This thesis titled
A Survey Study on Uses and Gratifications of Social Networking Sites in China

by

YACONG YUAN

has been approved for
the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism
and the Scripps College of Communication by

________________________________________
Hugh J. Martin
Associate Professor of Journalism

________________________________________
Gregory J. Shepherd
Dean, Scripps College of Communication
ABSTRACT

YUAN, YACONG, M.S., June 2011, Journalism

A Survey Study on Uses and Gratifications of Social Networking Sites in China

Director of Thesis: Hugh J. Martin

This study is a test of the uses and gratifications theory on Social Networking Sites in China. An online survey of 353 subjects on two major SNS in China showed socio-integrative needs were the strongest motivation for all users who participated in SNS. However, some gender differences were also found. Males were more interested in finding news than female users. Males were also more likely than females to talk about their problems. Female users were more likely than males to facilitate social interactions on SNS. Other results showed low frequency SNS users participated in more activities than high frequency users. The number of friends each user had was not significantly associated with participation in different activities.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Hugh J. Martin

Associate Professor of Journalism
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express special gratitude to my thesis chair, Professor Hugh J. Martin. Professor Martin taught me the art of research methods upon my entrance into this program, which inspired me to be a professional media researcher as a life-long career. He has always had faith in me and my success. His encouragement is critical during my hardest time of my study at Scripps. He spared no effort to help me improve my research in every stage of my thesis, as well as my step further to become a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland. Without his support, this thesis would not have been completed, and I would not be successful as I start and continue my graduate career from Scripps. I love what I am doing now and will continue to do in the future.

This thesis could never been completed without the invaluable advices and exceptional effort from my committee members, Professor Hong Cheng and Professor Bernhard Debatin. They both offered special insights in research methods on international media on the Internet. Their feedbacks helped me narrow down my focus.

My heartfelt thanks also go to Professor Anne Cooper-Chen, Professor Michael S. Sweeney and Professor Joseph Bernt, without whose advice and enduring support, I would not successfully complete my study at Scripps. Anne is the first one who exposed me to the theories of uses and gratifications, which inspired me for this thesis.

I would also like to thank my friend, Xunan Guan, who has lent great help during my survey data collection session and invaluable effort during my study in the U.S.

Last but not the least, I want to give my special thanks to my parents. Thank you for raising me as a righteous person with devotion to the power of knowledge.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing Popularity of Social Networking Sites in China</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Social Networking Sites in China</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renren.com</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaixin001.com</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity of SNS among US Users</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity of Local SNS among Chinese Users</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Related Studies</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses and Gratifications Theory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Use of Media in Pre-Internet Era:</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U&amp;G Applied to Internet:</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Gratifications</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital Theory</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Use of Internet</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet and Social Capital</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNS and Social Capital</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Methodology</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages and Disadvantages of Survey Research</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Questionnaire</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Measures</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Spent on SNS</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Motivation to Use SNS</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-social Motivation to Use SNS</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Different Use-patterns between High and Low-frequency Users (RQ2b)........... 71
Gender Difference in Use Patterns (RQ2c).................................................. 71
Effect of Ties on SNS Usage (RQ3)................................................................. 72
Other Findings about Chinese Users ............................................................. 75
Nova Force of SNS: Business Elites............................................................... 75
The Rise of Chinese Twitter as a Social Media.............................................. 75
Solitary Usage among Younger Users ........................................................... 76
Limitations of Study ...................................................................................... 76
Conclusion .................................................................................................... 78
Test of Uses and Gratification in New Contexts ............................................ 78
Flexibility of Research Method................................................................... 80
References..................................................................................................... 83
Appendix A: Survey questionnaire (English)............................................... 97
Appendix B: Survey questionnaire (Chinese)............................................... 100
LIST OF CHARTS

Page

Chart 2.1: ANOVA: Average Activity by Employment Groups ...................................... 57
Chart 2.2: Compare Means: Average Activity by Education Groups ............................ 60
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Growing Popularity of Social Networking Sites in China

The past several years has witnessed the growing popularity of social networking sites (SNS) throughout the world. One of the largest potential populations is found in China. According to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology in China, there were 191 million SNS users by the end of March, 2010 (Li, 2010). The average SNS user in China has 2.78 accounts (CNNIC, 2009).

However, international SNS companies, including Facebook and MySpace, have so far failed to make significant inroads into the Chinese market. It is questionable whether the success of Facebook in Taiwan and Hong Kong, where traditional Chinese characters are used, can be copied to Mainland China where simplified Chinese characters are used (Mozur, 2011; Eldon, 2011). The mainland market is dominated by two Chinese companies, Kaixin001.com and Renren.com, which are ranked No. 16 and No. 18, respectively, among websites in China (Alexa, 2010a, Alexa, 2010b). The rank by country is measured by “a combination of average daily visitors” to the websites and “page views on the websites from users from that country over the past 3 months.” Facebook, which has over 500 million users around the world, has not even made it into the top 100 websites in China (Alexa, 2010c; Alexa, 2010d; Alexa, 2010f; Facebook, 2010). Most recently, Renren’s Initial Public Offering on NASDAQ has pushed Facebook to renew efforts to gain users in the Chinese market (Lee & Baldwin, 2011; Baldwin & Saba, 2011). Meanwhile, Renren’s competitor Kaixin001.com is also planning to go public this year to expand its business (Pepitone, 2011).
Facebook has at times been blocked visits from Chinese Internet users (McDonald, 2009). However, this study aims to find out what other possible reasons might explain Chinese SNS users’ strong preferences for local SNS.

Purpose of the Study

This study will examine Chinese users’ demand for SNS from a uses and gratifications (U&G) perspective (Katz, Gurevitch & Hass, 1973). I chose uses and gratifications as the theoretical foundation because it is “a theory fits well in the new information age” (Johnson, 2009). This study will ask what uses and gratifications Chinese SNS members are seeking.

This study aims to answer these questions with a survey of Chinese SNS users on Renren.com and Kaixin001.com.

The findings will be of general value to cross-cultural communication and media researchers interested in online communication. This study will help to identify how cultural differences might impact the needs people seek in their online social life in SNS. For another, this study will help to answer how online communities like SNS have impacted people’s social life and media consumption in one of the world’s largest media markets.
CHAPTER 2: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN CHINA

Overview

Renren.com

Renren.com began in December 2005 under the name Xiaonei.com (which means “OnCampus.com” in Chinese). In March, 2007, Xiaonei.com established access for oversea universities (Renren.com, 2011). After Facebook was banned in China, many overseas Chinese Facebook users then moved onto Xiaonei. In November 2007, Xiaonei expanded its network again to attract white collar workers and high school students (Renren.com, 2011). Its penetration into the high school market secured a growing future user base. In March 2008, Xiaonei offered access from a mobile phone log-on service (Renren.com, 2011). This was an important move because among the 457 million Internet users and 859 million mobile users in China, 303 million accessed the Internet via mobile phones by the end of 2010 (CNNIC, 2011). This means 66.2 % of all netizens in China actually are mobile phone netizens (CNNIC, 2011).

Xiaonei is owned by Qian Xiang Hu Dong (Oak Pacific Interactive), a private company established in 2002, which owns several Chinese SNS, including mop.com, dudu.com, renren.com, uume.com, banma.com and wowar.com (China InterActive Corp, n.d.). Xing Wang, founder of Xiaonei, is almost a Chinese version of Mark Zuckerberg except that Wang sold Xiaonei to Oak Pacific in November, 2006 (Sina Tech News, 2006) for somewhere between $2 and $4 million (Ye, 2011). Wang continued to found the most innovative SNS in China, including Chinese Twitter fanfou.com, and Chinese Groupon meituan.com (Rabkin, 2011). He dropped out from Ph.D. study in University of
Delaware to found a number of SNS before he founded Xiaonei from his undergraduate alma mater Tsinghua University in Beijing, the MIT of China (Rabkin, 2011).

In April 2008 the parent company of Xiaonei successfully raised $430 million US from Japanese telecommunication and media conglomerate SoftBank Corp., arguably the largest amount of investment attracted by a Chinese company in the Internet industry (Renren.com, 2011; Huang, 2010). In July, 2009, Xiaonei.com opened its application platform (Renren.com, 2011) to third parties. This was an important step in response to the fierce competition from Kaixin001.com after the latter achieved a peak triumph in its social game applications (Su, 2010). One month later, Xiaonei.com officially changed its name to Renren.com--which means “PeoplePeople.com”—to continue expanding its network from college students to ‘Everybody’ (Renren.com, 2011; Su, 2010). Two months later, Renren.com started a service called “Renren Connection” (Renren.com, 2011), which allows Renren users to log on to other niche SNS and third party websites (such as video sharing sites, music sites, game sites, restaurant rating sites, book-review sites, etc.) with their Renren log-in name and password. In March 2010, Renren.com embarked on the online job-matching market (Renren.com, 2011) to compete with other niche job-hunting sites from international conglomerates such as LinkedIn, Monster, Xing and local Chinese sites such as 51job.com (Song, Y. 2010). This might be detrimental for traditional online job-hunting sites because the successful job-matching rate via social networks and internal recommendations is 4 times of that via traditional blind job-hunting by CVs and cover letters, according to a professional Internet research company in China, iResearch (2010). On May 4, 2011, Renren.com branded itself as
“The Facebook of China” and raised $743.4 million in its Initial Public Offering on NASDAQ in the U.S. for further expansion (Lee & Baldwin, 2011; Baldwin & Saba, 2011). By April 2011, Renren held 36% of market share of real-name registered SNS in China, leaving its competitors Tencent (13.5%) and Kaixin001 far behind (Ye, 2011).

Kaixin001.com

Kaixin, a pun in Chinese, means both “to be happy” and “to open your heart” (Kaixin001.com, 2011). Although this site was established more than two years after Renren.com, Kaixin001.com had surpassed Renren.com in the amount of user flow by October 2008 (Huang, 2010). With sky-rocketing popularity brought about by its “spam and viral social games,” Kaixin001 has become immensely popular among Chinese white-collars (Su, 2010). By successfully attracting users from Renren.com in such a short period of time, Kaixin001.com became the biggest dark horse of Chinese Internet industry (Huang, 2010). During its peak in late 2008, Happy Farm, a resemblance of Facebook’s social game Farmville with different rules, attracted 15 million daily active users. The game still attracted over 10 million players in late 2010 (Lukoff, 2010).

Kaixin001 is a private company founded by Binghao Cheng, the former leading engineer from the Chinese online media giant sina.com (Kaixin Wang, n.d.). In response to the quick and overwhelming success of Kaixin001.com, a subsidiary of Renren.com’s parent company Qian Xiang Hu Dong (Oak Pacific Interactive, or OPI) launched a competitor site called Kaixin.com (Su, 2010). As if they were twins from the same mold, OPI’s copycat Kaixin.com has exactly the same Chinese name, same applications, and even same theme color and layout of homepage as the real “001” Kaixin (Huang, 2010).
Many users could not tell the difference and started out on OPI’s copycat Kaixin.com. The “001” site later got left behind and filed an intellectual property lawsuit against Qian Xiang Wang Jing in May, 2009 (Su, 2010). In the end, Kaixin001 (the real Kaixin) won the lawsuit but lost the portion of users already registered on OPI Kaixin. Four months after the filing of this case (September 2010), OPI announced its decision to gradually merge users from Renren.com and the copycat Kaixin.com into Renren.com (Huang, 2010).

Besides its success in the overwhelming popularity of online social games, Kaixin001.com has successfully integrated into its network public figures, media groups, companies, universities, public organizations and even government units to interact with average SNS users. For instance, in June, 2009, Xinhua TV (Xinhua news agency is comparable to Associated Press in the United States) became the first organization to join Kaixin001.com (Kaixin01.com, 2011). The following month, Shanghai Media Group (SMG), a multimedia conglomerate with 5,200 employees and capital assets of 1.72 billion US dollars, brought about 30 of its subsidiary media companies to join Kaixin001.com (Kaixin01.com, 2011). In February 2010, Beijing Capital International Airport joined Kaixin001 as the first airport in China to provide flight related information via SNS (Kaixin001.com, 2011). Two months later, the National Tax Bureau of Chongwen District in Beijing City joined Kaixin001’s network to publicize and inform citizens of tax-related knowledge (Kaixin001.com, 2011). It is the first government unit to join Kaixin001 but definitely not the last one. By September 2010, more than 2,000 organizations had joined Kaixin001’s network, including Red Cross China, The Chinese
University of Hong Kong, VisitBritain, Shanghai Shenhua Football Club, China National Women Basketball Team, China Central Television (CCTV), BMW, Mercedes-Benz, to name a few (Kaixin001.com, 2011). In May 2010, Kaixin001 started to equip itself with third-party applications (fecn.com, 2011), which expand its functional diversity with enriched user experiences. In December 2010, Kaixin001 presented a new function to its users – “Happy Group Purchase” (fecn.com, 2011), which is a resemblance application of Groupon in the States. By February 2011, total registered members on Kaixin001.com had broken the record of 100 million (Li, 2011).

*Popularity of SNS among US users*

According to the Adult and Social Network Websites study (PEW, January 2009): “One third (35%) of American adult internet users have a profile on an online social network site, four times as many as three years ago, but still much lower than the 65% of online American teens who use social networks.” The SNS giant Facebook has over 500 million active users (Facebook, 2010). There are more than 70 languages on the site, and 70% of its users are outside the United States (Facebook, 2010). Facebook is the second busiest website in the world, according to Alexa global traffic rank (Alexa, 2010). SNS has become so popular that Microsoft invested $240 million into Facebook in Oct, 2007 (Stone, 2007). In terms of its user population, “Facebook is now the third largest country on earth” (Stengel, 2010).

*Popularity of Local SNS among Chinese Users*

The same trend is taking place in China. “China is the world's largest Internet market by users at 420 million. About half of them use social networking sites,
government data showed” (Lee, 2010). The SNS market in China has also attracted numerous investments from competitors around the world. In June, 2008, Facebook released its simplified Chinese version and officially entered the Chinese market. Soon afterwards, MySpace from United States, Xing from Germany, Mixi from Japan, Cyworld from Korea and other SNS players entered the SNS market in China (CNNIC, 2009). However, their efforts to prevail in the Chinese market have not been successful. The two Chinese companies, Renren.com and Kaixin001.com, are winning the competition.

Kaixin001.com and Renren.com and are ranked No. 16 and No. 18, respectively, among websites in China (Alexa, 2010a, Alexa, 2010b). However, neither Facebook nor Twitter has made it into the top 100 websites in China (Alexa, 2010c, Alexa, 2010d, Alexa, 2010f). While Facebook is hesitating over its plans for an initial public offering (IPO), its Chinese competitors eyes investment from the U.S. Renren’s parent company Oak Pacific has launched its IPO in U.S. in May, 2011 with Morgan Stanley, Credit Suisse and Deutsche Bank; Kaixin001 and Taomee (a Chinese SNS for children) plan initial public offerings soon afterwards (Lee, 2010).
CHAPTER 3: RELATED STUDIES

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Half a century ago, Elihu Katz argued that media effects only exist when effects fit users’ demands (Katz, 1959). At the crossroads of the future of mass communication research, Katz pointed out a new direction for future researchers: a shift of the central research theme from “the study of mass persuasion” to the study of media uses by an active audience, thereby shifting the focus of media effects from “what media do to people” to “what people do with the media” (Katz, 1959). Although both media effects researchers and media use researchers “seek to explain communication outcomes” (A. Rubin, 1993), the former study the mass communication process from the communicator’s perspective, while the latter view media from the audience perspective (Windahl, 1981).

Social Use of Media in Pre-Internet Era:

There is no lack of studies focusing on the social and interactive use of media for relationship building, even before the creation of the Internet and social media. For example, one of the five grounding assumptions of uses and gratifications stated that “there are definite relationships between media and interpersonal communication for satisfying needs or wants” (A. Rubin, 1993). This implies an ultimate goal of media use is for interpersonal communication, a social use.

As early as the founding study of uses and gratifications, On the Uses of Mass Media for Important Things, Katz, Gurevitch and Haas (1973) tested the social needs fulfilled by different media. Through a survey with a sample of 1, 5000 Israeli adults,
they identified five categories of media needs: (1) cognitive needs to “strengthen information, knowledge, and understanding”; (2) affective needs to “strengthen aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experience”; (3) self-integrative needs to “strengthen credibility, confidence”; (4) social-integrative needs to “strengthen contact with family, friends, and the world” and (5) escape or tension-release needs (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973). They then identified a rank order of fulfilling the five needs across various media. For instance, books were the best medium for cognitive needs; film was considered best for affective needs; newspapers were the key medium for fulfilling self-integrative needs; and TV was considered most helpful to pass time and escape (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973). Particularly in fulfilling social integrative needs, they concluded that “it is the medium of film or television which contributes to friendship and familial solidarity… but the content of conversation is contributed by newspapers and books” (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973). It seems that at that time, no single medium was powerful enough by itself to fulfill social-integrative needs. Therefore, it is worth noticing what later changed with SNS – the convergence of various media into a single platform including news, videos, online games, interactive social communications, and other uses.

But in 1973, TV was the least specialized medium because it served a wide array of needs (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973). McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972), for example, classified four kinds of needs TV audiences fulfilled that were similar to needs identified in uses and gratifications: (1) diversion (escape); (2) personal relationships (social-integrative); (3) personal identity (self-integrative); and (4) surveillance (cognitive). However, despite its importance as a founding brick in uses and
gratifications theory, Katz et al.’s survey was carried out in Israel alone, so the findings may not be representative among media users from other parts of the world.

Based on Katz et al.’s (1973) finding that TV serves as the best medium for family consolidation, Lull (1980) focused on the social uses of television within families. Lull (1980), argued that TV viewing can also be used for avoidance, and he mentioned that in one family the couple observed only touched each other twice during a seven-day period. Lull interpreted such avoidance as a way to “promote family harmony by reducing interpersonal discord” (Lull, 1980).

However, Lull did not take a step further to ask this question: To what extent do people watch TV for socially-related purposes, and to what extent do they watch TV for non-social purposes? What is the relationship between the two kinds of motivations for watching TV (social purpose vs. non-social purpose)?

The same questions can be asked about SNS by comparing social use vs. non-social use. Therefore, a very important question to address in this study on SNS use is:

RQ1: What motivates Chinese users for SNS using?

The convergence on SNS of multiple media functions that were used for social purposes when those functions existed on separate media suggests a prediction:

H1: Chinese SNS users primarily use SNS to fulfill socio-integrative needs.

*U&G Applied to Internet:*

Song et al. (2004) reviewed previous studies and concluded that there is no essential difference between the basic uses and gratifications that audiences seek from traditional media and from the Internet. However, Slot and Frissen (2008) argued that
new characteristics of media use have emerged in the Web 2.0 era where people no longer just consume media, but also create, share, facilitate and participate in online communication. All of this makes the Internet, especially SNS, more interactive than traditional media. These new characteristics of new media have opened new fields for uses and gratifications researchers to explore further.

A central concept in the study of media use in the Web 2.0 era is user-generated content. Szuprowicz (1995) proposed three major categories of interactions that can result in user generated content: user-to-system, user-to-user, and user-to-document. Courtois et al. (2009) used this typology to develop their own categories of user generated content, media seeding, narrative seeding and metadata seeding. Media seeding refers to uploading photos, video and audio files; narrative seeding refers to user-to-user interaction such as posting blogs or forum entries; and metadata seeding refers to user-document interaction, such as tagging, rating or leaving a comment (Courtoise et al, 2009).

The study had the following findings: First, there is a divide between high-frequency Internet seeders and low-frequency seeders, (Courtois et al, 2009) In other words, 80% of user generated content is contributed by 20% of the users (Courtois et al, 2009). This finding is consistent with previous studies (Courtois et al, 2009, Sohn, 2008). Secondly, Courtois et al. (2009) found that there is a divide on the degree of gratifications received by high-frequency seeders and low-frequency seeders. However, the rank order for various gratifications obtained was identical for both groups when asked about media seeding, narrative seeding and metadata seeding. Third, the strongest relationship exists
between narrative and metadata seeding (Courtois et al, 2009). For instance, previous studies on blogs showed that people who often make blog postings (narrative seeding) also often refer to other blogs or comment on other blogger’s postings (metadata seeding) (Herring et al. 2005).

*Internet Gratifications*

Williams (2006) also asked if Internet activities provide the same uses and gratifications as face-to-face communication, suggesting this as a topic for additional research. Relating to that question, Kraut et al. (1998) found an *Internet Paradox* – “the Internet is a social technology used for communication”, but an increase in Internet use led to declines in social involvement and psychological well-being (Kraut et al, 1998). However, a three-year follow-up study found the negative impact of the Internet disappeared (Kraut et al, 2002), possibly because the audience matured with Internet use. More interestingly, they found that personal character affects gains and losses from Internet use (Kraut et al, 2002). Outgoing people with Internet access experience more gains, but shy people experience more losses (Kraut et al, 2002). Similar questions can be asked about SNS - what kind of differences there are in people’s use patterns of SNS.

Kraut et al. (1998) also pointed out that new media such as the Internet can either facilitate or discourage social participation, “depending on how they are used”. Historically, research on TV’s impact on social life has witnessed a number of contradictory findings that depends on how the media has been used (Kraut et al, 1998). Passive users might have entirely different losses and gains (or uses and gratifications)
than active users. These differences depend on whether users are seeking solitary or social gratifications.

Uses and gratifications theory has changed and matured in response to the development of new technologies, and what applies to traditional media does not necessarily apply to new media (Johnson, 2009). However, the above mentioned studies (Courtois et al, 2005; Herring et al, 2009; Katz et al, 1973; Kraut et al, 1998; Kraut et al, 2002; Lull, 1980; Williams, 2006) of both traditional and new media were not done in China. Chinese culture has the lowest individualism rank – a measure indicating group loyalty is emphasized over individual needs – of any Asian country, according to Geert Hofstede’s research on cultural dimensions. China also has an unusually high power distance ranking, an indicator that an unequal distribution of wealth and power is accepted in Chinese culture (Hofstede, 2010). Therefore it is worthwhile to ask some classic uses and gratifications research questions about SNS in China to see if findings from other countries also apply in China:

RQ2: What are the use patterns of Chinese SNS users?

This suggests two subsidiary questions:

RQ2a: What is the relationship between time spent on SNS and time spent on other media?

RQ2b: Are the use patterns of low-frequency SNS users different from high-frequency users?

RQ2c: Are the use patterns of male users different from female users?
As previous studies suggested, there is also a trend of old media displaced by new media, such as the time spent on TV being replaced by time spent on the Internet and home computer (Danko & McLachlan, 1983; Kohut, 1994).

Social Capital Theory

Social Use of Internet

Cooke and Buckley point out the Internet is playing an increasingly important role in socializing communication: “Web 2.0 is about making computing and media social” (2008). However, there is a debate about how Internet use affects social ties (Zhao, 2006). Some studies found use of the Internet actually reduces offline social ties (Kraut et al, 1998; Nie, Hillygus & Erbring, 2002). Another study found that online communication is a supplement to offline communication, instead of a substitution (Koku, Nazer & Wellman, 2001), therefore the Internet “is more useful for maintaining existing ties than for creating new ones” (Zhao, 2006). Still, others found positive relationship between Facebook usage and both “maintenance and creation of social capital” (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007).

This debate has not been settled. A study of Social Isolation and New Technology (PEW, November 2009) found that social media websites help people enhance their participation in the socializing process and reduce isolation:

The study found that SNS “provide new opportunities for users to maintain core social networks” (PEW, November 2009). For instance, “71% of all users of social networking services have listed at least one member of their core network of influentials as a ‘friend’ on a social networking service” (PEW, November 2009).
Social networking sites either help users maintain “a more diverse social network”, make users “more likely to belong to” a social organization, or “substitutes for some level of neighborhood involvement” (PEW, November 2009).

Zhao (2006), in a study based on the 2000 General Social Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, differentiated social and non-social use of Internet. The study examined the correlation between number of social ties people maintained and their use of the Internet. Social use of the Internet involves “direct contact with people”, such as emails and online chatting; while nonsocial use of the Internet involves “solitary activities, such as web surfing, news reading, and person-versus-computer gaming” (Zhao, 2006). Zhao’s findings showed that social-users are likely to have more social connections than non-social Internet users; and heavy solitary users are even more likely to have fewer social ties. The time spent on interpersonal online contact is positively related to number of social ties, and time spent on solitary online activities is negatively related to number of social ties (Zhao, 2006). However, the findings were not statistically significant.

Zhao raised two questions for future researchers: (1) “Does Internet use increase social ties?” rather than help maintaining more social ties; and (2) are there other factors, such as personality, which might affect the number of social ties and social use of Internet (Zhao, 2006). Zhao’s study focused on the correlation between use-patterns and the size of social networks instead of uses and gratifications sought and obtained by the users. However, he did not examine social media. Therefore, this study asks:
RQ3: What is the correlation between the number of ties people have on SNS and SNS functions they are using?

This also suggests two predictions:

H3a: People with more ties on SNS tend to engage in more social activities online (use more interactive functions of SNS).

H3b: People with fewer ties on SNS tend to engage in fewer social activities online. (use more non-interactive functions on SNS).

Internet and Social Capital

There has been a disagreement of the definition of “social capital”. For some researchers social capital is the social network itself (Coleman, 1988), but others consider social capital an outcome generated by the network (Forley & Edwards, 1997), and still others define it as both the network and the effect of the network (Putnam, 2000). Early scholars such as Coleman defined it as the value of functional aspects of social structure, consisting of the obligations and expectations people hold towards each other, based on the trustworthiness of their social structures (Coleman, 1988). Some later scholars such as Williams (2006) viewed it as the benefits people can get from their social network, for instance emotional support, or the ability to mobilize others.

There are also questions about whether online social capital will serve the same role of off-line social capital. Williams (2006) argued that the functions of the Internet and older media are becoming increasingly different, so new measures must be applied to study the Internet and new media use. He also pointed out previous studies examining social capital focused on the negative impact of Internet for relationship-building, such as
isolation, depression, and reduced time spent with families and friends off-line (Williams, 2006). The possible positive benefits the Internet brought to socialization have been given little attention (Williams, 2006). Like Zhao (2006), Williams also noted the conflicting views of the Internet: Nie argued that “the Internet could be the ultimate isolating technology…even more than television did before it” (Nie & Erbring, 2002), but ignored new social capital that might form online.

One the other hand, Kraut et al. (1998) at first found the Internet could encourage to isolation and depression, but later found opposite result in their follow-up study Internet Paradox Revisited: the Internet was related to increases in community involvement and trust (Kraut et al, 2002). The UCLA Internet project found that instead of reducing social time with family and friends, Internet use significantly reduced time spent on other media, such as television (UCLA Center for Communication Policy, 2001). However, Williams (2006) argued that the UCLA study, based on the time-spent measurement, did not account for possible changes in the total time spent on social activities. Norris has made an attempt to measure the social capital on the Internet, but did not differentiate online and offline social experiences (2002).

Williams (2006) argued for a more appropriate model to measure the social use of Internet. He constructed a model of social capital based on connections in four-dimensions, (1) online bonding, (2) online bridging, (3) offline bonding and (5) offline bridging (Williams, 2006). William’s model expanded Putman’s two-dimensional model of “bridging” and “bonding” connections (Williams, 2006). According to Putman (2000), “bridging” creates social capital that is inclusive, connecting people from different
backgrounds, and is consistent with the concept of a “weak-tie” proposed by Granovetter (Putman, 2000; Granovetter, 1973). “Bonding” creates social capital that is exclusive to close family members and friends, and is consistent with “strong-ties” in Granovetter’s studies (Putman, 2000; Granovetter, 1973). “Bridging” is helpful for getting new information and opportunities, but provides little solid emotional support. “Bonding” can provide substantive emotional support, but lacks openness to outsiders and new things (Putman, 2000; Williams, 2006). Wellman et al. argued that online social networks help maintain both weak and strong ties (Wellman, Salaff, Dimitrova, Garton, & Haythornthwaite, 1996).

Galston (1999) based his study of online community on entry and exit cost, and argues that high cost of exit helps to keep communities together. If we view exit from an SNS network as a loss of social capital, we can assume that the value of an SNS is based both on the size of a social network (weak-ties, or bridging social capital) and the quality of the network (strong-ties, or bonding connections). An example of the size of the network applies with telephone, “the more people that own telephones, the more beneficial it would be for a person to obtain one” (Sohn, 2008). I wonder if the same can be applied to SNS, the more friends a person have on SNS, the more beneficial it would be for this person to use SNS.

Previous research also showed that “individuals with socially oriented values are more likely to provide information for others than are those with an individual orientation” (Sohn, 2008). In a study on blogging behavior and subjective well-being carried out in Taiwan, which shares a similar cultural identity with China, Ko and Kuo
(2009) found that self-disclosure behavior in blogging actually helps to enhance the social capital people have, resulting in deeper bonds and broader bridging between people.

Sohn (2008) and Courtois et al. (2009) also found that a large portion of content on online communities is contributed by a small portion of active users. Sohn (2008) argued that since reciprocation is not compulsory in communication within an online community, it gave rise to a free-rider phenomenon (Sohn, 2008). This might be a typical explanation for lurkers on SNS. He also alerted that “the online community will stop functioning” if everyone decides to have a free ride (Sohn, 2008). However, the reality does not seem to be the case, since some SNS members are fonder of adding content than the others.

The literature on social capital suggests RQ2 about patterns of use on SNS and RQ3 about correlations between ties and activities should focus on activities associated with different aspects of social capital.

**SNS and Social Capital**

While “Internet use alone did not predict social capital accumulation”, certain types of SNS usage such as “intensive use of Facebook did” (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). Despite the debate about potential differences between online social capital and off-line social capital social media researchers found a new trend: SNS provide a platform for transforming offline social capital into online social capital. SNS are a way to maintain and intensify existing social capital, especially when people move to a new geographic location (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). Researchers also
found strong correlations between Facebook usage and both bonding (strong-tie) and bridging (weak-tie) social capital. Facebook is especially helpful for building bridging social capital (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). Thus, SNS are playing a crucial role helping people maintain old friendships and develop new friendships, including both bonding and bridging social capital.

However, Ellison et al.’s study (2007) was carried out among college students from one university, thus their conclusion cannot be generalized to a larger population in other geographic areas or a broader age group. Their hypothesis needs further examination in a more diverse population of SNS users.

In their most recent subsequent study, Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2011) found “an interplay between offline and online communication”, which is an expansion from previous studies focused on a one-way social capital model, either by “online to offline” or “offline to online” measures (Ellison et al, 2007).

This most recent research (Ellison et al, 2011) found that Facebook usage is most beneficial for “social information seekers” who seek to turn latent ties (Haythornthwaite, 2005) into weak ties and build up bonding social capital. Facebook has less impact on maintaining strong ties or bonding social capital. This is because close friends always have multiple ways of communication and thus are less reliant on Facebook (Ellison et al, 2011). This finding is also consistent with Haythornthwaite’s finding (2005) that “introducing a medium can create latent tie connectivity among group members that provides the technical means for activating weak ties.”
International Studies on SNS

Quite a number of studies have been done on the motivations and use patterns of SNS among U.S. users (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ancu & Cozma, 2009; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006; Lampe, Wash, Velasquez & Ozakaya, 2010; Stafford, T.F., Stafford M.R. & Schkade, 2004; Nie & Erbring, 2000), but fewer studies have been done on uses and gratifications international SNS users seek (Balaban, 2010; Chapman & Lahav, 2008; Ogan & Cagiltay, 2006). Balaban (2010) did a qualitative study on Romanian students’ motivation for using SNS by comparing three focus groups: frequent users, occasional users and non-users. A focus group might be more appropriate after getting an overview of SNS use in a survey. Balaban (2001) found that among the four uses and gratification needs, a social-integrative need is the major motivation driving users to use SNS. Chapman and Lahav (2008) did a comparative study of cross-cultural differences in the use patterns of SNS via in-depth interviews in four countries, including the US, France, China and South Korea. Chapman and Lahav’s study found that “social networking behaviors clearly vary from culture to culture” (2008). While U.S. users use SNS mainly to share personal information and broadcast their activities, Chinese SNS users are more driven by displaying their online persona, gaming and discussing lifestyles and political interest (Chapman & Lahav, 2008). Ogan and Cagiltay’s survey of 4,531 users of Itiraf.com, the Turkish confession social site, found different use patterns of Turkish respondents living in other countries (2006). Bargh and McKenna, in their study of Internet and social life, also pointed out that it is almost impossible to interpret the
underlying motivation for people’s usage of media without taking social, economic, and cultural context into account (2004).

As no quantitative study has been done on Chinese SNS users, which is the largest SNS population on this planet, this study will address some classical uses and gratifications questions to Chinese SNS users.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This section summarizes the research questions and hypotheses developed from the preliminary literature reviews.

This study sought to find out why and how Chinese people use SNS, and the relationship between their social capital and SNS use. Therefore, the study tested the following questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: What motivates Chinese users for SNS using?

This suggests the following prediction:

H1: Chinese SNS users primarily use SNS to fulfill socio-integrative needs.

RQ2: What are the use patterns of Chinese SNS users?

This suggests two subsidiary questions:

RQ2a: What is the relationship between time spent on SNS and time spent on other media?

RQ2b: Are the use patterns of low-frequency SNS users different from high-frequency users?

RQ2c: Are the use patterns of male users different from female users?
RQ3: What is the correlation between the number of ties people have on SNS and SNS functions they are using?

This also suggests two predictions:

H3a: People with more ties on SNS tend to engage in more social activities online (use more interactive functions of SNS).

H3b: People with fewer ties on SNS tend to engage in fewer social activities online. (use more non-interactive functions on SNS).
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

To best evaluate the uses and gratification patterns of Chinese SNS users, the researcher conducted an online survey via Zoomerang.com (an online survey hosting site) between February 1st – 17th, 2011. The survey questionnaire was distributed in Chinese, which is the native language of potential participants on SNS in China.

The survey was not random, which means results cannot be generalized to the larger population of SNS users. However, findings about uses and gratifications that survey respondents seek can be analyzed for consistency with the theory and with findings from previous studies.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Survey Research

According to Wimmer and Dominick, there are several distinctive advantages of survey research: First of all, “a large amount of data can be collected with relative ease from a variety of people” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p179); Secondly, “surveys are not constrained by geographic boundaries” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p180), which is essential for this study since one of my research questions is to look at the patterns of SNS activities among Chinese users. Online surveys are also extremely helpful for collecting responses from users scattered all over the world without geographic boundaries.

The disadvantages of survey research include less control over independent variables than one can have in an experiment. This can make it difficult to identify relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. Another disadvantage is possible biased results from misleading wording in a questionnaire, or
mistakenly collecting data from the wrong respondents (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p.181). To overcome the second disadvantage, I conducted a pilot study to minimize possible misunderstandings in the questionnaire wording. Also, the distribution of the survey to SNS users in the first place has minimized the possibility of collecting data from the wrong respondents.

The Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was developed and adapted from several previous studies: Gratifications and Seeding Behavior of Online Adolescents by Courtois, Mechant, De Marez and Verleye (2009), 2009 Report on Chinese Netizens’ Uses of Social Networking Sites by CNNIC (2009) and PEW Internet & American Life Project (January 2009, November 2009). Both the pilot study and the online survey were distributed in simplified Chinese, which is the native language of SNS users in China. The complete questionnaire, in both English and Chinese, can be seen in Appendix A & B.

The Measures

Time Spent on SNS

To explore patterns of SNS use, time spent on SNS is measured by two variables in the questionnaire’s section I. Firstly, time spent per session is measured categorically: (1) 0-1 hours, (2) 1-2 hours, (3) 2-3 hours, (4) 3-4 hours, (5) 4+ hours. Secondly, time spent on SNS is compared with time spent on other media, defined as TV, Online News portal, mobile phone, etc. This question asks if users spend (a) more time on SNS, (b) about the same amount of time, (c) or less time.
Social Motivation to Use SNS

Social motivations to use SNS are measured by the following five items: (1) let people know I care about their feelings, (2) stay in touch with people I know, (3) talk about my problems, (4) feel involved with what happens with others, (5) stay informed of occasions and events. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, from (1) not important at all, to (5) very important. In uses and gratifications terms, caring about others, keeping in touch, feeling involved with others and staying informed of social events represent social-integrative needs. Talking about one’s own problems is a personal integrative need (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973).

Non-social Motivation to Use SNS

Non-social motivations to use SNS are then measured by the following six items: (1) keep track of international news, (2) keep track of domestic news, (3) escape from my responsibilities, (4) postpone tasks I should complete first, (5) amuse myself, (6) relax (from pressure). Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, from (1) not important at all, to (5) very important. In uses and gratification terms, tracking international and national news represents cognitive needs, escaping and postponing tasks as well as relaxing from pressure represent escape and diversion needs, amusing oneself represents affective needs (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973).

Activities on SNS

Activity on SNS is measured by four items: (1) add information about myself, (2) check out friends’ updates without leaving a comment, (3) check out friends’ updates and add a comment, (4) initiate an interaction. Each activity is measured by frequency of use
based on a five-point Likert scale, from (1) never to (5) always. In uses and gratification
terms, adding information about self represents personal-integrative needs, checking
friends’ updates without leaving a comment represents cognitive needs, checking friends’
updates and adding a comment represents social integrative needs, initiating a contact
also represents social integrative needs.

*Number of Ties on SNS*

Number of ties on SNS is measured by a fill-in-blank question: “how many
friends do you have on the domestic SNS you use most often?”

*SNS Membership*

Membership of SNS is measured by asking respondents to select from a list of
SNS, both domestic and international ones, all the SNS they belong to. The list of items
includes: Kaixin001, Renren, QQ Alumni Book, Douban, MSN Space, LinkedIn,
Facebook, Sina Microblog, and others.

*Demographic Features*

Demographic features are measured by age, education level, occupation and
gender. Age is measured by a fill-in-blank question: “How old will you be by the end of
year 2011.” Education level is measured by the following items: (a) high school degree
or less, (b) undergraduate college student, (c) undergraduate college degree, (d) graduate
student, (e) graduate degree. Occupation is measured by the following items: (a) full-time
student, (b) government unit employee, (c) state-owned company employee, (d) foreign
company employee, (e) domestic private company employee, (f) unemployed, and (g)
others.
The Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out first to test understanding of the questionnaire (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). After receiving approval from Ohio University’s Institutional Research Board (IRB), the researcher carried 10 print-out questionnaires to the 2nd floor of Alden library at Ohio University. Chinese students were asked to answer the draft questionnaire voluntarily and anonymously (1 potential participant refused to take the survey). Based on results from the pilot study, the researcher made two minor changes in the questionnaire for the online survey: first, the researcher added some examples (SNS, e.g.: Renren.com, kaixin001.com) to clarify the phrase “social networking sites” in the questionnaire; second, when asking people their membership status in multiple SNS, Sina MicroBlog, the Chinese resemblance of Twitter, was added since 2 out of 10 participants in the pilot study specified it in the “others” category.

Survey Sample Selection

An online survey was then carried out on Zoomerang.com between February 1st and February 17th, 2011. The questionnaire and method of distribution had been approved by IRB. Using snowball sampling – where respondents are asked to pass survey information to their friends and acquaintances - the researcher first contacted her friends on several Chinese social networking sites by sending messages to their inbox. These contacts were mainly on Renren.com and Kaixin001.com, the two most popular SNS in China. The researcher’s solicitation included a link to the survey. In the message the researcher invited her friends to voluntarily participate in this survey. The researcher also
invited her friends to share this survey link to their friends on the SNS where they received the message.

The disadvantage of snowball sampling is potentially biased results, for instance, the sample might consists of respondents with similar demographic characteristics for age and education, or come from a particular group (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p.99-100). A convenience sample is never a random sample, which limits the study’s ability to represent the population of SNS users in China.

However, “the Internet creates unique sampling problems” (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998, p.101). The “absence of sampling frames for population” (Stemple & Stewart, 2000) means that “sampling requires creative solutions” (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998, p.101). Riffe, Lacy & Fico (2005, p.100) also argued that convenience sampling “can be justified under three conditions”: (a) when there is difficulty obtaining material for study; (b) when resource limitations make it difficult to obtain and random sample; and (c) for exploratory studies in an “under researched but important area”. Therefore, it is justifiable to apply snowball sampling in this study because it fits the second and third conditions to use a convenience sample.

For one thing, given the limitation of time and resources individual researchers can devote into a single study, it is impossible to use census or random sample in this study. Except for the PEW survey (PEW Internet & American Life Project, November 2009) and UCLA Internet Report (2001), many previous survey studies of SNS were not based on a random sample (Urista, Dong & Day, 2009; Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield, 2006; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2007; etc.).
Also, given the limited literature on uses and gratification studies on Chinese SNS, “even a convenience sample becomes worthwhile in generating hypotheses for additional studies” (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005, p.100).

Moreover, snow-ball sampling also has the following advantages for this particular study: First, it fits the way information is distributed via social networks, which is based on individual ties and social capital the hardcore cohesive power of any SNS. The snowball distribution may have contributed to the strong response rate. There were 805 visitors to the survey page on Zoomerang, and 353, or 43.85%, completed the questionnaire.

Secondly, the way information travels on SNS increases the reach of snow-ball sampling. As Sohn (2008) put it, the Internet and computer-mediated communication environment has made it possible for message to travel beyond the scale of word-of-mouth communication, and break the circulation boundaries of “socially or geographically close individuals”, reaching “people outside of the circle” (Sohn, 2008). Respondents to the survey included SNS users inside and outside of China.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

A total of 353 valid responses were collected among 805 visitors to the survey page (response rate = 43.85%). Composition of participants in this study is distinctively different in four ways from participants in the CNNIC report (2009).

CNNIC stands for China Internet Network Information Center. As the state network information center of China, CNNIC is under joint administration of Ministry of Information Industry and Chinese Academy of Sciences (CNNIC, 2003). CNNIC’s report on Chinese netizens’ uses of SNS (2009) was conducted among 3,007 participants from seven big geographic areas covering all three levels of cities (small, medium, and large) in China. Telephone interviews were conducted based on randomly selected household telephone numbers (CNNIC, 2009). The confidence interval is 95% (CNNIC, 2009).

Participants in this study have the following features:

Gender

Among the 353 valid responses, 154 are male (44.1%), 195 (55.9%) are female. This sample is slightly different from the CNNIC report, in which male users (52.9%) composed a higher percentage than female SNS users (47.1%) in China (CNNIC, 2009).

Education

Eighty-four point three percent of the participants have a college degree or above (college degree 32.3%, graduate student 30.6%; graduate degree 21.4%), while only 37.8% of the sample in CNNIC report holds a college degree or above (CNNIC, 2009).

---

1 Only 347 cases were used for data analysis, 6 outlier cases were dropped for violation of assumptions of normality.
Therefore, this sample is highly educated compared to the general SNS population in China. Nearly half of the respondents to the current study are full time student (46.7%), which resembles the portion (50.3%) in CNNIC report (2009).

**Age**

According to the CNNIC report (2009), more than half (52.5%) of SNS users in China are in the age group of 20-29. The same group composed of 94.8 % participants in this survey. Therefore, this sample is relatively young compared to the overall Chinese SNS users.

**Employment**

Because of the relatively young age distribution in this study, nearly half of the participants are full-time students (47%), followed by employees in foreign companies (17.8%) and state-owned-enterprises (11.5%). According to the CNNIC report (2009), Students composed half of all SNS users in China (50.3%). However, the percentage of employees in Party-related units is lower (7%) than that in the CNNIC report (10.8%). Also, participants in our study do not include categories such as farmers, workers, and technicians.

**RQ1: Motivations**

RQ1: What motivates Chinese users for SNS using?

H1: Chinese SNS users will primarily use SNS to fulfill socio-integrative needs.

**Scale of Reliability Test**

To explore which specific motivations drive the usage of SNS, I started by testing the relationship between social and non-social motivations and activities on SNS.
Descriptive statistics of each item in the three categories (social motivation, non-social motivation and activity on SNS) can be found in Table 1.1.1, Table 1.1.2 and Table 1.1.3 below as well as in the questionnaire (Q4, Q5, Q6, respectively) under Appendix A & B.

**Table 1.1.1 Descriptive Statistics: Social Motivation Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance: Social Motivations</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep in touch with known contacts</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel participated in others' lives</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for others</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about my problem</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep track of current events</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>343</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.1.2 Descriptive Statistics: Non-social Motivation Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance: Non-social Motivations</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be happy</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observe information</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track domestic news</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track international news</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procrastinate</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid responsibility</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>340</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.1.3 Descriptive Statistics: Activity Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency: Activities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check friends' updates without adding a comment</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check friends' updates and add a comment</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add content about myself</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate a contact</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>342</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the above mentioned items from my questionnaire, I created three new variables: total social motivation modified, total non-social motivation modified, total activity modified. To create the variables, I treated each group of questions as a scale, using reliability analysis to examine inter-item correlations. Based on the results in Table 1.1.4, I deleted “current events” from social motivation, “be happy” from non-social motivation, and “check friends’ updates without making a comment” from activity. Those items each have a corrected item-total correlation less than 0.30. Deleting the items increased Cronbach’s Alpha for each to scale to more than 0.70. Therefore, I have deleted an unfit item from each category, as shown in Table 1.1.4. Summing the scores on the remaining items in each category formed three new variables: total social motivation-modified, total non-social motivation-modified, and total activity-modified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1.4: Inter-item Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrected item-total correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current events 0.203 0.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be happy check friends' updates without comments 0.260 0.701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>check friends' updates without comments -0.017 0.724</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation

First of all, using Pearson’s product-moment coefficient test, I tested the correlation between total activities-modified, total social motivations-modified and total non-social motivations-modified. This was to test H1 that Chinese SNS users primarily
use SNS to fulfill socio-integrative needs. No violation of assumptions was found in the pretest. Both modified-social motivations and modified-non-social motivations are significantly correlated to total activity-modified. Meanwhile, modified-social motivations’ correlation to total activity-modified ($r = .468$, $p=.000$, $N=340$) is much stronger than that of modified-non-social motivations’ ($r = .123$, $p=.024$, $N=339$).

Therefore, while people go on SNS for both social and non-social reasons, their activity is associated with social uses of SNS. Therefore, H1 is supported here because social-integrative needs are the strongest uses and gratifications needs for Chinese SNS users.

I also tested the correlation between each individual question in the modified-social motivation factor and the scale for total activity-modified. As shown in Table 1.2, there are medium-strength, positive correlations between total activity-modified and care for others ($r =.419$, $p=.000$), keep in touch with known contacts ($r=.372$, $p=.000$), feel participated in other people’s lives ($r=.370$, $p=.000$) and talk about my problems ($r=.287$, $p=.000$). The first three motivations represent social-integrative needs and the last one represents personal-integrative needs in the theory of uses and gratifications. Therefore, social-integrative needs are associated with the usage of SNS, followed by personal-integrative needs. This result supports H1 and provides a partial answer to RQ1 asking what motivates the use of SNS.

I also tested correlations between each modified non-social motivation question and the scale for total activity-modified. Small, positive correlations are found between total activity-modified and the motivation to track international news ($r=.185$, $p=.001$) and to track domestic news ($r=.169$, $p=.002$). Both represent cognitive needs
(surveillance) in uses and gratifications. However, neither of them are contributors as strong as social integrative needs, as shown on Table 1.2. This result supports H1 and provides answers to RQ1.

Table 1.2 Correlations: Motivation factors vs. Total Activity-modified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U &amp; G needs</th>
<th>social-integrative</th>
<th>social-integrative</th>
<th>social-integrative</th>
<th>personal-integrative</th>
<th>cognitive</th>
<th>cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Factor</td>
<td>care others</td>
<td>keep in touch with known contacts</td>
<td>feel participated in others' lives</td>
<td>talk about my problem</td>
<td>track international news</td>
<td>track domestic news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.419</td>
<td>.372</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Findings for Motivations:**

**Age**

In this study, gender, education and employment status are not driving motivation difference in using SNS. The only significance for demographics is a negative correlation between age and total non-social motivation-modified ($r = - .182, p = .001$). It seems that younger users tend to be more solitary and their age is associated with non-social reasons to use SNS. However, given the fact that 94.8% of survey participants are 20-29, the effect of age observed here might be limited by the lack of variation in my sample. This question is open for further exploration, but provided answers to RQ1.

**Hierarchical Multiple Regressions**

To better answer RQ1 and see the proportion of contributions from different variables to activity on SNS, hierarchical multiple regressions were deployed.
Independent variables were coded into four blocks, as shown on Table 1.3 (block 1: categorical demographic factors, including education, employment status, gender; block 2: other demographic factors, including time spent on SNS per session, number of friends, age; block 3: social motivations to use SNS – all items; block 4: non-social motivations to use SNS – all items). No collinearity was found in this model because no Tolerance value is less than .10 and no VIF value is above 10 (Pallant, 2005).

Table 1.3 Descriptive Statistics of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.846</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on SNS per session</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.176</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of friends</td>
<td>283.63</td>
<td>209.043</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>25.30</td>
<td>2.772</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for others</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.076</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep in touch with known contacts</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about my problems</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.075</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel participated in others’ lives</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep track of current events</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.123</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observe information</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.971</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track international news</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.051</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track domestic news</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.108</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid responsibility</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procrastinate</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.105</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be happy</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.934</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 1.3.1, the overall model explains 32% of variance in average activities on SNS [$F (17, 252) = 6.98, P <.0005$]. A large portion of this variance comes from block 2 and block 3, which represents demographic factors (time per session, number of friends, age) and social-motivations of using SNS, respectively. Block 2 explains 7.4% (Sig. $F$ change = .00) of variance in average activity, when demographic characters in block 1 (education, employment status, gender) are controlled; block 3 explains 21% of variance in average activity (Sig. $F$ change = .00), when demographic factors in both block 1 and block 2 are controlled.

### Table 1.3.1 Hierarchical Multiple Regression: Average Activity – Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.39850</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.38555</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>7.056</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.34166</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>15.383</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>.274</td>
<td>.33938</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>1.580</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>.153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within this model, four items are making statistically significant contributions to the variance in average activity, as shown in Table 1.3.2. These items are number of friends (beta = .156, $p = .006$) in block 2, and three social motivation items in block 3: feel participated in others’ lives (beta = .192, $p = .004$), care for others (beta = .178, $p = .012$), keep in touch with known contacts (beta = .169, $p = .009$). Other variables did not
make statistically significant contributions. This result supports H1 and H3a (People with more ties on SNS tend to have more social activities online), which will be tested further later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feel participated in others' lives</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Care for others</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Keep contact with known friends</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of friends</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now that I have looked at the motivations driving average activities, I also want to take a further look at which motivations are associated with each activity. Therefore, with same order of independent variable blocks in Table 1.3, I also applied hierarchical multiple regressions to each activity on SNS.

With dependent variable as “adding content about myself”, this model as a whole explains 22% of variance, as shown in Table 1.4.1. The ANOVA result suggests that the model as a whole is significant \([F (17,252) = 4.191, p = .000]\). Statistically significant contributions were found from block 2, block 3, and block 4. Variables in block 2 (time spent on SNS per session, number of friends, age) contributed an additional 4.6% of variance (Sig. F Change = .006) when demographic variables in block 1 are controlled; variables in block 3 (social-motivations to use SNS) contributed an additional 9.9% of variance (Sig. F Change = .000) when variables in block 1 and block 2 are controlled; and variables in block 4 (non-social motivations to use SNS) contributed an additional 5.4% of variance (Sig. F Change = .009) when variables in block 1, 2, 3 are controlled.
Table 1.4.1 Hierarchical Multiple Regression: Add My Content – Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>1.939</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>4.288</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.408</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>6.134</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>2.924</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the analysis in Table 1.4.2, I also took a look at which specific motivations made a statistically significant contribution to the DV of adding contents about oneself. All three significant contributors are non-social motivations from block 4: procrastination (beta = -.202, p=.003); track international news (beta = .168, p = .038); and talk about my problems (beta = .136, p = .036). It is not surprising that users add content about themselves to talk about their own problems, possibly to seek for advice and help from their friends. However, it is interesting to notice that people who love to display themselves to others (add contents about themselves) are also fond of tracking international news on SNS. This is a mixture of personal-integrative needs and cognitive needs (surveillance). Therefore, H1 (Social motivation is associated with the activity on SNS) does not get supported in this analysis.
Table 1.4.2 Significant Contributors to Adding Contents about Myself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Procrastination</td>
<td>Tension-release</td>
<td>-.202</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Track international news</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Talk about my problems</td>
<td>Personal-integrative</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson’s correlation analysis was then used to examine a gender differences in the motivation of adding contents about oneself. Results in Table 1.4.3 show no difference for social motivations. The gender difference is primarily associated with male users’ cognitive needs. For males, tracking current events (r = .190, p = .021) and tracking international news (r = .190, p = .021) contribute uniquely to their activity of adding content about themselves; while for females, keeping in contact with others (r = .336, p = .000) and being happy (r = .176, p = .015) contribute uniquely to the same activity. It seems that males add content about themselves to fulfill cognitive needs and social-integrative needs, while females add content to fulfill social-integrative and affective needs. Among the three common contributing motivations, females have stronger motivation to display information about themselves than their male counterpart, as shown on Table 1.4.3 (Care for others: female r = .321, p = .000, male r = .220, p = .007; my problems: female r = .294, p = .000, male r = .226, p = .006; participation: female r = .274, p = .000, male r = .192, p = .019). However, there is no statistically significant difference in the strength of the correlation between each pair of common motivations and adding content about oneself caused by gender. As shown on Table 1.4.3, all the Zobs value obtained is between -1.96 and +1.96 (Pallant, 2005).
Table 1.4.3: Correlation by gender: motivation to add content my content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>motivation</th>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson's r (2-t)</td>
<td>Pearson's r (2-t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>track international news</td>
<td>cognitive</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>social-integrative</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>track current events</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>keep in touch with known contact</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>be happy</td>
<td>affective</td>
<td></td>
<td>.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>care for others</td>
<td>social-integrative</td>
<td>-.980</td>
<td>.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>talk about my problem</td>
<td>personal-integrative</td>
<td>-.680</td>
<td>.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>feel participated in others' lives</td>
<td>social-integrative</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I also examined the item that was deleted in the scale of reliability test - checking friends’ updates without leaving a comment- as a DV in the multiple regression analysis. ANOVA results suggest that the regression model as a whole is not significant [F (17,252) = 1.351, p = .162>.0005]. And the residual chart is curvy-linear.

I then examined the correlations between each motivation and this activity (checking friends’ updates without leaving a comment) by gender. There was no significant correlation among female users. But results in Table 1.5 show significant motivations driving this activity among male users included feeling participated in others’ lives (r=.279, p=.001), procrastination (r=.237, p=.004), making myself happy (r=.205, p=.013) and avoiding responsibilities (r=.187, p=.023). Checking friends’ updates without leaving a comment is a solitary activity. The motivations for male SNS users to do so are a mixture of social, affective and tension-release needs (Katz & Haas, 1972), as shown on Table 1.5.
Therefore, to answer RQ1, motivations driving the activity of checking friends’ updates without leaving a comment actually varied by gender. For male users, it is a mixture of social and non-social reasons. This result does not support H1 (Social motivations is the driving force for users’ activities on SNS).

Table 1.5

Correlation by gender: Motivation to check friends updates without a comment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>motivation</th>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>Pearson’s r</th>
<th>Sig. (2-t)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel participated in others’ lives</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procrastinate</td>
<td>Tension-release</td>
<td>.237</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be happy</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid responsibility</td>
<td>Tension-release</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then I examined the factors driving the activity of checking friends’ updates and adding a comment in hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The regression model as a whole is significant \([F (17, 252) = 4.452, p=.000]\) and explains 23.1 % of variations in the activity of checking friends’ updates and adding a comment. As shown in Table 1.6.1, statistically significant contributions were found from block 2 and block 3. Variables in block 2 (time spent on SNS per session, number of friends, age) contributed an additional 4.6 % of variance (Sig. F Change = .006) when demographic variables in block 1 are controlled; variables in block 3 (social-motivations to use SNS) contributed an additional 16.4 % of variance (Sig. F Change = .000) when variables in block 1 and block 2 are controlled.
The only item that made a statistically significant contribution to the variance of checking friends’ updates and adding a comment is: care for others (beta = 246, p=.001), which represents social integrative needs in uses and gratifications theory (Katz & Haas, 1972). These results support H1 in the activity of checking friends’ updates and adding a comment.

Pearson’s product moment correlation test also showed a gender difference in the motivations to check friends’ updates and add a comment. Results in Table 1.6.2 show male users are uniquely associated with personal-integrative and cognitive needs that include talking about my problems (r=.286, p=.000), tracking current events (r=.246, p=.002), tracking domestic news (r=.240, p=.003) and tracking international news (r=.190, p=.021).
Table 1.6.2  
Correlation by gender: motivation to check friends’ updates and add comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>motivation</th>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>Male Pearson's $r$</th>
<th>Male Sig. (2-t)</th>
<th>Female Pearson's $r$</th>
<th>Female Sig. (2-t)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Talk about my problems</td>
<td>Personal-integrative</td>
<td>.286</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Track current events</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td></td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Track domestic news</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Track international news</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Care for others</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.421</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep in touch with known contact</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>-.263</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feel participated in others’ lives</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>1.334</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Be happy</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>-.343</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the four common contributing motivations, male users have stronger motivations to care for others and to feel participated in others’ lives than their female counterpart (care for others: male $r = .421$, $p = .000$, female $r = .357$, $p = .007$; feel participated in others’ lives: male $r = .351$, $p = .002$, female $r = .323$, $p = .000$). However, female users have stronger motivation to keep in touch with known contacts and to be happy (keep in touch with known contact: female $r = .314$, $p = .000$, male $r = .287$, $p = .000$; be happy: female $r = .233$, $p = .001$, male $r = .196$, $p = .002$). There is no statistically significant difference in the strength of the correlation between each pair of common motivation and checking friends’ updates and adding a comment caused by gender. As shown on Table 1.6.2, all the $Z_{obs}$ values are between -1.96 and +1.96 (Pallant, 2005). So both male and female users are motivated by affective and social integrative needs in this activity. Social needs are stronger than the other U&G needs, which support H1.
I then tested the contributing factors to the activity of initiating contact on SNS using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The regression model as a whole is significant \[ F (17, 252) = 4.745, p=.000 \] and explains 24.2 % of total variance in the activity of initiating contact with others. As shown in Table 1.7.1, statistically significant contributions were found from block 2 and block 3. Variables in block 2 (time spent on SNS per session, number of friends, age) contributed an additional 3.9 % of variance (Sig. F Change = .014) when demographic variables in block 1 are controlled; variables in block 3 (social-motivations to use SNS) contributed an additional 18.2 % of variance (Sig. F Change = .000) when variables in block 1 and block 2 are controlled.

### Table 1.7.1 Hierarchical Multiple Regression: Initiate Contact – Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.773</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>3.588</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>*.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.479</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>12.190</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>*.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I also tested correlations between each IV item and the DV of initiating contact with Pearson’s r, and found three significant contributors, all social motivations, as shown on Table 1.7.2. The items are keep in touch with known contacts (beta=.212, p=.002), care
for others (beta=.151, p=.042), tracking current events (beta=.143, p=.023). All these motivations represent social-integrative needs, according to U&G theory (Katz & Haas, 1972), which supports H1.

Taking the initiative to start a contact is an action with strong social motivation. The correlation between this action and the motivation to track current events suggest that SNS users do not track current events just for surveillance or acquiring information’s sake. But rather, they keep track of those social events in order to join known friends, or mingle with new friends sharing the same interest or hobby. I reach this conclusion because in the questionnaire I defined current events with examples as “concerts, exhibitions, sport matches”, which offer off-line social opportunities.

Table 1.7.2: Significant Contributors to Initiating Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Keep in touch with known contacts</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Care for others</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tracking current events</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson’s correlation analysis also suggests a gender difference in the motivation to initiate contact on SNS. Results in Table 1.7.3 show male users are uniquely motivated by social-integrative needs while female users are uniquely motivated by non-social motivation such as cognitive and affective needs. Male users are motivated by tracking current events (r=.282, p=.000). This is probably because they use current events as social occasions which they invite friends to join together. On the other hand, females are motivated by non-social motivations, such as: tracking domestic news (r=.181, p=.013),
being happy ($r=.174$, $p=.017$), observing information ($r=.167$, $p=.021$) and tracking international news ($r=.153$, $p=.035$). This result does not support H1 in the activity of initiating contact on SNS.

**Table 1.7.3 Correlation by gender: motivations to initiate contact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>Pearson's r</th>
<th>Sig. (2-t)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Current events</td>
<td>Social-integrative</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Track domestic news</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Be happy</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Observe information</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Track international news</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to Pearson’s r correlation analysis, I also examined the gender difference in each motivation by cross tabulation analysis, regardless of which activity they are doing on SNS. The only significant gender difference is found in the motivation for tracking current events ($p=.019$). While the majority of both male (79.5 %) and female users (67.5 %) are less likely to use SNS to track current events (72.8 % in total); among users with a strong motivation to track current events, females are disproportionately more likely to do so (32.5 %) than their male counterparts (20.5 %).
Table 1.8 Cross-tab: Gender difference in Tracking Current Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ2: Use Patterns

RQ2: What are the use patterns of Chinese SNS users?

This suggests two subsidiary questions:

RQ2a: What is the relationship between time spent on SNS and time spent on other media?

RQ2b: Are the use patterns of low-frequency SNS users different from high-frequency users?

RQ2c: Are the use patterns of male users different from female users?

Time Spent on SNS vs. Activities on SNS (RQ2)

Assuming there are different types of users (lurkers, and social butterflies), and they use SNS out of various reasons (procrastinate, talk with friends, etc.,), I wonder whether the length of time a person spent has to do with their motivations and usage of SNS. To find those answers, I deployed Pearson’s r correlation test.

First of all, to answer RQ2 (What are their use patterns on SNS?), I tested the relationship between time spent on SNS and total activity-modified, and found a small
significant correlation \((r=.163, p=.002)\). To find out which activity consumes the time people spend on SNS, I also tested the correlation between each item in the scale (excludes checking friends’ update without making a comment) and time per session people spent on SNS. As shown in Table 2.1, all the social activities are significantly correlated with time spent on SNS. They are: initiate a contact \((r=.141, p=.009)\), check friends’ updates and add a comment \((r=.138, p=.010)\), and add content about myself \((r=.117, p=.030)\). Social integrative needs are prior to personal integrative needs for most users. This result, again, supports H1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>social-integrative</th>
<th>personal-integrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time per session</strong></td>
<td><strong>initiate contact</strong></td>
<td><strong>check &amp; add comment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I also tested the relationship between motivations and time spent on SNS. No significant correlation was found between total social motivation-modified and time spent. Therefore, social motivation does not necessarily associate with people spending more time on SNS. Results in Table 2.2 show that non-social motivations-modified are associated with people spending more time on SNS \((r=.131, p=.016)\), as those motivations are usually time-consuming, such as observe information \((r=.119, p=.027)\), and procrastination \((r=.119, p=.028)\). Therefore, people spent more time on SNS per session are mainly to fulfill their cognitive and tension-release needs.
Table 2.2 Correlation: Non-social motivation-modified vs. time spent per session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>cognitive</th>
<th>tension-release</th>
<th>total non-social motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time per session</td>
<td>observe information</td>
<td>procrastinate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Spent on SNS vs. Other Media (RQ2a)

Results in Table 2.3 provide an answer to RQ2a (What is the relationship between their time spent on SNS and time spent on other media?). For the 352 participants, 44% spent more time on SNS than other media, while 34% spent less time on SNS, and 23% spending more or less the same amount of time on both.

And to answer RQ2c (Is the use patterns of male users different from female users?), I did not find a gender difference in their time allocation between SNS and other media (p=.998>.05) after a Chi-square test.

Table 2.3: time spent on SNS vs. other media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More time on SNS</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More or less the same</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less time on SNS</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High-frequency vs. Low-frequency Users (RQ2b)

To answer RQ2b (Are the use patterns of low-frequency SNS users different from high-frequency users?), based on the variable time per session, I have split the file into two groups cut on the middle point of the categorical variable used to answer this
question. The middle point was 1-2 hours for each SNS log-in session. Therefore, in this
study, low-frequency users are defined as people spent less than 1.5 hours per log-in
session on SNS, and high-frequency users are defined as people spent more than 1.5
hours per log-in session.

As shown in Table 2.4, both low-frequency (r=.485, p=.000) and high-frequency
users (r=.457, p=.000) are strongly associated with social motivations-modified to use
SNS, which again, supports H1. Low-frequency users are also partly associated with non-
social motivations-modified (r=.178, p=.004), but high-frequency users are not
influenced by non-social motivations. Again, for both low and high-frequency users,
social motivations are much stronger than non-social ones. These results also suggest that
low-frequency users are more active than high-frequency users on SNS. It is possible that
low-frequency users spent less time per session, but log onto SNS multiple times in a day
and carried out more total activities than high-frequency users who log on SNS longer
each time with fewer total activities. A similar pattern can also be found in Table 2.5,
low-frequency users are socially more active than high-frequency users, which suggests
that high-frequency users are more likely to be lurkers or procrastinators on SNS.
Therefore, to answer RQ2b, the use patterns are different between low-frequency users
and high-frequency users.
Table 2.4 Correlation: Total Activity-modified vs. Total Motivation-modified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low-frequency users</th>
<th>High-frequency users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Social Motivation</td>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-social</td>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.5 Correlation: Total Activity-modified vs. Each Social Motivation-modified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>care for others</th>
<th>keep contact</th>
<th>talk about my problem</th>
<th>feel participated in others' lives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-frequency users</td>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-frequency users</td>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.384</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.0330</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see from Table 2.6, for low-frequency users, there are significant correlations between total activity and the motivation to track international news (r=.244, p=.000) and domestic news (r=.173, p=.005). Cognitive needs such as reading news are time-consuming to fulfill.

On the other hand, for high-frequency users, I found a negative, medium correlation between total activity-modified and the motivation to procrastinate on SNS (r= -.363, p=.001). So for high-frequency users, procrastination reduces total activity. It might be that procrastination as a solitary activity keeps users logging in on SNS for a longer time per session. This might be a typical user-pattern for lurkers. Together with the result we found in Table 2.5, that high-frequency users are not so concerned with talking about their problems on SNS, it might just be that they log onto SNS to pass time,
but not so eager to socialize with others via various activities. The difference in motivation for low and high frequency users answers both RQ2b and RQ1.

| Table 2.6 Correlation: Total Activity-modified vs. Each Non-Social Motivation-modified |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                        | Low-frequency users                   |                  |                  |
|                                        | Track international news              | Track domestic news | Procrastinate    |
| U&G needs                              | Cognitive                             | Cognitive        | Tension-release |
| Pearson's r                            | .244                                  | .173             | -.363           |
| Sig. (2-t)                             | .000                                  | .005             | .001            |

**Gender Difference in Use Pattern (RQ2c)**

To answer RQ2c (Are the use patterns of male users different from female users?), I applied an independent t-test to examine possible gender difference in each activity on SNS (add content about myself, check out friends’ update without comment, check out friends’ update with comment, and initiate a contact with friends). The only significant gender difference is found in the activity of adding content about oneself: males (M = 2.83, SD = .996) and females [M = 3.13, SD = 1.04, t (341) = -2.632, p = .009]. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate (eta squared = .02). It shows that females are prone to add more content about themselves than their male counterpart.
Other Findings for Use Patterns:

Employment (RQ2)

Besides gender, I also tested other demographic variables’ impact on use to answer RQ2 (user patterns on SNS among Chinese users). One-way ANOVA was deployed to compare the mean scores of average activity on SNS across different employment groups. Average activity\(^2\) is computed as total activity divided by four (the number of variables under Q6: activities on SNS). Total activity\(^3\) is computed as the summation of the score for every activity variable under Q6 (add contents about myself, check friends’ updates without a comment, check friends’ updates with a comment, initiate a contact). Although we did not find a significant difference between each group (p = .428), as shown in Table 2.7, we have found a general pattern.

Table 2.7 ANOVA: Average Activity by Employment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Activity</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>0.996</td>
<td>0.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>53.048</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>339</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) Average activity ranges from 1 to 5.

\(^3\) Total activity ranges from 4 to 20, which is the summation of four activities each ranges from 1-5.
Table 2.8 Compare Means: Average Activity by Employment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Group</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time student</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government or related unit</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-owned-enterprises</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign company</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic private company</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 2.1 ANOVA: Average Activity by Employment Groups

As shown in Table 2.8 and Chart 2.1, employees in foreign companies have the highest average activity score on SNS (M = 2.253, SD = .426), while others (M = 2.00,
SD = .489) and employees in government and related units (M = 2.11, SD = .336) have the lowest average activities among different employment groups. It is interesting to notice that for both male and female users, white collars employed in foreign companies are more active on SNS than full-time students. Among others, female employees in foreign companies are most active on SNS (M = 2.30, SD = .377). This indicates a possible trend that business elites has become the driving force and main body of SNS users in China, instead of students.

*Gender Difference across Employment Groups (RQ2c)*

We can also see that female users are more active than male users across different employment groups except in government or related units. One possible explanation might be due to the reason that females add more content about themselves than male users, which might result in more interactive activities on SNS. For instance, it keeps them returning to and logging in on SNS to check out and respond to their friends’ comments on their pictures, links, blog entries, or status they added. This result provides answers to RQ2c (gender difference in use patterns).

*Education (RQ2)*

Similarly, we also deployed one-way ANOVA to compare the mean scores of average activity across different education groups to answer RQ2 (use patterns on SNS). There was no significant difference between education groups in all cases (p = .183), or for males (p = .606) and females (p = .145) separately.

*Gender Difference across Education Groups (RQ2c)*
However, we have noticed an interesting gender difference in Table 2.9 and Chart 2.2, that across different education levels, female users are more active than their male counterparts. The most active SNS users are highly-educated female users studying in graduate school (M=2.27, SD = .36), and the least active users are male college students (M=2.04, SD=.41). This result answers RQ2c (gender difference in use patterns) and RQ2 (use patterns).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College student</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Percentage)</td>
<td>(14.7%)</td>
<td>(13.4%)</td>
<td>(15.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Percentage)</td>
<td>(32.3%)</td>
<td>(34.9%)</td>
<td>(29.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate student</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Percentage)</td>
<td>(30.2%)</td>
<td>(27.5%)</td>
<td>(32.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Percentage)</td>
<td>(22.0%)</td>
<td>(22.8%)</td>
<td>(21.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N | 341 | 149 | 190

4 Category of high school degree or less has been eliminated, since there are only 3 cases in this category it would not be representative of the general Chinese SNS user population.
RQ3: Number of Friends vs. Usage

RQ3: What is the correlation between the number of ties people have on SNS and SNS functions they are using?

This also suggests two predictions:

H3a: People with more ties on SNS tend to engage in more social activities online (use more interactive functions of SNS).

H3b: People with fewer ties on SNS tend to engage in fewer social activities online. (use more non-interactive functions on SNS).

To test the strong-tie, weak-tie social capital theory and answer RQ3, correlations were used to examine relationships between the number of friends a person had and SNS use and motivations. As shown in Table 3.1, I found a positive correlation between number of friends a person has and his or her total SNS activity-modified (excludes
checking friends’ updates without leaving a comment), \( r = .215, p = .000 \). This result supports H3a that people with more ties on SNS tend to engage in more social activities online. In the end, it is the friends people have that motivates them to go on SNS. This analysis also coincides with the result I found in RQ1’s session, that people go on SNS mainly out of social reasons. I found a small, positive correlation between total social motivation-modified and number of friends \( (r = .192, p = .000) \). The small correlation might be interpreted by ‘the strength of weak ties’ (Granovetter, 1983). A person does not necessarily have to have a large amount of super strong social ties to be a heavily and socially involved user of SNS.

### Table 3.1 Correlation: No. of friends vs. motivation & usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Activity-modified</th>
<th>Total Social Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender Difference: Number of Ties and Social Activity**

I also tested the correlation between number of friends and each activity among male and female users, separately. For male users, no significant correlation was found between number of friends and any activity on SNS. Results in Table 3.2 show that for female users, the number of friends is significantly correlated to their activity of adding content about themselves \( (r = .294, p = .000) \), and checking friends’ updates and adding a comment \( (r = .170, p = .031) \), which represent personal-integrative and social-integrative needs in uses and gratifications theory. However, one could also argue that users add content about themselves in order to interact and keep updates with their friends, which
eventually fulfills social-integrative needs. Therefore, in case of female users, H3a is supported (more social ties, more social interactive activities on SNS).

Table 3.2 Correlation: No. of friends vs. each activity (Female)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U&amp;G needs</th>
<th>personal-integrative</th>
<th>social-integrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>add content about myself</td>
<td>check friends' updates and add comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gender Difference: Number of Ties and Motivations to Use SNS*

Pearson’s product-moment correlation was also deployed separately for male and female users to examine correlations between the number of friends and motivations to use SNS. Results in Table 3.3 show a significant correlation between number of friends and the motivation to keep contact with known friends among female users (r = .163, p = .039), which satisfies purely social-integrative needs. Therefore, for female users, H3a is indirectly supported (more social ties, more social activities, which fulfill social-integrative needs). For male users, significant correlations were found between the number of friends they have and their motivation to talk about their problems (r = .205, p = .030), and motivation to feel participated in others’ lives (p = .213, r = .024). Thus for male users, number of ties influence both their personal-integrative needs and social-integrative needs, and H3a is partially supported.

We did not find direct support for H3b that people with fewer ties on SNS tend to engage in fewer social activities online.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U&amp;G Needs</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>talk about my problems</td>
<td>personal-integrative</td>
<td>social-integrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feel participated in others' lives</td>
<td>social-integrative</td>
<td>keep contact with known friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson's r</td>
<td></td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-t)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This study had three major findings. First of all, socio-integrative needs were the strongest motivation for Chinese SNS users. Secondly, low frequency SNS users participated in more activities than high frequency users. Thirdly, it is not only the quantity of social ties but also the quality or strength of ties that associate with user participation in different SNS activities. More interestingly, a pattern of gender differences were found throughout our data analysis.

Social Needs Motivates SNS Use (RQ1)

Social needs consistently drove SNS user in all of our analysis. While people go on SNS for both social and non-social reasons, they are mainly associated with social motivations to use SNS. Thus H1 (people go to SNS primarily to fulfill social-integrative needs) is supported and RQ1 is answered (motivations to use SNS).

First of all, total modified social motivation’s contribution to the variance of total activities modified is much stronger than that from total modified non-social motivations. Secondly, hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed social motivations (block 3) contributed the largest portion of variance for three measures of SNS activities (a) average SNS activity; (b) checking friends’ updates and adding a comment; and (c) initiating a contact. People go to SNS because they (a) care for others, (b) want to feel participated in others’ lives, and (c) want to keep in touch with known contacts. Thirdly, activities that fulfill social-integrative needs (e.g.: initiating a contact; checking friends’ updates and adding a comment) also drove people to spend more time on SNS. Moreover,
for both high-frequency users and low-frequency users, social motivations to use SNS are much stronger than non-social motivations. Lastly, the positive correlation between the number of ties and total activities modified on SNS showed that it is the friends people have that drove them to go on SNS. Thus people go on SNS primarily to fulfill social-integrative needs, which support H1 and answers RQ1 (motivation to use SNS).

Those findings are consistent with uses and gratifications sought on SNS by Romanian students (Balaban, 2010), by U.S. college students (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011) and by university students from U.K. (Joinson, 2008). For Turkish users, social-integrative needs are fulfilled through writing (adding content about oneself) while tension-release needs (diversion) are fulfilled through reading (checking updates without making a comment) (Ogan & Cagiltay, 2006). The different experience by Turkish users might be due to the unique role that confession and story-telling plays in Turkish culture and religion, or different function design on this Turkish website. However, there is no indication in these findings that Chinese collectivism and power distance (Hoftstede) influence SNS use in China.

Those findings do prove again that social-integrative needs are the most important needs among all five uses and gratification needs. This is probably because human beings are gregarious animals, by nature we are social animals trying to avoid feeling lonely even if we know everyone is destined to born and die alone. Thus this inner fear of loneliness creates social integrative needs, which is the ultimate motivation for the popularity of SNS. It is the same reason why people use telephones to keep in touch with friends and relatives, it is the same reason why people watch TV together or read news to
stay informed and has common topics to talk about the next day they go to work. Is is
true, as Marshall McLuhan argued, that technology drives the change of media, and the
change of media drives the change of society (McLuhan, 1964; McLuhan, Fiore & Agel,
2001). Yet, the function of media as a cohesive power of society has not changed over
time. Social media has only reinforced this role by helping people be part of their
community and cultivating the society together as a whole.

Gender Difference in SNS Motivation (RQ1)

The researcher also found gender differences in the motivation across all SNS
activities. However, none of the gender differences are statistically significant.
Throughout those results, we found a reoccurring pattern of gender differences: male
users’ usage are associated with a mixture of social-integrative (tracking current events),
personal-integrative (talking about my problem) and cognitive needs (tracking news).
Females’ usage is more associated with social-integrative needs (adding content about
themselves to generate social interactions; initiating a contact in order to feel happy).
Those results answer both RQ1 (motivation to use SNS) and RQ2c (gender difference in
SNS use patterns).

For instance, female users have a stronger motivation to disclose and add
information about themselves on SNS, but are not into the activity of checking friends’
updates without making a comment, while male users are motivated by a mixture of
social and non-social needs.

For the motivations to initiate contact on SNS, male users are uniquely motivated
by social-integrative needs (tracking current events) while female users are uniquely
motivated by non-social motivation such as cognitive (observing information, tracking domestic and international news) and affective needs (feeling happy).

*Males: A Twist of Social Gender?*

For male users, a significant correlation was found between the motivation to talk about their problems and the activity to check friends’ updates and add a comment. It seems that male users who are more open to sharing their problems with others are more likely to engage in social activities on SNS. This is an interesting example of how Chinese males are using SNS to build social capital, bonding with friends and increasing the strength of weak ties (Chang & Zhu, 2011; Granovetter, 1983).

A possible explanation for this unexpected result might be the unique single-child policy in China, which resulted in a reversed psychological gender between male and females born after 1979 when the policy began. More often than not, the boy is the only hope to carry on the blood line for the third generation of a 4-2-1 family (Goh, Kuczynski, 2010). Thus the, boy is prone to be raised as a “little emperor” (Zhang, Kohnstamm, Cheung & Lau, 2001) and spoiled by 6 people (his own parents, and his grandparents from both sides of the nuclear family). Surrounded by the care and protection by such an enormous amount of love over the years, a male single child is often comparatively less aggressive and less independent than his female counterpart, especially if both grow up and attend college in the same city (Zhi, 2010).

On the other hand, single-child girls are often more aggressive and more independent than their male counterparts. Fong (2002) argued that one-child policy helps to empower singleton daughters in urban families in China in two ways. For one thing,
their mothers have become role-models for the girls’ future. Released from fertility burdens, the mothers of singletons made more success in their careers and become financially more independent, able to sponsor their parents in old age. For another, singleton daughters face no internal competition from an older son. As a result, parents are more willing to invest in their daughters’ education with the expectation that their daughters will take filial obligations years later.

Traditional Chinese culture and social norms place the filial responsibility of taking care of parents in their old age on the older son in a family. The traditional the role of a woman is to help her husband to take care of her parents-in-law instead of her own parents (Lin, 1948; Su, 1922, as cited in Yu, Yu & Mansfield, 1990). However, things started to change as one of the many ramifications from the single-child-policy. Hong (1987) argued that one potential ramification is more independent career choice of Chinese female, and a subsequent reduction of gender biased inequality in Chinese society. As a result, singleton girls have to take the role of a traditional male heir of filial responsibility (Fong, 2002) regardless of previous gender preferences. Girls are often raised to inherit and expand the future of their whole family.

Meanwhile, the single-child policy forced modern Chinese parents to do the best investment and put all their hope and eggs in one basket, be it male or female (Strom, Strom & Xie, 1996; Yu, Yu & Xie, 1996). Because both parents work in most nuclear families in China, female single children are educated as equal with their male counterparts (Fong, 2002; Lavely, 1988; Bian, 1996; Strom, Strom & Xie, 1996). When they grow up and enter the society, they have to be equally competitive with their male
counterparts. Strom, Strom & Xie (1996), in a survey of singletons’ parents, found an increase in parents’ expectations by various measures, which includes “(a) fathers participated in child care more than fathers did in the past; (b) mothers considered themselves to be more successful than fathers; (c) Parents of sons reported more difficulties and frustrations than parents of daughters.” Lavely (1988) also argued that “urban girls enjoy a rough economic parity with urban boys-equal family demography and equal government subsidies.”

All such social consequences have result in a trend of reversed psychological or social gender among young people in big cities in China. This social phenomenon has cause concern for Chinese media (Zhi, 2010), as many are afraid of the fading masculinity among boys. Interestingly, a similar change in male psychology has been discovered earlier among American boys (Pollack, 2000). As Pollack put it in his book *Real Boy’s Voices*:

American boys are absolutely desperate to talk about their lives. They long to talk about the things that are hurting them (p.x)...they reveal a hunger for connection, a longing to be themselves. (p.3)

This social phenomenon might provide an explanation why male SNS users in China are motivated by talking about their own problems in the activity of adding content about themselves while the female users are not.

*Females: Social Animals Born This Way?*

Interestingly enough, female users are motivated by cognitive (observing information and tracking news) and affective needs (feeling happy) instead of social-
integrative needs to initiate contact with friends. Initiating contact is the first step toward creating or adding to social capital.

Initiating contact also makes them happy. Perhaps females are born as social animals.

For the motivation to observe information, maybe females are fonder than males of taking the initiative to ask about a friend’s updates in life. It might also be that female users tend to observe useful information and share it with friends on SNS (initiate contact).

For the motivation to track news, perhaps it is a very important way for females to exchange information in their social activity. Exchanging information is one way SNS allow users to strengthen weak ties (Chang & Zhu, 2011).

We did not ask which type of news specifically are users tracking. It might as well be that females track more fashion, art or entertainment news than political news. Therefore, the relationship between tracking news and initiating contact among female users is an open question needs further exploration.

*Time Spent On SNS (RQ2a)*

No significant correlation is found between time spent on SNS and total social motivation modified. This means that social-integrative needs motivates people’s usage of SNS, but those needs do not necessarily encourage them to spend more time on SNS. It is non-social motivations, which are time-consuming (such as observing information or procrastination), that make people spending more time on SNS. This provides answers to RQ1 (motivations to use SNS) and RQ2 (use patterns of Chinese SNS users). No gender
difference is found in the allocation of time spent on SNS, which partially answers RQ2c (different use patterns between male and female users).

Our study also found the majority of SNS users spent more time on SNS than other media. In the result, 44% of participants spent more time on SNS, 34% spent more time on other media, and 23% spent more or less the same time on SNS and other media. This result answers RQ2a (time spent on SNS vs. time spent on other media).

_Different Use-patterns between High and Low-frequency Users (RQ2b)_

Frequency was measured by the time per session on SNS. While both low-frequency users and high-frequency users are primarily associated with social motivation items which represent social-integrative needs, low frequency users are also partially associated with non-social motivations. Our study showed that low-frequency users are also socially more active than high-frequency users, perhaps because they have stronger motivation to socialize with others than high-frequency users. And high-frequency users are more likely to be lurkers who procrastinate on SNS. High-frequency users have a medium strength motivation to procrastinate on SNS ($r = -0.363$, $p=0.001$), which reduces their total activity on SNS. In other words, people who spent more than 1.5 hours per log-in session are more likely to indulge in solitary activities to fulfill tension-release needs. This provides answers to both RQ1 (motivation to use SNS) and RQ2b (different use patterns between high-frequency and low-frequency users).

_Gender Difference in Use Patterns (RQ2c)_

While males were more interested in finding news and talking about their problems than female users, the latter were more likely to facilitate social interactions on
Moreover, female users, who are fonder of adding contents about themselves than their male counterpart, also have more total activities on SNS. This finding is consistent with the findings from previous studies (Courtois et al, 2009), that people who often make blog postings also refer to other blogs or comment on other bloggers’ postings (Herring et al, 2005). Self-disclosure behavior in blogging helps to enhance the social capital people have, resulting in deeper bonds and broader bridging between people (Ko & Kuo, 2009). It is possible that females are better at managing and developing social capital than their male counterpart. This provides answers to RQ2c (gender difference in use patterns).

Effect of Ties on SNS Usage (RQ3)

I found a positive correlation between the number of SNS ties and total SNS activity modified. There is also a small, positive correlation between number of SNS ties and social motivation modified. Thus it is the power of ties (or social capital) people have that motivates them to go on SNS. This answers RQ3 (correlation between number of ties on SNS and SNS usage) and support H1 (social needs motivates SNS usage).

Gender Difference in SNS Social-ties

Gender differences appeared again in the effect of social-ties on SNS usage. For male users, there is no significant correlation between the number of SNS ties and any of their SNS activities. However, for female users there are significant correlations between number of SNS ties they have and two activities (adding content about themselves; checking friends’ updates and adding a comment). This result does not necessarily mean another proof of our stereotyped perception of females being more narcissistic than
males, because my findings also show males love to talk about their own problems on SNS. Consistent with previous studies’ findings (Courtois et al, 2009; Herring et al, 2005; Ko & Kuo, 2009), it seems that female users disclose their personal information on SNS to generate more interactions with their friends. It might just be the social-nature of females to communicate with each other, rather than interactive behavior of narcissism. This answers both RQ2c (different use patterns between male and female users) and RQ3 (correlation between number of ties on SNS and SNS usage).

Another gender difference reoccurred in the effect of social-ties on SNS motivation. For female users, significant correlations were found between number of SNS ties they have and the motivation to keep in touch with known contacts. For male users, the number of ties is significantly correlated with a mixture of personal-integrative needs (talk about my problems) and social-integrative needs (feel participated in others’ lives). H3a is partially supported (more ties, more social activities).

_Male Users: Love to Talk about Their Problems on SNS_

What was interesting were the findings about male users. Opposite to our stereotyped perceptions of males, significant correlations were found between the number of friends they have and their motivation to talk about their problems, and motivation to feel participated in others’ lives.

The first finding here is opposite to our normal stereotyped perception that males are less likely to talk and discuss their problems publicly in front of others. However, it really depends on what sort of problems they are talking about here on SNS, which is open for further investigations by future researchers. It might be, however, that males talk
about their problems on SNS to solve practical problems which need knowledge from friends, thus the more the merrier. And such problems do not necessarily have to be psychological or emotional problems. It might also be that males who are not likely to talk about their problems in a face-to-face situation are willing to do so with their friends during online instances. This would be consistent with research showing SNS can allow users to maintain and intensify offline strong ties (PEW, November 2009; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Ellison et al, 2011).

Male users’ second significant motivation of feeling participated in others’ lives indicated strong social-integrative needs. This longing for friendship and social connections among male users might again be explained by the cultural difference resulting from the single-child syndrome in China. As the only child in a family, most single-children grow up lonely without any peers for brotherhood or sisterhood in their childhood or teenage years. Instead, the hopes of their parents or even grandparents give them extra pressure for their study and their future. Various kinds of extracurricular classes such as Olympic Math, Cambridge English or Piano lessons have also deprived single children of part of their free time to play and communicate with their peers from neighborhood who face the same situation. They are a generation that was born and grew up lonely.

While females can go easily with their nature to communicate and socialize either face-to-face or online, males might be more prone to resort to online communication, such as SNS, to talk about their problems and feel participated in others’ lives. Besides number of ties a person has, it might also depend on the intensity and strength of their
friendship what kind of motivation drives which activities on SNS. Perhaps in off-line
life, males do not have friendships as strong as females do, thus their social needs have to be fulfilled online.

Other Findings about Chinese SNS Users

*Nova Force of SNS: Business Elites*

This study showed that business elites such as white collars, instead of college students, may be becoming the driving force of Chinese SNS users. One possible explanation for the extreme popularity of SNS among foreign company employees might be the cultural difference in their operation in China. As working over-time has nearly become a habit for foreign companies in China, the border between private life and working life tend to be blurred and mixed altogether. It is quite possible for foreign company employees to take a break on SNS while they remain in the office, especially when they are done with their part of work, but as long as the project team stays, he or she has to stay in office as well. And even if they cannot access SNS from corporate computers, they can probably log on to SNS via mobile phones, since 66.2% of netizens in China are mobile phone netizens (CNNIC, 2011). It is also possible that because they are usually off-work late, it is not convenient for them to do off-line entertainment or other social activities with non-foreign company employees friends whose schedules are different from theirs, while online activities on SNS provide an easy alternative.

*The Rise of Chinese Twitter as a Social Media*

During the pilot study, 2 out of 10 participants specified Sina Microblog, the Chinese resemblance of Twitter, in the “others” session when asked about their multiple
SNS membership status. This is a very interesting phenomenon, that while most researchers tend to view Twitter as a separate form of social networking tool from Facebook, MySpace or LinkedIn (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ancu & Cozma, 2009; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006; Lampe, Wash, Velasquez & Ozakaya, 2010; Stafford, T.F., Stafford M.R. & Schkade, 2004; Nie & Erbring, 2000), the users tend to view them as they belonging to the same category. It is not surprising that we found out later from the online survey that 54% of all participants are members of Sina MicroBlog. It is almost the same membership rate with that from the 2nd most popular traditional domestic SNS in China (Kaixin001.com, 54%). From this point, we can see that Sina MicroBlog, though quite new (launched on September 25, 2009) has been gaining increasing popularity among Chinese SNS users, and should not be viewed separately from other SNS in future research. Future research should explore more into Sina MicroBlog or Twitter by viewing them as a member of the SNS family.

Solitary Usage among Younger Users

This study also found a negative correlation between age and total non-social motivations. Thus younger users tend to be more solitary, with their SNS usage associated with non-social motivations. It is questionable whether the younger generation of single children in China is less socially mature and more self-focused. The reasons for this trend need further research.

Limitations of Study

This study might not be as representative as the CNNIC 2009 report on the overall use of SNS in China for two reasons: First of all, snowball sampling is not random.
Results therefore cannot be generalized to the population of SNS users. As Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005, p.101) pointed out, “availability of content shapes the nature of the research”. In this study the majority of respondents will have a college or higher level education, and over 90% of the participants are between 20-29, which does not necessarily represent the total SNS population in China. For the SNS population, 52.6% are between 20-29, and 37.8% have a college or higher level education (CNNIC, 2009).

Secondly, due to the length-limit of an online survey questionnaire – response rates decrease as the questionnaire gets longer, I only did a general user-pattern analysis in this study. For instance, for time spent on SNS, I only asked how long the users spent during each log in session, but did not ask how much time in total they spent on SNS in a typical day or a typical week. Our survey result shows that 45% of SNS users log in for just under an hour each time using SNS. It might be that people sneak in SNS quickly for multiple times in a day. Without asking for the total amount of time spent on SNS (per day or per week), we cannot describe the complete user patterns of SNS. Further studies should include both questions to provide a better insight into the possible different user behaviors on SN. Moreover, though fully aware of the possible impact of geographical difference on the users’ ethnography and user patterns on SNS, I did not include the question “Where are you living now?” Because of the cultural diversity and imbalanced economic development in China, further research with specific ethnographic focus might provide better answers to this question.

An online survey is an effective way to get an overall map of SNS use but cannot provide detailed insights into the motivations driving each type of user.
interviews with individuals (representatives of average user, high-frequency user & low-frequency user, lurker user and socially-active user) based on a general survey might give more insights of the “hows” and “whys” of their specific motivations and behaviors on SNS.

Also, I did not ask questions to differentiate the type of content users add about themselves (such as the user-generated-content categories used by Courtois et al. (2009): media seeding, narrative seeding and metadata seeding). Further studies should take a step further on these directions.

Conclusion

Test of Uses and Gratification in New Contexts

This study is a test of uses and gratification theory in two new contexts: a new medium (social networking sites) in a different cultural context (China). By asking some classic and basic uses and gratification questions, this exploratory study hopes to provide some inspiration for further research in this new area in more specific directions.

Applying uses and gratification theory among Chinese SNS users gives us findings that are similar to other cultural contexts: social-integrative needs is the primary and ultimate drive for people to go on SNS. It is the strongest need among the five uses and gratification needs that users are seeking on SNS. SNS developers should focus on this core feature of this new medium to better serve their users.

Social science researchers should explore more of this distinctive feature from their own perspectives in an interdisciplinary context. For instance, media researchers should ask, how does the usage of SNS affect our habit of media consumption and the
news industry? For sociology researchers, how does the usage of SNS affect our social capital structure and formation? For psychology, how does the usage of SNS affect our personal character building and mental well-being? For business scholars, how does the usage of SNS affect our decision making process and the success of new business strategies in this new media era?

For instance, as SNS has becoming increasingly important in people’s allocation of media consumption time, it is almost inevitable that marketing and communication specialists will view SNS as the most efficient way to deliver their messages.

The gender difference found here should also be explored by media and sociology researchers in cross-cultural communication, as well as companies interested in doing business in China. This gender difference highlights the importance of cultural differences in a dynamic social context, especially in a developing country experiencing social transition. For instance, the gender differences associated with the one-child policy may influence larger cultural dimensions such as individualism and power distance (Hofstede, 2010). The gender difference in Chinese SNS users’ motivations and use patterns also suggests communication specialists should approach their audience with separate strategies for each gender.

Moreover, the importance of social capital implies that people might more easily rely on information distributed by their social ties, rather than traditional information authorities, such as the government or the editor of a news outlet. There might be miscellaneous implications: first of all, it is an ongoing challenge for the news production industry and more importantly, journalism education; secondly, it also proposed the
question of possible segmented audience and society for sociology scholars; thirdly, it calls for new communication strategy for organizations, politicians, and business corporations.

*Flexibility of Research Method*

In two weeks, the researcher has successfully collected over 300 responses, with a response rate of 43.85%. The researcher believes the main reason for this successful data collection is that we might have chosen the most appropriate research method currently available for researches focused on SNS user experience. In other words, by asking potential participants to share (or retweet) the link of our survey, be it embedded in the researcher’s status or blog within the SNS site functions, we have followed the way information is distributed from person to person, from networks to networks on SNS, which is mainly via “weak-ties”.

According to Granovetter (1973), “whatever is to be diffused can reach a larger number of people, and traverse greater social distance, when passed through weak ties rather than strong.” So information travels faster and wider than usual on SNS, especially the ones distributed via weak ties. The large number of total participants and high response rate in this study supports Granovetter’s theory of the weak-tie power.

This study suggests SNS can produce larger snowball samples than using traditional snow-ball sampling methods, be it word-of-mouth, or via Emails, because potential participants go beyond the traditional range of a snow ball sample (several tens of friends, family, or their friends) (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). As Oxford anthropologist Robin Dunbar suggests, “We can only have 150 friends at most”
Participants in this study range from age 18 to age 50, the majority of which belong to the age group of 20-29 (94.8% of all participants).

Also, as Riffe, Lacy and Fico put it (2005, p.120), “accumulated support from convenience samples works best if these samples come from a variety of situations”, such as samples “from several locations and time periods.” Our participants ages are more diverse than earlier SNS studies carried out among college students from 1 or 2 universities in the U.S. (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ancu & Cozma, 2009; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2011; Lampe, Wash, Velasquez & Ozakaya, 2010; Stafford, T.F., Stafford M.R. & Schkade, 2004; Nie & Erbring, 2000). And SNS allow our distribution of survey to travel beyond geographic boundaries among all Chinese SNS users, within and outside China.

Our major findings - consistent patterns of social-integrative needs as the strongest uses and gratification motivation that drives SNS usage, and a reoccurring gender difference in SNS usage - proved again the justification of convenience samples under appropriate conditions. As Riffe, Lacy and Fico argued in *Analyzing Media Messages* (2005, p.120): “The scientific method is the solution for the inability to randomly sample. If strong relationships of interest exist in larger populations, then they usually will be found consistently even in nonprobability samples”. For the sampling challenges on the Internet, they put it this way (Riffe et al, 2005, p.120):

It will take methodological research to establish standard sorts of Internet sampling that will yield valid representative samples. Until that time, researchers
are best advised to let their theoretical frameworks, hypothesis, and sampling theory be their guides.

This study might be a trial of the revival of snow-ball sampling for survey studies on SNS. Future researchers should not be reluctant to explore the advantage and disadvantage of snow-ball sampling survey on SNS studies.
REFERENCES

Alexa. (2010a), web traffic report on renren.com, retrieved from

Alexa. (2010b), web traffic report on kaixin001.com, retrieved from

Alexa. (2010c), web traffic report on Twitter.com, retrieved from

Alexa. (2010d), web traffic report on Facebook.com, retrieved from

Alexa. (2010e), web traffic report on Google.com, retrieved from

Alexa. (2010f), top sites in China, retrieved from


System Sciences (HICSS'05) - Track 4. Retrieved from
http://www.computer.org/portal/web/csdl/doi/10.1109/HICSS.2005.167

http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_china.shtml

Hong, L.K. (1987). Potential effects of the one-child policy on gender equality in the

Huang, Y.X. (2010, September 26). Qian Xiang “Kai Xin Wang” Wei He He Bing? (千
橡“开心网”为何合并？Why Does Oak Pacific “Kaixin.com” Merge with
“Renren”?). it.21.cn. Retrieved from

iResearch (2010, April 27). You Xi Wan Jia Ji Ti Chu Tao, She Jiao Wang Zhan Zao Yu
Mi Tu (Tu). (Game Players Rush Away, SNS at Cross-roads, 游戏玩家集体出逃
社交网站遭遇迷途). Retrieved from
http://news.iresearch.cn/0200/20100427/113620.shtml

from http://mediaconvergence.org/blog/?p=166

and Uses of Facebook. Proceedings from CHI 2008: the twenty-sixth annual
SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems. New York, NY: ACM.


Krotoski, A. (2010, March 14). Robin Dunbar: we can only ever have 150 friends at most…. Guardian.co.uk. Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2010/mar/14/my-bright-idea-robin-dunbar


Li, B. (2011, February 28). Ministry of Industry and Information Technology: Total Internet Population Reached 404 million; SNS Population Reached 191 million in


Li, M. (2010, April 22).


APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

The Question Body:

I. First, some questions about how you use domestic Social Networking Sites (e.g.: Renren.com, Kaixin001.com):

1. In a typical session, how long do you use domestic SNS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please select the best choice to fill in the blank in the following sentence:

In a typical week, in total, I spent ... time on domestic SNS compared to time I spent on all other media (e.g.: TV, Online News portal, mobile phone, etc.).

- More
- About the same
- Less

II. These next questions ask about ways you might use domestic SNS for social relations

3. It is very ... for me to use domestic SNS to...

(Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for not at all important and 5 stands for very important.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1) Let people know I care about their feelings
2) Stay in touch with people who understand me
3) Talk about my problems
4) Feel involved with what happens with others
5) Stay informed of occasions and events (e.g.: concerts, sports, exhibitions)

III. These questions ask about other ways to use domestic SNS.

4. It is very ... for me to use domestic SNS to...

(Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for not at all important and 5 stands for very important.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1) Keep track of the international news
2) Keep track of the local news
3) Escape from my responsibilities
4) Postpone tasks that I should complete first
5) Amuse myself
6) Relax (from pressure)

IV. Now we would like to ask how often you use some functions on domestic SNS.

5. How often do you …?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- add information about yourself on your own SNS site so that your friends can see
  (e.g.: update status, upload photos, write a blog, etc.,)
- check-out friends’ updates without sharing or responding to the update
  (e.g.: their sharings, photos, status, etc.,)
- look at your friends’ updates and share or respond to the updates
- initiate a personal interaction
  (e.g.: inbox message, birthday gift, tag a friend, initiate a post on a friend’s wall)

6. Which of the following SNS are you a member of? (Select all that apply.)
- Kaixin001
- Renren
- QQ Alumni Book
- Douban
- MSN Space
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Sina Microblog
- Others, please specify________

7. About how many friends do you have on the domestic SNS that you use most often?

V. Now we’d like to ask you some demographic information. (Only aggregated results will be reported.)
8. How old will you be by the end of year 2011?

__________________________

9. What is your education level?
- High school degree or less
- Undergraduate college student
- Undergraduate college degree
- Graduate student
- Graduate degree

10. What is your occupation?
- Full-time Student
- Government unit employee
- State-owned company employee
- Foreign company employee
- Domestic private company employee
- Unemployed
- Others, please specify________

11. What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

Ending Page:
Thank you for your participation. I appreciate your help with my thesis!!
APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CHINESE)

I. 以下问题是关于您在中文本土社交网站的使用习惯:

1. 您一般每次登录中文本土社交网站的时间有多长（如：人人网，开心网）？
   A. 少于 1 小时
   B. 1-2 小时
   C. 2-3 小时
   D. 3-4 小时
   E. 4 小时以上

2. 相比您每周花在其它媒体上的时间（电视，新闻网站，报纸，手机等），您每周花在社交网站上的时间……
   A. 更多些
   B. 差不多一样
   C. 更少

II. 以下问题是关于您使用本土社交网站的社交原因：

3. 在您使用本土社交网站时，下列因素有多重要？（请每行圈出一个答案）

1 = 一点都不重要   2 = 不太重要   3 = 一般重要   4 = 很重要   5 = 极其重要

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>因素内容</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 让别人知道我在乎他们的感受</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 和了解我的人保持联系</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 讨论我遇到的问题</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 感受参与到他人的生活中</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) 获知近期社交活动的信息 (如：演唱会，展览，体育赛事等。)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. 以下问题是关于您使用本土社交网站的其它原因：

4. 在您使用本土社交网站时，下列因素有多重要？(请每行圈出一个答案)

1 = 一点都不重要  2 = 不太重要  3 = 一般重要  4 = 很重要  5 = 极其重要

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>不重要</th>
<th>极其重要</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>观察/获取信息</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>跟踪国际新闻</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>跟踪国内新闻</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>回避我的职责</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>拖延我该首先完成的任务</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>让自己开心</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>放松一下(缓解压力)</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>3  4  5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. 以下问题是关于您在本土社交网站上的活动：

5. 您在社交网站上进行以下活动的频率是…？(请每行圈出一个答案)

1 = 从不  2 = 较少  3 = 时有时无  4 = 经常  5 = 总是

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>总是</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 在个人页面上添加与我有关的内容，方便大家了解</td>
<td>1  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(如：更新状态，上传照片，写博客等)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 查看朋友的更新，但不加评论</td>
<td>1  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(如：好友的分享，照片，状态等)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. 您是以下哪些社交网站的用户？
   (请选择所有符合的选项)
   □ 开心网（kaixin001.com）
   □ 人人网（原校内网 renren.com 或 kaixin.com）
   □ QQ 校友录
   □ 豆瓣
   □ MSN Space
   □ Linked In
   □ Facebook
   其它，请注明________

7. 在您最常用的本土社交网站上，您的好友数是？

________________________________________

V. 以下问题是关于您的个人基本信息：(仅经统计的整体数据将用于论文发表)

8. 到 2011 年年底，您的年龄是？

________

9. 您的教育水平是…？
   A．高中毕业及以下
   B．大学在校生
C．大学毕业
D．研究生在校生
E．研究生毕业

10. 您的工作情况是…?
   A．全职学生
   B．受雇于政府机构及相关部门
   C．受雇于国企
   D．受雇于外企
   E．受雇于民营私企
   F．待业
   G．其它，请注明____________

11. 您的性别是…?
   A．男
   B．女

非常感谢您参与本次调查！