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Revising the Flaming model: *Examining personality traits as predictors of flaming motives in online forums*

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## *Abstract*

This study has revised the first flaming model developed by Alonzo and Aiken (2004) and tried to analyze flaming in online forums using the revised model. The revised flaming model, based on the Uses and Gratifications theory and McGuire's motivation theory, implies that personality traits predict flaming in online forums. In the model, three personality traits (Disinhibition, Worrying and Assertiveness) are linked with six flaming motives (Pass time, Entertainment, Escape, Relaxation, Status-enhancement and Anonymity) and analyzed through several hierarchical regression analyses. It was concluded that the current flaming model was not suitable for analyzing flaming in online forums. All hypotheses were rejected, suggesting that personality traits do not predict flaming in online forums. However, due to the low means of the flaming motives it is arguable whether this conclusion is right. Most of the respondents involved in the sample size did not flame which makes it difficult to analyze the flaming model. Besides the personality traits, several control variables also were analyzed for the flaming model. Based on the results, the control variables Age and Spending time on a forum showed a significant effect on several flaming motives. Age was significant with Pass time and Entertainment. Spending time on a forum showed a significant effect with Pass time, Escape and Relaxation. Although significant, both control variables were negatively associated with a negative beta coefficient, leading to the conclusion that younger people and people who spent less time on the forum, would flame more in online forums. In sum, the current flaming model has failed to show any significance; thus modifications are needed for future research.

## *Abstract*

In dit onderzoek wordt het eerste flaming model van Alonzo en Aiken (2004) herzien om flaming te onderzoeken in online forums. Het herziene flaming model, dat gebaseerd is op de 'Uses and Gratifications' theorie en McGuire's motivatie theorie, stelt dat persoonlijkheidskenmerken voorspellers zijn van flaming op online forums. In dit model worden drie persoonlijkheidskenmerken (Disinhibition, Worrying en Assertiveness) gekoppeld aan zes motieven om te flamen (Pass time, Entertainment, Escape, Relaxation, Status-enhancement en Anonymity) en geanalyseerd middels verschillende hiërarchische regressie analyses. Gebaseerd op de resultaten kan worden geconcludeerd dat het herziene model niet geschikt is om flaming te analyseren op online forums. Alle hypothesen werden verworpen, wat suggereert dat persoonlijkheidskenmerken niet kunnen worden gezien als voorspellers van flaming op online forums. Echter, vanwege de lage gemiddelden van de flaming motieven is het beargumenteerbaar of deze conclusie klopt. De populatie bestond uit te weinig respondenten die flamen, wat inhoudt dat het moeilijk is om het flaming model te onderzoeken. Van de controle variabelen bleken er twee wel een significant effect te hebben op de flaming motieven. De controle variabele Age bleek significant te zijn met Pass time en Entertainment. De controle variabele Spending time on a forum bleek significant te zijn met Pass time, Escape en Relaxation. Deze effecten vertoonden echter een negatieve bèta coëfficiënt, wat leidt tot de conclusie dat jongere mensen en tevens mensen die minder tijd besteden op forums, meer zullen flamen op online forums.

Voor de toekomst zal verder onderzoek noodzakelijk zijn, daar het huidige flaming model geen significantie heeft aangetoond.

## *Introduction*

As of today, flaming is becoming more and more a phenomenon that people cannot avoid. In 2006, former president Bush makes anonymous flaming a crime with stiff fines and two years prison as penalties (Inquirer 2006). In all layers of the internet, flaming occurs in for example e-mail (Turnage 1997), electronic classrooms (Aiken 2000) and Youtube (Moor 2007).

Before elaborating further on the phenomenon of flaming, an explanation of flaming is required to avoid any misunderstandings in this research. In the past, it has been proven that defining flaming is a difficult task as each researcher has come up with their own explanation of flaming. According to Kayany (1998), flaming can be identified as an expression of hostile emotions directed at another person, as opposed to criticism that is directed at ideas and opinions. Aiken (2000) defined flaming as comments that had the intention to offend others, whereas O'Sullivan (2003) defined flaming as hostile and aggressive interactions via text-based computer mediated communication. The Oxford dictionary describes a 'flame' as: 'Computing, informal a vitriolic or abusive message posted on an Internet message board or newsgroups, typically in quick response to another message'.

Although all of these definitions are correct, the definition used by Moor (2007) fits the best for researching flaming in online forums. Flaming is defined as "displaying hostility by insulting, swearing or using otherwise offensive language" (Moor, 2007, p.1). Note that his definition does not include any setting, it emphasizes only on the behavior of flaming.

Instead of examining the flaming phenomenon alone, this study will focus on the question why people flame in online forums. To answer this research question, a revised flaming model based on Alonzo and Aiken's model, was created to examine flaming in online forums and their connection to certain personality traits of the forum users.

Alonzo and Aiken (2004) had developed a conceptual model which measured personality traits as predictors of several flaming motives. Although this conceptual model is largely based on a model designed by Conway and Rubin (1991) to measure motives for watching television, it was adapted for flaming. In line with the television motive model, Alonzo and Aiken's Model of Flaming was also based on two theories: The Uses and gratifications theory and McGuire's motivation theories. Before discussing Alonzo and Aiken's model of flaming, these two theories will be shortly described.

### *Uses and gratifications theory*

The Uses and Gratifications theory (UGT) is a theoretical framework that is considered to be one of the most appropriate frameworks for examining psychological and behavioral tendencies in mediated communication (Lin 1999).

The Uses and Gratifications theory is based on three assumptions: (a) audience are active media users; (b) they are goal directed in their behavior; and (c) they are aware of their needs and select media to gratify these needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). Instead of focusing how media influence people, the uses and gratifications approach emphasizes on how the active audience uses and selects media. For researching personality traits as predictors for flaming in online forums, the uses and gratifications theory is a good basis to start with.

According to Katz et al. (1974), the uses and gratifications perspective focuses on social and psychological motives. These motives help to explain why people use certain technologies and what motivates the people to select certain types of technologies so they can achieve gratifications for the psychological needs behind their motives. Regarding the psychological motives, Alonzo and Aiken (2004) stated that in recent models of the UGT, personality is a factor that is becoming more and more important. Personality has a great influence on people's individual needs and thus affects the gratification they seek. That is why examining personality traits as predictors of motives, in this case flaming which occurs on the internet, is a good fit in the perspective of the uses and gratifications.

Regarding flaming, Alonzo and Aiken (2004) stated that the Uses and Gratification theory is very useful in examining flaming motives in electronic communication, because people can have a tendency towards this behavior to satisfy certain needs or to achieve certain personal goals. They argue that motives reflect one's needs and thus are observable and measurable (Conway and Rubin 1991).

As for gratifications, Alonzo and Aiken (2004) stated that fulfilling gratifications is different for each medium. As for television, viewers' needs may be gratified after an extra effort in calling to the television station. So there is no immediate gratification. However, internet users are in the position to achieve immediate gratification by posting on a forum or e-mailing.

### *McGuire motivation theories*

Conway and Rubin (1991) have linked personality traits to television viewing motives, whereas Alonzo and Aiken (2004) linked personality traits to flaming motives. In both studies, the personality traits were associated with one of the few studies in the UGT that focus on psychological variables as a way to understand human motivation.

McGuire (1974) is one of the few in the UGT who uses the nature of human motivation as a starting point instead of examining the gratifications first. He argues that from the human motivation, a person's needs and their way to satisfy them are examined which will lead to examining possible gratifications that a person can acquire. McGuire presented the only extensive analysis of psychological variables in the uses and gratifications theory. McGuire developed a classification system with 16 general theories of human motivation. The paradigms are divided by cognitive and affective. According to McGuire, the definitions of cognitive and affective motives are: "Cognitive motives are motives that stress the person's need for being adaptively oriented toward the environment and for achieving a sense of meaning. The affective motives are based on the individual's need to reach satisfying feeling states and to attain emotional goals" (McGuire, 1976, p.315) The other dimensions are: active/passive, internal/external and growth/preservation.

### Cognitive

#### *Stimulation theory*

The stimulation theory is a cognitive paradigm that helps to understand why a person has a need for stimulation. McGuire states that people have a certain 'hunger for stimulus'. To escape from boredom, people are seeking varied experiences and novelty. In their lives, they need a certain degree of stimulation. People that are living normal lives often are already satisfied, finding their stimulation or exciting experiences in mass media like television or the internet.

### Affective

#### *Tension reduction theory*

Tension reduction theory is an affective paradigm that explains why a person has the need to reduce tension. The theory suggests that people need stability in their lives. They are active and internally oriented (Conway and Rubin 1991). However, they will actively seek to reduce this tension as it is negative. Also, they will undertake actions and pursue experiences to reduce arousal in their lives (Alonzo and Aiken 2004)

### *Assertion theory*

McGuire describes assertion theory as a need to be competitive. People are seeking for success, dominance and admiration. In order to increase self esteem, people have to develop their potentials. Surpassing others is important in their life as well as needs for power and achievement. Interesting to see is that McGuire also argued that if a certain mass medium had a domain in which fantasy plays a role, opportunities would rise for the people that seek admiration and dominance. Even though they lack any power or dominance in real life, in a fantasy world everything is possible.

To operationalize McGuire's motivation theories, three psychological variables were established by Conway and Rubin (1991) and Alonzo and Aiken (2004). The stimulation theory was represented by Disinhibition seeking. Tension reduction theory was represented by Anxiety and Assertiveness was chosen as the variable for the assertion theory. Although the variable Creativity was also chosen in Alonzo and Aiken's flaming model, in the revised model it was removed. Therefore, the study will not expand any further on this variable.

### *Alonzo and Aiken's flaming motives*

As noted earlier, the flaming model is largely based on the television model designed by Conway and Rubin (1991). For establishing the flaming motives, Alonzo and Aiken adapted several motives that were examined in the television model, resulting in the following flaming motives: Pass time, Escape, Relaxation and Entertainment.

Taking all variables into account, the following model of flaming is established by Alonzo and Aiken.

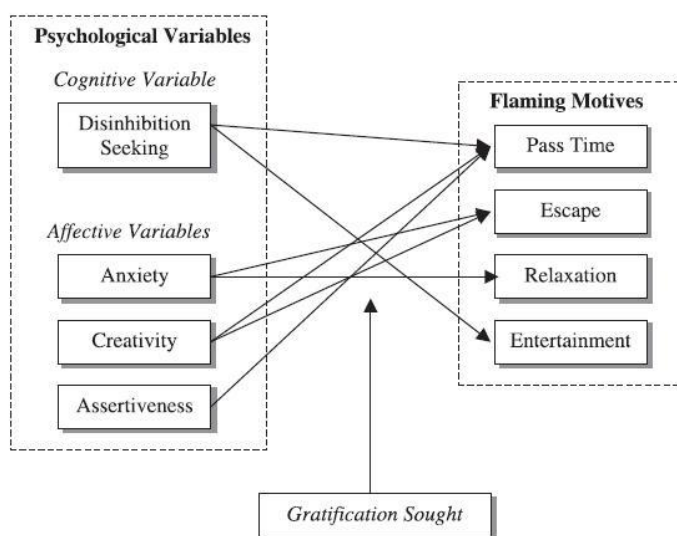


Figure 1. Original model of flaming

Based on the model, six hypotheses are examined whereby the psychological variables would be significantly and positively associated with the corresponding flaming motives as shown in figure 1. The flaming model was tested in an electronic setting using a group support system gallery writing program, where a total of 160 students anonymously discussed problems that were chosen beforehand. Afterwards, a self-assessed questionnaire was completed by the subjects.

### *Results Original flaming model*

Besides testing the flaming model, Alonzo and Aiken have also analyzed comments generated by the subjects. It turns out that 11.0% of all comments were classified as flames. The flames then were categorized by hostile (40.0%), swearing (28.0%) and name-calling (33.0%).

Analyzing the data, evidence was found supporting the hypotheses that Disinhibition is a predictor of the Pass time flaming motive as well as the Entertainment flaming motive being positive and significant at .01 and .05 level. Furthermore, the psychological variable Anxiety was indeed significantly and positively associated with the Escape flaming motive and Relaxation flaming motive with both a significance level of .05. Based on these results, it can be concluded that there are personality traits that can predict flaming. However, there also were personality traits that did not predict their flaming motives, thus rejecting their hypotheses. It is clear that it is necessary to adjust the flaming model for this research, so therefore a revised flaming model has been created.

### *Revised Flaming Model*

*Creativity.* Based on the results, the psychological variable Creativity was not significant with neither Pass time nor Escape, leading to the removal of Creativity in the revised flaming model.

*Assertiveness.* Analyzing the data of Alonzo and Aiken's flaming model, it can be concluded that the psychological variable Assertiveness is negatively associated with the flaming motive Pass time. This rejects Alonzo and Aiken's hypothesis that Assertiveness is positively correlated with Pass time. For the revised model, the link between Assertiveness and Pass time is removed. Based on Conway and Rubin's television model (1991), Assertiveness was a predictor of the television motive Status-enhancement with a significance level of .05. The choice to change the flaming motives will be discussed later on in this chapter.

*Anxiety.* The last modification in the flaming motives is the use of the psychological variable Worrying instead of Anxiety used by Alonzo and Aiken (2004) as well as Conway and Rubin (1991).



The most prominent reason is that the questionnaire which measured trait anxiety and used by Alonzo and Aiken as well as Conway and Rubin was not available for this research. After analyzing trait Anxiety, Worrying came up as a good alternative variable. Worrying and anxiety are two words that share an overlap with their definitions. Oxford dictionary defined anxiety as ‘feeling of worry, nervousness or unease about something with an uncertain outcome’., whereas worry was defined as: “feel or cause to feel anxious or troubled about actual or potential problems”. A lot of articles have examined the relationship between worry and anxiety with the outcome that it had a good correlation. (Constans 2001; Meyer 1990). *Additional flaming motive.* This research was also interested whether people would flame if they knew it could be done anonymous resulting in the new flaming motive Anonymity. In a previous study, a link between anonymity and uninhibited verbal behavior has been shown where people in electronic anonymous meetings initiated more uninhibited verbal behavior (swearing, insults and hostile comments) than they would in face-to-face meetings (Kiesler et al., 1984).

#### *Other differences between revised model and original flaming model*

As Alonzo and Aiken’s flaming model was the first to examine personality traits as predictors of flaming one can wonder if this flaming model could be applied in a different setting (online forums). According to Lee (2004) flaming occurs a lot in online forums. Flaming in online forums are real and expressed by real forum users. This differs from the setting of Alonzo and Aiken where the analyzed flaming occurred in a controlled setting (electronic gallery), as the participants were asked to discuss topics that were beforehand chosen by the researchers itself. In this research, it is not possible to select the discussion subjects beforehand, as it relies only on forum user’s experiences regarding to flaming. Furthermore, Alonzo and Aiken used only students as participants, whereas this research will focus on a more diverse population by approaching real forum users. It is expected that forum users are more familiar with flaming, because of their experiences on forums. There is also a higher possibility that forum users witnessed and/or anticipated in flaming in online forums, which makes them a good target group for researching flaming.

### Revised model of flaming

Taking the modifications and additions into account, a new revised flaming model can be produced.

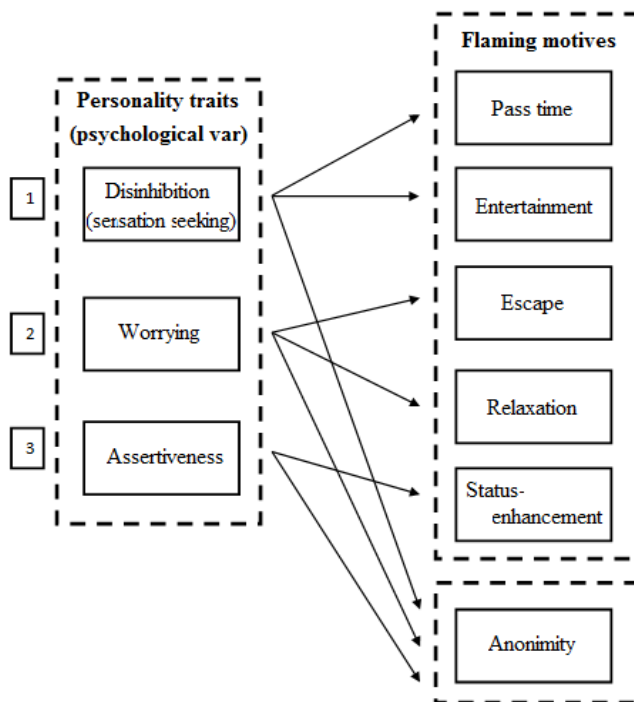


Figure 2. Revised flaming model

1. *Disinhibition (Sensation Seeking)*. Sensation seeking is a personality trait that explains the need for intense, new, varied and complicated experiences and feelings. Also, the willingness to take risks for such experiences and feelings are part of the 'sensation seeker'. People who are high sensation seekers, have the tendency to take greater risks. (Zuckerman 1978). Zuckerman divided sensation seeking in several subscales including the most important subscale Disinhibition, which occurs when social constraints break down (Hiltz 1989). When social control breaks down, people will engage in anti-social behavior which they would normally inhibit. Flaming is an expression of disinhibited behavior. Regarding sensation seeking, Alonzo and Aiken (2004) argued that people who have a higher desire for sensation seeking, are willing to take more risks to experience sensations. In combination with the lost of social presence and anonymity, there is no one that will stop them, no repercussions and thus allowing sensation seekers to exploit flaming.

As displayed in figure 2, Disinhibition is the predictor of both flaming motives Pass time and Entertainment. A higher sensation seeker, thus displaying a higher level of Disinhibition, have a higher possibility to take risks for experiencing new events and engage in anti-social behavior like flaming. A high sensation seeker can flame for pass time and entertainment

because he/she will be bored and to get out of that boredom, he will exploit flaming.

2. *Worrying*. The psychological variable Worrying is the predictor of the flaming motives escape and relaxation. In this research, Worrying will refer to as a form of tension or stress. When someone is worried, a negative tension is rising within that person. To lessen this arousal, the person has to release his feelings and thus reducing the negative tension. Releasing your feelings and thus the tension can be achieved in several ways: crying, laughing, yelling but also flaming. People can flame in online forums to for example escape the problems in real life or to relax and thus getting back in balance. Alonzo and Aiken (2004) reasoned that people who are active in an electronic meeting, might relieve their tension by flaming to 'loosen-up' and thus escape from real life. Regarding online forums where users are actively commenting and discussing to each other, this could be a reason for flaming in online forums.

3. *Assertiveness*. A personality trait that focuses on having confidence and/or being more dominant. As hence described, Conway and Rubin chose assertiveness as a predictor of the television motive Status-enhancement. They reasoned that if a person is assertive, he/she wants to be dominant, to be in control or having power through media use. When fulfilling that need, they would achieve a higher status and have more self-esteem. Regarding flaming, the expectation is that assertive people would flame to achieve a higher status in online forums. Furthermore, Alonzo and Aiken (2004) stated that flaming in electronic communication might allow a person to express one's opinions, attitudes and their need to exert power over others.

4. *Anonymity*. The reason why anonymity is being predicted by all three psychological variables, is the expectation that anonymity does play a role in flaming. However, no evidence has been found relating specific personality traits/psychological variables that predict flaming for anonymity. Therefore, all three psychological variables (Disinhibition, Worrying and Assertiveness) are the predictors of Anonymity.

### *Hypotheses*

Based on the new revised flaming model, the following hypotheses can be derived:

**Hypothesis 1.** A higher level of Disinhibition (sensation seeking) is significantly and positively associated with flaming for Pass time.

**Hypothesis 2.** A higher level of Disinhibition (sensation seeking) is significantly and positively associated with flaming for Entertainment.

**Hypothesis 3.** A higher level of Worrying is significantly and positively associated with flaming for Escape.

**Hypothesis 4.** A higher level of Worrying is significantly and positively associated with flaming Relaxation.

**Hypothesis 5.** A higher level of Assertiveness is significantly and positively associated with flaming for Status-enhancement.

**Hypothesis 6.** A higher level of Disinhibition, Worrying and/or Assertiveness are significantly and positively associated with flaming for Anonymity.

### *Method*

#### *Subjects*

Subjects were approached through four Dutch online forums by posting a topic, named 'flaming' where respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire provided by the link. Data were collected for over two weeks. In total, the questionnaire was started 205 times. However, due to incomplete or extreme bad entries, a total of 116 entries (56%) were removed from the data, leading to a sample size of 89 respondents. Analyzing the sample, respondents consisted mainly out of males, accounting for 93.3%. Female respondents accounted for 6.7%. The mean age was 29. The minimum age was of course 18, as this was set as a condition for participating the questionnaire. The maximum age was 58. In terms of level of education, the University had the highest percentage of the sample with 34.8%. The HBO followed with 30.3%, MBO 19.1%, secondary school 13.5% and primary school 2.2%. As for residence, the sample was classified into the twelve provinces of the Netherlands for easier interpretation of the results. As it turns out, the respondents were spread throughout the Netherlands. South Holland (15.7%), Overijssel (14.65%), North Brabant (10.1%) and Utrecht (10.1%) were the four provinces with the highest percentages. However, 13.5% of the respondents did not give an answer and 9% of the respondents were resided outside of the Netherlands. As the questionnaire did not have a condition that the participants had to resided in the Netherlands, these respondents were not eliminated from the sample. The subjects were also asked how much time they spent on the forum. Likely due to the choice of the forum tweakers.net, which is a popular and high visited forum in the Netherlands, 73% of

the respondents visited the forum every day. Respondents that visited the forum multiple times a week accounted for 21.3%, once a week accounted for 3.4% and once a month accounted for 2.2%.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, percentages, minimum and maximum of the descriptive (control) variables

Control variables	M	S.D.	%	Min	Max
Age	28.02	8.88		18	58
Gender	1.07	0.25			
Man			93.3		
Woman			6.7		
Education	3.82	1.12			
Elementary school			2.2		
High school			13.5		
MBO			19.1		
HBO			30.3		
University			34.8		
Spending time on forum	3.66	0.66			
Once a month			2.2		
Once a week			3.4		
Multiple times a week			21.3		
Every day			73.0		

Note. Education and Spending time were scaled into 4 groups, Gender was divided into 2 groups.

### *Procedure*

The questionnaire was distributed through four online Dutch internet forums, which consisted of two technological forums and two students forums. Before posting the questionnaire online, permission was asked to the moderators of two forums. In each forum, a new topic was started where the link to the questionnaire was provided.

The topic started with an introduction of the subject 'flaming' and the questionnaire. In one of the forums, the forum users were invited to begin a discussion about flaming, as this was the criterion of the moderator for giving permission to post the questionnaire. Furthermore, another criterion was stated that the participants had a minimal age of 18. This criterion was developed because of the wording of several statements in the questionnaire. In all forums, it was made very clear that participating the questionnaire would be completely anonymous.

In total, the questionnaire had 72 items, 5 items for descriptive variables, 20 items for flaming motives, 19 items for assertiveness variable, 12 items for sensation seeking and 16 items for worrying variable. The whole questionnaire consisted of seven pages, starting with an introduction page where the purpose of the questionnaire, a definition of flaming and

examples of flames were showed. The following page consisted of the descriptive variables age, gender, residence, level of education and time spent on the forum. Then, the flaming motives, sensation seeking, worrying and assertiveness variables were asked through four questionnaires in the following four pages. Each questionnaire started with an introduction text where the purpose of the statements and the scales of each questionnaire were explained. On the last page a thank you note was mentioned to the respondents for their time and an opportunity was given to them to e-mail if they had any questions or were interested in the results. Completing the questionnaire took around 10 minutes.

### *Questionnaire (variables)*

The questionnaire consists of several variables that examined the revised flaming model. The variables include in the questionnaire are control variables, dependent variables and the independent variables.

### *Independent (psychological) variables*

#### *Assertiveness: Rathus Assertiveness Schedule*

To measure assertiveness as a predictor of flaming, the shortened 19-item Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) was used. The RAS was translated into Dutch as the questionnaire was distributed on Dutch online forums. The original RAS consists of 30 items that participants complete through self-report. Participants have to indicate to which degree an item described them using a 6-point scale ranging from -3 (very uncharacteristic of me, extremely non descriptive) to +3 (very characteristic of me, extremely descriptive) (Lumley 2001). The maximum scores on the RAS ranges from -90 (low assertiveness) to +90 (high assertiveness). In this questionnaire, the range from -3 to +3 was coded into a 6-point Likert scale ranging from (1) +3 to(6) -3.

#### *Disinhibition: Sensation Seeking Scale*

For measuring sensation seeking, the 'SpanningsBehoeft Lijst (SBL)' was used. The SBL is a Dutch scale that was translated from the original Zuckerman sensation seeking scale, used by Alonzo and Aiken (2004). The SBL was developed by Feij (1984) and is a self-report questionnaire. There are 67 items in total; the DIS subscale has only 12 items. Each item represents a statement that the participant has to rate to which degree he or she agrees with. Each item is scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1. strongly disagree to 5. strongly agree.

### *Worrying: Penn State Worry Questionnaire*

To measure worrying, the Penn State Worry questionnaire (PSWQ) was used in this research. The PSWQ is developed by Meyer (1990) and is a frequently used questionnaire to measure worry. The PSWQ has a good validity for assessing the trait worry, the internal consistency is high and has proven to have a relatively good reliability through test-retest (Meyer 1990). The PSWQ has 16 items in total, which are scored on a 5-points Likert scale ranging from 1 ('not at all typical of me') to 5 ('very typical of me'). For this research, all 16 items were translated into Dutch.

### Dependent variables

#### *Flaming motives*

For examining flaming motives, a self-assessed questionnaire was developed using items derived from Conway and Rubin television motives (1991). Alonzo and Aiken (2004) also used a self-assessed questionnaire to measure flaming motives. However, in the original flaming model only four flaming categories were examined. For this research, five flaming motives will be explored in the revised flaming model:

1. Pass time;
2. Escape;
3. Relaxation;
4. Entertainment;
5. Status-enhancement.

Sixteen television statements of Conway and Rubin (1991) were translated into Dutch and reworded so they would be applicable for flaming in Dutch forums (e.g. 'I would flame because'). These 16 television statements had sufficient factor loadings, so they were chosen to measure the flaming motives. However, the results of Conway and Rubin had an effect on the diffusion of the chosen 16 statements, as there was not an even spreading. For example, Pass time has five statements where as Status-enhancement only has two items. Onward, four statements regarding flaming were developed and added to measure anonymity.

The flaming questionnaire uses 5-point Likert scales ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The participants are asked to imagine the statements regarding flaming in a forum. They then have to indicate whether or not they agree with the statements by filling in the scale.

### *Anonymity*

To measure anonymity in flaming motives, four original Dutch items were developed and added in the questionnaire of flaming motives. These four items focus on whether someone would flame if it could be done anonymous. All four statements emphasize on the variable anonymity, thus measuring in what degree anonymity plays a role in flaming.

### Control variables

#### *Demographic variables*

The following descriptive variables are present in the questionnaire: Age, gender, level of education, residence and how much time respondents spend on a forum. These variables can show differences in flaming on demographic level.

Thus, the sequence of the variables in the questionnaire is: 1. Demographic variables, 2. Flaming motives, 3. Rathus Assertiveness Scale (RAS), 4. 'SpanningsbehoefteLijst' (SBL) and 5. Penn State Worry Questionnaire (PSWQ).

#### *Data analysis*

For analyzing the data, PASW statistics 18.0 was used. Testing for reliability was done using several reliability analyses. For examining the flaming model, six hierarchical regression analyses have been executed. A significance level of .05 was used. As gender was a dichotome variable, it was scaled as value 0 woman and value 1 man. For the variable Age, it was rescaled into 4 groups: 1. 18-30, 31-40, 41-50.

As for the variable Assertiveness, the questionnaire itself had a range of -3 to +3. However, it was not possible to implement this scale into the online questionnaire. Therefore, the online questionnaire for Assertiveness had a scale of 1 to 6. Afterwards, the scores were recoded into the original range of -3 to +3 and summed up to get a total score for Assertiveness according to the manual.



## Results

### Pre-analysis

For testing the reliability of the variables, several reliability analyses were executed using the Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficients. Table 1 summarizes the means, standard deviations and Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficients of the independent and dependent variables.

Table 2. Means, Standard deviation, alpha coefficient of the independent and dependent variables

Measures	M	S.D.	Cronbach $\alpha$
Independent variables			
Disinhibition Seeking scale	2.90	0.61	.76
Worrying	2.88	0.92	.94
Assertiveness	0.29	0.96	.86
Flaming motives			
Pass time	1.88	1.01	.87
Entertainment	1.99	1.20	.94
Escape	1.62	0.92	.86
Relaxation	1.79	1.12	.91
Anonymity	2.10	1.18	.91

*Note.* All measures ranged from 1 to 5 on a 5-point Likert scale, except for Assertiveness which ranged from -3 to +3

For the variable Worrying, a remarkable high alpha of .94 was found which showed that it has a very strong reliability. Disinhibition and assertiveness also showed a strong reliability with a respective alpha of .76 and .86.

Analyzing the flaming motives, it is notable that all motives have a high reliability with alpha's ranging from .86 to .94.

Overall, all of the variables showed a remarkable high Cronbach alpha. Therefore, there was no need to moderate items for further analyses to achieve a higher reliability.

Analyzing the means and standard deviations, it is notable that the means of all variables can be scaled around the 2, except for assertiveness which had a different ranging scale. All of the other variables had a 5-point Likert scale. Especially for the flaming motives, all of the means are scored close to each other, showing small variance between the results. Thus, it seems that all respondents scored relative low on the variables.

### Model analysis

For analyzing the flaming model, several hierarchical regression analyses were executed to see whether the psychological variables would predict the flaming motives. Each hypothesis was tested with a separate regression analysis, which meant that six regression analyses were performed. The hierarchical regression analysis was stepwise divided into two

steps(or blocks) to see how much each variable accounted for their contribution to the flaming model. The control variables (demographic items) were entered in the first step. However, the residence variable was completely removed due to error in the regression analyses. For the second step, the independent (psychological) variables were added to the regression analysis. The flaming motives were of course the dependent variables.

*Flaming for pass time.* In the first step, the control variables accounted for 15.7% of the variance in pass time motive. In the second step, Disinhibition accounted for 15.8% of the variance. As shown in table 3, only the control variables Age and Time spent on forum were significantly correlated with flaming for pass time ( $R^2 = .16$ ,  $F[5, 56] = 2.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, the standardized beta coefficients were negative, suggesting that a younger age and less time spent on the forum would lead to more flaming for pass time ( $\beta = -.27$  and  $\beta = -.26$ ). These results do not support hypothesis 1, which expects a higher level of Disinhibition significantly and positively associated with flaming for pass time. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

*Flaming for entertainment.* Regarding flaming for entertainment, the control variables accounted for 12.0% of the variance. The psychological variable Disinhibition accounted for 12.2% of the variance in the flaming model. Only the control variable Age was significantly associated with flaming for entertainment ( $R^2 = .12$ ,  $F[5, 56] = 1.55$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In line with the previous flaming motive, it seems that again people of a younger age would flame for entertainment on a forum due to the negative standardized coefficient ( $\beta = -.29$ ). There was no evidence found that supported hypothesis 2 which predicts a higher level of Disinhibition was significantly and positively associated with flaming for entertainment.

*Flaming for escape.* The control variables accounted for 18.4% of the variance in the first step. In the second step, Worrying accounted for 18.8% of the variance, showing a slight improvement in comparison with the first step. Spending time on a forum was the only variable that significantly correlated with the escape motive ( $R^2 = .19$ ,  $F[5, 53] = 2.45$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Due to the negative standardized coefficient ( $\beta = -.35$ ), spending less time on the forum will lead to more flaming for escape thereby rejecting hypothesis 3 which predicts that flaming for escape was significantly and positively correlated with worrying.

*Flaming for relaxation.* The control variables accounted for 11.1% of the variance, whereas Worrying accounted for 11.2% of the variance. Spending time on a forum proved to be significant with flaming for relaxation ( $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F[5, 53] = 0.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, Spending time on the forum is negatively associated with flaming for relaxation ( $\beta = -.27$ ),

leading to the conclusion that spending less time on a forum leads to more flaming for relaxation. Elaboration on this conclusion will be in the chapter “Conclusions and Discussions”. No evidence was found for hypothesis 4 that flaming for relaxation is significantly and positively associated with worrying, thus the hypothesis is rejected.

*Flaming for status-enhancement.* Accounting 2.3% of the variance for the control variables, the psychological variable Assertiveness only accounted for 2.5% of the variance. No significance was found for the status-enhancement flaming motive, neither for Worrying or the control variables. Thereby, hypothesis 5 is rejected.

Table 3. Beta coefficients of the independent and dependent variables based on the hypotheses

Variables	Pass Time $\beta$	Entertainment $\beta$	Escape $\beta$	Relaxation $\beta$	Status-Enhancement $\beta$	Anonymity $\beta$
<i>Step 1: (R<sup>2</sup>)</i>	(.16)	(.12)	(.18)	(.11)	(.02)	(.10)
<i>Control variables</i>						
Age	-.27*	-.29*	-.22	-.08	-.07	-.26
Gender	.04	.02	.11	.18	.05	.03
Education	-.24	-.20	-.24	.02	-.14	-.07
Time spent on forum	-.26*	-.21	-.35*	-.27*	.01	-.18
<i>Step 2: (R<sup>2</sup>)</i>	(.16)	(.12)	(.19)	(.11)	(.03)	(.11)
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Disinhibition Seeking	.03	-.04	-	-	-	.00
Worrying	-	-	-.70	.18	-	.08
Assertiveness	-	-	-	-	-.04	-.02

Note. The  $\beta$ 's are standardized when entered at step 2

\* $p < 0.05$

*Flaming for anonymity.* For analyzing anonymity as a motive to flame, a separate hierarchical regression analysis was executed. All control variables were inserted into the equation in the first step. In the second step, all three psychological variables (Disinhibition, Worrying, Assertiveness) were entered. The control variables accounted for 10.1% of the variance whereas the three psychological variables accounted for 11.0% of the variance. The psychological variables as well as the control variables all failed to show a .05 significance thereby resulting in rejecting hypothesis 6, expecting that one of the three psychological variables (Disinhibition, Worrying, Assertiveness) would predict flaming for anonymity. See table 3 for more results.

## *Conclusions and Discussion*

It is obvious that the current flaming model is not suitable for examining personality traits as predictors of flaming in online forums. Based on the data, all six hypotheses were rejected meaning that the three chosen personality traits (Disinhibition, Worrying and Assertiveness) do not predict flaming in online forums. As the whole flaming model failed to show any effects between the independent variables and dependent variables, no additional analyses were attempted to increase the significance level. There is absolutely no significant effect found between the psychological (independent) variables and the flaming motives. However, a significant effect was found between two control variables and all dependent variables. The data showed that the control variables Age and Spending time on a forum had a significant influence on all of the flaming motives. It was interesting to see that in comparison with Alonzo and Aiken's control variables (2004), gender displayed no significance effect on the flaming motives, leading to the conclusion that gender did not play a role in flaming behavior.

Returning to the significant control variables, Age showed a significant effect on Pass time and Entertainment, both flaming motives that were expected to be predicted by Disinhibition in hypotheses 1 and 2. Although Age was significant with Pass time and Entertainment, it was negatively associated with Pass time and Entertainment. The negative standardized beta coefficient of Age suggests that the younger the age, the more flaming for Pass time and Entertainment will occur. As discussed earlier, age was categorized into four groups: 18-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60. Although the negative standardized coefficient concluded that the lower groups flamed more for pass time and entertainment, it is interesting to see that the mean age of the sample size was 28.02 with a standard deviation of 8.88 which is not surprising as online forums are often used by the younger generation of this time. This finding shows that most respondents are assigned to the first group (18-30) and thus creating the possibility that the significant effect found is not solely influenced by Age. The sample size displays a strong, focused tendency towards the younger age group, making it arguable whether the results and the significant effects found are reliable.

The second control variable that showed a significant effect was Spending time on the forum. Spending time on the forum displayed significance with the flaming motives Pass time, Escape and Relaxation. However, negative standardized coefficients were found for the Pass time, Escape and Relaxation, leading to the conclusion that spending less time on a forum will increase the effect of flaming for pass time, escape and/or relaxation. As described earlier, the variable Spending time on a forum was categorized into four groups (thus a scale from 1 to 4) and had a mean of 3.66 with a standard deviation of 0.66. This leads to the

conclusion that the sample size consisted of very active forum users, therefore it is interesting to see that the respondents who were not that active in comparison to their fellow-users were the ones that would most probably flame for Pass time, Escape or Relaxation. Looking at the negative standardized coefficients, a possible explanation can be the policy on forums that inactive forum users are not aware of.

All forums chosen for this research, used a forum policy. The policy clearly states that flaming will not be tolerated and users who disobey will be warned or even banned from the forum. It is possible that users who do not know about these rules (and thus the community on the forum), are not very active on the forum and therefore most likely could flame to pass time, escape or for relaxation. This explains why spending less time on a forum leads to more flaming for the three previous described flaming motives.

Although the two control variables showed significant effects on all flaming motives, the most important conclusion that can be drawn from the data, is that the current flaming model failed to answer the research question: If personality traits predict flaming in online forums. Based on the results, all hypotheses are rejected concluding that the three psychological variables cannot predict flaming in online forums. Several explanations are possible for this conclusion.

The most prominent explanation can be found in the questionnaire regarding flaming. With only a mean ranging from 1.62 to 1.99 for all 5 flaming motives, it is obvious that the questionnaire failed to analyze flaming behavior.

Before this research was conducted, it was clear that the hardest part of it was approaching respondents who would flame. Although the flaming questionnaire was developed using the exact but translated items derived from Conway and Rubin television motives model (1991) and that also proved to be significant, it failed to pick out the persons who would flame. Looking at the low results of the questionnaire, it can be understandable why all hypotheses were rejected. If none of the respondents would flame, then it is of course difficult to analyze whether flaming behavior can be predicted by personality traits. Another possible explanation for the low results is the fact that flaming is not something you can be proud of as some studies even categorize flaming as cyberbullying (Willard 2004). Thus admitting flaming can be something people are ashamed of, as it can be a sensitive subject. Although it is not surprising, one can wonder whether the results are trustworthy when asking the respondents directly if they would flame. Also, feedback on one of the forums pointed out that flaming did not occur often in their community, thus making it difficult to approach the specific respondents needed for this research. However, although not likely, it is possible that

all 89 respondents simply would not flame as it is not in their personality to flame. This statement has found support in the feedback of the users, as they commented that flaming does not occur very often in their specific forum.

Other feedback on the forum suggested that there was the feeling that all items on the flaming questionnaire represented the same, as flaming in general. There was no clear difference between the items representing the flaming motives Pass time and Relaxation. Also, some of the respondents commented that they could not imagine why people would flame for escape (e.g. "I would flame to get away from the rest of the family and others", appendix 1). It is true that some of the items were hard to imagine as a reason for flaming as they were too straightforward, suggesting modification in the questionnaire is needed. More will be discussed in the section Limitations and Recommendations.

Based on other feedback of the respondents, another possible explanation is that respondents have a different definition of flaming. As discussed earlier, the sample size of this research consisted of real forum users. There was a strong possibility that these users were already familiar with flaming, making them suitable for examining flaming in online forums. However, a disadvantage was that they defined and interpreted flaming different than stated in this research. Some respondents comment that the interpretation of 'offensive' flaming behavior differs among people. For example, some respondents categorized an offensive comment not a part of flaming, as it was just part of the discussion. Often, respondents pointed out that most comments were harmless. Also, some respondents replied that they were just not aware of comments that could be interpreted as flaming because they did not mean it that way. These findings are supported by Postmes and his associates (2000), where research found that some messages could look offensive to outsiders but were instead very entertaining for the users. Thus, it can be that for an outsider of the community on forums, misunderstandings are created regarding flaming leading to the believe that flaming occurs more often than in reality. As outsiders, there is a strong possibility that comments are misinterpreted, meaning that they were not that offensive as first thought.

Speaking of community, flaming behavior is often not accepted in the community forum. As discussed earlier, forum policy prohibits users to flame. When users do flame, it can eventually result in banishment of the forum. Besides the forum policy, moderators also monitor the forums. This makes it possible for the moderators to see whether users respect the forum policy and thus not engage in flaming.

Overall, the hardest part of this study was approaching the respondents who would flame to test the flaming model properly. As data showed, there was hardly any flaming behavior analyzed and thus making it very difficult to prove whether personality traits predict flaming behavior in online forums.

### *Limitations and Recommendations*

Looking back at Alonzo and Aiken's model (2004), one can wonder whether the current flaming model is actually suitable for examining the setting online forums. Their flaming model has proved to show several significant effects, concluding that personality traits were indeed predictors of flaming. However, as all hypotheses of this research were rejected, it is clear that there are several limitations of this research that influenced the results. Looking back at the descriptive data, an astounding 56% of the data were removed due to incomplete or bad entries. More than half of the entries were removed, leading to a relative small group of 89 respondents in total. With such a limited sample size, the recommendation for future research is to increase the number of respondents and making the results more reliable by distributing the questionnaire on more forums, perhaps even international forums. This brings us to another limitation of this research. The current questionnaire was only distributed in the Netherlands, therefore the results cannot be generalized. By distributing the questionnaire international, a better image can be achieved whether personality traits predict flaming.

Comparing Alonzo and Aiken's model (2004) with the current flaming model, it is notable that the personality traits are the same. A future recommendation would be to examine more personality traits as our personality consists of more components than only Disinhibition, Worrying and Assertiveness.

Analyzing the raw data of this research, it seemed that the questionnaire was too long, as most respondents only filled in the descriptive variables and the flaming questionnaire. The personality traits questionnaires were not filled in, thus creating incomplete entries and possible distorted image of the data. As discussed earlier, the flaming questionnaire was deemed too straightforward, items were all the same and sometimes hard to imagine, leading to the conclusion that most of the respondents did/would not flame at all. Whether the translation to Dutch was the cause of it is arguable. However, all these findings suggest that modifications are needed in the questionnaire. A recommendation would be to shorten the questionnaire as this questionnaire had 72 items and to rescale the items to avoid the interpretation that the items are alike. As for the items on the questionnaire, perhaps instead of a flaming questionnaire filled with straightforward statements, a better alternative would be

that the items are described in a story mode. For example, display examples of discussions/comments where a person flames and ask the respondents what he/she would do in the situation. Another way is to ask the respondent how they would respond to that certain person by choosing out of the 5 following options, making it easier to interpret their answers instead of open questions. Using this approach makes it probably easier for the respondents to imagine flaming in these specific, controlled situations instead of asking them straightforward whether they would flame in specific situations. There is a strong possibility that respondents would flame more and thus creating a more diverse variance in the flaming motives variables. Then perhaps the current flaming model will display significant effects of the personality traits on the flaming motives.

Although the flaming model has failed to show any significance on forums, a recommendation for future research would be to apply the flaming model in different settings. As flaming occurs in all layers of the internet, there are numerous possibilities in settings whereby this current flaming model can be used to study personality traits as predictors of flaming. For example, online newspapers; a lot of flaming occurs on online newspapers possibly due to sensitive subjects evoking strong opinions/reactions from readers. It would be interesting to apply the flaming model in this new setting, as there is a difference between forums and online newspapers. As described earlier in the Conclusion and Discussions section, flaming behavior is often not accepted in the community of certain forums. Although online newspapers have policies and moderators that prohibit flaming and remove flames from their website, there is no community present. Therefore, there is a possibility that flaming occurs more in online newspapers than on forums. Also, the fact that news articles can be sensitive because of their subjects can evoke flaming as discussed earlier. If this is true, online newspapers would be a suitable setting to apply the current flaming model and to test whether personality traits are in fact predictors of flaming.



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## Appendix 1

### Introductietekst

Beste Deelnemer,

Allereerst heel erg bedankt voor het deelnemen aan dit onderzoek!

Een voorwaarde voordat u verder leest, is dat u minimaal 18 jaar moet zijn om deel te mogen nemen aan dit onderzoek. Het onderzoek bestaat uit 4 kleine vragenlijsten die in totaal +/- 10 minuten zal duren.

Voor mijn bacheloropdracht onderzoek ik het fenomeen 'flamen' op online forums. Omdat het woord 'flamen' niet bij iedereen bekend is, volgt hier een korte definitie:

**Flaming:** "Het vijandig zijn door middel van beledigen, vloeken en/of andere aanstotelijke taal."

(Moor, 2007)

Flaming komt vaak voor in opmerkingen die geplaatst worden op online forums. Deze opmerkingen met vijandige inhoud heten dan 'flames'.

Om een duidelijk beeld te geven van 'flames' volgen hieronder een paar voorbeelden:

[..]:

*"wat een mietje zeg.."*

*En dat zegt een dikke vette troll als jij, die op geen enkele post van mietje inhoudelijk heeft gereageerd?*

[...]:

*XX, houdt je kop eens dicht, idioot.*

[..]:

*Als meneertje daar niet zo goed tegen kan en dan ff meteen de thread laat sluiten door meneer de collega mod, maak ik me daar redelijk pissig over*

[....]:

*Jij bent zeeeeeeeeer triets.*

*met je zieke reactie's zegmaar afkrakend bij andermans filmpjes,*

*Ga optiefen en ga niet zo zielig reageren bij andermans filmpjes tienjarige teef.*

Door middel van dit onderzoek wil ik informatie verkrijgen over het feit waarom mensen gaan flamen op online forums. Wat zijn de redenen om te gaan flamen? Uit onderzoek blijkt dat persoonlijkheidskenmerken voorspellers kunnen zijn van motieven om te gaan flamen. Een persoon met bepaalde persoonlijkheidskenmerken zal eerder de neiging hebben om te gaan flamen.

Dit onderzoek zal diverse persoonlijkheidskenmerken onderzoeken om na te gaan welke daarvan kunnen leiden tot flamen op online forums.

Het onderzoek is anoniem en dus zullen uw gegevens ook anoniem worden verwerkt.

Ik zou u graag willen vragen om de vragenlijst zo eerlijk mogelijk te willen invullen. Als u het niet zeker weet, wil ik u toch vragen om datgene in te vullen wat u het meest aanspreekt. Let op dat er geen foute antwoorden zijn, het gaat immers om uw mening.

Leeftijd:

Geslacht: Man / Vrouw

Huidige opleiding of hoogst afgeronde opleiding: Middelbare school / MBO / HBO/  
Universiteit / Anders

Woonplaats:

Geef aan hoe vaak u op het forum zit:

ongeveer 1x per maand/ongeveer 1x per week / meerdere keren per week / elke dag

Hieronder ziet u een aantal uitspraken die gaan over flamen op forums. Stel u voor waarom u zou flamen op een forum. Geef aan in hoeverre u het met de uitspraken eens bent.

Antwoordmogelijkheden:

1 : helemaal mee oneens

2: tamelijk mee oneens

3 : ik weet het niet

4 : tamelijk mee eens

5 : helemaal mee eens

**Ik zou flamen op een forum:**

1. Om de tijd te verdrijven, vooral als ik me verveel	1	2	3	4	5
2. Omdat het al wordt gedaan	1	2	3	4	5
3. Omdat ik het leuk vind	1	2	3	4	5
4. Omdat ik toch weet dat het anoniem is	1	2	3	4	5
5. Omdat ik me dan ergens mee bezig kan houden	1	2	3	4	5
6. Omdat het plezierig is	1	2	3	4	5
7. Omdat niemand er achter kan komen dat ik dan flame	1	2	3	4	5
8. Omdat het ontspannend is	1	2	3	4	5
9. Om indruk te maken op andere mensen in het forum	1	2	3	4	5
10. Omdat flamen gewoon leuk is	1	2	3	4	5
11. Omdat ik het zo anoniem een keer kan uitproberen	1	2	3	4	5
12. Omdat ik me daarmee vermaak	1	2	3	4	5
13. Om mijn zinnen te verzetten	1	2	3	4	5
14. Als er niemand is waarmee ik kan praten	1	2	3	4	5
15. Als activiteit met vrienden	1	2	3	4	5
16. Om de rest van de familie en anderen uit de weg te gaan	1	2	3	4	5
17. Omdat ik op deze manier ontspan	1	2	3	4	5
18. Omdat ik mij dan belangrijker voel dan in het echte leven	1	2	3	4	5
19. Als ik niks beters te doen heb	1	2	3	4	5
20. Omdat ik de personen (toch) niet ken	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende vragenlijst zal stellingen bevatten die gaan over assertiviteit. Er wordt namelijk gesteld dat een persoon die behoefte heeft om controle en macht te hebben over anderen, kan gaan flamen op het forum om die behoefte te vervullen. Op het moment dat die behoefte is vervuld, krijgen ze meer zelfvertrouwen en ook een hogere status op het forum. 'Status verhogen' is in dit geval de reden om te gaan flamen.

#### Instructie

Geef aan in hoeverre de volgende stellingen kenmerkend of beschrijvend zijn voor u door de volgende scores te gebruiken.

- +3 Zeer kenmerkend, buitengewoon goede beschrijving
- +2 Redelijk kenmerkend, vrij goede beschrijving
- +1 Enigszins kenmerkend, ietwat goede beschrijving
- 1 Enigszins niet kenmerkend, ietwat slechte beschrijving
- 2 Redelijk niet kenmerkend, vrij slechte beschrijving
- 3 Helemaal niet kenmerkend, buitengewoon slechte beschrijving

1. Ik heb getwijfeld om dates te accepteren of te ondernemen vanwege verlegenheid. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Als het eten in een restaurant niet voldoet aan mijn wensen, zal ik erover klagen bij de serveerster/serveerder. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ik vermijd zorgvuldig het pijn doen van andermans gevoelens, zelfs als ik het gevoel heb dat ik diegene ben die is gekwetst. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Als mij wordt gevraagd om iets te doen, wil ik graag weten waarom ik dat moet doen. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Om eerlijk te zijn, mensen gebruiken mij vaak in hun voordeel. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Vaak weet ik niet wat ik moet zeggen tegen een aantrekkelijk persoon van het ander geslacht. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Ik aarzel om bedrijven en instituten te bellen. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Ik zou eerder solliciteren naar een baan door brieven te schrijven dan via persoonlijke interviews. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Ik schaam me ervoor om producten waar ik niet tevreden over ben terug te brengen \_\_\_\_\_
10. Ik vermijd het stellen van vragen uit angst dat het dom klinkt. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Tijdens een woordenwisseling ben ik soms bang dat ik zo van streek raak dat ik ervan tril. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Ik vermijd het onderhandelen van prijzen met verkopers en winkelbediendes. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Als iemand valse of slechte geruchten over mij verspreidt, zal ik \_\_\_\_\_

ervoor zorgen dat ik zo snel mogelijk met diegene een gesprek aangaan

14. Ik vind het moeilijk om 'nee' te zeggen. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Ik heb eerder de neiging om mijn emoties op te kroppen dan een scene te maken. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Ik beklaag mij over de slechte service in een restaurant of ergens anders. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Iemand die probeert om voor te kruipen in een rij kan een weerwoord van mij verwachten \_\_\_\_\_
18. Ik geef snel mijn mening. \_\_\_\_\_
19. Er zijn momenten waarop ik niks kan zeggen. \_\_\_\_\_

De volgende vragenlijst zal ingaan op sociaal ongeremd gedrag. Sociaal ongeremd gedrag is een component van 'sensation seeking', een persoonlijkheidskenmerk die de behoefte aan intense, nieuwe, gevarieerde en gecompliceerde gevoelens en ervaringen aangeeft en de bereidheid om risico's te nemen alleen al voor zo'n ervaring/gevoel.

Op de volgende pagina staan een aantal uitspraken, die in meer of mindere mate op u van toepassing kunnen zijn. Geef aan wat u van deze uitspraak, d.w.z. of de uitspraak al of niet op u van toepassing is.

Antwoordmogelijkheden:

- 1 : helemaal mee oneens  
2 : tamelijk mee oneens  
3 : ik weet het niet  
4 : tamelijk mee eens  
5 : helemaal mee eens

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ik houd van wilde feesten zonder veel remmingen.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Ik heb iets tegen gokken, vooral als het om veel geld gaat.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Het is een erg fijne ervaring om na een paar drankjes een beetje aangeschoten te zijn.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Ik denk dat het op den duur gaat vervelen als je het steeds bij een en dezelfde sexpartner houdt.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Dat sommige mensen wel eens een slippertje maken, komt vaak door een begrijpelijke behoefte aan variatie op sexgebied. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Ik ga bij voorkeur met iemand mee uit die een sterke lichamelijke aantrekkingskracht op mij uitoefent.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. Dat er op een feestje stevig wordt gedronken, draagt bij tot een goede sfeer.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Het is fijn en afwisselend om van tijd tot tijd ongewone en opwindende ervaringen mee te maken, zelfs als die een beetje beangstigend zijn of niet volgens de gangbare normen.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Iemand moet vóór zijn huwelijk veel afwisseling op sexueel gebied hebben gehad.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Nog steeds worden al te veel plezierige dingen door de mensen als onbehoorlijk beschouwd.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Ik kijk graag naar veel van de seksscènes die er in films te zien zijn.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Met een paar borrels op, voel ik mij erg lekker.	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende vragenlijst zal ingaan op bezorgdheid/ongerustheid. Ongerstheid is een begrip dat deels overlap heeft met het begrip angst. Angst of 'Anxiety' is een vorm van spanning die mensen zoveel mogelijk proberen te reduceren in hun leven. Mensen hebben de behoefte aan balans en stabiliteit. Een persoon die negatieve spanning ervaart, zal niet in balans zijn en zal dus alles doen om die spanning te verminderen of los te laten. Een manier om die spanning kwijt te raken, is door je af te reageren of te uiten door middel van huilen, lachen of bijvoorbeeld te gaan flamen. Een persoon zou zich dus opgelucht kunnen voelen nadat hij/zij de spanning is kwijtgeraakt door middel van flamen.

Instructies: Schat in hoeverre de volgende statements bij u passen. Gebruik hiervoor de schaal van 1 ('helemaal niet typerend voor mij') tot 5 ('erg typerend voor mij'). Vul alstublieft alles in.

	helemaal niet typerend			erg typerend	
	voor mij			voor mij	
1. Als ik geen tijd heb om alle dingen te doen die ik wil doen, dan maak ik me er geen zorgen over.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ik bezwijk onder mijn zorgen.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Ik heb de neiging om me niet over dingen druk te maken.	1	2	3	4	5
4. In veel situaties maak ik me zorgen	1	2	3	4	5
5. Ik weet dat ik me geen zorgen moet maken, maar ik kan er niks aan doen.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Als ik onder druk sta, dan maak ik mij grote zorgen.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Ik maak mij altijd zorgen over allerlei dingen.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Ik vind het makkelijk om zorgelijke gedachten van mij af te zetten	1	2	3	4	5
9. Op het moment dat ik klaar ben met de ene taak, dan maak ik mij alweer druk om de andere dingen die ik nog moet doen	1	2	3	4	5
10. Ik maak mij nooit zorgen over iets.	1	2	3	4	5

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11. Als ik niks meer aan de kwestie kan veranderen, dan maak ik me er ook geen zorgen meer over.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Ik ben altijd al iemand geweest die zich zorgen maakte over alles en nog wat.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Het valt me op dat ik me altijd druk maak over dingen.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Als ik me eenmaal ongerust maak dan is dat niet zomaar weg	1	2	3	4	5
15. Ik ben altijd bezorgd.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Ik maak me druk om projecten totdat deze afgerond zijn	1	2	3	4	5

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**Bedankt tekst**

Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking aan dit onderzoek. Mocht u nog vragen hebben of bent u benieuwd naar de resultaten van dit onderzoek dan kunt u mij bereiken op e-mail: [bachelorthesisds@gmail.com](mailto:bachelorthesisds@gmail.com)