Cultural values and Facebook use among Palestinian youth in Israel

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ABSTRACT

Culture is a set of values that influences attitudes and social behavior. Despite the role of culture in shaping attitudes and motivations, most of the extensive research literature on the determinants and patterns of social media use has focused on psychological and social factors. The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by investigating the role of cultural values in perceptions of privacy, trust and motivations for using Facebook among young Palestinians in Israel. We relied on Hall's concept of high and low communication contexts and three of Hofstede's cultural dimensions: collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Data from a survey of Arab high school students ($N = 567$) established that variations in the adoption of cultural values are associated with the motivation for using Facebook through their effect on trust and on privacy concerns. We discuss the findings and their implications.

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1. Introduction

The integration of computer-mediated communication in everyday life has led to an upsurge in the availability and use of social networking sites (SNSs). One of the most popular SNSs is Facebook, which was launched in 2004 and had acquired over 750 million active members internationally by late 2011 (Anderson & Fagan, 2012). Studies have applied the Uses and Gratifications approach (U&G) to explore the motivations for using Facebook (Joinson, 2008; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2007; Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). These studies claim that the motivations for using a particular medium are shaped in part by the user's social status, social psychology predispositions, position in the social structure (Lin, 1999; Roe, 1983; Rosengren & Windahl, 1989; Ruggiero, 2000; Zhou, Jin, Vogel, Fang, & Chen, 2011), gender (Grellhesl & Punyanunt-Carter, 2012) and age (Rideout, Roberts, & Foehr, 2005). These studies have also identified three core reasons for using social networks: information, friendship, and communication (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010; Park et al., 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

The rapid and global expansion of Facebook as a communication technology calls for studies that investigate the role of cultural values in the motivations for its use. This study will explore the association between variations in cultural values and attitudes toward Facebook and motivations for its use by examining it within Hall's framework of the context of communication and Hofstede's

dimensions of national cultural values. Hall (1976) distinguished between low and high context communication. He categorized Japanese, Arab and Mediterranean peoples as high context cultures and Western cultures as low context cultures. In high context cultures, interpersonal contact takes precedence over everything else (Hall, 1976). Culture shapes the attitudes and values that influence the communication technology that people use to meet their needs (Silverstone & Haddon, 1996). Through its influence on attitudes and subjective norms, culture can also influence actual behavior, promoting or impeding the use of information and communication technology (Barzilai-Nahon, 2004; Erumban & de Jong, 2006; Zakaria, Stanton, & Sarkar-Barney, 2003).

In light of the potential association between cultural values and the use of SNSs, we used Hofstede's (2001) framework, which originally consisted of four cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and masculinity), in order to investigate the relationship between variation in cultural values and the motivations for using Facebook for the creation and maintenance of social relationships.

Attitudes toward privacy and trust have been identified as important factors that affect the motivations for using Facebook (Buchanan, Paine, Joinson, & Reips, 2007; Dwyer, Hiltz, & Passerini, 2007; Gangadharbatla, 2008). Attitudes refer to the overall evaluation of people (including one's self), objects, and issues. These global evaluations are based on cultural beliefs, emotions past experiences and behaviors (Petty, Briñol, & DeMarree, 2007). Regarding attitudes toward privacy, in order to create and maintain social ties, one must disclose intimate, personal information to others. The more individuals are afraid of or concerned about disclosing personal information, the more likely they are to avoid

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using Facebook to expand their social ties. While scholars have investigated the role of privacy concerns in the motivation for using Facebook, the role of variations in cultural values in shaping these attitudes has not received sufficient attention (boyd & Marwick, 2011; Cardon et al., 2009; Feng & Xie, 2014; Wang, Norice, & Cranor, 2011).

Trust is another important aspect that is also shaped by cultural values and influences the motivations for Facebook use (Lorenzo-Romero & Constantinides, 2011; Neumark, Lopez-Quintero, Feldman, Hirsch Allen, & Shtarkshall, 2013; Sledgianowski & Kulviwat, 2009; Vance, Elie-Dit-Cosaque, & Straub, 2008). Trust plays a central role in high context cultures such as the Arab one (Al-Haj, 1995; Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1980a, 1980b; Triandis, 1989, 1995; Zakaria et al., 2003). Therefore, this study investigates both its antecedents and role in the motivations for using Facebook. In sum, while many studies have investigated the motivations for using Facebook, most have focused on psychological and social factors rather than cultural values. Moreover, previous studies have compared cultures but failed to acknowledge the possibility of the existence of within culture differences (Cardon et al., 2009; Gong, Stump, & Li, 2014).

This study will focus on the Palestine minority in Israel, an ethnic minority transitioning from adherence to traditional values to the embracing of modern values. This ethnic group varies in the degree to which it is adopting these values, making it a perfect candidate for the study of the implications of these variations with regard to the motivations for and patterns of Facebook use (Al-Haj, 1995; Haj-Yahia, 2000, 2002; Seginar & Mahajna, 2004). The contribution of this study is that explores the role of variations in the cultural values and attitudes of young people and their association with the motivations for using Facebook, particularly in light of privacy concerns and level of trust.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

The Uses and Gratifications theory (U&G) is a leading theoretical approach to studying the use of channels of communication. One key assumption of the theory is that individuals' media use is purposeful and selective. The choice of a communication channel or a specific type of communication on an SNS ("like" or the wall) is the result of the individual's social and psychological needs that shape the motivation for using a particular communication channel and the expectation that those needs will be satisfied (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Lin, 1999; Rubin, 1994; Ruggiero, 2000). According to the theory, the user's social status and social psychology predispositions in part shape the motivations for selecting a particular medium (Lin, 1999). Consistent with this argument, early studies showed that media choice and use differs based on the individual's position in the social structure (Roe, 1983; Rosengren & Windahl, 1989; Ruggiero, 2000; Zhou et al., 2011). For example, one study that applied the U&G approach to investigate the seven most highly sought gratifications using SMS text messaging found significant differences between male and female respondents. Women reported significantly higher scores on access than did men (Grellhesl & Punyanunt-Carter, 2012). Similarly, age was a critical factor in the motivation for playing video games. For fifth graders, the strongest motivators were the perceived challenge and arousal attributes of video games. For eighth graders, it was competition; for eleventh graders, competition and diversion; and for college students, the major motivations were challenge, competition and diversion (Greenberg, Sherry, Lachlan, Lucas, & Holmstrom, 2010). A study that is more relevant to our research is that of Rizkallah and Razzouk (2011) who found that ethnic origin is an important factor in understanding media use and that culture has an impact on the patterns of Facebook use.

A major goal of some studies has been to categorize the various reasons for using Facebook (Anderson & Fagan, 2012; Park et al., 2009). For example, Bonds-Raacke and Raacke (2010) identified three main reasons: information, friendship, and communication. These dimensions are consistent with earlier research, which showed that people sign-up to use Facebook principally to keep up-to-date with old and new friends, and for other purposes such as organizing or publicizing social events, studying, and dating (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

Other studies have tried to understand the role of various motivations in online behaviors such as attitudes toward the Web and the use of and satisfaction with the Web (Luo, 2002). For instance, Lampe et al. (2007) used a U&G approach to show that different motivations for use were associated with different patterns of contributions in creating content in online communities. Similarly, Joinson (2008) identified a core set of fundamental uses for and gratifications from Facebook.

More relevant for the current study is the role of ethnicity as one of the social factors affecting the differential use of media. In their review of SNS research in communication journals, Zhang and Leung (2014) highlighted the importance of cultural context, noting that the current research on SNSs has been developed primarily in North American or European cultural contexts. Zhang and Leung noted that the findings might be problematic in that they do not take into account the communication behavior of non-Western populations. Thus, more research is needed to understand how cultural backgrounds affect the use of SNSs. Specifically, within cultural groups there are variations in the adherence to cultural values, and these variations might explain variations in the motivations to use SNSs.

2.1. Culture and communication

Hall (1976) proposed that cultures could be categorized based on the messages that the members in a given culture prefer to use. He developed a continuum ranging from high context to low context communication on which he placed various cultures. In a low context culture, "where very little is taken for granted, greater cultural diversity and heterogeneity are likely to make verbal skills more necessary and, therefore, more highly prized" (Okabe, 1983, p. 38). On the other hand, in a high context culture, "cultural homogeneity encourages suspicion of verbal skills, confidence in the unspoken, and eagerness to avoid confrontation" (Okabe, 1983, p. 38). In this study, we focus on the Arab culture, which differs from that of Western groups. According to Hall (1976), Japanese, Arab and Mediterranean peoples, who have extensive information networks among family, colleagues, and clients and who are involved in close personal relationships, belong to high context cultures. In this view, for most normal transactions in daily life they do not require, nor do they expect, much in-depth background information about other actors. As members of small and traditional societies, they keep themselves informed about everyday activities having to do with the people who are important in their lives. In contrast, Western societies such as Americans, Germans, the Swiss and Scandinavians belong to low context cultures that compartmentalize their personal relationships, their work, and many aspects of day-to-day life. Consequently, each time they interact with others they need detailed background information.

The emphasis of the central role of culture in shaping attitudes and behavior has inspired a number of studies exploring the impact of culture on the adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) (Barzilai-Nahon, 2004; Zakaria et al., 2003) and cultural differences in the use of ICT (Hargittai, 2008; Kayan, Fussell, & Setlock, 2006). Culture can influence actual behavior through its influence on attitudes and subjective norms that

promote or impede the use of ICT (Erumban & de Jong, 2006). A few studies have investigated the relationship between cultural values and the use of SNSs (Cardon et al., 2009; Gong et al., 2014). For example, Al Omoush, Yaseen, and Alma'aitah (2012) found that while Arab youngsters use SNSs to free themselves from some of the restrictions in their lives, their attitudes are still influenced by the cultural values of the Arab nation. Their results also revealed a significant effect of members' motivations, attitudes, and usage on the value of maintaining membership in Facebook.

In the study of culture, Hofstede's (1980a, 2001) framework has been accepted as a method for identifying cultural values (Lee & Peterson, 2000; Van Everdingen & Waarts, 2003). The framework originally consisted of four cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and masculinity), and a fifth dimension (long-term orientation) was added later. Given the strong correlation between the values of uncertainty avoidance and masculinity, and to avoid multicollinearity, we decided to include three dimensions in our analysis: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism. In the next section, we define each dimension and indicate its expected relationship with the motivations to use Facebook.

2.2. Cultural values

Hofstede defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (1980a, p. 260). Values are internalized early in life, and the extent of adherence to them may differ from individual to individual. In this study, we consider three of Hofstede's values: uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and power distance.

2.2.1. Uncertainty avoidance

Hofstede (1980a) defined uncertainty avoidance as "the degree to which members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity". Societies differ in how they deal with uncertainty. For example, a cross-cultural study involving the United States and Japan demonstrated that Japanese respondents were more likely to choose communication methods that were rich in information (e.g., body language, facial expression, and tone of voice) because of their strong inclination to avoid uncertainty (Straub, 1994). Erumban and de Jong (2006) determined that uncertainty avoidance is the most significant cultural factor in explaining some of the differences between countries in their ICT adoption rates. Uncertainty avoidance has a significant negative influence on the expressive use of Web 2.0 technologies (Ribière, Haddad, & Wiele, 2010).

Given that people use Facebook to maintain and expand their social networks, scoring high on uncertainty avoidance would affect this motivation (Gong et al., 2014). To avoid uncertainty, people might prefer to use Facebook as a vehicle for interacting with people they actually know rather than for making new virtual friends. Thus, we expect that:

H1. There is a positive association between a high level of uncertainty avoidance and the use of SNSs for maintaining existing relationships.

2.2.2. Individualism versus collectivism

Individualism refers to whether the interests of the individual in a culture prevail over those of the collective or vice versa. According to Hofstede (1991), in countries that score high on the individualism scale, ties between individuals are weak, and people are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families. In contrast, collectivism refers to societies in which people are integrated into strong and cohesive in-groups from birth

(Hofstede, 1991). In such societies, interpersonal relations are central to everyday life, and people are born into extended families or clans that protect them in exchange for their loyalty to the group (Hofstede, 2001).

Studies about the relationship between individualism and the adoption of ICT have produced mixed findings. For example, Talukder and Yeow (2007) noted that cultural aspects in Bangladesh such as the Islamic religion, a collectivistic culture, and a high degree of ambiguity avoidance affected the content of messages in Bangladeshi virtual communities. Lee, Choi, Kim, and Hong (2007) reported a positive relationship between individualism and post-adoption perceptions of mobile Internet services. Similarly, Cardon et al. (2009) demonstrated that a high degree of collectivism was significantly associated with having fewer offline friends.

Based on these findings, we expect that those who score high in collectivism would be more likely to use Facebook for maintaining their existing social ties, rather than expanding them. Therefore, we suggest that:

H2. There is a positive association between collectivist values and the desire to maintain existing relationships, such that the higher the score on the collectivistic scale, the higher the score on the scale of relationship maintenance.

2.2.3. Power distance

Cultures differ in their acceptance of the distance between individuals located in different positions in the social power hierarchy (Hofstede, 2001). The power distance norm deals with the desirability or undesirability of inequality and of dependence versus interdependence in society. Studies have found inconsistent evidence regarding the theoretical expectation about an association between power distance and the acceptance of new media (Dwyer, Mesak, & Hsu, 2005; Gong, Li, & Stump, 2007; Yeniyurt & Townsend, 2003). For example, in a study designed to investigate the role and effect of national culture on the use of SNSs across countries, power distance was not associated with the rate of SNS adoption (Gong et al., 2014). Similar results were reported in a study in an Arab country (Al Omoush, Yaseen, & Alma'aitah, 2012). However, we may attribute the lack of evidence to the limitations of the studies. The first study's focus was on the adoption of SNSs in general, rather than a particular one that might exhibit quite different characteristics, making it more difficult to establish a significant relationship. In the second study, the target population was all of the active Arab users of Facebook. This study ignored the demographic characteristics of respondents with varying backgrounds, expertise, occupations, and aspirations, and who belonged to different age groups. While there is some disagreement about the role of power distance in SNS use, we recognize that Palestinian youngsters in Israel belong to a traditional culture in transition with variations in the respect accorded to the hierarchical structure of society, a value that teenagers may want to preserve even in virtual space. Therefore, we expect that:

H3. There is a positive association between one's score on power distance and his or her motivations for using Facebook to maintain existing relationships and expand his or her social ties.

2.3. Attitudes toward privacy

Most of research in the context of SNSs has focused on two primary attitudes: privacy and trust (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Iachello & Hong, 2007). However, attitudes toward privacy and trust are associated with cultural values. Privacy refers to the flow of personal

information and the norms regulating this flow (Nissenbaum, 2011). The most common definition of privacy is the right of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others (Westin, 1967, 2003). Information technologies and digital media have long been viewed as threats to privacy because they have radically disrupted the flow of personal information. Numerous studies have explored privacy concerns with regard to using websites generally and SNSs in particular (Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011; Feng & Xie, 2014; Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Jones & Soltren, 2005) with disagreement over how privacy settings, friending behaviors, and disclosures interact (Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Ellison et al., 2011; Gross & Acquisti, 2005). Indeed, participation in communication mediated by SNSs is inherently paradoxical. On one hand, the maintenance and development of interpersonal associations requires the disclosure of personal and intimate information. On the other hand, the users need to control this flow of information to ensure that it is communicated only to those with whom they want to share it (Taddicken, 2013). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that cultural values shape variations in the disclosure of personal information and the attitudes toward the need for its control.

With regard to the privacy of young people, boyd and Marwick (2011) recognized that teenagers' understanding of privacy behavior differs according to the social context, and privacy cannot be separated from context. Thus, we posit that:

H4. There is a positive association between privacy concerns and the motivation for using SNSs to expand one's social ties.

A few studies have investigated the factors that could explain privacy concerns among SNS users, especially cultural ones. For instance, Wang et al. (2011) found that SNS respondents from different cultures (American, Chinese, and Indian) had significant differences in their privacy-related attitudes and behaviors. In general, American respondents were the most concerned with privacy, followed by the Chinese and Indians. Wang and colleagues explained these differences by relating them to the scores on individualism. The US is an individualistic society and thus values personal privacy more than the Chinese and the Indians who are more collectivist cultures (Wang et al., 2011).

These results suggest that users from different cultural backgrounds and holding different cultural values may differ in their emphasis on privacy. For example, Marshall, Cardon, Norris, Goreva, and D'Souza (2008) found that American university students were far more cautious than Indian students about online privacy. The latter were also more likely to interact with strangers who initiated contact with them. These findings contradict the traditional understanding of collectivist and individualist communication patterns and demonstrate that online privacy and communication behaviors do not match the traditional understanding of cross-cultural differences. In this case, Indian and American university students did not exhibit many of the contrasting behaviors associated with collectivists and individualists.

With regard to privacy concerns among Palestinians, Hall and Hall (1969) noted that: "...since there is no physical privacy as we know it in the Arab family, not even a word for privacy, one could expect that the Arabs might use some other means to be alone...". Given these claims, we would expect that Arab adolescents who embrace collectivistic values would treat the issue of privacy on Facebook differently from those who have adopted individualistic values, especially because of the feature of SNSs that mixes real relationships and virtual ones. In such an environment, we propose that:

H5. There is a positive association between collectivistic values and privacy concerns.

2.4. Attitudes toward trust

Trust is generally defined as having confidence that a service or resource will behave in an expected manner despite the lack of ability to monitor or control the environment in which that service or resource operates (Chin, Varadharajan, Wang, & Pruthi, 2004). Trust is considered from two viewpoints: individual and societal, making it a critical factor in the success of online communities (Sherchan, Nepal, & Paris, 2013). Trust has a direct, positive effect on attitudes toward web sites as well as on perceptions about their usefulness and ease of use (Lorenzo-Romero & Constantinides, 2011).

Trust also plays a central role in the use of SNSs (Sledgianowski & Kulviwat, 2009). For example, an online survey of two popular social networking sites, Facebook and MySpace, found that Facebook users had a higher level of trust and reported more willingness to share identifying information than Myspace users (Dwyer et al., 2007).

Based on these findings, our next hypothesis is:

H6. There is a positive association between attitudes about trust and the motivations for using SNSs to maintain existing relationships and expand social ties.

As new forms of ICT expand the available modes of information exchange, culturally preferred behavioral patterns can promote or impede their use. Cultural values define the value of information that is considered useful and meaningful (Zakaria et al., 2003). For example, Vance et al. (2008) found that individuals adhering to high uncertainty avoidance cultural values were less trusting of ICTs than individuals adhering to low uncertainty avoidance values.

These findings prompted us to examine the relationship between cultural values and attitudes toward trust with regard to SNSs. Regarding trust, Hall (1976) asserted that high context people place a great deal of emphasis on relationships and have a common, implicit understanding of how members of the community should conduct themselves. Therefore, for trust to develop, one needs to know with whom one is dealing. In high context societies people must establish and maintain trusted personal relationships in order to communicate in an effective way. These personal relationships are the contextual "glue" that allows high context communication with its terse, situationally dependent messages to occur (Zakaria et al., 2003).

Although few scholars have formally linked collectivism/individualism with trust, many imply that trust is strong in collectivist societies and weak in individualist societies. A common theme is that because collectivists have a more interdependent worldview, they place more importance on relationships and nurture them with more care than individualists (Hofstede, 1980a, 1980b; Triandis, 1989, 1995).

Given these arguments, we expect that:

H7. There is a positive association between collectivism and power distance values, and trusting attitudes toward Facebook.

2.5. The Israeli context

Israel is a multicultural society, and the Arab citizens of Israel (or Palestinians who have Israeli citizenship) comprise 19% of the Israeli population. Of these, 82% are Muslims, 9% are Christians and 9% are Druze (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2011). Like other Arab subcultures, Arab society in Israel is conservative and prizes tradition, the extended family, and the welfare and safety of the group. It also has a rigid hierarchy and little autonomy – all collectivist characteristics. Within Arab society, there are more

conservative homogenous groups than within Jewish society (Al-Haj, 1995; Sharabi, 2009; Shavit, 2004). Schwartz (1999) found that Israeli Arabs and Muslims scored higher than Israeli Jews on the *collectivistic* dimensions of 'conservatism' and 'hierarchy'.

However, Arab society has been undergoing a process of rapid modernization (Khattab, 2005; Shafir & Peled, 2004). Education has become the most important asset for the Arab minority, at the individual level as well as at the national level (Al-Haj, 1995). The rate of illiteracy among Israeli Arabs has declined rapidly, a change that has affected the urban and rural population and men as well as women. Contact with the Jewish population, who for the Arabs are agents of modernization, has gradually increased, involving them in bilingual and bicultural experiences that have promoted their exposure to mass media and mass communication (Al-Haj, 2000).

Nevertheless, the process of modernization among the Arabs in Israel is complex, multi-dimensional and influenced by various forces that are at times even contradictory. The Arab minority is affected not only by the typical processes associated with modernization and Westernization but also by its unique socio-political status in Israel and the dual problem of competing national and citizenship identities. This complexity is also reflected in family life styles. Rarely are families either completely modern or completely traditional. Instead, one generally finds elements of both patterns in Israeli Arab families (Al-Haj, 1995; Khoury-Kassabri, Haj-Yahia, & Ben-Arieh, 2006).

Thus, the state of Arab Palestinians as a culturally traditional group in transition makes it an ideal population for investigating the role of cultural variations in values and their association with the motivations for and attitudes toward the use of Facebook for the formation and maintenance of social ties. Concentrated in cities and villages in northern Israel, this is a heterogeneous group with varied and complicated relationships with the Jewish mainstream. Israeli Palestinians are generally Muslim, involving them in the global and local conflict between Westernized modernization and traditional religiosity (Al-Haj, 2000; Seginar & Mahajna, 2004).

Studies have reported that Arab teenagers in Israel have extensive access to the Internet and Facebook (Abbas, 2010; Neumark et al., 2013). In a study that investigated differences in the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in Israel, Mesch (2011) found that Arabs were more likely to use CMC to expand their business and occupational contacts, whereas members of the majority Jewish group were more likely to use CMC to maintain existing family and friendships ties. However, little is known about Arab teenagers' use of SNSs and the role of cultural values in this use.

3. Method

3.1. Procedure

The study population consisted of 567 respondents representing Palestinian adolescents in Israel. The sample was randomly selected and included students in the private and public Arab high schools in Israel. We obtained the list of schools from the Ministry of Education's website. From this list we randomly selected schools from the northern and central areas of the country and those that serviced various religious groups (Muslims, Christians and Druze).

To test our hypotheses, we developed a questionnaire based on the adaptation of scales that were previously published in the literature. The questionnaire included 180 items and took 45 min on average to complete. The survey received the approval of the Research Ethics Board at the University of Haifa as well as the Chief Researcher of the Minister of Education. Parents were asked for permission for their children's participation in the study and were allowed to refuse. The researcher administered the survey to the students in their classrooms during a normal class period in the first semester of the 2013–2014 academic year. Responses to the questionnaire were made anonymously.

3.2. Participants

In the sample the respondents' ages ranged from 15 to 18 years old (N = 567), with a mean age of 16.06 (SD = 0.94). As to gender, 64.4% were girls and 35.6% were boys. Regarding religion, 75.2% of the participants were Muslims, 17.4% were Christian and 7.4% were Druze. As for level of religiosity, nearly half (48.2%) of the respondents defined themselves as religious, and the rest (41.8%) defined themselves as traditional. It is important to note that 83.2% of the participants reported having a profile in Facebook.

3.3. Measures

3.3.1. Dependent variables
3.3.1.1. Motives for using Facebook. We assessed this variable using the scales developed by Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) and modified for the Palestinian population. Two frequently mentioned objectives of using Facebook are nurturing or maintaining existing relationships and seeking new ones. These two goals were examined as our dependent variables.

3.3.1.2. Maintaining existing relationships. To measure this variable, we used four items that explored the motivations for using Facebook to maintain existing relationships: "I use Facebook to learn more about people in my class", "I use Facebook to learn more about other people living near me", "I use Facebook to know what my extended family is doing", and "I use Facebook to keep in touch with my extended family". Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = exactly, 1 = not at all) to what degree these reasons were likely to be their reasons for using Facebook. The items were combined in a single scale) α = .79, M = 10.64, SD = 4.13).

3.3.1.3. Expanding social ties. This concept was measured using 11 items that asked about using Facebook in order to find new friends and groups. Items included searching for new friends, finding information, knowing what my old friends are doing these days, and to check out someone I met socially. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = exactly, 1 = not at all) to what extent these motivations would likely be their own reasons for using Facebook. Responses were combined into a single scale (α = .82, M = 27.8, SD = 8.6).

3.3.1.4. Privacy concerns. To measure privacy concerns, we used the scale of Buchanan et al. (2007). The scale included 11 items that assessed general concerns about online privacy. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale from "never" (1) to "always" (5). Examples of the items are, "I am concerned about my privacy when using a Facebook account", "I am concerned about online organizations not being who they claim they are", and "I am concerned about online identity theft". A confirmatory factor analysis was carried out resulting in a single dimension. Items were combined into a single scale (α = .93, M = 31.33 SD = 11.12).

3.3.1.5. Trust. To measure this concept, we adapted four items from Pan and Zinkhan (2006) scale. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The statements were, "Facebook's site can be trusted", "I can count on Facebook to protect my privacy", "I can count on Facebook to protect customers' personal information" and "Facebook can be relied on to

keep its promises". A confirmatory factor analysis was carried out resulting in a single dimension. Items were combined into a single scale (α = .85, M = 9.36 SD = 3.49).

3.3.2. Independent variables

3.3.2.1. Demographics.
Age was measured as a continuous variable, and gender was introduced in the analysis as a dummy variable (boys = 1 and girls = 2).

3.3.2.2. Cultural values.
We measured collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance using items from Hofstede (1991) and Srite and Karahanna (2006). For all three constructs, the respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) the degree to which they agreed with the statements.

Examples of statements relating to *collectivism* include, "I take other people's needs and feelings into account when making decisions", "Group success is more important than individual success" and "Being loyal to a group is more important than individual gain". Responses were combined into a single scale (α = .81, M = 18.44 SD = 4.32). Higher values indicate agreement with collectivistic values.

Power distance was measured using six items that measured the extent of agreement with the right of authority figures to make decisions. The items were combined into a single scale. Higher values indicate more agreement with the right of authority figures to make decisions (α = .82, M = 13.45, SD = 5.06).

The scale measuring *uncertainty* contained four items: Fear of ambiguous and unfamiliar situations is normal; rules and regulations are important because they tell workers what the organization expects of them; order and structure are very important in a work environment; and it is important to have job requirements and instructions spelled out in detail so that people always know what they are expected to do. The items were combined into a single scale. Higher values indicate a higher level of uncertainty avoidance (α = .74, M = 16.6, SD = 2.7).

4. Results

We used SPSS for the descriptive statistics and the regression model, and to conduct the exploratory factor analysis.

4.1. Gender differences

Table 1 presents the results of a means comparison and a *t*-test based on gender for independent sample differences.

As the table shows, there was a significant difference in age: the average age of the boys was higher than that of the girls. In terms of cultural values, we found two differences. The average score on power distance was higher for boys than girls. On the other hand,

the average score on uncertainty avoidance was higher for girls than boys. We did not find any statistically significant differences in the scores on collectivism.

There were also statistically significant differences based on gender in one motivation for using Facebook: a higher percentage of boys than girls reported using Facebook to expand their social ties. There were no significant differences between the genders regarding using Facebook to maintain existing relationships. Regarding privacy concerns, the girls reported that they were more concerned than the boys about their privacy when using Facebook, and the latter trusted the site more than the girls.

4.2. Social motivations for using Facebook and cultural values

To test the study's hypotheses we conducted an OLS regression analysis in two models. Model 1 assessed the association between cultural values and the social motivations for using Facebook, while in Model 2 we added privacy concerns and trust to explore their association with the social motivations.

Our first three hypotheses expected that differences in the cultural values (e.g., collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance) would affect the participant's motivations for using Facebook (e.g., maintaining existing relationships and expanding social ties). Our findings support *H1, H2, and H3*. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between the three cultural values and the motivation for using Facebook for maintaining existing relationships. In other words, the higher the scores in collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, the more motivated the youngster is to use Facebook for maintaining existing relationships (see Model 1, Table 2). This result leads us to infer that the more traditional the culture, the more people use SNSs for maintaining existing relationships.

We found that two cultural values—collectivism and power distance—predict the use of Facebook to expand social ties (see Model 1, Table 3).

In Model 2 we entered the variables of privacy concerns and attitudes toward trust into the OLS regression to explore their relation with the social motivations for using Facebook. We found a significant positive relation between privacy concerns and the desire to expand one's social ties and a positive but non-significant association with the desire to maintain existing relationships. These results provide partial support for *H4*, which expected a positive relation between privacy concerns and the social motivations for using Facebook (see Model 2, Tables 2 and 3).

The results also support *H6*, which predicted a positive association between attitudes about trust and the social motivations for using Facebook (see Model 2, Tables 2 and 3). In addition, gender and high scores on power distance and collectivism predicted the use of Facebook for expanding social ties. Furthermore, there

Table 1
Mean of study variables according to gender.

	Boys M(SD)	Girls M(SD)
Age	16.26 (.91)	15.96 (.94)[**]
Collectivism	18.20 (4.42)	18.55 (4.21)
Power distant	15.19 (4.93)	12.63 (4.86)[**]
Uncertainty avoidance	15.51 (3.69)	16.50 (2.75)[*]
Using Facebook to expand social ties	28.85 (8.77)	26.35 (8.08)[*]
Using Facebook to maintain existing relationships	10.43 (4.03)	10.79 (4.19)
Privacy concerns	28.96 (10.07)	32.67 (11.27)[**]
Trust attitudes	10.28 (3.84)	8.92 (3.24)[**]

[*] $p < .05$.
[**] $p < .001$.

Table 2
Linear regression: The desire to maintain existing relationships (dependent variable).

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Age	−.599	.248	−.125[**]	−.590	.246	−.123[*]
Gender	.240	.448	.029	.265	.454	.032
Collectivism	.152	.054	.153[**]	.117	.054	.118[*]
Power distance	.092	.042	.117[*]	.067	.041	.084
Uncertainty avoidance	.175	.071	.138[**]	.181	.070	.143[*]
Trust				.215	.061	.183[**]
Privacy				.037	.020	.098[*]
R^2			.082			.115
F		6.43[**]			6.59[**]	

[*] $p < .05$.
[**] $p < .01$.

Table 3
Linear regression: The desire to expand social ties (dependent variable).

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Age	−.772	.447	−.089	−.760	.490	−.078
Gender	−2.631	.910	−.155**	−2.981	.905	−.175**
Collectivism	.265	.111	.131**	.196	.108	.097
Power distance	.191	.085	.119*	.124	.083	.077
Uncertainty avoidance	.191	.144	.074	.190	.140	.073
Trust				.573	.122	.239**
Privacy				.145	.039	.190**
R^2				.072		.15
F				5.55**		8.95**.

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

was a significant positive relation between high scores on power distance and collectivism and this motivation, but gender had a negative association with it. As noted earlier, boys were more inclined than girls to use Facebook to expand their social ties (see Model 1, Table 3).

4.3. Trust, privacy concerns and cultural values

To test the study's hypotheses about the association between attitudes about trust and privacy concerns and cultural values, we conducted an OLS regression.

The results in Tables 4 and 5 indicate that, as we expected in H5 and H7, gender and cultural values were significantly related to trust and privacy concerns. The cultural values of collectivism and power distance were related positively to attitudes about trust, whereas only collectivism was related positively to privacy concerns. These results suggest that boys trust Facebook more than girls. Furthermore, the higher the scores on collectivism and power distance, the greater the trust in Facebook. Regarding privacy concerns, the results suggest that girls are more likely to be concerned about their privacy on Facebook. In addition, higher scores on collectivism are associated with concerns about privacy on Facebook. These results support our hypothesis H5.

5. Discussion

Previous studies have established that social and psychological factors, as well as privacy concerns and attitudes about trust are associated with patterns of Facebook use (Vance et al., 2008; Zhang & Leung, 2014). However, there is a lack of empirical studies that have explored the role of cultural values in the motivations for using social media. The findings of the few studies that have been conducted are inconsistent. For example, while Al Omoush, Yaseen, and Alma'aitah (2012) did not find a significant effect of uncertainty avoidance on Facebook members' motivations, in another study

Table 4
Linear regression: Attitudes toward trust (dependent variable).

Variables	B	SE B	β
Age	.185	.169	.051
Gender	−1.130	.363	−.152**
Collectivism	.084	.041	.100*
Power distance	.072	.033	.103*
Uncertainty avoidance	−.011	.055	−.010
R^2 = .23			
F = 5.1**			

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

Table 5
Linear regression: Privacy concerns (dependent variable).

Variables	B	SE B	β
Age	−1.007	.621	−.077
Gender	3.996	1.168	.168**
Collectivism	.259	.129	.098*
Power distance	.171	.107	.078
Uncertainty avoidance	−.015	.180	−.004
R^2 = .22			
F = 4.8**			

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

uncertainty avoidance was negatively associated with the rate of SNS adoption (Gong et al., 2014). In addition, studies on the role of culture have usually compared cultural groups as a whole, ignoring variations within the group (Cardon et al., 2009; Gong et al., 2014).

Given the inconsistency of findings and lack of studies of within culture variations, the main purpose of this study was to investigate role of variations in a single ethnic group and the adherence to traditional or modern cultural values on the motivations for using Facebook for social purposes. Our findings reveal that there is significant positive relationship between three traditional cultural values (collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance) and the motivation for using Facebook for maintaining existing relationships. In other words, the higher the score on these scales, which reflect adherence to traditional cultural values, the more likely the individual is to use Facebook for maintaining existing relationships. This finding appears to be consistent with the distinction between high and low context cultures and even expands it to the realm of computer-mediated communication. It is reasonable that in high context societies in which people have extensive information networks among family and friends and are strongly involved in close personal relationships, the motivation for using Facebook is to maintain these ties, providing information to known contacts. The associations between most of the traditional cultural values persist even when trust and privacy concerns are controlled.

While previous studies have been inconclusive about the role of collectivism in the use of SNSs (Al Omoush, Yaseen, & Alma'aitah, 2012; Cardon et al., 2009; Gong et al., 2014) and did not find that collectivism had a significant effect on Facebook members' motivations, we did establish a positive association between collectivism and the desire to maintain existing relationships as well as to expand social ties. Our explanation for these findings is based on the description of the Palestinian population in Israel as a collectivistic one, emphasizing the homogeneity of the group and its transition from a traditional to modern society (Al-Haj, 1995; Sharabi, 2009; Shavit, 2004).

Previous studies expected to find a negative relationship between a high score on power distance and SNS adoption (Al Omoush, Yaseen, & Alma'aitah, 2012; Gong et al., 2014), but have failed to do so. Indeed, in this study, we found a positive relationship between a high score on power distance and both social motivations. The inconsistency between our findings and those of previous studies might be attributed to the lack of control for heterogeneity. While previous studies considered various SNS platforms together, our study focused on Facebook. Thus, while we did demonstrate that power distance affected the motivations for using Facebook, we urge caution in generalizing this finding to all SNSs.

Previous studies have shown that trust plays a central role in the adoption of SNSs (Sledgianowski & Kulviwat, 2009) and found that Facebook users had more trust in the site than MySpace users (Dwyer et al., 2007). Our results indicate that trust in Facebook is

associated with the two social motivations for using Facebook: maintaining existing relationships and expanding social ties. The more respondents trust the site, the more they use the site to satisfy these needs. We also determined that collectivism and power distance were related positively to attitudes about trusting Facebook. These results, which are consistent with previous studies (Vance et al., 2008), can be understood in the light of the study's context. Palestinian youngsters in Israel belong to the Arab culture, which emphasizes trust in their relationships (Hall, 1976), and in such high context societies, people must establish and maintain trusted personal relationships in order to communicate in an effective way (Zakaria et al., 2003). This relation between trust and culture was transferred to the virtual space, affecting the social motivations for using SNSs.

Privacy concerns revolve around the decision regarding when, how, and to what extent information about the individual is communicated to others (Westin, 1967, 2003). Using Facebook challenges this decision because the maintenance and development of interpersonal associations requires the disclosure of personal and intimate information, but the user needs to control the flow of this information to others (Taddicken, 2013). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that privacy concerns would shape the motivations for using SNSs. Individuals who are not concerned about their privacy are more likely to use Facebook to expand their social ties. Given that cultural values shape privacy concerns, it is also reasonable to assume that those who adhere to traditional values are more concerned about their privacy. Our results revealed that the more participants want to use SNSs to expand their social ties, the more concerned they are about their privacy. This finding makes sense because reaching out to unknown individuals on Facebook requires taking the chance that one's privacy may be violated.

Several studies have investigated the association between cultural values and privacy concerns. Based on the different individualism scores for each cultural group (American, Chinese, and Indian), one study suggested that respondents from different cultures who used SNSs had significant differences in their attitudes about privacy (Wang et al., 2011). Another study found that American students (an individualistic culture) were far more cautious than Indians (a collectivistic culture) about their privacy online. The latter were more likely to interact with strangers who initiated contact with them (Cardon et al., 2009). We maintain that these contradictory findings are a result of the difference in focus of the two studies. The first study referred to an entire cultural group, whereas the second study was conducted among students and analyzed the results at the individual level.

Our findings revealed a positive association between privacy concerns and collective values at the individual level. Once again, we can explain these results in the light of our understanding of Arab culture, which, as a high context culture, makes a clear distinction between members of the in-group and the out-group (Hall, 1976) regarding the flow of information. Thus, those who score high on collectivism may be concerned about their privacy on SNSs because of their inability to control the flow of personal information, leading to the possibility that out-group members could become aware of it.

5.1. Limitations

The findings of this study should be considered in light of several limitations. First, this study explored the relationship between cultural values and social motivations for using Facebook without reference to other factors that could influence these motivations. Second, the study was conducted among teenagers who were still in the developmental stage of their lives in which they were formulating their own values. These values may change over time and be somewhat different in the same individuals when they reach adulthood. Finally, our study was conducted within a single ethnic group, with the goal of investigating the association between intra-ethnic variations in cultural values and the motivations for using Facebook. Future studies should compare the association between the cultural values of various ethnic groups and the use of Facebook.

6. Conclusion

Despite its limitations, this study presents important and unique findings. The results expand previous findings and indicate that variation in the adherence to cultural values plays a central role in the motivation for using SNSs as well as in the association with privacy concerns about and trust of the Internet in general and SNSs in particular. From our findings, we can also infer that members of traditional cultures are more likely to use SNSs to maintain their ties with people they already know rather than to expand their social ties. Finally, privacy concerns, attitudes about trust and cultural values play a central and differential role in the determining whether people use SNSs to maintain their existing relationships or to expand them.

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