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Motivations and Usage Patterns of Social Networking Sites: Exploring Cultural Differences Between United States & Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Cybernetics has experienced a major breakthrough and led to the utilization of computers at nearly all parts of daily life including social networking. Even though Social Networking Sites (SNS) is a global phenomenon, it is constrained by local conditions such as culture. Thus, the purpose of the study is to incorporate cultural dimensions to the motivations and usage patterns of the SNS considering SNS as a collection of features. Present study replicates a study made in the United States in Sri Lanka, and identified differences, trace them to cultural reasons. Findings revealed that while patterns of SNS usage do not differ across cultures, some of the motivations behind them do differ. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings, possible cultural reasons for differences and directions for further research are discussed.

Key words: Social Networking Sites (SNS); Facebook; Culture; US; Sri Lanka; Specific Facebook features; General Facebook use

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INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial human beings have been living in groups. In early days their basic requirements such as housing and food were fulfilled through group effort. Even though people started to live in different houses with the progress of civilization, they still depend on other members in the society for different needs. In the last two decades cybernetics have experienced a major breakthrough .This led to the utilization of computers at nearly all parts of daily life. The new technology has changed the existing relationships among individuals and has created new forms of social networking. These virtual communities (VC) link people around the world in a virtual setting (Hsu, Ju, Yen, & Chang, 2007). A virtual community can be identified as a "groups of people with common interests and practices that communicate regularly and for some duration in an organized way over the internet through a common location or mechanis" (Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002, p.273). According to Sproull and Faraj (1997) physical location is not relevant, numbers of participants are relatively invisible and logistical and social costs are lower in electronic communities. SNS are a form of rapidly developing VC. It is an "individual web page which enables online, human relationship building by collecting useful information and sharing it with specific or unspecific people" (Kwon & Wen, 2010, p.254).

Through the last 10 years, millions of internet users around the world have visited a large number of social networking and social media sites (Kim, Jeong, & Lee, 2010). According to Moerdyck (2012) awareness of the SNS is very high. Facebook is close to 100%, Twitter reaches 80% awareness and Google+ is known by 70%. Further, she mentioned that 7 out of 10 internet users are a member of at least 1 social network. This indicates that more than 1.5 billion people are using social network sites. World internet penetration is 30% and social media penetration are 22% (Kemp, 2012).

SNS such as Facebook has different features and members will have different motivations to engage with these features. It can vary from the motivations for general Facebook use. For example a member may log on to the Facebook only to use a specific feature such

as chat. Even though SNS is a global phenomenon, it is constrained by local conditions such as culture. People who live in collective cultures give more importance to real world relationships than online relationships (Jackson & Wang, 2013). Members in collective cultures like Sri Lanka invest more on family, friends and other groups than members in individual culture. Therefore, their SNS usage should be lesser than that in an individual culture.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1 Social Network Sites

SNS are the latest stages in the development of internet, further, known as a Web 2.0. It is driven by the user and combined with others. It provides an opportunity for users to present themselves and start or keep up connections with others. The most widely used SNS are Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter (Smith & Kidder, 2010). According to Smith and Kidder (2010) SNS such as Facebook become popular since their goal is making and spreading of a users' community. Apart from that, it is a way to shape personal identities of young people. These sites do not rely upon face to face encounter such as traditional social networks. In the beginning, Facebook relied more on offline contacts, but now it has changed. Some friends are second-order friends (friends of friends) or more than that, sometimes they have never met (e.g., political action groups). On the other hand, members in Second Life, and YouTube may have never met or not have any idea to meet (Clemons, 2009).

1.2 Motivations

Scholars have studied the impact of motivation on the use of SNS. Smock et al., (2011) highlighted that relaxing and entertainment, expressive information sharing, companionship, professional advancement; social interaction and habitual pass time are the main motives for use general Facebook and specific features. Relationship maintenance is the strongest motivator for using Facebook followed by passing time and entertainment. Coolness, virtual community and companionship are less important in this matter (Special & Li-Barber, 2012). Information dimension, the friendship dimension, and the connection dimension are the main dimensions to use SNS (Raacke & (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010). Major reason to join with SNS is to communicate with friends. Others reasons are looking at or posting photos, entertainment, finding out about or planning events ,sending or receiving messages ,making or reading wall posts, getting to know people better ,getting contact information, presenting oneself to others through the content in one's profile (Pempek et al., 2009). Joinson (2008) pointed out that keep in touch plays a key role to use Facebook. Further, he has identified that social connection, shared identities, content, social investigation, social network surfing and status updating as other factors. According to Quan-Haase and Young (2010) pastime, affection, fashion, share problems, sociability, and social information are the main motives to use Facebook. Tosun (2012) mentioned that the main motive is maintaining long-distance friendships. Others are; game-playing/entertainment, active forms of photo-related activities, organizing social activities, passive observations, establishing new friendships, and initiating and/or terminating romantic relationships. Moradabadi, Gharehshiran, and Amrai (2012) mentioned that motives for using Facebook are information sharing, freedom of communication, free flow of information, control of information, sense of equality and requirement for information and entertainment. According to Giannakos, Chorianopoulos, Giotopoulos, and Vlamos (2012) social connection, social network surfing, wasting time and using applications are the factors to use Facebook. Self-expression, media drenching and performance, passing time, information seeking, personal status, relationship maintenance, and entertainment are the motives to join with SNS (Dogruer et al., 2011). According to Pai and Arnott (2012) belonging, hedonism, self-esteem, and reciprocity are the four main values related to SNS.

1.3 Demographic Factors

Users' gender, race and ethnicity, and educational background are associated with the use of SNS. According to Valenzuela et al. (2008) relationship between Facebook use and students' social capital can be seen even when considering demographic, socioeconomic and socialization variables. There is a significant difference between younger and older adult behavior in time of completion and task completion in Facebook settings. Further, youngsters are more skilled in Facebook usage, whereas adults face problems in understanding privacy settings. And yet, both younger and older adults show fully open profiles (Brandtzæg et al., 2010). Younger users are more likely to use Facebook for news purposes (Glynn et al., 2012). Teenagers have a larger number of friends compared to older users and their friends are in their own age range (age ± 2 years) (Pfeil, Arjan, & Zaphiris, 2009).

The number of peers is a key factor on the continued intention to use SNS for women. The number of members has no significant effect on enjoyment for men (Lin & Lu, 2011). Men are mainly using friend networking sites for dating purposes and relatively they have a larger number of friends (Rack & Raacke, 2010). Females are negatively associated with using chat feature (Smock et al., 2011). Women are more likely than men to use Facebook for news related purposes (Glynn et al., 2012). Females are more satisfied with Facebook's ability to help maintain relationships, entertain and coolness of Facebook than males. Further males revealed more basic information and contact information than female. Females have higher privacy settings than males (Special & Li-Barber, 2012).

Moreover, women are favored with privacy (Rack & Raacke, 2010). Women like Facebook applications than men and men use Facebook to search something than women (Giannakos et al., 2012).

1.4 Cross Cultural Studies

1.4.1 Culture

"Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from another" (Hofstede, 2001, p.9). There are six widely used cultural models at present. These were developed by Kiuckhohn and Schwartz, Hall, Schwartz, Trompenaars, House and his GLOBE association and Hofstede (Bhagat & Steers, 2009, pp.3-21).

1.4.2 Hofstede

This cultural model, developed in 1980 with four dimensions and another dimension added in1991, is the most widely used model and was therefore selected for analysis in this study. Those five dimensions are as follows.

1.4.3 Power Distance

The extent to which, members think how institutional and organizational power should be distributed. It can be equal or unequal. Members in high power distance cultures are much happier with a larger status differential. They accept an unequal power distribution. Further there is a hierarchical system and downward communication flow. On the other hand, in low power distance cultures, power is collective and people think themselves as equals, and members are willing to share their ideas.

1.4.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance refers to the degree to which a society feels about the challenges arising from uncertain situations and attempts to avoid them. High uncertainty avoidance cultures wish formal rules and detest any uncertainty while low uncertainty avoidance cultures have a high tolerance for uncertainty, believe in taking risks and trying new things.

1.4.5 Individualism-Collectivism

Individualism-Collectivism describes the extent to which a culture believes in and has loyalty to the self or to the groups normally around the family. In high individualistic cultures there is little connection among the members and they have less shared responsibilities than collective cultures. They use "I" instead of "WE". However, in collective cultures, there are a strong group unity and harmony while they prefer to use the WE instead of I.

1.4.6 Masculinity-Femininity

Masculinity-Femininity indicates the extent to which a culture values assertiveness and the quality of life. It mainly denotes expected gender roles in a culture. People in high masculinity cultures believe in achievement and material possessions. Consequently they expect different roles from males and females in the society. On the other hand, feminine cultures trust less in achievements and more in quality of life while they favor equality between male and female.

1.4.7 Long Term vs Short Term Orientation (LT/ST)

Long term vs. Short term refers to the societies' time horizon. Long term oriented societies give more importance to the future. They exhibit values are as such as dedications, hard work and more saving. However, values of short term oriented cultures are related to the past and the present. And also they have a strong recognition for traditions.

1.4.8 Cross Cultural Studies About SNS

As SNS is an emerging field, there are only a few cross cultural studies about SNS. Some of them compare many cultures while others compare only two cultures. Following Table 1 summarizes the some of the cross cultural studies related to SNS.

Table 1
Summary of Cross Cultural Studies Related to SNS

Author	Context and respondents	Findings
(Vasalou et al., 2010)	423 FB users from US UK Italy Greece France	Experience with the site and culture, have an impact on users' intention for using Facebook, as well as their instrumental uses and the time they spent on the site.
(Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011)	349 US and 240 Koreans under graduates	Major motives for using social network sites: Seeking friends, social support, entertainment, information, and convenience are same between the two countries. Korean college students put more weight on gaining social support from current social relationships, but American students give comparatively higher importance on looking for entertainment.American college students' networks are bigger than Korean student.
(Jackson & Wang, 2013)	400 college student participants from a southwestern university In Chongqing, China -490 college participants from a midwestern university in the US	There is a cultural difference in SNS use. US respondents investmore time in SNS, believe it is more important and have more friends in SNSs than Chinese respondents. Personal characteristics are less effective in forecasting SNS use in China than in the US.
(Chapman &Lahav, 2008)	Young adults, aged 18-34, interviews of 36 respondents, 8-10 in each of the US, France, China and South Korea.	There are three aspects of cultural difference in social networking behaviors: the users' goals, the typical pattern ofself-expression, and common interaction behavior.

To be continued

Continued

Author	Context and respondents	Findings
(Marshall, Cardon, Norris,Goreva,D'Souza, (2008)	245 Indian university students and 241 American university students	Indian students, from a collective culture, and American students, who are from an individual culture, showed number of common communication forms. "Indian students reported communicationbehaviors considered significantly more individualist than the American students" (p.87).

1.4.9 Research Questions

RQ1: What motivations predict the use of specific Facebook features among Sri Lankan undergraduates?

RQ2: Are the motivations that predict general Facebook use different from the motivations that predict use of specific Facebook features?

RQ3: Will culture make any difference in the motivations to use Facebook specific features and general use?

RQ4: Will Sri Lankans (representing a collective culture) use Facebook features less than United State (US) Facebook users (representing an individual culture)?

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Context-Indian Subcontinent

The Indian subcontinent denotes a main part of the world's population. Historically, the Indian subcontinent has been a geographical and cultural unity. This uniqueness has been strengthened by natural barriers. This study replicates a study made in US in Sri Lanka, will identify differences, and will later try to trace them to cultural reasons. Since no scores on cultural dimensions were available for Sri Lanka, India is used as a proxy due to historical, religious and cultural similarities. Table below indicates the differences between India and US according to the Hofstede cultural dimensions.

Table 2
US and India (Hofstede Cultural Dimensions)

	Power Distance		Uncertainty Avoidance		Individualism/ Collectivism		Masculinity Femininity		LT/ST	
	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank
India	77	10-11	40	45	48	21	56	20-21	61	7
United States	40	38	46	43	91	1	62	15	29	27

Note. Source: Hofstede. G. (2001).

In global setting, key dimension of cultural differences is the individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1990 in Fujimoto, Bahfen, Fermelis, & Härtel, 2007). Based on previous literature, Jackson, and Wang (2013) mentioned that collectivism and individualism is the most important dimension for uniqueness among national cultures. Therefore this study mainly focuses on collectivism and individualism. Power distance dimension will be used to explain professional advancement motivation.

2.2 Sampling

Convenience sample which represents none probability sampling procedure was used in this study. The sample is 262 undergraduates from the University of Ruhuna Sri Lanka. It is located in the Southern province and one of the leading Universities in the country. Its rank for 2013 is third among the Sri Lankan universities. (Top 30 Universities of Sri Lanka).

2.3 Data Collection

2.3.1 Primary Data

In this study, researcher used self –administered questionnaire which includes closed questions. It consists of three parts. The first part is demographic factors (e.g. age, gender) and Facebook usage (e.g. experience with the Facebook, the number of friends). Next part includes the use of specific features. And the third part includes questions relating to motivations to use Facebook. Second and third part includes Likert type scale questions where respondents had to make their level of agreement such as; Strongly Agree, Agree, No idea, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 were assigned respectively for above mentioned categories.

2.3.2 Secondary Data

To compare Sri Lanka with US, secondary data were taken from the main article Smock et al. (2011). Mean, standard deviation and then number of respondents were taken from this source.

2.3.3 Measures

2.3.3.1 Dependent Variable (Use of Specific Features)

In this study, "use of specific Facebook features" is the dependent variable and measured by the frequency of use. Respondents had to rank how much they agreed with these statements on a 5 point Likert-type scales. The scale was directly adapted from Smock et al. (2011).

2.3.3.2 Independent Variable (Motivation to Use Facebook)

Motivations for using Facebook is the independent variable and was measured by using scales developed by Papacharissi & Mendelson (2011). Smock et al., (2011) used the same scale to measure the motivation to use Facebook. Respondents had to rank how much they agreed with this statement on a 5 point Likert-type scales.

2.3.3.3 Control Variables

Internet usage can be affected by factors such as age and gender (Valkenburg & Soeters, 2001). Following variables were used as controlled variables. Age, gender, and

internet usage per day was adapted from the Smock et al. (2011). Further, friends in Facebook, experience with the Facebook and main logging method were used.

3. RESULT ANALYSES

3.1 Factor Analysis

KMO value is .879 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant. In this case, the results of each method give evidence that the data were generally appropriate for factor analysis. After considering the normality of the data, principle axis factoring method was used to find the correlated items. In the original scale, there were nine factors called relaxing entertainment, expressive information sharing, escapism, cool and new trend, companionship, professional advancement, social interaction, habitual pass time, to meet new people with a single item. But after the factor analysis, data collected from Sri Lanka were divided into six factors.

Table 3
Rotated Factor Matrix

	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Because it's enjoyable		.673				
Because it's entertaining		.665				
Because it relaxes me		.785				
Because it allows me to unwind		.597				
Because it is a pleasant rest		.656				
To provide personal information about myself						.703
To tell others a little bit about myself						.754
So I can forget about school, work, or other things			.663			
So I can get away from the rest of my family or others			.792			
So I can get away from what I'm doing			.761			
Because everybody else is doing it			.625			
Because it is the thing to do			.566			
Because it is cool		.479				
So I won't have to be alone	.512					
When there's no one else to talk or be with	.596					
Because it makes me feel less lonely	.589					
It is helpful for my professional future				.573		
To post my resume and/or other work online				.673		
To help me network with professional contacts				.728		
To keep in touch with friends and family					.698	
To communicate with distanced friends					.774	
Because it is a habit, just something I do	.491					
When I have nothing better to do	.602					
Because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored	.695					
Because it gives me something to do to occupy my time	.675					

3.2 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was found to be high value indicating a higher level of internal consistency of the variables used in the study (Table 4).

Table 4
Reliability Scores

Factor	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha value
Relaxing entertainment	6	0.862
Passtime and companionship	7	0.822
Escapism and trend	5	0.873
Expressive information sharing	2	0.805
Professional advancement	3	0.768
Social interaction	2	0.764

3.3 Multicollinearity

Results suggest that there is no issue on multicollinearity. Tolerance values were above 0.1 and VIF values were below 10 (Table 5).

Table 5
Multicollinearity

Independent variables	Tolerance	VIF
Relaxing and entertainment	.554	1.804
Expressive information sharing	.650	1.538
Escapism and trend	.549	1.823
Passtime and companionship	.496	2.018
Professional advancement	.667	1.499
Social interaction	.807	1.240

3.4 Predicting Use of Features

In order to answer the first research question, regression analysis was used. Table 6 represents the results of the regression analysis. In regards to the status updates (R^2=.224) there were two significant motives. Expressive information sharing (β =. 240, $p < 0.01$) and professional advancement (β=. 272, $p < 0.01$), indicating an association between these two motives and use of status updates. Comments (R^2=. 304) had three significant predictors. Expressive Information Sharing (β =. 239, $p < 0.001$), Passtime and Companionship (β = .221, $p < 0.05$) and Social Interaction (β= 214, $p < 0.05$). Two motives positively predicted the writing on Facebook Friends' Walls (R^2=. 287). Expressive information sharing (β =. 239, $p<0.01$) and professional advancement (β =. 196, $p < 0.05$). Further, number of friends had a positive impact on wall posts (β =.144, $p < 0.10$). For the use of private messages (R^2 =. 286), there were two significant predictors. Expressive information sharing (β =. 256, $p < 0.01$) and professional advancement (β =. 360, $p<0.001$). Additionally, number of friends (β =. 132, $p<0.05$) and experience (number of years) in the Facebook (β = .289, $p < 0.01$) had a positive impact on the use of

private messages. Using the chat in Facebook (R^2= .217) was predicted by relaxing and entertainment motivation only (β = .522. , p <0.001). Further, there was a positive impact of the number of friends on using the chat feature (β = .215, p <0.001). Using Facebook Groups (R^2 = .189) was positively predicted by; relaxing and entertainment (β=.320, p <0.05), expressiveinformation sharing(β =.158, p <0.05), and professional advancement (β =.119, p<0.05). Additionally, age (β =. -116, p <0.05) negatively and number of friends (β =.122, p <0.05) positively influence on using Facebook groups. Facebook application (R^2=.309) had three significant predictors. Relaxing and entertainment (β =.523, p <0.001), escapism and trend (β=.268, p <0.01), and professional advancement (β =.234, p <0.05).

To find whether motivations that predict general Facebook use different from the motivations that predict use of specific Facebook features, regression analysis was used. Smock et al (2011) used time spent on Facebook per day as the dependent variable and the nine motivations as independent variables. According to the collected data, majority of them use internet less than one hour per day. Therefore, in this study experience with Facebook was used as the dependent variable and six motives were used as independent variables. Control variables were same. According to Vasalou et al., (2010) experience with the site has an impact on users' intention for using Facebook. Table 7 represents the results on experience with Facebook. General Facebook use (experience with the Facebook, R^2 =. 33) predicted only one motive, expressive information sharing (β = -.132, p <0.01). Additionally, internet usage per day (β =.203, p <0.001) and the number of friends (β =.156, p <0.001) were also predictors.

Table 6
Predictors of Facebook Use by Feature

	Status updates	Comments	Wall posts	Private messages	Chat	Groups	Application
(Intercept)	2.798	.448	1.991	.122	.664	3.284	2.451
Age	-.074	-.030	-.077	-.047	.004	-.116*	-.085
Gender	-.111	.175	.027	.134	-.067	-.106	-.046
How many hours do you use internet per day	.014	.062	.034	-.004	-.036	-.133	-.102
How many friends do you have in Facebook	.063	.086	.144**	.132*	.215***	.122*	.033
How do you log on to the Facebook account	.072	.080	.116	.163	-.165	.058	.107
For how many years do you use Facebook	-.052	.110	-.108	.289**	-.137	.093	-.082
Relaxing and entertainment	.202	.149	.166	-.017	.522***	.320*	.523***
Expressive information sharing	.240**	.239***	.239**	.256**	.063	.158*	-.034
Escapism and trend	.041	-.058	.003	.046	.081	-.075	.268**
Passtime and companionship	.101	.221*	.190	.166	-.093	-.019	.085
Professional advancement	.272**	.096	.196*	.084***	.134	.199*	.234*
Social interaction	-.144	.214*	.015	.360	-.044	.110	-.170
R^2	.224	.304	.287	.286	.217	.189	.309

Note. * P< 0.05, ** P< 0.01, *** P< 0.001

Table 7

	Experience with the Facebook
(Constant)	1.971
Age	.000
Gender	-.197
How many hours do you use internet per day	.203***
How many friends do you have in Facebook	.156***
How do you log on to the Facebook account	-.160
Relaxing and entertainment	.111
Expressive information sharing	-.132**
Escapism and trend	-.086
Passtime and companionship	-.050
Professional advancement	-.048
Social interaction	.092
R^2	.300

Note. Regression model of general Facebook use based on experience on Facebook (N = 262),* P< 0.05, ** P< 0.01, *** P< 0.001.

3.5 Supplementary Analysis

Correlations of dependent variables are presented in the Table 8. Factor analysis with promax rotation was performed. There was only one factor, so this could not be continued. There is not any impact of correlation on the objective of this study.

Table 8
Correlation Analysis of Facebook Features Use

	Status update	Comments	Wall posts	Private messages	Chat	Groups
Status updates	1	.491**	.451**	.204**	.265**	.227**
Comments		1	.529**	.420**	.424**	.335**
Wall posts			1	.337**	.386**	.318**
Private messages				1	.349**	.320**
Chat often					1	.449**
Groups						1

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

3.6 Motivations to Use Facebook (US and Sri Lanka)

t test was used to answer the third research question. Using the mean values and standard deviation from Smock et al. (2011) and survey data, *t* value was calculated manually. Only two dimensions contain the same items as in the original scale. Those were professional advancement and social interaction. *t* values were calculated only for these two dimensions. According to the t values, there was no significant difference between the two countries on professional advancement motivation (t = -10.78< $t_{0.01, \infty}$ =

2.58) and social interaction motivation (t = -0.96 < $t_{0.01, \infty}$ = 2.58).

3.7 Facebook Usage Between Two Countries

t value was used to find the answer to the forth research question. Table 9 represents the t values for the use of specific features for two countries.

Result suggests that there is no significant difference between US and Sri Lanka in use of Facebook features. According to the above Table, there is no significant difference between the two groups on status update on Facebook (t = -2.19 < t 0.01, ∞ = 2.58). When it comes to the comments feature on Facebook, no significant difference between US and Sri Lanka was identified (t = -0.87 < t 0.01, ∞ = 2.58). In relation to the wall posts result shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups (t = 2.55 < t 0.01, ∞ = 2.58). Results suggest that there is no significant difference between US and Sri Lanka in using private message on Facebook (t = -1.75 < t 0.01, ∞ = 2.58). When it comes to the Facebook chat feature no significant difference between the two groups can be seen (t = -1.09 < t 0.01, ∞ = 2.58). Further, there is no significant difference between US and Sri Lanka on Facebook groups and application usage (t = -7.89 < t 0.01, ∞ = 2.58) and (t = -1.72 <t 0.01, ∞ = 2.58)

Table 9
Use of Specific Features (US and Sri Lanka)

	US			Sri Lanka				
	Mean	Std. deviation	*N*	Mean	Std. deviation	*N*	Calculated *T*- value	Value according to the Table (sig, 0.01)
I update my status on Facebook often	2.96	1.19	267	3.19	1.23	262	-2.19	2.58
I use the comments feature on Facebook often	3.62	1.06	267	3.70	1.05	262	-0.87	2.58
I write wall posts on my friends' pages often.	3.42	1	267	3.18	1.16	262	2.55	2.58
I use the private messages feature on Facebook often	3.24	1.04	267	3.41	1.19	262	-1.75	2.58
I use Facebook chat often	3.32	1.29	267	3.44	1.24	262	-1.09	2.58
I use Facebook groups often	2.53	1.04	267	3.29	1.17	262	-7.89	2.58
I use Facebook applications often	2.77	1.19	267	2.95	1.21	261	-1.72	2.58

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Motivations to Use Facebook Features and General Use

As per Smock et al. (2011), six motivational factors significantly predict the use of specific features and general use (relaxing entertainment, expressive information sharing, companionship, professional advancement, social interaction and habitual pass time). In Sri Lanka, use of specific features and general use were predicted by five motivations (relaxing and entertainment, expressive information sharing, passtime and companionship, professional advancement and social interaction).This may be due to several reasons. In US, study sample consisted of 267 undergraduates from two entry-level telecommunication courses. In this study, sample included 262 undergraduates from different study disciplines. Further in US, 65% of the participants were male with an average age of 20. But in Sri Lanka, 66.4% were female with an average age of 24. Moreover, in Sri Lanka high percentage of respondents use internet less than one hour per day. Due to the technological advancement, internet usage should be higher in US. E-readiness ranking indicate that Sri Lanka is in the place 63 while US in 3 (Digital economy rankings 2010).

4.2 Comparing General Use Versus Feature Use

Expressive information sharing was a significant positive predictor of specific features but significant negative predictor in general use in both countries. Findings of this study support the arguments developed by Smock et al. (2011) that "examining specific communication behaviors on the site, as opposed to aggregated measures of use (p.2327). But three motivations (relaxing entertainment, expressive information sharing and social interaction) significantly predicted the general use in US. In Sri Lanka it was predicted only by one motivation (expressive information sharing). This may be due to the different measurements in general use. In US it was measured by time spent on Facebook, but in this study general use was measured by experience with the Facebook.

4.3 Cultural Impact on Motivations and Usage Patterns

Firstly, findings of this study indicate that motivations for SNS use differ between cultures. This is concurring with Jackson and Wang (2013) and Vasalou et al. (2010), but contradicting with Kim et al. (2011); motivations to use SNS were same between US (Individual culture) and Korea (Collective culture). This may be due to the different measurements in the two studies. In Kim et al. (2011), amount of use, number of friends and attitude towards the SNS were predicted by the motivations. But in current study, specific Facebook features were predicted by the motivations.

Secondly, current study suggests that there is no significant difference between the two cultures in using specific Facebook features. It is agreed with Marshall et

al (2008); Indian students, from a collective culture, and American students, who are from an individual culture, have a number of common communication forms.

4.4 Explaining Relaxing and Entertainment

Relaxing and entertainment were predictive motivation only for status updates in US. But when it comes to the Sri Lankan context it was a predictive motivation for one- to- one communication (chatting) as well as one-to-many communication (groups). Possible reasons may be collectivism and gender. Sri Lanka has a collective culture, in which people try to relax and entertain with other members. Gossiping is a way of entertaining in Sri Lanka and members like to know about day today gossip (such as meals, love affairs) of their families and friends. Further, females spend more time on gossip than males and females are more likely than male to gossip about close friends and family members (Jack Levin & Arluke, 1985). According to the data 66.4% were females. Bumgarner (2007) mentioned that Facebook operates primarily as a tool for the facilitation of gossip. Chat provides good platform for one to one communication and allows members to share day today life gossip while groups is a media to entertain as a group.

4.5 Explaining Expressive Information Sharing

In US, expressive information sharing significantly predicts use of one-to-many communication not one-to-one communication. But when it comes to Sri Lanka, expressive information sharing predicts use of one- to-many (status updates, wall posts, comments, group) communication as well as one to one (private message) communication. One -to-many-communication is the easiest way to provide information to the entire network. Expressive information sharing is the most important predictor for use of specific features in Sri Lanka. This might be a result of limited opportunities available for self-expression. Political parties and big companies influence public media. As a result of this influence, people are usually deprived of the opportunities to express their ideas as they wish in the mass media. Facebook removed that barrier and created a good platform for information sharing. Following are some incidents happened in the data collection period. There was a big discussion in Sri Lanka of Halal products. Some groups argued against the way of issuing halal certificate in Sri Lanka. But mass media gave little involvement in this issue. Consumer rights are not strong and they have very few opportunities to express their brand related experience. There are court orders against some brands because of some harmful ingredients. Still these brands are sold in the open market and are advertised in the mass media. Public media do not address these kinds of controversial issues because it directly affects their advertising income. Further, kidney disease is a serious problem in Sri Lanka. World Health Organization pointed out that “arsenic” is the main reason for this. Matters like non-enforcement of prescribed standards in food industry such as agricultural chemicals with arsenic are not discussed in mass media. In all these issues Facebook was the strongest platform for people to express their ideas.

4.6 Explaining Social Interaction

Even though there is no significant difference between the two cultures on social interaction, it predicts specific features in different ways. Comments, wall posts, private messages, chat and groups were predicted by social interaction in US but it predicts only comments in Sri Lanka. This indicates that in Sri Lankan culture, social interaction is a motivation to use Facebook but not significant in using specific features especially one to one communication. According to Jackson & Wang (2013) collective cultures give more importance to real world relationships than online relationships. Further, members in collective cultures used to have more stress and tension in online communication and prefer to communicate in person (Fujimoto et al., 2007). Collective culture may be the reason for contradiction between the two cultures.

4.7 Explaining Professional Advancement

There was no significant difference between countries on professional advancement. But it predicts specific features in different ways. Wall posts and private messages were predicted by the professional advancement in US. In Sri Lanka it was the predictive motivation for status updates, wall posts, private messages and groups. This may be due to the power distance in the two cultures. US culture is a lower power distanceculture than Sri Lanka (see Table 6). Members of the high power distance cultures have to publicize their achievements in order to gain respect. As an example entering in to the university is a great achievement in Srilanka and hence a commonly announced social event. Few percentages of students get an opportunity to enter the university from those who are facing the Advanced Levels (Final exam in the school). In 2010, it was 15.25% (Wijesooriya, 2012). Most of the students mention their university and field of study in the Facebook profile. After finishing the degree they update it in the Facebook with their graduation photos. Even some students mention about their thesis in the wall. Entire network can see the new status and qualifications of the individual, which is beneficial for them in finding career opportunities.

4.8 Contribution of the Study

Current research contributes some useful insights to the existing literature on SNS and extends the uses and gratifications theory. Further, this study introduces cultural dimension to the model developed by Smock et al (2011). Another contribution of this study is adjusting SNS usage motivations by applying it in to a new cultural context. Apart from that, the present study compares the phenomenon in an emerging and developed economy and explores the similarities and differences in the

two contexts. Finally, this study shows that patterns of SNS usage do not differ across cultures; some of the motivations behind them do differ.

Social media marketing plays a significant role in modern marketing. Marketers need to cross cultural data in order to design their marketing strategy. This study compares SNS usage in an emerging and developed economy which enables marketers to develop better social media strategy across different cultures.

5. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Implications for Research

Findings of this study will help to see "uses and gratifications theory" which assumes that "people communicate to satisfy personal goals (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974 in Perse & Courtright, 1993, p.485) from cultural perspective. Current study showed some differences as well as some similarities in the two cultures. For example, predictive motivations for use of specific features are different. But there is no significant difference in using specific features. This suggests that some aspects of SNS are universal across-cultures. In order to prove this argument will require more large scale cross-cultural studiessince members in different cultures maintain relationships in different ways. This may enable researchers to find relationships between SNS use, social capital outcomes, and loneliness across cultures.

This study proves the argument developed by Smock et al. (2011)

> dividing general use into different features accounts for a more detailed explanation of how motivations are related to use and, in some cases, pinpoints different positive and negative associations between motivations and uses that would not emerge in a study of general use (p.2328).

As a growing field of study, scholars can conduct more studies to explore above mentioned positive and negative associations.

5.2 Implications for Practice

Social media plays a major role in current marketing environment. Marketers can communicate with their target audience very effectively through social media. Especially this is a good opportunity for international marketers. Findings of this study will provide useful insights about social media usage in Sri Lanka to marketers who use Facebook as a communication tool.

Penetration rate of Facebook use is 7.09% ("Sri Lanka Facebook Statistics,") Especially Sri Lankan economy is rapidly growing after the 30 year civil war. This will create good business opportunities for people those who are willing to invest in emerging economies. If someone is interested in using Facebook as a marketing tool in Sri Lanka, he should be aware of the motivations that drive Facebook use. Especially members in Sri Lanka like to express themselves in the Facebook. As above findings it is easy to understand that if members think that a particular brand is prestige, they will promote it by themselves.

Next important finding is that social interaction is not a very important motivation in Sri Lanka. Thus members will not join with Facebook to interact with others. As it has already been illustrated, it may be due to the collective culture and they value real world relationships. As such, Facebook brand communities will not be a good marketing idea in Sri Lanka.

As Table 9 shows, applications are the least used specific Facebook feature. Therefore application based marketing strategy will not be effective in Sri Lanka. They can use other features for the marketing campaign such as promote members to share positive brand related information on their walls by arranging competition. For example, one will be getting a gift from those who share certain brand information.

LIMITATIONS

The study presented above is limited by some factors. In Hofstede study, he has not mentioned about Sri Lanka. Since no scores on cultural dimensions were available for Sri Lanka, India was used as a proxy due to historical, religious and cultural similarities. There are many SNS such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. But in this study, researcher selected only Facebook. Due to none probability sampling method it is difficult to generalize the findings. For generalizability will require larger cross-cultural data collection.

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