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Self-Representation on Facebook: What Does It Gratify?

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Abstract: The last two decades have seen a continuous increase in the use of social networking sites (SNS) amongst people of all age groups. Each individual has different motives and needs for self-representation on these sites, which are related to certain motives and needs. This research investigated four different socio and psychological motives of social and affection on Facebook by Pakistani youth. Data was collected from students at International Islamic University, Islamabad through a questionnaire by employing convenient sampling techniques. Results showed that Facebook users' main motives were social and affection, and exhibitionism, which were not the same for males and females as well as users of different age groups.

Key Words: Self-representation on SNS, Facebook, Motives of Self-representation. Age and Gender-wise Differences

Introduction

As a matter of fact, societal contact and communication with others are intrinsic yearnings and craving of human beings. Man has been using different technologies and tools for this purpose. The present age is termed as the age of technology. Social networking sites have got faster and more progressive growth in the recent past (Chang et al., 2015). In fact, social networking was initially created to satisfy user's personal communication needs. Millions of people became its users due to its

ease. The report Digital 2021: Global Overview estimates that 4.20 billion people use social media globally. This is roughly 54% of the entire world's population. This number is rising daily; since January 2020, active social media usage has increased by 13%, or 490 million people (Avocado Social, 2021).

As of the third quarter of 2021, there were 2.91 billion active users on Facebook, making it the most widely used and largest social network worldwide ("Facebook MAU worldwide 2020," 2021). In Pakistan, it is the

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most widely used social networking platform. Facebook users are growing in number in Pakistan. In terms of the Facebook user audience, Pakistan is ranked ninth in the globe ("Facebook users by country 2021," 2021). Facebook has a large user base and draws people of all ages. Facebook is a user's personal media platform that is important for self-representation (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfeld, 2007).

According to the uses and gratification theory, people employ media to represent themselves in accordance with their desires because of social and psychological demands. The Uses and Gratifications Hypothesis (Katz et al. 1973) sheds light on the gratifications that users of social media seek out and experience, as well as how these gratifications vary depending on the user. Also, people use social media to satisfy their desires. According to the communication model, people choose a particular medium that may satisfy their intended demands mostly because of their motivations (Rubin et al., 1988). The key finding of the motives model was that people are conscious of their motivations before engaging in any communication (Rubin et al. 1988). According to Charney and Greenberg people use the internet for the gratification of their needs such communication, pleasure, identity seeking, diversion, and entertainment and for their careers (Charney & Greenberg, 2001). Park and Floyd argued that with audience activity, individual social and psychological factors have an influence on communication motives' uses and gratification theory supports their work (Park & Floyd, 1996). According to another study, teenage and young adult Facebook use is associated with in order to investigate user motivation for maintaining pages, Papacharissi took consideration the concept of impression management. She discovered that website users alter the information on their personal webpage for purposes like spying, amusement.. professional advancement, diversion, social utiutility,d self-expression (Papacharissi, 2002). Based on definition of Goffman Papacharissi claimed, "a web page provides the ideal setting for the presentation of self-information, since it allowed a carefully performance crafted through impression management was achieved under optimal conditions." A Facebook member could be subject to similar allegations (Papacharissi, 2002). According to a research (Papacharissi and Rubin_2000), an individual's social presence and online motivations are closely related. Their key results also indicated that information seeking, as opposed to other interpersonal needs like face-to-face communication, is the primary driver behind internet use and is the primary reason why people communicate with one another online. Thus, research of Papacharissi and Rubins also provided proof that the internet is an alternative medium for people who usually avoid interpersonal face to face communication (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Dhaha & Igale (2013) explored six vital factors of using Facebook among the youth of Somalia. He discovered that the main reasons people use Facebook are for self-expression, amusement, passing the time, companionship, and knowledge. Brandtzaeg & Heim (2009) conducted research on 1122 users of social networking sites to examine how individuals used SNSs to achieve their goals. Both quantitative and qualitative

methods were used in their study. Their findings demonstrate a variety of Facebook motivations, including social usage interaction. individual identification, information seeking, and entertainment. However, the stated information, friendship, and amusement motives of Kim, Sohan, and Choi (Kim, Sohn & Choi , 2011). Hargittai conducted research on Facebook users in 2007. He highlighted the gender difference in Facebook use. He argued that men have less time, so they use Facebook very frequently than females. The motives of females were social needs, entertainment and passing time whereas men want to make new relationship thought Facebook, and female wants to maintain an existing relationship (Hargittai, 2007). a wide range of adverse consequences for their personal psychological well-being (Bányai et al., 2017; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Ryan, Chester, Reece, & Xenos, 2014). Facebook users might favour virtual social interactions to in-person ones. Using Facebook become their compulsive behavior. According to Wood, social networking sites are mediated communication platforms that enable users to communicate with one another by offering a variety of features that allow users to display traits of their desired constructed personal identities. This enables social networking site users to quickly determine what is appropriate for their self-representation. (Wood et al., 2015). In social media, self-representation is more obvious and evident than in traditional media. In the online world, amateurs place more of their attention on self-promotion than on engaging in productive activities where they can demonstrate their individuality and uniqueness (Burgess & Green, 2009). Facebook users may start regulating their emotions and engage cognitive in preoccupation, leading to stress and anxiety in actual life. Thus, they find difficulties in managing their lives and experience negative consequences in real life (Marino et al., 2017). Today's youth belong to the generation that was raised in the period of digital applications. As a result, they are genuine "digital natives" (Siegle, 2011). People, particularly young people, use Facebook for a variety of reasons. While there are many reasons why people use SNSs, establishing and sustaining relationships both online and offline is one of the main reasons (Alhabash & Ma 2017) (Kuss & Griffiths 2011, 2017). The benefits and pleasures can also vary depending on the Network used. Facebook, for instance, can be used to meet the need to belong and to show oneself. (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012).

Facebook is used by individuals to represent themselves in a flexible goal-directed way that enables desired self-representation to accomplish desired goals. Users both explicitly and implicitly reflect themselves (Enli & Nancy, 2012). Furthermore, Facebook allows users to reflect a constructed self-due to the lack of physical appearance. People may therefore be more eager to show themselves in particular ways to manage their best impressions of others and feel satisfied. This necessitates a need to determine the reasons why people use social media, particularly Facebook. As a result, the self-representation may have an impact on the satisfaction objectives that individuals have for their online self-representation.

Very few studies have been conducted to explore self-representation and Facebook user motives (Horzum, 2016). The current study's goal was to ascertain what motivates

individuals to use Facebook for self-representation.

A critical review of the available literature on Facebook shows that researchers have used the notion self-presentation instead of selfrepresentation (Savneet & Malik, 2012); (Grieve et al., 2020); (Gil-Or et al., 2015); (Noumeur, 2019); (Yu & Kim, 2020); (Kim & Ahn, 2013). Few researchers have used the notion of self-representation. People use the Internet to "reinvent themselves" in the virtual world. Internet users show their second selves in the virtual world there (Peachey & Childs, 2011). Furthermore, Human representation is based on how they framed themselves in photographs, images and text on the cinema screen and websites etc (Silverstone, 1999; Couldry, 2006; Martin-Barbero, 1993). The concept of self-representation is centered on symbolic forms created and then disseminated which link it to the field of representation. According to Thumim and Sara Enli when socializing online on Facebook, people construct their self- representation. (Thumim & Enli, 2012). Thumim argued that to participate in online social networks such as Facebook, individuals have no choice but to themselves (Thumim, represent 2009: Thumim, 2012). Therefore, it is very important to understand the concept of online self representation and the social and psychological dimension of human motives which individuals gratify through selfrepresentation on Facebook.

(i) The researchers designed the present study to address the questions that (1) what are the motives of Facebook users behind their self-representation on Facebook? and (2) Do people belonging to different gender and age groups have different motives of self-representation on Facebook?

Methodology

For data collection, a survey research technique was used. The survey method is useful to know the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of individuals. The population of the study was young Facebook users. A convenient sampling technique was employed for data collection. The sample mainly comprised of undergraduate students because recent studies indicated that Facebook usage is common among university students (Dogruer, .(2011 Students who were studying in the BS program of International Islamic University were the sample of the study. Undergraduate Students were selected as the population of the study. Initially, 250 students have approached out of which 177 students met the inclusion criteria (using Facebook), hence the final sample size was 177. Cohen, Cohen, Aiken and West (2003) proposed a minimum sample size of 150 for two predictors in the study. As this study mainly has two predictors which are gender and age, hence the sample size is appropriate. Students from the media and communication school who also Facebook were chosen as a sample. Out of 250 students, 177 had strong responses, of which 100 were from the female group and 77 from the male category.

The researchers developed a questionnaire for data collection considering the objectives of the study and related literature review. The questionnaire contained 12 different close-ended questions. The empirical indicators of social and psychological dimensions behind self-representation are social and affection

motive, recognition, exhibitionism, and cognitive motive. Literature shows numerous inventories of Facebook users' motives. Leung, (2013) identified social and affection motive, recognition motive, cognitive motives, and exhibitionism motive as the motives of self-representation on Facebook. Hence the researchers adopted Leung's dimensions of self-representation in the present study.

Four statements about Facebook use, including I use Facebook to share my interest, view, and thought, I use Facebook to understand myself, I use Facebook to voice out my discontent, and I use Facebook to let my anger out, were questioned to study the social and affection motive. Three statements—I use Facebook to promote my expertise, I use Facebook to establish my personal identity, and I use Facebook to obtain respect and support—were used to examine recognition motive and cognitive motive. I use Facebook to sharpen my thinking, and I use Facebook to attract people's attention, were two of the comments that were used. Three statements, including "I use Facebook because it makes me cool among peers," "I use Facebook because I want to gain renown," and "I use Facebook because I like when people think about me," were used to demonstrate exhibitionism. The survey had a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from firmly disagree to strongly agree (1932). Statements were used as the data gathering tools.

The researchers used ascending order for the level of agreement with the given statements. They coded strongly agree as 5, agree as 4, neutral as 3, disagree as 02 and strongly disagree as 01.

Data were analyzed by using SPSS. The questionnaire was consisted of two pieces of demographic information of students. It also contained 12 items that were related to the motives of Facebook users' self-representation. Data were analyzed by using mean value with the help of a computed sum of indicators and then the data was tabulated, analyzed, and understood in light of the study's goals. The researchers employed Cronbach alpha for examining the internal consistency of the data collection tool. Alpha Coefficient was calculated at .88 for 14 items. For the analysis of gender difference, the researchers used t test and ANOVA was used for the analysis age differences as these are most appropriate to measure reliability.

Sample Characteristics

The present study investigated gender and agewise differences among respondents. The researchers analyzed the demographic characteristics of the respondents, particularly in terms of gender and age. Table 1 given below shows Sample characteristics which are as follows.

Table 1. Gender and Age-wise Frequency Distribution of the Sample

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	α
MFB	20	100	58.84	.88
1. SAF	4	20	11.66	.80
2. REC	3	15	8.99	.78

3. COG	1	5	3.14	.72
4. EXH	4	20	11.28	.90

Initially, 250 individuals were approached for data collection, out of which data from 177 individuals (because they were fulfilling the inclusion criteria) were retained for the purpose of data analysis. As the table shows 43.50 % of respondents were males and 56.50

were females. The ratio of respondents below the age 21 was 42.90% and the ratio of respondents between the age 21 to 25 were 37.90 % and the ratio of respondent between 24 to 28 were 15.30 and 4% were above the age of 28.

Social and Psychological Dimension of Self-Representation

Table 2. Mean Scores of Social and Psychological Dimensions of Self-representation and Alpha Reliability of Self-representation Motives.

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage		
Gender	Male	77	43.50		
	Female	100	56.50		
Age	18-21	76	42.90		
	22-24	67	37.90		
	25-27	27	15.30		
	28 & above	7	4.00		

Key: SOC (Social and affection motive), REC (recognition motive) COG (cognitive motive) EXH (exhibitionism motive) COM (communication motive)

The collected data show social and affection motive (11.66) and exhibitionism motives (11.28) respectively, which are higher than other motives such as recognition motive (8.99) and cognitive motive (3.14). Data revealed that the major motive, due to which people represent themselves on Facebook is "social and exhibitionism" motive.

Gender-wise Differences in Self-representation Motives.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviation and T-test of Motives.

	Ma	Iales Females		95% CI					
Measures	M	SD	M	SD	t	p	LL	UL	Cohens d
SN	13.32	4.01	10.37	2.58	5.9 5.13	.00	1.97	3.93	.50
REC	10.25	3.24	8.02	2.50	5.15	.00	1.37	3.07	.45
COG	3.49	1.19	2.86	1.15	3.55	.00	.28	.98	.28
EXH	13.31	4.32	9.72	3.82	5.84	.00	2.37	4.80	.55

Results show that males scored (M = 13.32, SD = 14.10) higher as compared to the females (M = 10.37, SD = 2.58) on social motive. The difference is significant as t (177) = 5.13, p < .05). Similarly, males scored higher (M = 10.25, SD = 3.24) as compared to the females (M = 8.02, SD = 2.50) on the Recognition motive. Again, the difference came out to be significant t (177) = 5.15, p < .05). Results of cognitive motive shows that the male score (M=3.40,

SD=1.19) was higher than the female (M=2.86, SD=1.15) and the difference is significant as t (177) =3.55, p<.05). On exhibitionism male scored higher (M=13.31, SD=4.32) with significant difference t (177) = 5.25, P<.05). Results also shows on communication motive male score higher than female (M= 13.74, SD=4.05) the difference is significant as t (177) = 5.25, p<.05).

Self-representation Motives and Age Differences

Table 4. One Way ANOVA across Age Categories on Social Motive (SOC), Recognition (REC), Cognitive Motive (COG), Exhibitionism Motive (EXH),

Demographic s	Categories	SAN		REC		COG		EXH	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Age (Years)	19-21	11.30	3.25	8.95	3.037	3.22	1.239	11.41	4.398
	22-24	10.76	2.731	8.60	2.594	2.96	1.199	10.09	4.010
	25-27	14.33	4.641	10.00	3.731	3.33	1.144	14.11	4.191
	28 & above	13.71	4.645	9.29	4.071	3.14	1.345	10.43	5.028
ANOVA F		F=	F=	E _ 0/	F 5.87				
		8.35	1.39	F = .86	F 3.8/				
ρ-value		$\rho = 0.00$	ρ = .24``	ρ = .46	$\rho = .00$				

Note. SAN Social and Affection Need; REC Recognition Need; COG Cognitive Need; EXH Exhibition Need

Additionally, the findings demonstrate that people portray themselves as (M=1) The majority of students, 43%, are between the ages of 19 and 21, and they reported using Facebook for sociable, affectionate, and exhibitionist purposes. The statistics indicate that the average social and affection motive is (11.30). However, the data indicate that males and females alike have more objectives with an exhibitionism motive in the 25–27 age group. For exhibitionism, the mean is highest in the

same age range of 25–27, with 14.11 greater than recognition, cognitive, and exhibitionism motives. Ages 22-24 have fewer motives than other age groups. One-way ANOVA was conducted across four age categories on outcomes: social and affective need. cognitive need, recognition need, exhibitionism need. Findings revealed the significant differences present across age categories on social and affective need, and exhibitionism needs (as ρ < .01). However, there were no significant differences were

observed across age categories on recognition needs, cognitive needs (as $\rho > .20$; see table 4).

Discussions

The current study was designed to investigate the motivations/needs behind self-representation on Facebook among Pakistani youth. It did so by pursuing the assumptions of the uses and gratifications theory. The researchers selected students at International Islamic University, Islamabad through a convenient sampling technique for the said purpose. Analysis of collected data shows that Facebook users represent themselves on Facebook for the gratification of their motives such as social/ affection motive, and exhibitionism motive.

The result of data indicated that individuals mostly use Facebook because they want to share their interests, views, and thoughts with other people, as table 2 shows the high mean values of respondents on specifically on social and affection motives. These results are in line with earlier research (Yang & Brown, 2013). They also indicate that the social and affection motive as well as the exhibition motives for Facebook usage is neither culturally nor geographically bounded.

Findings also indicated that males scored significantly higher on all the social and psychological motives for Facebook usage. However, the finding was inconsistent with previous studies (Makashvili & Amirejibi, 2013)

The findings showed that young adult students want to repair their mood when they get bored by representing themselves on Facebook because it's fun for them to show themselves to others and receive encouragement. Several other studies show the same motive for Facebook use. It is in human nature they want to get other person's attention. So, for Facebook users, it's easy to exhibit themselves in front of others according to their desires because physical appearance and face-to-face communication are not possible on Facebook, so users can easily represent themselves in their desired way and can make themselves cool among peers. Through this, they can get fame and can become prominent among others. The results also substantiate the findings of Hollenbaugh's (2011) study. Furthermore, the researchers found that some young students represent themselves on Facebook to promote their expertise and their identity because, through this, they gain respect and support. A similar motive of Facebook users was found by Leung (2013). The study's findings support those of earlier studies that revealed Facebook users reveal personal information about themselves, with exhibitionism and social connectedness serving as the main drivers. Facebook users typically share updates, pictures, information about themselves in order to connect with others and to achieve their social and psychological goals.

The study by exploring age-wise and gender-wise differences amongst the users in terms of motives/ needs of Facebook users confirms the assumptions of uses and gratification theory in respect to social media too. It found that although there is a great penetration of social media amongst people of all age groups around the world the motives of social media (Facebook) is not passive and not the same among them. The uses and gratifications theory assumes that audience mass media using behavior is active, and not

passive; the audience get themselves engaged in mass media uses due to certain social and psychological motives, which they want to be gratified by mass media consumption. Although this theory was presented in the context of mass media. However, the researchers based the present study (which is related to social media uses) found that the uses and gratification theory can be employed for examining audience social media uses and their motives as well.

Although the study was limited to Facebook users only, however, researchers who wish to undertake further investigation in this area would do well to recruit users of all SNSs to come up with a clear generalization.

The primary drawback of this research is its cross-sectional design, which allows for the determination of only associations rather than causal relationships. Additionally, all data were self-reported, which can lead to self-deception and socially acceptable behavior. This is especially true for queries that examine the reasons why people use Facebook. Finally, the present work was limited to a sample of university-going students in a cultural context characterized by collectivism; thus, readers should exercise caution before generalizing the present findings to the broader population, such as adults and Westerners (characterized by individualistic culture).

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