
Facebook but because this is what others likes, you post things that doesn’t
necessarily reflect yours believes”.

If analysing the answer exposed above (A1), it can be noticed that this situation is
highlighting the concept of false front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 23) because of the
discrepancy of what the performer would like to expose in the front, and what he is actually
communicating. The fact that the performer’s act is showing more what the audience would
like to see rather than what he wants to show, is supporting the concept of socialized
performance (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) because the performer is focusing so much
on attracting the audiences’ attention by showing them what they want to see, that he is
unconsciously creating a false front. All together, the combination of the concept of false
front and of socialized performance, the performer is experiencing another situation
mentioned by Goffman (1956) as being the reality of the performer versus the reality of the
audience (see Theoretical Framework, p. 22). In this case, the reality of the audience is taking so much credit in comparison with the reality of the performer, then at some point, the individual tends to believe more in the audience’s reality than in his own. Thus, he is not necessarily reflecting his own beliefs, but rather what the audience would like to see.

Some respondents have argued that they are trying to avoid to get judged by appearances by the audience. Thus, this argument is highlighting the concept of stereotypical thinking (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24), which supports that the audience has the tendency to categorize and judge the performer based on its previous experiences:

A2: "People have the tendency to judge you by appearances, this is why I avoid to post pictures that could be misinterpreted”.

Many respondents said that they are avoiding public debates on Facebook, but also trying not to harm their freedom of speech at the same time. However, when it comes to chat and an environment which is more private, they are not avoiding debates and conflicts anymore:

A3: "This is honestly something that I am trying to avoid, like I am not posting stuff on Facebook to have a debate or whatever. If I wanna fight with someone about something, then I will just talk to this person. [...] when I’m posting something, there is not even a way to start a debate or a fight or whatever. I don’t put anything political, I am not criticizing, no! I am pretty neutral on Facebook because I don’t want stuff like this to happen to me”.

A4: "Yes! But if I chat I don’t care”.

Respondents have argued that they are thinking twice before performing online, in order to not get offended by the observers or to not offend their audience:

A5: “Yes, I can say that I am thinking about what reactions could ignite the post. Therefore, I am not posting everything, just to post. Only if in my opinion truly deserved to be posted. I am thinking beforehand how this could affect my image, if I would post some photo. Usually I don’t write negative comments on others, expressly to not engage in all kinds of disagreements. I stay more cold, let’s say”.

A6: “[...] Yeah, because look I am myself a person which filters the content in order to not end up in an unfavourable position. Yes, I can say that. [...] But on the part with selecting what I post in order to not end up in an awkward situation there yeah I find myself also”.

A7: "Generally I think twice about how directly should I express my opinion and how could I offend somebody through my post or text. [...] But usually it has to happen
something outstanding for me to express my opinion, but in general I talk with my friends about this kind of situations”.

Moreover, respondents have argued that they are trying to keep in mind the limits of common sense when commenting online and they are encouraging others to do the same. These politeness limits can be identified with Goffman’s (1956) concept of manner (see Theoretical Framework, p. 22), which refers to the ‘unseen rules’ regarding how can the performer’s behaviour affect the audience, and also how he could get affected by it. They said that sometimes the freedom of speech is taken more in consideration in offline conversations than in the online one, and they are not agreeing with this:

A8: "[…] I mean in the limits of common sense, not like a censor. And I think everybody should consider the limits of common sense when they are active online. It is about the perception of freedom of speech, and you think you are allowed to say whatever you want but by doing it, you are controlling the other’s freedom of speech and the freedom to receive opinions. And than you have to limit your freedom of speech to the point in which you bother others. And I think we are considering this and we are doing this in our offline life, and we should consider it online too”.

Very few of the respondents argued that they are not afraid of their audience’s reactions on the performance, but this is also because they claim that they trust their online friends and they support the idea that everybody has freedom to speech:

A9: "Most of my Facebook friends are people that I know and with whom I am close, to some extent, and they are on the same level with me, if I can say it like this. I never had concerns regarding the content uploaded by me that it could harm somebody, I think everybody has the right to express herself/himself in a free way and I am not afraid to be judged”.

Summing up all the findings regarding the performer’s fears when it comes to the audience’s reactions on what it is performed, it can be noticed that many of the respondents are aware of these aspects and they are controlling their Facebook posts in order to not have to deal with unpleasant situations. Considering the fact that if some of the performance’s observers will express some negative opinions on the act that it is performed, the whole audience is able to see that specific reaction, the performer risks much more to be affected by an online performance than by an offline one. Thus, the results showed that most of the Facebook performers are aware of these risks, trying to limit the chances of receiving negative feedbacks from the audience. However, there are a few respondents whom are not influenced by this issue.
6.1.4. Removing parts of the performance already posted on Facebook

This subchapter deals with the situation in which a performer acted online at some point, but for various reasons, he decided to remove the performance. Thus, many respondents have confirmed that they have removed past performances because it didn’t fit anymore with their present self:

**A1:** "Yes I have! I opened my Facebook at 2005. [...] Then I’ve put a lot of teenage photos there which became a bit embarrassing when I grew older because when you are a teenager and you post all kind of things and you are 20 and you don’t feel like before anymore, I am like ‘oh, these needs to go’.”

Related to the old pictures posted when the users were younger, some of the respondents have received negative feedback from the audience, which made them to remove the performance even if they kept them online because it is part of who they are:

**A2:** "[...] Actually my friends that I made in university, some of them were like ‘what’s up with your old photos’. I was like ‘I was 14 there, are you judging me based on that, I am like a kid’, and they were like ‘but still delete those, delete those’ and I did. They are not so flattering, I now, but it’s me, I was like this, and you can see the date there and you can see how old I am [...]”.

By analysing the previous answer (A2), two main concepts introduced by Goffman (1956) in his theory are applicable. Firstly, the concept of **socialized performance** (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) because the performer is taking in consideration the officially accredited values of the society, being influenced by the audience’s opinion. And secondly, the concept of the **false front** (see Theoretical Framework, p. 23) because, by changing the performance in order to fulfil the audience’s expectations, the act is not anymore guided by the performer’s wills.

In addition to the previous example, another respondent removed part of his performance also by taking in consideration the audience’s negative feedback:

**A3:** “[...] Because someone was telling me that is ugly or it appeared to me that something is not in place in the photo. For example, my hair was in all directions, or I thought my nose is too big from some angles. But, very rarely it happened to me to delete after posting”.

Another category of online performance conducted when the performers were younger, and deciding to remove them later are the comments:
A4: "[...] I also deleted comments, you know, I’ve kept some photos that are okay to keep but some comments were like embarrassing comments, or my way of writing was embarrassing, or how I was talking [...]”.

Generally, almost all the respondents have confirmed that they are deleting old pictures because they don’t feel like they are representing them anymore. A few subjects confessed that they have removed some pictures because they have received some mean comments on them:

A5: "[...] or I got mean comments on some pictures and I decided to delete them, or it seemed to me that is too old and it is not current enough...”.

This situation meets also the analysis conducted before, at A2. However, the respondents’ answers regarding the fact that they are removing old performances can be considered a characteristic of the online performance because when an individual is performing online, the act will stay in the front until the performer is changing or removing it. Thus, many performers update their online performances in order to follow the evolution of their offline self. But, in some cases, they feel the need to remove some old performances because they don’t want to be identified with the past image anymore. Thus, this attitude can be emphasized using the concept of personal front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) which supports the idea that an individual is allowed to present himself as he would like to appear.

On the other hand, some respondents who have confessed that they never received mean comments on their posts think that this shows how superficial is the communication on Facebook. This argument can be analysed using the concept of social doubt, in relation with the concept of false front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 23), both because the audience is not expressing freely its thoughts about what it is performed, and because the performer is keeping his critical opinion ‘hidden’ in the backstage:

A6: "For reasons as bad or mean comments I haven’t deleted any of my pictures and I never received a mean or bad comment on my pictures. And this is also showing how superficial is the communication on Facebook. Because I am convinced that from the 700 friends that I have, half of them are not pleased by my picture, but nobody will manifest these feelings because on Facebook the negative parts are kept hidden, you show only the positive parts”.

Another reason for users to not keep public some past pictures is because of different friendships or relationships that are not a reflection of the present anymore:

A7: "Yes! The truth is I haven’t deleted them, I just put them on private. Because they were a reflexion of my personal life in which I don’t feel comfortable anymore".
Many respondents who answered that they are not deleting their posts have mentioned that they never deleted a post because of negative feedback. However, they are frequently updating their performance on Facebook by deleting old pictures:

_A8:_ "No, only like I said before that I am deleting old tags and pictures for update”.

On the other extreme are the users who are not concerned about their older performances and they have argued that they find it scary when some observers are commenting of ‘like’ very old pictures of themselves:

_A9:_ "Never, I never deleted anything or whatever. It might be also because I don’t go through all my pictures like from a few years ago, and I don’t understand those people who are actually doing that. One day you see ‘oh, this person liked this picture, wait, the picture is from 5 years ago, how far are you going through my pictures’, this is even scary, because I don’t go myself but some other people are just spies if they are going through all your pictures. But no, I do it a couple of times but I don’t have pictures that I am ashamed of”.

Concluding this subchapter, it is noticeable that Facebook performers behave in various ways when it comes to their performances. Some of them are deleting only old information about themselves to update their profile and others are removing only pictures that are not reflecting anymore their present personal lives. Another reason for deleting pictures revealed by the respondents is because of negative comments or feedback received from the audience, but not many subjects were in this situation. On the other extreme, are a few users who are not deleting at all their older posts.

### 6.1.5. Considerations regarding the way online performances could affect the performer

The interviewed people have revealed several ways in which their Facebook performance could affect them professionally or personally. The majority of the respondents are afraid to not get affected by their online performance from a professional perspective. In this respect, it is very important how the performer is creating his _personal front_ (see _Theoretical Framework_, p. 24) since the online image projected on Facebook can influence important aspects of the performer’s professional life:

_A1:_ „I think it could affect you if you are searching for a job, and it can affect your profile because a picture can say many things about your activities and they represent you to some extent and it is very important what impressions you create through your posts”.”
One of the respondents gave examples of situations in which the online performance can affect his carrier:

**A2:** „Your posts can have negative consequences. It may have repercussions when you have to find a job too. If the employer is checking your Facebook profile and it finds you in the company of frivolous people, or he/she finds you in delicate situations like drinking alcohol, these facts can have negative consequences on your professional life”.

Another way in which online content could affect the user is when people are associated with inappropriate behaviours or activities. Most of the respondents are avoiding the possibilities for their audience to associate them with alcohol or party pictures. In this case, the concept of **stereotypical thinking** (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) is applicable considering that the audience is capable to associate the performer with a negative situation based on its past experiences:

**A3:** „If we were super drunk at a party, they not gonna post silly pictures, we will share them between each other, but we are not gonna post them on Facebook because there is no point to do that. So, I am usually not affected by this. Usually we have nice pictures, to remember nice times, so those we can share with the others”.

The respondents consider that online it is very easy to create false impressions about a person, and it is better to be avoided content that could encourage the followers to get a wrong idea about the user. They also mentioned that online it is harder to explain themselves than offline. In this case, the concept of **false front** (see Theoretical Framework, p. 23) can be applied in a reverse way, because the performer doesn’t intend to transmit a wrong image of himself, however, the audience is interpreting his actions in the wrong way. Thus, the audience will perceive a wrong image about the performer and this is not advantageous for the individual:

**A4:** „Well if I am drunk at a party and somebody is posting a picture with me like that, of course I don’t want that picture to be online. I can create a false impression that this situation is a significant part of my life, and it’s not, and I avoid this. Because you can’t explain a situation online, offline you can”.

The misinterpretation of the posted content was also mentioned as possibly dangerous because it can create unpleasant situations for the user. Many respondents claimed that they are careful about the way a message can be interpreted by others, or if it can be taking out of context and used against them. In this respect, the concept of **region** (see Theoretical
Framework, p. 25) can be considered because the barriers of perception vary depending on the media of communication used in order to perform in front of the audience:

**A5:** „It is very easy to get to be in an unpleasant situation, because the context of your message is not clear enough in the virtual environment. You have to be careful regarding this aspect”.

Privacy is an issue that was brought up by the respondents saying that they can be affected by online posts if they wouldn’t want somebody to know about themselves that they are in a certain place, with certain people, and if there will appear a picture or check in online, people will know where they are and with whom they are. In this particular case, the performer wants to limit his audience, by eliminating some of the possible observers:

**A6:** „[...] if I don’t necessarily want people to know that I am there at that and that moment, at that place, with that person, then yes, it can affect me. But, I didn’t reach that moment in which I got affected by a post because most of my friends are reasonable”.

Even if there are many online posts that could be dangerous from a safety point of view, not many respondents have taken this perspective in consideration. The ones who did, argued the following:

**A7:** „[...] as long as I am tagged by my friends, this doesn’t happen as often as if I tag myself everywhere I go. So the risks decrease because I am not always with the same person, so nobody can actually track what my future activities could be. I suppose that if I tag myself everywhere, then they can actually create a pattern out of my movements. [...] So there is no way to create a pattern from tags that my friends made. So the risk of robbery as I said earlier decrease when people cannot make a pattern from my activities”.

Also, some respondents have argued that for safety reasons they don’t agree with people who are posting pictures with their kids:

**A8:** „[...] As well many, many pictures with kids. I’ve heard about many cases in which kids being exposed on Facebook, the kidnappers were tracking parents’ profiles, and they are posting many pictures with the kids. The kidnappers were able to identify the child and when you are together with the kid in a public area there are risks of kidnapping. There was a case in my city, at the mall. A person left the kid at the playing ground and after shopping she went to take the kid and he was not there anymore. I understand that you love your kid and you want to post pictures with him, but it is important to have a limit with this”. 
Another issue mentioned by the respondents regarding how can online posts affect the users is related to the way people can perceive reality. Many respondents claimed that on Facebook it is presented only the good part of the users’ life. From this perspective, the concept of **false front** (see *Theoretical Framework*, p. 23) is applicable, since the online performers are selecting in the backstage to show only good parts of their offline reality, thus creating a misinterpretation of the reality. On the other hand, the concept of **social doubt** (see *Theoretical Framework*, p. 23) can be introduced in the analysis because the audience is questioning the validity of the performance, keeping in mind that some negative aspects of the performer’s self are not taken in consideration in the online act:

*A9:* “Everybody wants to show the positive aspects of their lives and of themselves, to underline their qualities and to hide the defects”.

*A10:* “[... They want to show as good as possible and to show a perfect life in front of their friends”.

They claim that because of the fact that on Facebook are presented only good things from life and happy moments, people can perceive reality in a wrong way. Thus, the concept of **reality of the performer versus the reality of the audience** (see *Theoretical Framework*, p. 22) can be developed based on the fact that the online audience requires the performer to present only positive aspects of his offline life. Thus, the individual risks to believe the audience’s reality more than his own, and in this case, the audience’s reality can harm the user because is representing a **false front** (see *Theoretical Framework*, p. 23). So, the real reality is denied by both the audience and the performer, feeling ‘safe’ in the positive online reality, created by them using this **false front** (see *Theoretical Framework*, p. 23).

*A11:* “[...] And this is also very relevant for the question regarding envy, because people receive only the positive part, the negative part is not shown anywhere. And it is created an environment in which you can think that the negative part doesn’t exist anymore, even though it is there, but is not manifested. It is created in a way a false image of the reality [...]”.

*A12:* “You can crate an illusion, you can’t distinguish anymore what is real and what is virtual. Everybody shows how happy they are and how perfect their life is, and many users can get depressed by this false image of perfection. Not everybody is as happy as they show they are, it is just an impression created on Facebook by positive posts”.

Summing up the results related to the way Facebook posts can affect the individual, there can be noticed several ways in which the respondents consider this social platform
dangerous. From issues related their professional lives, continuing with the possibility of others to associate the user with inappropriate behaviours or activities, with the high possibility of a message to be misinterpreted, or privacy related issues. Even posts that could put their safety in danger were mentioned by the users. However, it can be noticed that the respondents are mostly protecting their image and the way they can be perceived by others rather than their safety.

6.2. Social pressure experienced in the backstage – A better understanding of the consequences of Facebook usage

This second part of the research is very important in order to be able to answer the secondary research question: How is the online social pressure experienced by Facebook users? and also to elucidate the second hypothesis: The online presence of an individual enhance the feeling of social pressure. Thus, this subchapter addresses the way the online self presentation and the online performance is affecting the performer in the backstage.

According to the responses gathered through the semi-structured interviews, I was able to identify various ways in which online performers were experiencing pressure. Most of the respondents manifested stress related to privacy issues, followed by social pressure because they felt like ‘forced’ to share information or to react to some requests of the online audience, or simply by being available performing in the online environment. Therefore, in this chapter I will develop the respondents’ answers related to uncomfortable feelings caused by their online presence.

6.2.1. Facebook as a tool which develops envy between its users

Among the answers related to the respondents’ online identity governed by privacy concerns, some of the subjects have brought up the fact that they are avoiding to post many personal information because they think that this would make their followers envious on them and they could get affected by this:

A1: "I think the envy would be greater and people would try to do thinks like I do or to do thinks that can affect me”.

In this respect, the respondents are divided in two categories: the first one composed by the users who are limiting their personal front (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) in order to not create envy among his audience, and on the other hand are those who are developing the socialized performance (see Theoretical Framework, p. 24) in order to highlight their own qualities and possibilities to not feel inferior to those who are considered more popular than the performer:
A2: “Yes! Yes, because I encountered some cases where they were comparing themselves with Facebook personalities, or “look where X went I also want to go there because...I’ve saw that X went” or “I’ve saw how Y dressed up and he posted on Facebook” so somehow it’s present, I mean there is also envy”.

The fact that online performers are highly influenced by each other, the audience started to doubt the realness of what it is presented. Thus, the concept of social doubt (see Theoretical Framework, p. 23) is developed in this respect:

A3: ”But maybe in their offline lives is not even like that”.

Concluding the subchapter related to the role of Facebook in arousing envy between individuals, it can be noticed that there is a social pressure created by others’ posts confirmed by many respondents who consider that users are posting different aspects of their lives in order to brag themselves and show a great image in front of their followers. In addition to this, because the performers tend to dramatically emphasize only their qualities and the good part of the offline life, the audience is developing the concept of social doubt (see Theoretical Framework, p. 23) because they are not sure anymore about the realness of what it is presented in the online performance.

6.2.2. Social pressure leading users to delete their Facebook account & Experiences of former Facebook users

Some of the respondents revealed in their answers that the online social pressure made them delete their performance on Facebook:

A1: ”I had Facebook when it first went out, started... and then I deleted it because I thought it was stressful”.

In addition, some respondents have shared their backstage experiences they had after removing their online performance. Thus, the first noticeable changed confessed by the former Facebook performer was the feeling of loneliness:

A2: ”[...] But the first feeling that I had after I closed it was loneliness (laughing), I remember I was in my room and after I deleted my account I felt like the whole room was evacuated. But I was anyway lonely in the room, but that was the feeling. Like when I had Facebook I was constantly monitored and I always had the possibility to contact somebody to not feel alone. After I closed my profile I felt really alone. It was like I can’t see anybody anymore. But it wasn’t a bad feeling or an unpleasant feeling. Even when I went to bed I felt like I am alone. It was a very interesting experience. It was like via my computer and the monitor my house was full of people. I didn’t
believe that it will have such an instant effect. It was like I kicked out everybody from my house. It was really weird, but I repeat, it wasn’t unpleasant, it was okay”.

By analysing the previous answer (A2), it can be noticed how dramatically it was accentuated the feeling of the non-present audience in the performer’s offline life. Thus, the individual felt a permanent audience in his offline life only because people were so reachable knowing them as online audience of his performance.

A second experience after closing the Facebook account was related to communication between individuals. One subject said that he felt a difference in communication because his friends were continuing in the offline environment some topics started online, and since everybody was aware of what it is discussed, he was off-topic because he missed some information shared on Facebook. This example reveals how important it became the online performance in the offline presence of the performers:

**A3:** ”[...] but I felt like I was off-topic when I was meeting my friends. This I liked. It was like they already knew everything about each other and they even had inside-jokes and comments regarding their Facebook activities that I couldn’t understand anymore because I wasn’t active on Facebook anymore. I don’t like this kind of stuff. Everybody it was in the same ‘big picture’, ‘the picture of Facebook’, everybody knew everything about each other, questions had no purpose anymore, if you said something to a person he/she was like... ‘oh but I know, I saw on Facebook’, or ‘hey, have you seen that?’, ‘Yes, on Facebook’. All these stuff I didn’t knew anymore and it is better to find out information from face-to-face interaction, not only from Facebook”.

The third experience of a users who deleted his Facebook account was related to others’ attitude towards him. The respondent said that people are expecting others to have Facebook, as a must:

**A4:** ”[...] And another aspect that bothered me was when I started the university having Facebook was something understood, it was like a must: ‘Give me your Facebook account’, ‘But I don’t have one’, ‘What do you mean you don’t have Facebook?’. This was also weird because after all is just a website, it is not something that everybody should have, it is not mandatory. But now again, because I have this new account and I have friends from the university everything started again, the annoying posts, and this is why I don’t even use it very often”.

And a forth experience after a respondent closed his Facebook account was feeling less pressured being free from the online responsibilities:
A5: "I felt less pressure, I would say. Because I didn’t have to deal anymore with any of those stuff. Because I had an excuse not to reply to everything. Because, to be honest everyone of us lies at some point like ‘oh, I didn’t check my phone’, because sometimes I am leaving my phone in a very far corner of my room, I don’t hear, I don’t see, it is not actually a lie, it’s the reality that I don’t see it, I don’t hear it. But on Facebook, when you are there, there is a social pressure, I would say”.

Concluding this subchapter, it can be noticed that the online social pressure, in its various forms and types, it can lead to consequences as strong negative feelings experienced by the users while surfing on Facebook, or even determining some users to delete their account in order to find their freedom, privacy, and connectedness to the offline presence.
Chapter 7: Concluding discussions & Further analysis

This study has assessed the presentation of online identity based on the considerations of possible negative consequences experienced by the Facebook users because of their posts. The focus is oriented especially towards three main aspects related to the Facebook use. Firstly, on what are the users trying to communicate through their online posts. In this respect, I can understand what is their personal image about their own profile. Secondly, I will stress on what are the users willing to emphasize online. This is completing the aspect discussed earlier by explaining how are they communicating online. And thirdly, and most importantly, what are Facebook users trying to avoid and the motivations to do so. The first two aspects are meant to help for a better understanding of the third one, which is the main focus of the study. Many studies have been conducted before about the Facebook usage and online identity (see Previous Research, p. 15), however none was conducted by focusing on the users’ process of selecting the future posts together with the intentions of the posted content. The study is providing great insights regarding the way individuals are perceiving Facebook, about the fears and concerns they are dealing with when posting a content online, about what they are avoiding to make public from their offline lives, but also what they think about others’ online behaviour.

Further, I will conclude the main results of the analysis, based on the hypotheses and research questions provided in the subchapter Theoretically developed research questions and hypotheses (see p. 7). Thus, prior introducing the research questions, two hypotheses were mentioned and explained.

First hypothesis is Facebook users are choosing the content posted on their profiles based on the fear of receiving negative feedbacks from their online friends. When asked about their considerations regarding the future Facebook posts, most of the respondents have answered that they are thinking twice before posting information online because of various reasons. However, the concept of shame was very much avoided by the subjects, some of them arguing that shame is a very ‘strong’ word, and they preferred to replace it by fear of misinterpretation of the message, of unpleasant situations, of an embarrassing situation, or of the association of the individual with improper behaviour. Thus, the first hypothesis was confirmed because the respondents have argued that they are choosing the online content before posting it on Facebook in order to avoid unpleasant situations such as negative
feedbacks, misinterpretation of the message, the association with improper behaviour, or other situation which could make the user feel ashamed about.

The second hypothesis is *The online presence of an individual enhance the feeling of social pressure*. In order to elucidate this hypothesis, the second part of the results will be used, considering that the findings gathered in the subchapter *Considerations regarding the way online performances could affect the performer* (see p. 46) and in the subchapter *Social pressure experienced in the backstage – A better understanding of the consequences of Facebook usage* (see p. 50) are providing essential results which help concluding the issue of this hypothesis. Thus, many respondents have confirmed various ways in which Facebook usage could affect the user’s offline life. Thus, most of the subjects answered that they are afraid of the consequences of their online behaviour on their professional life. In this respect, the respondents confirmed that they are careful in order to not misbehave or facilitate to be associated with improper activities or situations. Therefore, many users have confirmed that they are avoiding pictures with alcohol or party pictures. Another aspect mentioned by the respondents regarding this issue was related to privacy concerns. Many users are afraid that if they will expose too many personal information, they will experience negative consequences in this regard. The fact that on Facebook are presented only the good aspects of the offline life, the respondents claimed that this could lead to the wrong perception of reality, ‘escaping’ real problems of the everyday life by being connected to the online environment which is associated with a good and safe place. Also, the fact that Facebook causes envy between individuals is another aspect highly supported by the respondents and also the fact that the online self is creating addictiveness, thus loosing precious time from their offline presence by being connected on Facebook. Some of the respondents have even confessed that all the aspects presented above have created such pressure on their offline life that they have decided to delete the Facebook account in order to be free from the online responsibilities. A few individuals have concerns related to safety issues, this fact revealing the Facebook users are more focused on their image, than on their safety. The findings exposed above are confirming the hypothesis, thus, the online presence of an individual can affect his offline life.

The main research question will be further answered: *How is the online identity created on Facebook affected by the users’ considerations experienced before they post a content?* This research question finds its answer by summing up the whole thesis considering that every issue that have been discussed in this research is revealing precious information that can contribute on the answer of this question. Thus, the respondents have argued that
they are carefully selecting the content posted on their Facebook profile, considering various aspects that could harm their online or offline presence. The online presentation of the self is affected by all the fears, emotions, concerns, and wills experienced by the user before he is uploading information online. Individuals are focusing on the creation on an online image which communicates various aspects regarding the users’ personality, preferences, aspirations, and values. However, every respondent confirmed the fact that they are avoiding to post negative aspects of their offline lives. Thus, the online presentation of the self is affected by the distorted presentation of the reality, governed by positive aspects of the offline life and perfect images which are attracting appreciation and avoiding negative thoughts and opinions. In addition, it was mentioned in the findings that people are considering this attitude towards the online interaction between individuals as being superficial due to the fact that people are expressing only positive thoughts.

The sub-question of the research question is: How is the online social pressure experienced by Facebook users? and its purpose is to complete the main research question and also to support the second hypothesis elucidated earlier. Thus, in addition to the answer provided at the second hypothesis, the findings have revealed that the online social pressure is experienced in the offline environment mainly by having the feeling of some ‘extra’ social responsibilities to the already existing ones. The respondents have argued that they feel stressed by the fact that they have to check on people, they have to answer to their messages and comments, and that they feel permanently connected to other people, thus missing the feeling of intimacy. In this respect, a few users have confirmed that, at some point in their lives, all the experienced pressure made them to close their Facebook account. However, every respondent who confirmed that have started to use this SNS again, today being active Facebook users.

Summing up the relevant findings, the hypotheses were argued and confirmed, and the research questions were elaborately answered providing important results analysed based on the concepts of presentation of the self in front of others, introduced by Goffman (1956). The aim of this study was fulfilled by providing relevant information conducting 20 semi-structured interviews related to the issue of the online presentation of the self based on considerations of possible negative consequences experienced by Facebook users because of their posts.

The findings have successfully filled up the gap discovered in the speciality literature, by giving clear and elaborated perspectives of the individuals in regards to the development of the self in the online environment. The conducted research has implications for society at
large because nowadays, social media is an indispensable tool in the life of virtually every person. Thus, findings related to the presentation of online identity based on considerations of possible negative consequences experienced by Facebook users because of their posts can answer to various aspects questioned by the individuals whom are part of this virtual society.

Further researches can be conducted with regards to issues concerning particularly the Facebook content that have been removed by the users for various reasons, or specific aspects related to Facebook as a tool which is developing envy between users. Another interesting topic that could be further developed is related to safety issues and how users consider that their online activities could be literally harmful for them, or issues related to the addictiveness to the online presence. Various topics related to this study could be further researched and analysed.
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http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/

“Random.org”:
https://www.random.org/

Books:


9. Appendix

Glossary of terms

*Internet* – a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols.

*Social Networking Sites (SNS)* – a dedicated website or other application which enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc.

*Instagram* – Instagram is the name of an online photo sharing social Web service that lets you share your life with friends through a series of pictures captured with a mobile device. Instagram also supports video uploads and lets users of the service instantly share photos on several social sites, including Flickr, Facebook, Tumblr and Twitter or specify a location with any photo to check in on Foursquare.

*Facebook* – the name of a social networking site (SNS) that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, post photos, share links and exchange other information. Facebook users can see only the profiles of confirmed friends and the people in their networks.

*News Feed/ Facebook News Feed* – on the Facebook social networking site, a News Feed is a list of updates on your own Facebook home page. The News Feed will show updates about those people who are in your friend's list, as well as the odd advertisement. The News Feed is actually a collection of events from your friend's own Mini-Feed that is intended to give you a quick look at what your friends have been doing on Facebook.

*Timeline/Facebook Timeline* – Facebook Timeline is where you share your photos, posts and experiences on Facebook. On your Timeline you can add a cover photo, edit your personal information, view your Facebook activity log, highlight posts or images, update your Facebook status, share Facebook app activity and add new life events to your profile.

*Post/Facebook post* – to publish a message in an online forum or newsgroup. A message published in an online forum or newsgroup.

*Selfie* – a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media.
**Facebook Like** – an option on the Facebook Web site to provide feedback on the stories that appear in your friend's news feed. The Like option allows to acknowledge a friend's news feed item in a positive way without needing to add actual commentary.

**Follower** – on Twitter, blogs, and other social media sites, a follower is someone who subscribes to receives your updates.

**Friends only** – the Friends option in your audience selector lets you share things with your friends on Facebook. If anyone else is tagged in a post, it becomes Friends (+) because the audience expands to include the tagged person and their friends. If you don't want your photo or post to be visible to the friends of the people you tag, you can adjust this setting. Click the audience selector next to the story, select Custom, and uncheck the Friends of those tagged box.

**Tag/Tagging** – a tag links a person, page or place to something you post, like a status update or a photo. For example, you can tag a photo to say who’s in the photo or post a status update and say who you’re with.

**Public/public profile** – something that’s public can be seen by anyone. That includes people who aren’t your friends, people off of Facebook and people who use different media such as print, broadcast (ex: television) and other sites on the Internet. For example, if you use our services to provide a real-time public comment to a television show, that may appear on the show or elsewhere on Facebook.
Interview design – EN

Q1: How are you using Facebook for social reasons?

Q2: How are you using Facebook for professional reasons?

Q3: Do you think your Facebook profile is a reflection of your personality?

Q4: What do you intend to communicate through your Facebook posts?

Q5: Do you feel the need to reflect your offline activities in the online environment?

Q6: What kind of content are you avoiding to post on your Facebook profile?

Q7: What criteria should fulfill a picture in order to be posted online by you?

Q8: What kind of pictures do you usually post on Facebook (with yourself, selfies, with friends, etc.)?

Q9: Were you ever in the situation to delete a picture that you have previously posted on Facebook? Why have you deleted it?

Q10: What do you think about mean or negative feedbacks received on your posts? Are you considering this aspect when you are posting something?

Q11: How are you avoiding contents that includes you and you don’t like, posted by others? Do you have the filter for tags on?

Q12: How do you think others’ posts in which you are tagged could influence you?

Q13: What impact does your online identity have on your offline life?

Q14: Do you think face-to-face communication have changed because of the online interaction between individuals?
Q1: Ce rol are Facebook în viața ta socială?

Q2: Ce rol are Facebook în viața ta profesională?

Q3: Consideri că profilul tău de Facebook este o reflexie a personalității tale?

Q4: Ce dorești să transmiți prin intermediul postărilor tale?

Q5: Simți nevoia de a reflecta activitățile tale zilnice și în mediul virtual?

Q6: Ce gen de poze eviți să postezi pe Facebook?

Q7: Ce criterii trebuie să îndeplinească informația pentru a fi postată pe Facebook de către tine?

Q8: În general postezi poze cu tine, cu activități pe care le desfășori, cu peisaje, etc.?

Q9: Ai fost vreodată în situația de a posta o poză pe care ulterior ai decis să o ștergi? De ce ai simțit nevoia să ștergi conținutul?

Q10: Ce părere ai despre feedback-urile negative la adresa postărilor tale? Ții cont de acest aspect înainte de a posta un conținut?

Q11: Cum eviți postările care îți displac, ale altor persoane, cu tine sau la adresa ta? Ai opțiunea de filtru pentru pozele în care apari etichetat/etichetată?

Q12: Cum crezi că te-ar putea afecta postările altora cu tine sau la adresa ta din punct de vedere social sau profesional?

Q13: Ce impact are identitatea ta online asupra vieții offline?

Q14: Consideri că s-a schimbat comunicarea fată-în-față din cauza interacțiunii online?