

SOCIAL MEDIA USES AND GRATIFICATIONS AMONG  
YOUNG ADULTS IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA

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**SOCIAL MEDIA USES AND GRATIFICATIONS AMONG YOUNG  
ADULTS IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA USES AND GRATIFICATIONS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA**

**Kenneth Lee Tze Wui**

While the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory has been widely used in research related to more conventional industrial media such as TV and later the new media including Internet and mobile platforms (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004; Chigona et al., 2008; Roy, 2009; Shin, 2009), social media – otherwise called web 2.0 – is found to be lacking in exploration, at least in Malaysia. Revolved around social media U&G among young adults in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, this study looks into (1) the reasons why subjects use the social media; 2) how process, content, and social motivations of social media use fare among the subjects; 3) how process, content, and, social motivations correlate with the overall experience of social media use among the subjects; and 4) how social media U&G differs between male and female subjects. This research adopts the quantitative approach, which involves a survey on purposively sampled 400 young adults in the Klang Valley aged from 15 to 29. A pilot survey was conducted prior to the actual survey to examine the internal consistency and quality of survey items. Research results interestingly reveal a finding similar to that found in the pioneer study by Stafford et al. (2004): social motivations are the weakest variable in social media U&G compared to the process and content motivations. Of the three

motivation types, only process motivations exemplify a statistically significant linear relationship with users' overall social media experience. Besides, results also show no statistical gender-related difference when it comes to social media U&G.

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## APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis entitled “**SOCIAL MEDIA USES AND GRATIFICATIONS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA**” was prepared by KENNETH LEE TZE WUI and submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Communication (Structure A) at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

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**SUBMISSION OF THESIS**

It is hereby certified that *Kenneth Lee Tze Wui* (ID No: *09UJM08840*) has completed this final year thesis entitled “*Social Media Uses and Gratifications among Young Adults in Klang Valley, Malaysia*” under the supervision of Mr. Raduan bin Sharif (Supervisor) from the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Creative Industries, and Ms. Cynthia Lau Pui-Shan (Co-Supervisor) from the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Creative Industries.

I understand that University will upload softcopy of my thesis in pdf format into UTAR Institutional Repository, which may be made accessible to UTAR community and public.

Yours truly,

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*(Kenneth Lee Tze Wui)*



## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the dissertation is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UTAR or other institutions.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- 1 CMC - Computer-mediated communication
- 2 HSBB - High Speed Broadband
- 3 ICT - Information and communication technologies
- 4 ITU - International Telecommunication Union
- 5 KPKK - Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture
- 6 MCMC - Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission
- 7 Q-Q Plot - Quantile-Quantile Plot
- 8 RO('s) - Research objective(s)
- 9 RQ('s) - Research question(s)
- 10 TAM - Technological Acceptance Model
- 11 U&G - Uses and Gratifications
- 12 U.K. - United Kingdom
- 13 U.S. - United States

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Internet users are shifting from mere consumption of information to contribution of content in what is known as the “social media” (Smith, Barash, Getoor, & Lauw, 2008). The current trend towards social media can be perceived as an evolution of the World Wide Web as a platform to facilitate information exchange between people (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Examples of social media include email contacts, instant messenger buddies, social network service contacts, and linkages in wikis and blogs (Smith et al., 2008). In the communication aspect, Constantinides and Fountain (as cited in Kazaka, 2011) and *Social media: A guide for researchers* (2011) hold that social media includes forums, blogs, micro-blogs such as Twitter, social network services such as Facebook, and social network aggregators such as FriendFeed.

Social media, or otherwise known as social networking, is also described by the term “web 2.0” (Dooley, Jones, & Iverson, 2012). Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) hold that personal web pages and the idea of content publishing, which bear the concept of web 1.0, are getting replaced by applications in the era of web 2.0. Web 2.0, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009), is a social platform where content is modified by all users in a



participatory and collaborative manner rather than on an individual basis. This is contrary to the precedent nature of the Internet, where users went online to seek the anonymity it offered (McKenna & Bargh, 2000).

Jacobs, Egert, and Barnes (2009) assert that social media today is used not just for simple communication, but a platform of expression via writing, arts, photographs and video sharing sites. Aegis Media Malaysia CEO Margaret Lim said today's communication systems give empowerment to those who crave connectedness by allowing them to swap photographs, audio and video clips, as well as to share their experiences ("Malaysians Top Media Consumers," 2008). Research shows that active participation in the social media is a "way of life" rather than just a buzzword for a majority of today's teenagers, who are "living an intensively connected lifestyle" (Jacobs et al., 2009).

## **1.2 Social Media Boom**

"Social Networking Explodes Worldwide" (2008) reports many social networking sites have demonstrated rapid growth in their international user bases. It says Facebook (facebook.com) took over the lead in April 2008 to become the world's number one social networking site. "Facebook Statistics" (2009) records over 175 million active Facebook users in March that year. In July 2010, the number of Facebook active users hit the 500 millionth mark ("Facebook Users Hit 500 Million," 2010), where more than 70% of them were from outside the United States (U.S.) ("Facebook Statistics," 2010).

Besides, Google had also been overtaken by Facebook to become the most visited website, although web analysis firm Experian Hitwise's media relations director Matt Tatham commented that the Internet is ever-changing and can be fickle (Pepitone, 2010). As of October 2012, Facebook had achieved a milestone by registering over a billion users (Lee, 2012).

Micro-blogging platform Twitter (twitter.com) also saw a massive traffic surge of close to 1000% between January 2008 and January 2009 (Falkow, 2009). According to "One in 10 American Adults" (2009), more than one in every ten online adults had used Twitter or similar services. "Twitter User Statistics Revealed" (2010) reports that new Twitter users were signing up at the rate of 300,000 every day and the site had garnered over 105 million registered users as of April 2010. In only four months, Twitter had surpassed MySpace in the number of unique visitors to become the third social networking site, registering 370,000 new accounts every day (Efrati, 2010). Jacobs et al. (2009) attribute such rapid growth of the social media to its ability to produce and share content across all arts of expressions.

### **1.3 Social Media and Society**

According to Blossom (as cited in "Social Media," 2009), social media is a shift in the mechanism of human communication that is empowering both individuals and institutions to change the world. Sieberg (2008) reports that Americans under 35, who is referred to as "the wired generation", were using social networking to push their political activism online to influence results in

the 2008 presidential election. According to the report, there were nearly 14 million voters of whom the presidential campaigns could target on social networking site Facebook alone, with Barack Obama getting the biggest share on Facebook with some 370,000 of his supporters. Sieberg (2008) described this phenomenon as “a force not seen since the 1960’s”.

John F. Kennedy in 1960 won the U.S. presidential election with the help of what is in today’s context known as the “industrial medium”, or television to be exact. Close to four decades later, when Obama was installed as the 44<sup>th</sup> U.S. president in January 2009, Ahmad Kushairi (2008) reports the former went a step further, having used the Internet and social media platforms during his campaign to reach out to a wider network of voters who included younger and more technology-savvy ones.

Rozana Sani (2008a) writes that Malaysians have been fast in “leveraging on the Internet to pitch election candidates”. The changing the structure of political communication sees representatives and candidates using everyday social media and social networking tools to reach out to constituents and voters (Rozana Sani, 2008a).

An early implication of the above can be traced back to the 1998 cyber-*reformasi* movement when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was sacked as Deputy Prime Minister (Brown, 2005, p.46). Prior to the event, in the effort to achieve the primary goal of Vision 2020 for Malaysia to secure a place among the industrialised nations, former Prime Minister Tun. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad

in 1996 launched the MSC project that consisted of a slew of business incentives to established an ICT-based economy in the country (Alsagoff & Hamzah, 2007). In the MSC Bill of Guarantees, Bill of Guarantee No. 7 promises zero censorship of the Internet (MSC Malaysia Bill of Guarantees, n.d.). In the aftermath of the dismissal of Anwar as a Deputy Prime Minister, which led to an arrest and eventually an imprisonment, an explosion of alternative websites on the Internet had been witnessed; they were what became the key platforms of communication between Anwar's supporters and the general public (Brown, 2005, p.46). It is suggested that the Internet's advantage to the opposition movement was two-fold as a medium of communication: firstly, it had not been strictly controlled then; secondly, it served as a platform to facilitate "greater communication and cooperation between disparate groups in civil society" (Brown, 2005, p. 46).

Besides, political figures such as Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun of Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Khairy Jamaluddin of United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), and opposition leader Lim Kit Siang, are cited to be among the "high-profile users of the social media" in Malaysia (Rozana Sani, 2008a). It is also said that socio-political bloggers such as Raja Petra Kamarudin, as well as online news portals such as Malaysiakini, Malaysia Today, The Malaysian Insider, and The Nut Graph, are rapidly deconstructing influence of traditional media (Russell, 2010).

The Internet holds to "create more informed choices and encourage the participation of more people – especially the young – in democratic

processes”, thereby bringing back politics to the grassroots level (Huggins, as cited in Rozana Sani, 2008a). This scenario assumes a paradigm shift in audience activity similar to what Klapper (as cited in Chigona, Kankwenda & Manjoo, 2008) identified in 1963, where consumers were said to be moving from a state of passivity and being controlled by the media to actively controlling over the media.

#### **1.4 Malaysian Internet Users**

In Asia-Pacific, Malaysia is reported to be one of the five most connected countries according to a study (“Digital divide remains glaring in Asia,” 2008). “Malaysians Top Media Consumers” (2008) utters the need for realisation that consumers now spend more time on the Internet than any other medium due to the social media’s ability to create virtual bond and leverage on “peer-to-peer” power to build interactive communities.

Malaysian Internet users have steadily increased over the years, with year 2007 recording a total of 14,792,700 (International Telecommunication Union [ITU], 2009) and the following year recording some 15,074,000 (ITU, 2010). The number continued to increase to 16,902,600 as of June 2009 as per ITU (as cited in “Asia Internet usage,” 2011), 17,500,000 in April 2011 (Department of Information Malaysia, 2011), and 17,723,000 as of June 2012 (Department of Information Malaysia, 2012).

In terms of Internet penetration, Malaysia marked 61.7% of the total population in 2012 (ITU, as cited in “Asia Internet usage,” 2012). By 2012, number of Internet users is predicted to be hitting some 20.4 million (Lim, 2009). 61% of the Malaysian Internet users have more than five years of experience online according to the Asia Media Journal (“Omnicom,” 2008).

The bi-annual Nielsen Global Online Consumer Survey (as cited in “Malaysians Rank 5<sup>th</sup>,” 2009; Russell, 2010) finds Malaysia taking the fifth place globally in terms of digital media consumption. Malay daily *Utusan Malaysia* (as cited in “Blogging in Malaysia,” 2008) reports the country had approximately half a million active bloggers, thereby ranking the country among the highest throughout the world after Indonesia and the European Union.

As of August 2008, Malaysia was also one of the top 15 countries to access Friendster (friendster.com), which was the top social networking site in Asia with over 55 million registered users (*Friendster at A Glance*, 2008). Later, Friendster was overtaken by Facebook, which had a penetration rate of over half the country's broadband users (Russell, 2010). Besides, Lim (2009) reports that 95% had a Friendster account, 90% were on Facebook, and 38% were Twitter users in a 2009 survey that involved 900 respondents.

In January 2010, following the government's ban on the use of the word “Allah” among non-Muslims, a Facebook group protesting against it had gathered close to 50,000 followers “in a matter of days” (Russell, 2010).

Besides, in terms of the time spent on the social media, Malaysia ranked second among the Asean countries (Lim, 2009), which suggests strong consumer activity in the media.

### **1.5 Internet and Young Adults**

The definitions of “young adulthood” are vague according to Ornstein (2001). Young adults are often defined by theorists as those who have reached sexual maturity, but are not yet married (Schindler, as cited Ornstein, 2001). As the size of population has grown in recent years, Cart (2008) holds that the conventional definition of “young adult” has stretched out to include those as young as ten and as old as twenty-five. Nevertheless, “young adults” is often defined as those aged from 15 to 29, as exemplified in World Health Organization (2010, 2011a, 2011b).

It is commonly acknowledged that young people consume the new media more often than older people do, which can be seen in the trend of intergenerational “digital divide” (Pfeil, Arjan & Zaphiris, 2009). In the U.S., Bennett (as cited in Omotayo, 2006) finds that 75% of the population aged from 18 to 29 regularly engage in the Internet for information. Similarly in Malaysia, connecting via the social media is also said to be a routine for youths aged between 15 and 29 (Rozana Sani, 2008b).

Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission [MCMC] (2010) reports that the country’s Internet consumption in 2009 is found to be

heaviest in the age groups of 15 to 19, 20 to 24, as well as 25 to 29 compared to other sub-groups. A joint research by Omnicom and Yahoo! (“Omnicom,” 2008) also reveals the most versatile Malaysian Internet users are known as the “embracers” who are defined as “young optimistic twenty-somethings” who go online almost four hours daily. In that regard, the operational definition of “young adults” – as reflected in the title – is set to be those aged from 15 to 29 years old.

### **1.6 The Klang Valley as an IT Hub**

The Klang Valley has, over the past three to four decades, attracted many educated and technology-savvy individuals seeking employment and business opportunities (*Klang Valley Broadband Push*, 2008). It is one of the most developed business and financial centers in the country (Syed Shah Alam & Rosidah Musa, 2009). According to Malaysia’s first Internet Service Provider, Joint Advanced Integrated Networking (JARING) (as cited in Azmuddin Ibrahim & Daing Zaidah Daing Ibrahim, 2006), half of the Internet businesses in Malaysia came from the Klang Valley. By the end of 2000, Access Service Providers in the country were concentrated mainly in the Klang Valley and Penang, with the former having the highest number of Internet subscribers (Government of Malaysia, 2001).

In terms of household Internet users, MCMC found that the Klang Valley marked the highest percentage from 2005 to 2010 (MCMC, 2009, 2010; *Household*, 2011). From 2005 to 2007, Klang Valley continued to also



dominate the pie chart by registering the highest number of Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) hotspots (MCMC, 2007). Parveen and Sulaiman (2008) also attribute Klang Valley as having the highest Internet penetration in their research on wireless Internet and mobile devices in Malaysia.

Effort to make the Klang Valley an Information Technology (IT) hub has been exemplified in The Klang Valley Broadband Push (KVB90) project aimed at increasing household broadband penetration rate in the Klang Valley to 90% by 2010 (MCMC, 2007; *Klang Valley Broadband Push*, 2008; Yip & Jayaraj, 2010). Under the KVB90 project, Kuala Lumpur became among one of the first cities globally to offer the public with the WiMAX 2.3 Giga Hertz free service, and the area of coverage was expected to extend to the whole of the Klang Valley by the end of 2009 (Yip & Jayaraj, 2010).

Besides, in a joint effort between Telekom Malaysia Berhad and the government to increase the country's competitiveness, the next-generation High Speed Broadband (HSBB) service known as "UniFi" was launched in March 2010 in four exchange areas in the Klang Valley including Bangsar, Taman Tun Dr. Ismail, Subang Jaya, and Shah Alam ("TM Launches High Speed Broadband," 2010; "TM Launches Next-Generation High Speed Broadband Service," 2010). Later in July, areas of the HSBB coverage were extended to some 18 new locations, which Lee (2010) reports to be on track to for the country have as many as 48 sites by the end of 2010, with focus placed upon the Klang Valley.

## 1.7 Context of Research

According to Kazaka, (2011), “social media” does not have one generally-established definition. However in *Social media: A guide for researchers* (2011), it is said to constitute related areas such as communication, collaboration, and multimedia. Studying the social media as a whole may result in findings too general due to its generality. To mitigate the otherwise lack of focus in this study, this research will focus solely on the communication area, which according to Constantinides and Fountain (as cited in Kazaka, 2011) and *Social media: A guide for researchers* (2011), includes blogs, micro-blogs like Twitter, forums, social network services like Facebook, and social network aggregators like FriendFeed.

Roy (2009) posits that most Internet U&G studies revolve around the contexts of the United States (U.S) and United Kingdom (U.K.), and that similar research in the context of Asia has to be addressed. As such, it would be both beneficial and interesting to look into the behaviors of young adults aged from 15 to 29 in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. While there is no proper definition as to how big and until where the Klang Valley covers, it is generally understood to include Kuala Lumpur and its neighbouring districts (*Klang Valley Broadband Push*, 2008). The Klang Valley includes Klang, Shah Alam, Kuala Lumpur, and other major urban areas of Petaling Jaya and Subang Jaya (Thompson & Jahin, 1994). The definition of “Klang Valley” in this study is therefore operationalised based on the definition provided by Thompson and Jahin (1994), as well as *Klang Valley Broadband Push* (2008).

## **1.8 Statement of Problem**

Uses and gratifications (U&G) has been widely used in research related to more conventional industrial media such as TV and later the new media including Internet and mobile platforms (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004; Chigona et al., 2008; Roy, 2009; Shin, 2009). Social media, however, is found to be lacking exploration from the U&G perspective to the researcher's knowledge and it is especially true in the Malaysian context. The interpersonal attribute of social media would make the U&G approach particularly suitable because U&G focuses on audience's social and psychological needs and how such needs can be motivated in order to communicate (Rubin, as cited in Chen, 2011).

In Malaysia, it is found that a number of Internet-related studies revolve around the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) as exemplified in Ramayah, Muhamad, and Noraini (2003), Parveen and Sulaiman (2008), as well as Ooh, Zailani, Ramayah, and Fernando (as cited in Reddick, 2010). In terms of U&G, Roy (2009) asserts that most studies have been conducted in the U.S. and U.K., but not Asia. While Internet U&G research in the context of Malaysia already has limited research support, the researcher is, at this point of writing, unable to retrieve any literature on its social media counterpart.

Despite being identified one of the important factors, the social motivations unfortunately did not fare too well compared to other motivations

such as process and content motivations in Stafford et al.'s (2004) pioneer study on Internet U&G. In other words, the social presence did not emerge to be very significant in the research. While social media is a result of evolvement of the Internet characterised by a platform populated by people and their artifacts and interactions – something Ramakrishnan and Tomkin (2007) calls the “PeopleWeb”, it is only sensible to presume that it has a considerably degree of social presence. Seeing that the social dimension is underperforming in Web 1.0, it is of the essence for the researcher to find out whether or not the same trend would be observed again in Web 2.0.

A thorough understanding of the big picture has prompted the researcher to address the gap by looking into social media U&G in the Malaysian context. Considering that social media is a relatively new area after the Internet, it is strongly believed the U&G perspective, especially in the Malaysian context, needs to be given conclusive research support. Besides, how the social dimension actually fares in social media U&G also requires further quantification.

## **1.9 Significance of Research**

Given the proliferation of communication in various aspects of today's life, computer-mediated communication (CMC) research has become increasingly prominent (Miller & Brunner, 2008). Many theorists deem U&G “a research tradition eminently suited for Internet study” due to its media-like characteristics (Johnson & Kayle; Lin; Ruggiero; Weiser, as cited in Stafford

et al., 2004). However Ruggiero (as cited in Quan-Haase, 2012) argues that U&G approach has to be included to explain any attempt to speculate on the future direction of mass communication theory.

U&G approach is expected to make a major contribution to studies in an environment where audiences are fragmented and the producer-consumer boundary is shrunk, and where user-generated content compliments and competes with the traditional media (Quan-Haase, 2012). Since social media is a relatively new sub-product of the Internet and has limited research in Asia (Roy, 2009), a research into the media using the U&G approach allows exploration into users' motivations behind the media use.

As web 2.0 centers around consumer-generated media, users of these media are generally deemed to be active because they, as Smith et al. (2008) assert, are no longer mere consumers of information, but also content contributors who share information with others. Similarly in the U&G theory, one of the core assumptions is that users are perceived to be active and goal-oriented individuals who have control over how they are going to make use of the media (Blumler & Katz, as cited in Sangwan, 2005). The presumed user activity is consistent across the said contexts and this would make social media U&G a very important research area.

Besides, development of IT and social media is significantly exemplified in the Klang Valley and other regions in Malaysia too are picking up this trend at a rapid pace. A pioneer study into social media U&G in

Malaysia with the U&G approach will be crucial to and beneficial for any succeeding research in the related areas – some of which may be conducted on an even bigger scale. At the commercial level, a better understanding of social media U&G of Internet users in the said place will provide the relevant blocs with a good idea on the consumer behavior of social media.

Those involved in the media industry need to understand the changing pattern of Malaysian media consumption (“Malaysians Top Media Consumers,” 2008). This, in turn, will allow them to design social media platforms in favour of the needs of the consumers and development of the nation. Understanding consumers’ behavior also allows advertisers to leverage online marketing strategy and reach out to the former via “insight-driven integrated advertising solutions” (“Omnicom,” 2008).

The research outcome is poised to contribute to the field of social media studies and act as a reference for future research in the related areas. As the nature of media is fickle and keeps evolving, certain characteristics associated with media use will also be likely to change. Only when this research is done, documented, and followed up that we could see the changing patterns and predict the direction we are heading to as far as social media and its U&G are concerned.

### **1.10 Aim and Objectives of Research**

The aim of this research is to look into social media U&G among young adults aged from 15 to 29 in the Klang Valley. To achieve the aim, this research is poised to meet the following research objectives (RO's):

- RO1. To study the reasons why subjects use the social media.
- RO2. To study how process, content, and social motivations of social media use fare among the subjects
- RO3. To study the relationship between process, content, and social motivations, as well as the overall experience of social media use among the subjects.
- RO4. To study how social media U&G differs between male and female subjects.

### **1.11 Research Questions**

The research outcome will be able to describe the following key research questions (RQ's) by which this research is framed. It can be observed that the RO's and RQ's are in line with each other; by answering the four RQ's, the RO's and research aim will also be met.

- RQ1. For what reasons do subjects use the social media?
- RQ2. How do process, content, and social motivations of social media use fare among the subjects?

- RQ3. How do process, content, and, social motivations correlate with the overall experience of social media use among the subjects?
- RQ4. How does social media U&G differ between male and female subjects?



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Computer-mediated Communication

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is defined by Metz (as cited in Miller & Brunner, 2008) as “any communication patterns mediated by a computer”. The notion of CMC was first discussed in Licklider and Taylor (1968), which posits “men will be able to communicate more effectively through a machine (i.e., a computer) than face to face”. After almost two decades of studies, researchers have found it increasingly useful to regard computers, through which communication is mediated, as a mass medium (Morris & Ogan, 1996).

With changes taking place in various aspects of life today due to proliferation of communication, Miller and Brunner (2008) hold that research into CMC has become increasingly prominent. CMC studies in both education and business domains have been concerned about the effects of computer as a medium of mass communication (Morris & Ogan, 1996). This is largely due to the following characteristics of CMC that Morris (as cited in Chen, 2009) has identified: ubiquity, transparency, asynchronism, hyper-reality, and interactivity.

Contrary to its actual potential, earlier ideas about CMC advocated a lack of capacity to deliver rich social information due to text-based and visually anonymous environment (Yao & Flanagin, 2004). CMC has been criticised to have prevented interpersonal communication and encouraged impersonal interactions such as bashings on the Internet (Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire, 1984). Besides, Siegel, Dubrovsky, Kiesler, and McGuire (1986) find that computer-mediated groups tend to demonstrate more aggressive behavior such as name-calling and swearings, as compared to groups that use face-to-face interactions.

Nevertheless, such a deterministic view has been challenged in subsequent studies. For instance, it is claimed the email plays a positive role by deconstructing organisational structures, allowing for greater information exchange among more people, and improving socialisation (Spence, 2002). Besides, CMC users are found to be able to adapt to the virtual environment and develop interpersonal relationships that resemble relationships formed face-to-face (Yao & Flanagin, 2004). It is also found that group collaboration in CMC has contributed to group processing outcomes deemed innovative and democratic (Miller & Brunner, 2008).

## **2.2 A Shift on the Internet**

The Internet is evolving into a “PeopleWeb”, which indicates a shift from a web comprised of pages to one populated by people and their artifacts and interactions (Ramakrishnan & Tomkin, 2007). In that regard, social

networking sites such as Facebook and Friendster that allow information sharing and sourcing, have become extremely popular in the new media (Lipsman, as cited in Pfeil et al., 2009) and according to Bausch and Han (2006), will continue to attract users in a large number.

Users are moving away from a state of anonymity on the Internet (McKenna & Bargh, 2000) with the evolvement of computer technologies. For instance, popular Chinese social networking site RenRen is concluded to be an extension of users' real life as "self-disclosure phenomenon elicited by reality rather than anonymity" is found present on the site (Yu & Wu, 2010). While web 1.0 is getting replaced by applications in the web 2.0 era such as blogs, wikis, and collaborative projects (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009), content now can be modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative manner rather than on an individual basis (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009; Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2010). With the rise of the social networking sites, their popularity is gauged not only by the size of the user base, but also the ability to provide users with the most significant amount of interaction (Cheung et al., 2010).

It is reported in Bausch and Han (2006) that users of the top ten social networking sites in the U.S. grew from 46.8 million in 2006 to 68.8 million in the following year. The growth of social media has influenced social interaction among people and contributed to a new meaning of the interaction, where scholars have begun looking into (as cited in Lipsman, Pfeil et al., 2009).

The ramification of the new media is, as Grossman (2006) puts it, a “community and collaboration on a scale never seen before”. The web 2.0 a revolution is as if “a new version of some old software” (Grossman, 2006). Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) have identified online empowerment of individuals linking to instrumentality, interactivity, activity, and involvement as the causes of influence of the new web. On the other hand, Jacobs et al. (2009) attribute the rapid growth of social media to its ability to allow users to produce and share content.

While the active audience theory has been shunned as far as traditional media is concerned, Livingstone (1999) highlights the importance of audience activity in both the design and use of interactive media. In fact, the shift in media user activity has been discussed since as early as 1963, when Klapper (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008) put forth the idea that U&G focuses on what people do with the mass media, rather than what the mass media does to people. Shin (2009) calls the U&G approach a “paradigm shift” from traditional media research, where focus was placed on media effects, such as what media does to people. A review of the U&G theory can be found in the next sub-chapter.

### **2.3 Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory**

The U&G theory, otherwise known as the “needs and gratifications” theory (Roy, 2009), revolves around why and how people use certain media (Lo & Leung, 2009). The term “gratifications” was coined by psychologist

Herta Herzog in 1944 to illustrate specific dimensions of audience's usage satisfaction, following which mass communication theorists had adopted and adapted the concept to study various mass media such as TV and electronic bulletins (Luo, 2002).

The U&G theory is built upon the basic assumption that audience has their own agenda and is deemed as active and goal-oriented rather than passive consumers of information (McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, as cited in Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). By assuming the audience to be active and goal-directed, the U&G perspective posits that they opt for and consume certain media and content they feel could satisfy their psychological needs, which explains the motivation behind their media use (Katz, Gurevitch, & Hass, 1973; Rubin, as cited in Roy, 2009; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, as cited in Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2010). Such fulfillment of needs – as a source of motivation, is proposed to be affecting user gratification of media use (Sangwan, 2005).

The U&G theory has been adopted and adapted over the years to study the use of various media ranging from the more conventional mass media to the new media and later to mobile technology (Stafford et al., 2004; Chigona et al., 2008; Roy, 2009; Shin, 2009; Liu et al., 2010). Although some scholars have questioned U&G's utility in studying the digital media, Ruggiero (as cited in Quan-Haase, 2012) posits there is a need to “seriously include” the U&G approach in any attempt to speculate on the future direction of mass communication theory. Besides, it is contended that whenever a new

technology makes its way into the arena of mass communication, users' underlying motivations and decisions to use the new communication tool could be explained by applying the U&G paradigm (Elliott & Rosenberg, as cited in Liu, Cheung & Lee, 2010).

However, in order to effectively study and gauge the new media by using the U&G scales intended for traditional media research, Lin (as cited in Shin, 2009) holds that a revision to the scales will be required. Consistent with Lin's idea is Angleman (as cited in Shin, 2009), who believes existing theories require amendments in order to fit new media studies. Application of the U&G theory in various new media studies has been reviewed and an overview of those studies with their respective motivations is presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Overview of Prior Studies on New Media U&G**

Author and year	Research area	Motivations identified
James, Wotring, & Forrest (1995)	Electronic bulletin board (i.e., forums)	Transmission of information and education, socialising, medium appeal, computer or other business, entertainment
Korgaonkar & Wolin (1999)	Internet	Social escapism, transaction, privacy, information, interaction, socialization, economic motivations
Papacharissi (2002)	Personal home pages	Passing time, entertainment, information, self-expression, professional advancement, communication with friends and family
Stafford et al. (2004)	Internet	Process: resources, search engines, searching, surfing, technology, web sites  Content: education, information, knowledge, learning, research

			Social: chatting, friends, interactions, people
Ko, Cho, & Roberts (2005)	Internet		Information, convenience, entertainment, social-interaction
Diddi & LaRose (2006)	Internet news		Surveillance, escapism, pass time, entertainment, habit
Cheung & Lee (2009)	Virtual community		Purposive value, self-discovery, entertainment value, social enhancement, maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity
Haridakis & Hanson (2009)	YouTube		Convenient entertainment, convenient information seeking, co-viewing, social interaction
Mendes-Filho & Tan (2009)	User-generated content		Content: information consistency, source credibility, argument quality, information framing
			Process: medium; entertainment
			Social: recommendation consistency, recommendation rating
Liu, Cheung & Lee (2010)	Twitter		Content: disconfirmation of self-documentation, disconfirmation of information sharing
			Process: disconfirmation of entertainment, disconfirmation of passing time, disconfirmation of self-expression
			Social: disconfirmation of social interaction
			Technology: disconfirmation of medium appeal, disconfirmation of convenience

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## 2.4 Media User Gratifications

Katz et al. (1974) suggest research on gratifications has revolved around media-related needs that serve to satisfy media consumers – at least in part – who are deemed active and goal-oriented. Despite having a problem

with ambiguity as far as the definition is concerned, Weiss (1976) asserts that related key terms like “uses”, “needs”, “satisfactions”, “gratifications”, and “motives” are being used interchangeably across different papers and within single papers.

The concept of “gratifications” is defined as some aspects of user-reported satisfaction Stafford et al. (2004), which will be affected by fulfillment of media needs that acts as a motivator (Sangwan, 2005). It is found in Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) that satisfaction of user motivations is positively correlated with future internet usage. Besides, Sangwan (2005) also puts forth the idea that the success or failure of an online community can be evaluated by user satisfaction. Before resorting to a certain behavior of media use, past experiences of individuals and whether or not their motivations can be satisfied by certain behaviors will be evaluated (McLeod & Becker, as cited in Johnson & Yang, 2008).

## **2.5 Categorisations of Needs and Gratifications**

The U&G theory proposes five categories of needs, namely cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative, and tension release needs (Katz et al., 1973). Over the years, researchers appropriating the U&G theory to study various media have discovered a plethora of different needs. While some of these needs are rather consistent with one of the earliest classifications of needs by Katz et al. (1973), others are not.



In a study that examines the relations between web usage and satisfaction, Luo (2002) employs three constructs drawn from previous traditional media U&G research, namely informativeness, entertainment, and irritation, in order to assess how each of them affects user attitude towards the web. Research results have confirmed the said constructs are determinants of users' attitude towards the web. Also employs similar constructs include such researchers as Eighmey (1997), Eighmey and McCord (1998), as well as Kargaonkar and Wolin (1999).

Livaditi, Vassilopoulou, Lougos, and Chorianopoulos (2003), in their interactive TV applications U&G study, categorise media needs into the two basic constructs of "ritualised" and "instrumental". Other researchers who have adopted such a classification of needs are Metzger and Flanagin, as well as Rubin (as cited in Ran, 2008), who have found that gratifications, as motivations, do lead to both ritualised and instrumental use of media.

In Sangwan (2005), several types of needs have been identified to explain the motivations behind the use of virtual community platforms such as forums, and they include functional, emotive, and contextual needs. However, it is posited that although the research sample has been assumed to be active participants of virtual communities, there are also passive participants whose latent needs have yet to be identified (Sangwan, 2005).

Cutler and Danowski, as well as Stafford and Stafford (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008) divide motivations into the categories of "process" and

“content”. Later, an additional category known as “social motivations” has been identified and included (Stafford & Stafford, as cited in Chigona et al., 2008). Stafford et al. (2004) describe this additional social dimension as “unique to Internet use”. Although found to be the weakest variable compared to the other two, social motivations serves as a vital construct in the Internet-specific U&G research (Stafford et al., 2004).

Chigona et al. (2008), who appropriate the motivation categories verified in Stafford et al. (2004) to study mobile Internet U&G, have confirmed the presence of all three constructs. Peters, Amato, and Hollenbeck (2007), as well as Mendes-Filho and Tan (2009) are among other researchers who have adopted the three constructs in their respectively studies of wireless advertising and user-generated content. Also adopting the instruments is Shin (2009), who, on top of the three motivation types, has added “embedded gratifications” to study wireless Internet use. Besides, Liu et al. (2010) also employ the three motivations types – on top of an additional “technology gratification” – to study Twitter use.

## **2.6 Process, Content, and Social Motivations**

This study bases its main framework on one developed by Stafford and Stafford (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008), and later verified by Stafford et al. (2004): the three motivation types of “process”, “content”, and “social”. The rationale behind this choice has been explained in Chapter 1 under “Statement

of Problem” (p. 12). What is defined by each of the process, content, and social motivations, is illustrated in the next few paragraphs.

Content gratifications from the U&G theory are characterised by their relation to information content, such as product or store information (Stafford & Stafford, as cited in Stafford et al., 2004) and place concern on messages carried by the medium (Stafford et al., 2004). Such motivations are stemmed from the use of mediated messages for the receivers’ intrinsic value (Cutler & Danowski, as cited in Chigona et al., 2008). Content motivations take consideration into the messages that a medium carries (Stafford et al., 2004; Stafford, 2009), which may be informative or entertaining (Stafford, 2009). Roy (2009) asserts that content is normally skewed towards entertainment and dispersion in U&G studies of non-Internet media, as compared to informativeness in those of Internet.

Nevertheless, certain Internet users may be motivated by such usage process as random browsing and site navigation (Hoffman and Danowski, as cited in Stafford et al., 2004). Process motivations are driven by the actual use of the medium per se (Cutler & Danowski, as cited in Chigona et al., 2008; Stafford et al., 2004; Stafford, 2009), such as enjoyment of the process of using the Internet (Hoffman & Novak, as cited in Stafford et al., 2004; Stafford, 2009). On the other hand, social motivations include such aspects as chatting, friendship, interactions, and people (Chigona et al., 2008).

## **2.7 Social Dimension and its Rising Impact**

Social contacts and interactions have shifted from an offline environment to an online environment (Boyd, as cited in Smeele, 2010) and the social dimension defines what users understand about themselves and their relation to the communities (Dyson; McMillan & Chavis, as cited in Jacobs et al., 2009). Stafford et al. (2004) posit the importance of looking into the potential U&G of the Internet as a social environment, as researchers may be expected to discover emergent social gratifications for Internet use.

Research by Jacobs et al. (2009) shows the majority of students utilise social media in a manner that resembles the actual social "friends and family" setting. Besides, Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (as cited in Ross, Orr, Sisic, Arseneault, Simmering, & Orr, 2009) are of the opinion that maintenance of pre-existing social relationships has been made possible and may be stronger through online platforms. Users now turn to the Internet more frequently to socialise with people they know and expand their circle of friends (Jones, as cited in Correa, Hinsley & Zúñiga, 2010).

Active participation on sites like Facebook, communication via texting and chat programmes, as well as creation of blogs have become "a way of life" for the new generation according to Jacobs et al. (2009). Individuals who choose not to engage online may be limiting their ability to advance socially as the Internet has become an increasingly user-generated environment (Correa et al., 2010).

## **2.8 The Need to Quantify Social Dimension**

Stafford et al. (2004) concede that there is limited evidence in support of the distinct social aspect to Internet use. Following the identification of social motivations in Stafford and Stafford (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008), researchers are trying to validate this emerging motivation type, which eventually has been found present in studies by such researchers as Chigona et al. (2008), Haridakis and Hanson (2009), as well as Norway Brandtzæg and Heim (as cited in Kim et al., 2010).

Miller and Brunner (2008) hold that studies that focus specifically on the social aspect of online communicators and its theoretical foundations are lacking. For instance, although the social dimension is found present in a mobile Internet U&G study by Chigona et al. (2008), the researchers merely confirm its existence without providing much elaboration into how it fares in contrast to content and process motivations – the latter of which according to Aoki & Downe; Leung & Wei; Rubin; Stafford & Gillenson; Stafford et al. (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008), are the most pronounced motivation types found on traditional Internet use. Besides, several social media studies also show that the social dimension does not live up to the media's supposedly social nature (e.g., Liu et al., 2010; Smeele, 2010; Xu, Ryan, Prybutok, & Wen, 2012).

## **2.9 Gender and U&G**

Gender differences have been identified as an important aspect in computer-related research (Gunawardena & McIsaac, as cited in Kim & Chang, 2007). The issue of limited women in the fields of information and communication technologies (ICT) remains a topic of interest for both the scientific community and decision-makers today (Sáinz & López-Sáez, 2010). Some studies have suggested that females may be more inclined to have computer anxiety and lower self-efficacy due to the socio-cultural background of gender (Halder, Ray, & Chakrabarty, 2010). Gutek and Bikson (as cited in Harrison & Rainer, 1992) also find that men tend to demonstrate computer-related skills at workplace. In another instance, Wilder, Mackie, and Cooper (as cited in Harrison & Rainer, 1992) find that males show greater interest in using a computer compared to females.

In more recent research, Leung (2003) finds socioeconomic status such as gender, with the exception of age, to be predictive of Internet use, and that heavy users of the web are usually males. Although Okazaki (2006) asserts that the effect of gender on mobile Internet service adoption is uncertain, married women indicate more negative perceptions than married men. Besides, a study on mobile phone U&G by Ran (2008) reveals that males are significantly skewed towards a certain news-seeking need. Roy (2009) also discovers gender-related differences in perceived Internet use. In terms of social media U&G, gender-related differences have also been found in a slew of studies such as Sveningsson Elm (2007), Joinson (2008), Jones,

Millermaier, Goya-Martinez, and Schuler (2008), Thelwall (2009), as well as Thelwall, Wilkinson, and Uppal (2010).

Volman, van Eck, Heemskerk, and Kuiper (2005) contend that the development of software, websites, and even teaching materials needs to have gender sensitivities taken into consideration in order to facilitate better learning among male and female pupils, who demonstrate very different preferences and attitudes towards ICT. Also in line with their idea are Halder, Ray, and Chakrabarty (2010), who suggest the importance of studying behavioral differences between people with respect to information processing and searching as such behaviors have to be more holistically understood and generalised before information retrieval systems and user support services are designed.

Those are some implications of how gender differences could impact human behavior associated with the acceptance of information and technologies. With gender being neglected as a significant variable, studying human information behavior will remain incomplete (Nahl & Harada; Roy, Taylor, & Chi, as cited in Halder, Ray, and Chakrabarty, 2010). It is, therefore, of the essence to find out if the influence of gender is valid in this social media U&G study. If valid, which aspect of motivations is users' social media experience influenced the most?

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Overview

This study looks into social media uses and gratifications (U&G) among young adults aged from 15 to 29 in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, and is guided by the following four research questions (RQ's):

- RQ1. For what reasons do subjects use the social media?
- RQ2. How do process, content, and social motivations of social media use fare among the subjects?
- RQ3. How do process, content, and, social motivations correlate with the overall experience of social media use among the subjects?
- RQ4. How does social media U&G differ between male and female subjects?

This study will rely on a quantitative, two-stage research method, where a questionnaire will be used as the survey instrument. The first stage will involve a pilot survey on a total of 40 social media users aged from 15 to 29. Where a test on internal consistency will be employed, the first stage is primarily aimed at achieving reliability of the instrument and providing evidence to support consistency of responses under certain circumstances.



The second stage is an actual survey on a pool of 400 social media users aged from 15 to 29 not inclusive of those having participated in the pilot survey. This survey looks into the significance of the three constructs on which this research is based, among other significant findings not being studied before in Malaysia.

### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

According to Crisp (1957, p. 176), one of the approaches of determining sample size in a non-probability sampling is to consider it as if it were a probability sampling. Although a non-probability sampling does not follow mathematical probability or guarantee the representation of the population (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006), McDaniel and Gates (1998, p. 310) hold that if executed properly, reasonable representation would still be possible. Besides, although we could not generalise findings statistically in non-probability sampling, we could, however, generalise them theoretically (“Non-probability sampling,” n.d.).

Borg and Gall (as cited in Donkor, 2010) posit that a sample size of 20 would be adequate for a pilot survey. It is, however, decided that a greater sample size is to be used for this research in its pilot survey. To be precise, the pilot survey will involve a total of 40 social media users aged from 15 to 29 in the Klang Valley who do not belong to the same pool of respondents from the

actual survey. They represent 10% of the sample size calculated for the actual survey.

In the actual survey, questionnaires will be distributed to a total of 400 social media users aged from 15 to 29 in the Klang Valley. The sample size of 400 has been selected based on a published table formulated by Israel (1992). A similar table can also be found in Watson (2001) but this study will instead adopt the classic formulation by Israel (1992), as exemplified in Table 3.1. The researcher has taken into consideration the numerous accuracy factors highlighted in Israel (1992) and Watson (2001): desired precision of results, confidence level, and degree of variability. For this research, the sample size is based on the precision level of  $\pm 5\%$  (highlighted column) in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Sample Size for Precision Levels  $\pm 3\%$ ,  $\pm 5\%$ ,  $\pm 7\%$  and  $\pm 10\%$   
Where Confidence Level is 95% and Variability Level (P) is 0.5%**

Size of Population	Sample Size ( <i>n</i> ) for Precision Levels of:			
	$\pm 3\%$	<b><math>\pm 5\%</math></b>	$\pm 7\%$	$\pm 10\%$
500	500	<b>222</b>	145	83
600	600	<b>240</b>	152	86
700	700	<b>255</b>	158	88
800	800	<b>267</b>	163	89
900	900	<b>277</b>	166	90
1,000	1,000	<b>286</b>	169	91
2,000	714	<b>333</b>	185	95

3,000	811	<b>353</b>	191	97
4,000	870	<b>364</b>	194	98
5,000	909	<b>370</b>	196	98
6,000	938	<b>375</b>	197	98
7,000	959	<b>378</b>	198	99
8,000	976	<b>381</b>	199	99
9,000	989	<b>383</b>	200	99
10,000	1,000	<b>385</b>	200	99
15,000	1,034	<b>390</b>	201	99
20,000	1,053	<b>392</b>	204	100
25,000	1,064	<b>394</b>	204	100
50,000	1,087	<b>397</b>	204	100
100,000	1,099	<b>398</b>	204	100
>100,000	1,111	<b>400</b>	204	100

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When determining sample size for the actual survey, consideration is also taken into the approximate number of Internet users in the Klang Valley. While statistics of Klang Valley Internet users aged from 15 to 29 are not available at the point of this research, MCMC (2009) and “Asia Internet usage” (2011) enable an estimate of the number of household Internet users in the Klang Valley: 5,760,084 and 6,676,527 in the years of 2008 and 2009 respectively. Therefore, it is sensible to set the sample at the maximum size of 400 based on the published table by Israel (1992), where population size is expected to be 100,000 and above.

Table 3.1 provides details on the sample size for a given set of criteria. This research follows the highlighted column in the table, which takes on a 95% confidence level. In other words, it is assumed that 5% of the sample size would be unrepresentative samples (this research determines sample size as if it were adopting a probability sampling technique). A confident level of 95% is standard for most social-science applications (Watson, 2001; Austin and Pinkleton, 2000, p. 204).

This research will accept a precision level of  $\pm 5\%$ . Precision level is sometimes known as sampling error (Israel, 1992). For instance, if it is found that 70% of the social media users adopt a certain practice, it can then be concluded that between 65% and 75% of the social media users in the population adopt the practice. As a high precision level will require a larger sample size and higher cost, it is reckoned that  $\pm 5\%$  would be the most appropriate and realistic level for the researcher. Besides, variability level (P) in Israel's published Table has been fixed at 0.5%, which signifies the maximum variability in a population. The more variable or heterogeneous a population, the bigger the sample size required to obtained the precision level (Israel, 1992).

After having considered guidelines on accuracy factors, a sample size of 400 is deemed to be sufficient and accurately representative of the population. Moreover, Al-Subaihi (2003), Lenth (2001), and Watson (2001) suggest that having a sample too small will result in the lack of precision in a

study to provide reliable findings, whereas using a sample too large causes the waste of time and resources.

### **3.3 Survey Instrumentation**

The three motivations types, namely process, content, and social motivations first identified by Stafford and Stafford (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008) and later revised by Stafford et al. (2004), will be used as the core framework in this social media study. The motivation types, acting as the global constructs in this research, will be measured by a slew of different statements associated with social media use.

The items under each of these three constructs, adopted and adapted from a slew of motivation items identified in Stafford et al. (2004), Chigona et al. (2008), Liu et al. (2010), and Shin (2009), will be asked to the subjects in the form of survey questions. The rationale behind choosing the said studies is that their framework is primarily based on the same model initiated by Stafford and Stafford (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008): process, content, and social motivations. A total of 22 statements (see Table 3.2) developed from the said studies will respectively fall under one of the three motivation types and be measured using a 5-point Likert scale of agreement, of which options are made consistent across the 22 statements and consist of the following:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree

3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

Respondents will be asked to indicate how well they would agree that each of the 22 motivation statements could be the reason of their social media use. The instrument will be tested during a pilot survey in the first stage of the research for reliability, after which only reliable items will be finalised for the actual survey.

**Table 3.2: Motivations behind Social Media Use**

Motivation	Statement
Process	1. Social media is enjoyment
	2. Social media is entertainment
	3. Social media helps pass the time
	4. I use social media when I have nothing better to do
	5. I use social media to show my personality
	6. I use social media to post things I want to say or tell
	7. Social media is a cost-effective way to publish
	8. Social media is easy to maintain
	9. Social media is convenient to use
	10. I can get what I want more easily with social media

	11. I can use social media anytime, anywhere
	12. Social media is user-friendly
Content	13. I use social media to share information useful to other people
	14. I use social media to present information about my interests
	15. I use social media to keep record of what is happening in my life
	16. I use social media to search for information
	17. I use social media to keep up with current issues and events
Social	18. I use social media to connect with people who share some of my values
	19. I use social media to maintain a personal relationship with friends or family
	20. Using social media makes me feel less lonely
	21. I participate in discussions on social media
	22. I make new friends using social media

On the other hand, the “gratifications” aspect of U&G will be measured by the overall user experience of the social media. Consistent with the approach used in the 22 statements on social media use, this question will employ a 5-point Likert scale to look into user gratification gauged by their social media experience, of which the options are as such:

1. Not at all satisfied
2. Not very satisfied
3. Not sure
4. Quite satisfied
5. Very satisfied

Where 1 signifies the extreme negative end of the continuum, 5 is completely the opposite. This mechanism works the same for the measurement format of the 22 motivation statements. As research analyses will include a test on how social media uses drive the overall user satisfaction, it is believed that having a consistent mechanism of measurement across these two variables will be able to provide better accuracy and precision in analysis.

### **3.4 Procedure**

In the pilot survey, questionnaires will be administered to a group of 40 samples who are social media users aged from 15 and 29. Survey results will then be taken for a reliability test. Questions that fail to meet a certain degree of reliability will be dropped and not be included in the actual survey questionnaire.

The actual survey will be run on a purposive method, where a total of 400 respondents not included in the pilot survey will be administered the final and validated version of the questionnaire. In purposive sampling, certain groups or individuals are selected for their relevance to the issue being studied



(Gray, Williamson, & Karp, 2007, p. 105). In the case of this research, respondents will be screened with respect to the following criteria:

1. They must be social media users who have used such social platforms as blogs, micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter), forums, social network services (e.g., Facebook, Myspace), and/or social network aggregators.
2. They must be in the age range of 15 and 29.
3. They must be residing in the Klang Valley, Malaysia.

Venues of sampling are set to be ten major shopping complexes across the Klang Valley, six of which are in located in Selangor and the rest in Kuala Lumpur:

1. Suria KLCC (Kuala Lumpur)
2. The Mall (Kuala Lumpur)
3. Bukit Bintang Plaza (Kuala Lumpur)
4. Cheras Leisure Mall (Kuala Lumpur)
5. Plaza Kajang Metro (Kajang, Selangor)
6. Plaza Alam Sentral (Shah Alam, Selangor)
7. 1 Utama (Petaling Jaya, Selangor)
8. Sunway Pyramid (Subang Jaya, Selangor)
9. AEON Bukit Tinggi Shopping Centre (Klang, Selangor)
10. Selayang Mall (Selayang, Selangor)

These shopping complexes have been carefully picked from various regions that make up the Klang Valley (see operational definition of “Klang Valley” on p. 11) in order to yield a better representation of the population. The Klang Valley, according to Syed Shah Alam and Rosidah Musa (2009), is one of the most developed business and financial centers in the country. It also registered the highest percentage of household Internet users as of March 2008 (MCMC, 2009).

### **3.5 Analysis Plan for First Stage**

In the first stage, results from the pilot survey will go through reliability test and item quality analysis using prominent statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics version 20. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) assert that internal consistency is one of the components of reliability. The test will therefore be run to assess the reliability of the survey instrument. Internal consistency will be quantified by computing the Cronbach alpha value for each of the three constructs on which the survey questions are based. According to Varma, (2006), a Cronbach’s alpha value ranges from 0 to 1.00; a value of 0.7 to 0.8 and above indicates high internal consistency whereas values lower than 0.7 indicate an unreliable scale (Field, 2006).

On the other hand, reliability of individual questions under the three constructs will be measured by the corrected item-total correlation or what in layman’s term is known as “item quality”. Varma (2006) asserts that item-total correlation values range between -1.0 and +1.0, and having item-total

correlation of 0.10 and above is recommended as a rule of thumb to check multiple-choice keys. Multiple-choice keys are used in the survey questionnaire. Only after reliability analysis and internal consistency have been run that questions deemed fit or reliable will be used for the actual survey.

### **3.6 Analysis Plan for Second Stage**

In the second stage, different methods of analysis will be required to answer the four research questions central to this research. However before any test could be performed on the research data, the assumption of a normal model for a response population is necessary. To be specific, the scores of the all statements under the three global constructs of process, content, and social motivations, have to fulfill the assumption of normality. The same applies to the information on users' overall social media experience, which serves as a dependant variable throughout this study. For this assumption of normality, the Q-Q Plot (Quantile-Quantile Plot), which Howell (2007) holds examines the reasonableness of the assumptions that the data are normally distributed, will be employed.

For RQ1 and RQ2, descriptive statistics will be used throughout data analysis in a few ways. As RQ1 looks into the numerous motivations behind social media use so as to provide insights into respondents' media behavior, this will require a comparison between the mean score of each and every question that takes on a particular reason. In the case of this research, there is a

total of 22 questions on the motivations behind social media use and the aim is to look for the respective mean scores that represent the 400 respondents in this study. After comparing the mean score of each and every question, the descriptive analysis will be able to tell the most or least relevant motivations.

RQ2 works in a similar nature as RQ1, except that this time the mean scores will be compared among the three main constructs under which various questions are parked instead of among the 22 questions. Based on the respective mean scores of the 22 questions calculated for RQ1, the data are reprocessed in order to obtain the "mean of mean" of all motivation statements that form the respective categories and it has to be done in this fashion as the individual mean score of the three constructs represents that contributed by the 400 respondents in this research.

RQ3 investigates the type and magnitude of the relationship between process, content, and, social motivations, as well as the overall social media experience among the respondents. For this RQ, user experience is measured by respondents' level of satisfaction or gratification. As this is a correlation research aimed at explaining the relationship between the dependant and independent variables, the multiple regression analysis will be the most appropriate test for this.

Last but not least is RQ4, which serves as an extension of RQ2 and RQ3. It compares how respondents' social media U&G differs across gender. This will employ the independent samples t-test in SPSS, which according to

Heiman (2006) aims at evaluating two sample means from independent samples. For this research question, it is essential to understand that U&G is made up of the two key components of “uses” and “gratifications” and therefore cannot simply be measured in whole.

The uses, for instance, does not necessarily guarantee gratification (e.g., Wang et al., 2012). Furthermore, the uses associated to a certain aspect may not lead to gratification in the same aspect but that does not necessarily hinder gratifications in other aspects. Therefore in understanding respondents’ U&G, it is essential to break it down into the following distinct components: the motivations that drive their social media use, and the gratifications they attain front their social media experience. By doing this, it will then become much easier to look at how each of these perspectives differs across gender.

### **3.7 Multiple Regression Analysis**

The multiple regression analysis is used to estimate the type and accuracy of a relationship between one dependant variables and more than one independent variable (Peers, 1996). In understanding RQ3, the analysis will be carried out to examine the relationship between the three constructs in this study, namely process, content, and social motivations, as well as the overall user experience. In that regard, the three motivation types will be the independent variables, whereas the overall user experience will serve as the dependant variable.

According to Peers (2006), the hypotheses for the multiple regression analysis, which will be tested against each other, are given by:

$$H_0 : \beta = 0$$

$$H_i : \beta \neq 0$$

If we fail to reject the null hypothesis  $\beta = 0$ , it means no relationship exists between the dependant and independent variables. The alternate hypothesis, expressed as  $\beta \neq 0$ , suggests otherwise. Since  $\beta \neq 0$  can mean  $\beta > 0$  or  $\beta < 0$ , this means there could be either a negative or positive relationship between the two variables if we fail to reject the hypothesis.

### **3.8 Independent Samples t-Test**

As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, the independent samples t-test will be employed to study RQ4. The purpose of the t-test is to allow evaluation of two sample means from the independent samples (Heiman, 2006). To be specific, this will allow an understanding into whether mean scores are statistically different between the males and females as far as the three motivation types and overall user media experience are concerned.

Before an independent samples t-test can be run to explain RQ4, there are some assumptions that must not be overlooked. Heiman (2006) asserts the following assumptions must be fulfilled:

1. Sample of study must be independent
2. Dependent variable has to be either interval or ratio.
3. Dependent variable has an approximately normal distribution.
4. There must be similar variances, otherwise known as homogeneity of variances, between the two groups.

According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), the hypotheses for this independent samples t-test, which will be tested against each other, are as follows:

$$H_0 : \mu_{male} = \mu_{female}$$

$$H_1 : \mu_{male} \neq \mu_{female}$$

The null hypothesis  $H_0 : \mu_{male} = \mu_{female}$  means there is no significant difference between the mean score of the two independent samples, whereas the alternative hypothesis  $H_1 : \mu_{male} \neq \mu_{female}$  suggests otherwise. When there is no significant difference in the three motivations or the overall media experience between the males and females, it can then be concluded that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. If the null hypothesis is rejected, the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant difference in user motivations or the social media experience across gender will be accepted.

### 3.9 Validity and Reliability

Based on the existing research design that comes with a methodology that is deemed appropriate for the research context and also procedures for a social media study of this scale, it is believed that the most fundamental validity and reliability any research should attain have been addressed. It is believe that with the presence of the following validity and reliability, this research work will yield better credibility:

1. Face validity: A pre-test will increase likelihood of face validity (Walonick, 2005). In order to avoid survey questions being misinterpreted or misunderstood, questionnaire is to be pre-tested by some 40 social media users aged from 15 to 29 in the Klang Valley.
2. Construct validity: The three global constructs in this research have been adopted from Stafford et al. (2004) and they have also been employed in a slew of other media studies including ones by Chigona et al. (2008), Shin (2009), Peters et al. (2007), Mendes-Filho and Tan (2009), as well as Liu et al. (2010).
3. Content validity: The survey questionnaire is primarily revolved around a total of 22 motivation carefully adapted and adopted from various Internet studies: Stafford et al. (2004), Chigona et al. (2008), Liu et al. (2010), and Shin (2009). This is to allow well-rounded coverage of the motivation statements. As the said studies have identified the respective constructs (they employ the same construct model initiated by Stafford and Stafford, as cited in Chigona et al.,



2008) under which each of these statements belongs to, this will increase the degree to which the survey items are logically linked to the constructs.

4. Reliability: The survey instrument will be tested during the pilot survey to examine the Cronbach alpha value and quality of each item before being used in the actual survey. This is to ensure that the measurement yields consistent results over time.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Pilot Survey Results

As mentioned in Chapter 3, a test on reliability and item quality would be run upon completion of the pilot survey. To measure the reliability of the survey instrument, internal consistency has been run to quantify the Cronbach's alpha value of each of the three constructs on which the survey questions are based. Reliability analysis for the first construct – process motivations – is exhibited in Table 4.

**Table 4.1: Reliability and Item Quality Analysis for Process Motivations**

Process Motivations	Corrected Correlation	Item-Total	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. Social media is enjoyment	.579		.675
2. Social media is entertainment	.265		.714
3. Social media helps pass the time	.327		.707
4. I use social media when I have nothing better to do	.084		.744
5. I use social media to show my personality	.546		.671

6. I use social media to post things I want to say or tell	.423	.693
7. Social media is a cost-effective way to publish	.404	.699
8. Social media is easy to maintain	.335	.706
9. Social media is convenient to use	.413	.701
10. I can get what I want more easily with social media	.433	.692
11. I can use social media anytime, anywhere	.221	.724
12. Social media is user-friendly	.384	.702
<hr/>		
N of Items	12	
Cronbach's Alpha	.721	
<hr/>		

The term “Item-Total Correlation” refers to the relationship or correlation between each item and total score from the scale (Field, 2006). Values in the column “Corrected Item-Total Correlation” are respective item scores that have been excluded from the total score before the correlation is computed (Varma, 2006). According to Varma (2006), item-total correlation values range between -1.0 and +1.0. It is recommended to have item-total correlation of 0.10 and above as a rule of thumb to check multiple-choice keys (Varma, 2006), which are used in the survey questionnaire.

In Table 4.1, all items except item 4 have an item-total correlation value above 0.10. This demonstrates relatively poorer quality in item 4

compared to others. Such an item is regarded as problematic, which according to Field (2006) may have to be dropped. However before dropping the seemingly problematic item 4, it would be good to also take consideration into its internal consistency or Cronbach's alpha value to examine reliability.

A Cronbach's alpha value ranges from 0 to 1.00 (Varma, 2006) and a value of 0.7 to 0.8 and above indicates high internal consistency whereas values lower than 0.7 indicate an unreliable scale (Field, 2006). Cronbach's alpha value for the entire items is 0.721, which falls within the acceptable range. It can therefore be said that the construct of process motivations is internally consistent or, in other words, reliable.

The column "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted" shows that there internal consistency of the construct would have an increase from 0.721 to 0.744 if item 4 is dropped. However it is important to note that dropping it does not dramatically increase the internal consistency. Furthermore, both values exhibit a reasonable degree of reliability. Thus, it is decided that item 4 is retained in the actual survey questionnaire.

Details on the reliability of content motivations as one of the three constructs central in this research is exhibited in Table 4.2. In terms of correlation with the entire scale, all items demonstrate correlation values above 0.10, which also signifies satisfactory item quality.

**Table 4.2: Reliability and Item Quality Analysis for Content Motivations**

Content Motivations	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
13. I use social media to share information useful to other people	.545	.625
14. I use social media to present information about my interests	.503	.637
15. I use social media to keep record of what is happening in my life	.459	.661
16. I use social media to search for information	.520	.629
17. I use social media to keep up with current issues and events	.297	.711
N of Items	5	
Cronbach's Alpha	.704	

Cronbach's alpha of content motivations reads 0.704, which also falls within the range of recommended value for reliability. It is sensible to take a look at item 17, which would generate a Cronbach's alpha of 0.711 if the item is deleted. This is similar to the case of item 4 under process motivations. Dropping item 17 from the questionnaire does not drastically increase the internal consistency from its existing 0.704. Furthermore item quality is exemplified in this particular item. Since content motivations consist of only five items – as compared to the 12 items in process motivations – dropping item 17 may also subsequently reduce the degree of dimension on which

measures of the construct are based and subsequently content validity. Hence there is no need to have it dropped from the actual survey questionnaire.

**Table 4.3: Reliability and Item Quality Analysis for Social Motivations**

Social Motivations	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
18. I use social media to connect with people who share some of my values	.640	.725
19. I use social media to maintain a personal relationship with friends or family	.211	.836
20. Using social media makes me feel less lonely	.708	.686
21. I participate in discussions on social media	.642	.712
22. I make new friends using social media	.633	.715
N of Items	5	
Cronbach's Alpha	.783	

Of the three constructs, reliability analysis results for social motivations have shown to be most impressive (see Table 4.3). Overall internal consistency for the five items is 0.783, which also translate to great reliability. On the other hand, corrected item-total correlation values across all items are beyond the suggested cut-point of 0.10, which signifies satisfactory item quality.

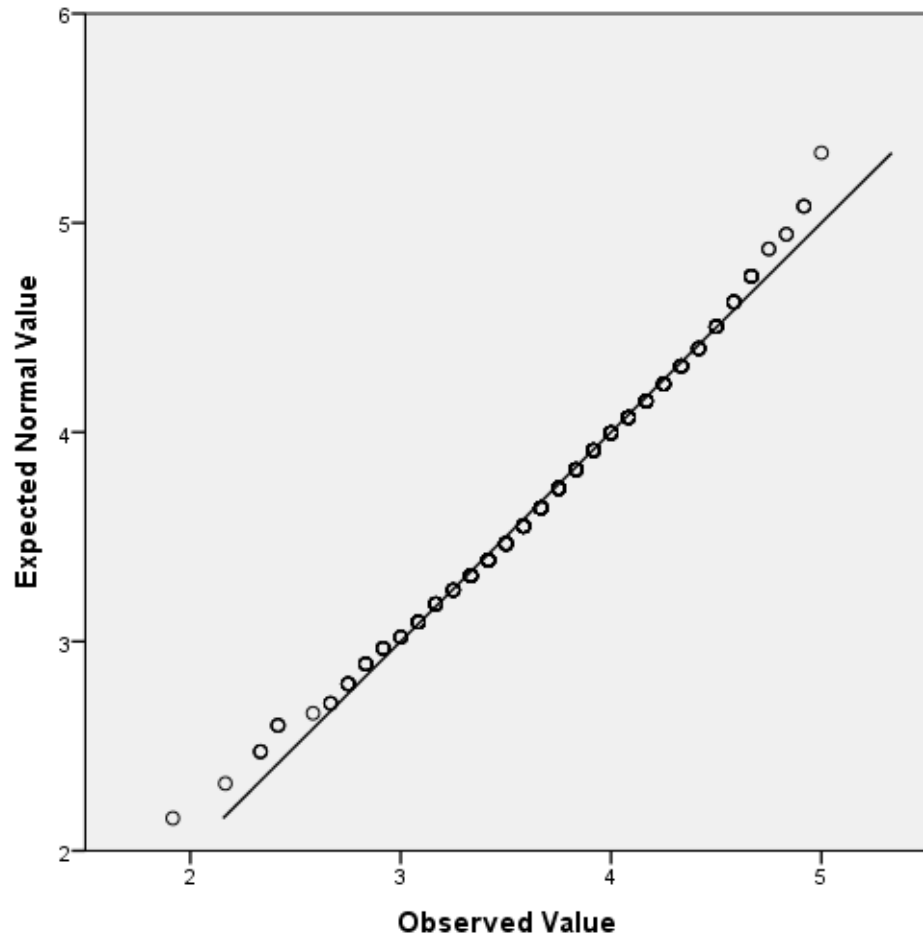
As all items across the three constructs of process, content, and social motivations are crucial and make up a large part of the survey instrument, having great reliability and item quality in them would help the actual survey yield more consistent results. From the results of this pilot survey, it can be concluded that all items across the three constructs are fit to be included in the actual survey instrument.

## **4.2 Actual Survey Results**

The actual survey was conducted in the period between May 2012 and June 2012 in a total of ten locations as detailed in Chapter 3. As each and every respondent was incentivised for their participation in the research, every completed questionnaire was carefully and thoroughly checked prior to the incentive disbursement. As such, at the end of the survey period, 400 valid questionnaires had been successfully obtained. The rest of the content in this chapter after this paragraph consists of findings from the actual survey.

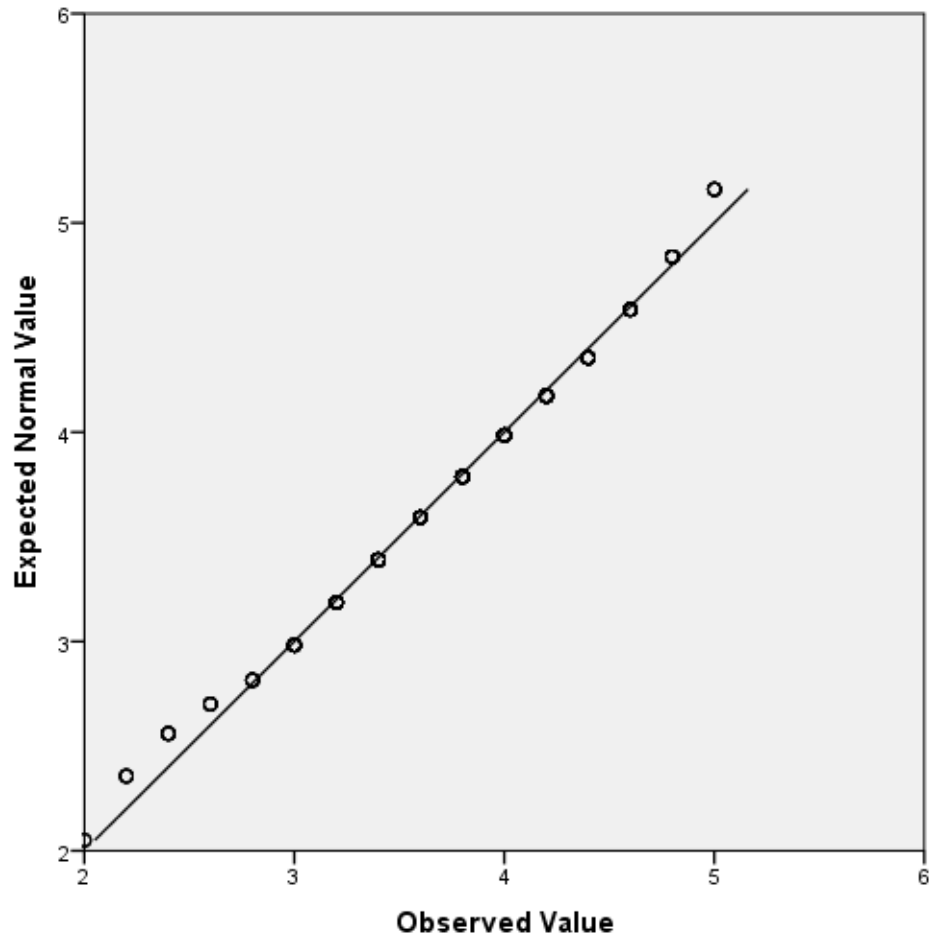
## **4.3 Normality**

Research data from the actual survey have to be proven normal before the conduction of other tests. Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 respectively illustrate the Normal Q-Q Plots for the three global constructs of process, content, and social motivations, as well as social media experience.

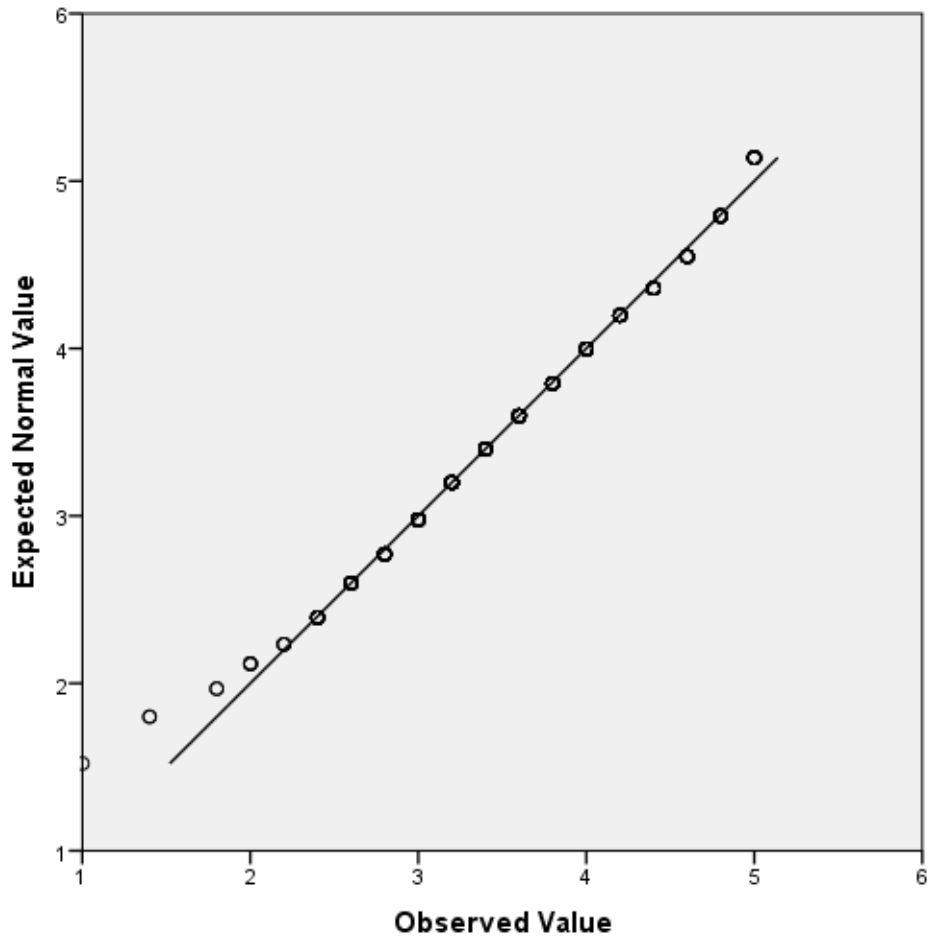


**Figure 4.1: Normal Q-Q Plot of Process Motivations**



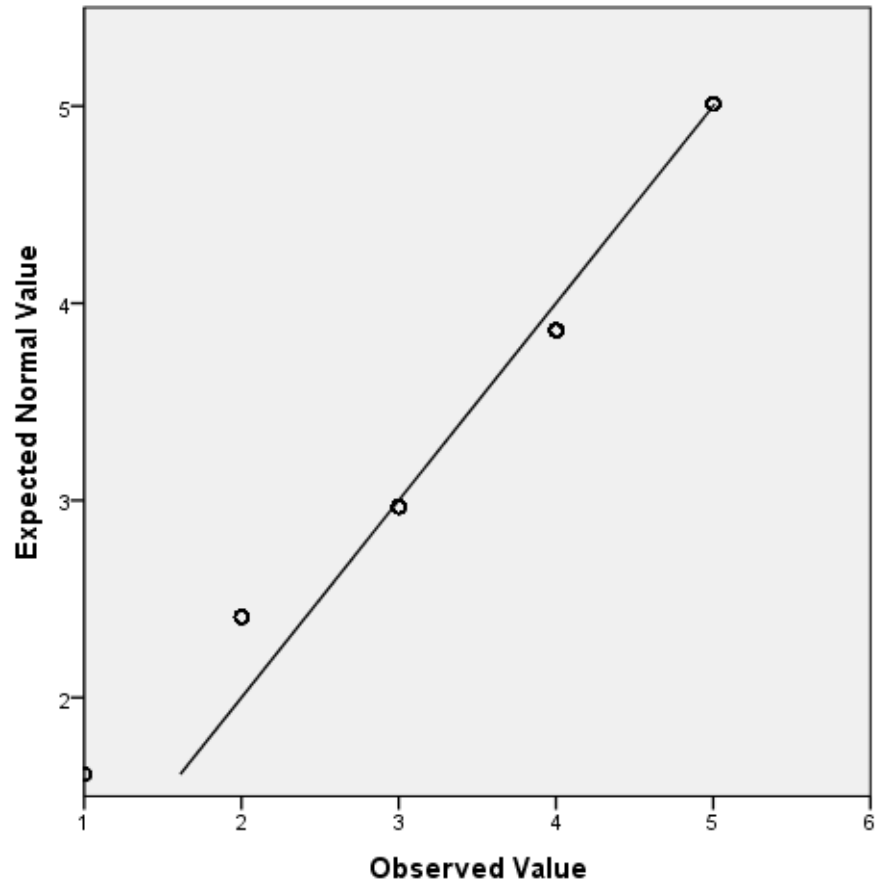


**Figure 4.2: Normal Q-Q Plot of Content Motivations**



**Figure 4.3: Normal Q-Q Plot of Social Motivations**

Based on the three Q-Q plots generated, most of the points fall nicely on the straight, diagonal line. Only a small handful of points deviate from the line, which exemplifies departure from normality – however only to a small extent. This is an evidence of a distribution which is almost normal, and that a normal model for the survey response is reasonable. Thus, it can be concluded that the data for the three constructs of process, content, and social motivations have achieved normality.



**Figure 4.4: Normal Q-Q Plot of Users' Social Media Experience**

As for the normality of users' overall social media experience, the plot in Figure 4.4 with skinny tails does not really live up to the expectations. It can be observed that both tails diverge from the straight, diagonal line in a “reverse S” pattern. If the line had been drawn to fit all but the highest and lowest dots, the plot would have deviated a little from the originally expected one.

Although the data does not look exactly normal, the Central Limit Theorem argues that if any sample size is reasonably large ( $N = 30$  or larger), the mean sampling distribution will be normally distributed although

distribution of scores in the sample is not (Urdan, 2005). As this study uses a sample size of 400, it will therefore assume a normal model for the said data under such a circumstance.

#### **4.4 Respondents' Demographic Profile**

The outcome of the survey involving 400 respondents sees the number of males almost tie with that of females, with the former taking up 47% and the latter, the rest of the pie chart. In terms of respondents' age in a macroscopic perspective, the survey has those aged from 19 to 24 years old making up the largest group. In terms of specific ages, those who are 23 and 24 years old are leading the mentioned group, with 12.5% and 11.8% respectively having engaged in the social media. Respondents aged from 15 and 16 years old respectively mark only 1.5% and 1% of the total, thus registering the smallest sub-groups. This research looks into the social media use of respondents aged between 15 and 29. More information on respondents' age is presented in Table 4.4.

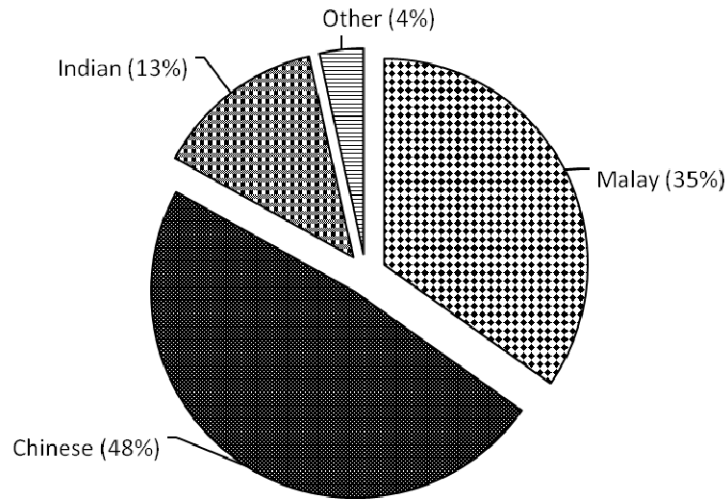
**Table 4.4: Respondents by Age**

Age	Frequency	Percent
15	6	1.5
16	4	1.0
17	7	1.8
18	25	6.3

19	55	13.8
20	35	8.8
21	39	9.8
22	33	8.3
23	50	12.5
24	47	11.8
25	25	6.3
26	22	5.5
27	30	7.5
28	15	3.8
29	7	1.8
Total	400	100.0

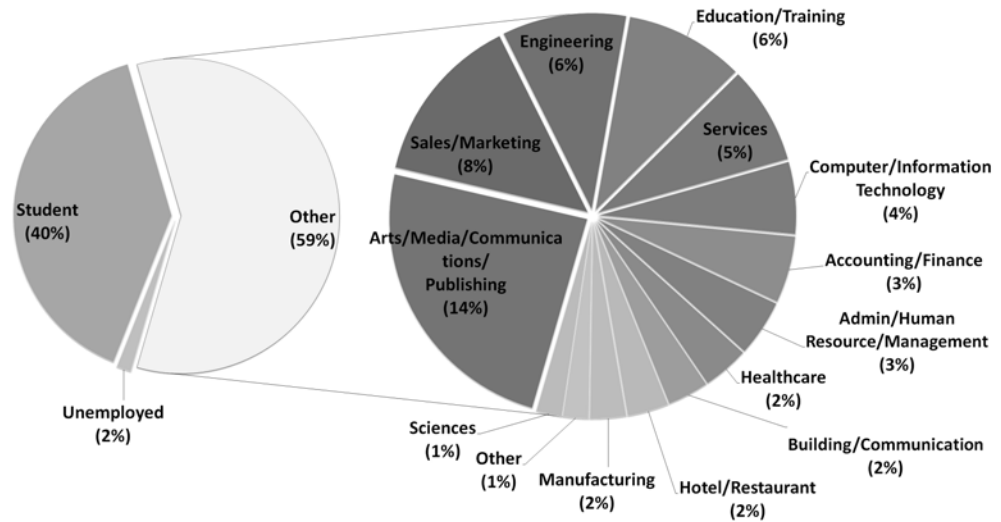
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In the breakdown of respondents' ethnicity – as can be seen in Figure 4.5, 48% of the 400 respondents are Chinese; this is followed by Malays, marking a total of 35%. While Indians register 13%, respondents of other minor races mark 4% and this includes and is not limited to the natives, or *Orang Asli* in Malaysia.



**Figure 4.5: Respondents by Race**

Of the total respondents, close to 40% of them were students, whereas another 59% were working individuals at the point of data collection. The remaining 1.5% represents unemployed respondents. Among the respondents who were employed or working, 14.3% of them were in the art/media/communication/publishing industries. This puts them in the category of the largest group. Individuals in the sales/marketing (8.3%) and engineering (6%) industries respectively mark the second and third largest groups. Individuals working in the industries of manufacturing and sciences, respectively mark 1.8% and 1.3%. Please see Figure 4.6 for full details on respondents' occupations.

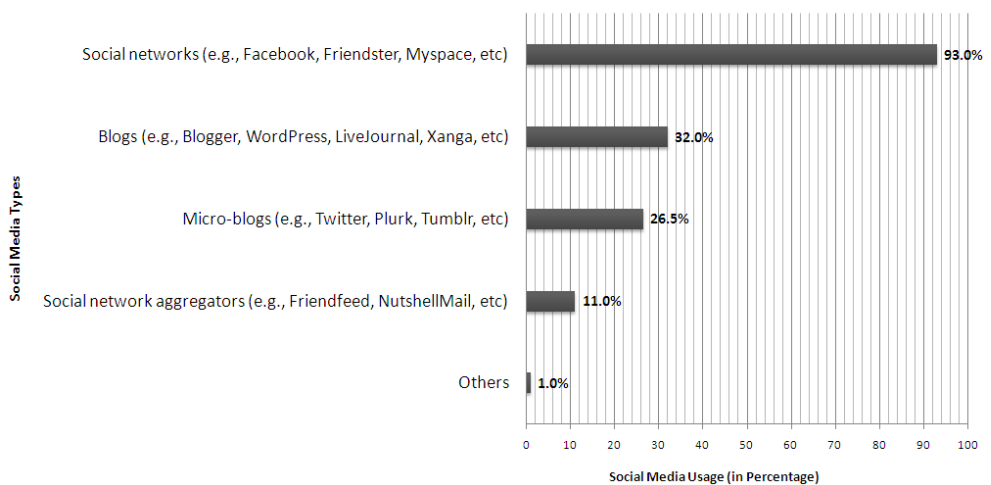


**Figure 4.6: Respondents by Occupation**

#### 4.5 Respondents' Social Media Psychographics

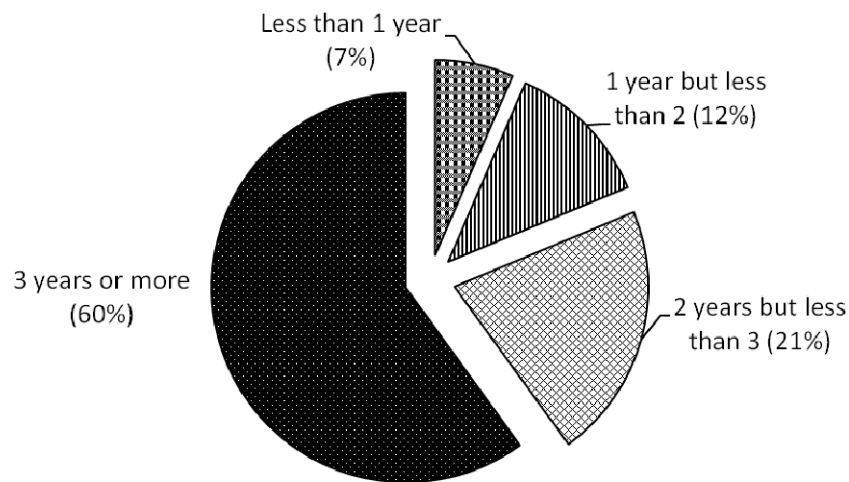
As this social media research focuses on the communication aspect – this includes such platforms as blogs, micro-blogs like Twitter, forums, social network services, and social network aggregators – one survey question thus looks into the usage pattern with each and every of the mentioned platforms.

Figure 4.7 summarises the findings.



**Figure 4.7: Respondents' Social Media Use**

As can be observed from the graph, social networking sites are the most used social media among the 400 respondents; only as few as 7% do not use them. Although less than half the percentage of social media, blogs are found to be the second most consumed social media platform as 32% of the respondents said to have used one. While the consumption of micro-blogs (26.5%) is not far behind, media aggregators mark the lowest among the four main social media types at only 11%.



**Figure 4.8: Duration of Social Media Use**

Figure 4.8 shows the duration of respondents' social media use. 60% of them have had an experience of three years and above in using the social media. This is followed by respondents who have used social media for two years but less than three; however the share is only about one third that of the previous category. Respondents who have had less than two years of exposure make up close to 20%.



Another question in the questionnaire consists of a slew of statements in a 5-point Likert scale aimed at identifying respondents' social media use. In order to understand to what extent each of the 22 statements is agreed or disagreed by the 400 respondents, it is necessary to calculate the mean score of each statement.

After running one-sample statistics test in SPSS, one reason could explain why the respondents are motivated to use the social media: the convenience of use. The mean score of this reason is calculated to 3.99 (rounding off 3.9875). Where 1 signifies strongly disagree, 3 being neutral, and 5 means strongly agree, it is evident that most of the respondents perceive the convenience aspect to be agreeable as the mean score is just 0.01 shy of 4.00.

Besides, most respondents too agree that they use the social media to keep up with current issues and events (mean = 3.95). This is followed by their agreement on the user-friendliness of the social media (mean = 3.93), and their utilisation of it to share information (mean = 3.90). In terms of whether or not the respondents use the social media to show their personality, a majority of them express their neutral stance over this aspect as can be understood from the mean score of 3.05; this also makes this statement the least agreed one among others. The full results are illustrated in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Statements on Social Media Use with Respective Mean Scores**

Statement	Mean*
Social media is convenient to use	3.9875
I use social media to keep up with current issues and events	3.9475
Social media is user-friendly	3.9325
I use social media to share information useful to other people	3.9000
I use social media to search for information	3.8850
Social media is entertainment	3.8750
Social media helps pass the time	3.8725
I can use social media anytime, anywhere	3.8600
Social media is enjoyment	3.8125
I use social media to connect with people who share some of my values	3.8025
I use social media when I have nothing better to do	3.7750
Social media is a cost-effective way to publish	3.7625
I use social media to maintain a personal relationship with friends or family	3.7575
Social media is easy to maintain	3.7325
I can get what I want more easily with social media	3.7050
I use social media to present information about my interests	3.6125
I make new friends using social media	3.6075
I use social media to post things I want to say or tell	3.5750
I participate in discussions on social media	3.4775
I use social media to keep record of what is happening in my life	3.2750

Using social media makes me feel less lonely	3.2675
I use social media to show my personality	3.0500

\* Derived from a 5-point Likert scale where 1 represents “strong disagree”, 3 represents “neutral”, and 5 represents “strongly agree”.

In terms of how important respondents think the social media is to them, Table 4.6 summarises the results. It can be observed that from the five-point Likert scale, where 1 signifies “very important”, 3 represents “not sure”, and 5 represents “not important at all”, respondents’ answers for this question are heavily skewed towards the left, positive side of the continuum.

**Table 4.6: Social Media Importance**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all important	13	3.3
Not very important	70	17.5
Not sure	96	24.0
Quite important	135	33.8
Very important	86	21.5
Total	400	100.0

Most respondents (33.8%) think that social media plays a “quite important” role in their lives. While the group that is “not sure” of the importance of social media comes in second highest at 24%, those who regard

it as “very important” register the third place with 21.5%. Those who view social media as “not very important” and “not important at all” respectively mark 17.5% and 3.3%.

One of the key survey questions asks respondents to rate their overall experience as social media users. By asking this question, it is poised to find out how satisfaction fares out of their social media use.

**Table 4.7: Respondents’ Social Media Experience**

User’ Experience	Frequency	Percent
Not at all satisfied	9	2.3
Not very satisfied	42	10.5
Not sure	55	13.8
Quite satisfied	214	53.5
Very satisfied	80	20.0
Total	400	100.0

From Table 4.7, it can be seen that most respondents feel “quite satisfied” with their social media experience; this group contributes to as much as 53.5% of the total. 20% of the 400 respondents claim to be “very satisfied” with their social media use, and this is followed by those who are indifferent about it (13.8%). While those who are “not very satisfied” with their social media use contribute to another 10.5%, those “not satisfied at all” users on the leftmost side of the continuum register the lowest percentage at 2.3%.

#### 4.6 How Process, Content, and Social Motivations Fare

In terms of the degree to which the 400 respondents agree to each of the three motivation types, this will require the “mean of the mean” to come into play. Like previously mentioned, all 22 statements on the respondents’ social media use are respectively pigeon-holed into one of the three motivation categories of “process”, “content”, and “social”. By using the respective mean scores of the 22 statements calculated earlier, the data are reprocessed in order to obtain the “mean of mean” of all statements that form the respective categories. In another word, this test looks into the respective mean scores of the process, content, and social motivations. The outcome of this test is illustrated in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Mean Score of Process, Content, and Social Motivations**

Motivation Type	Mean
Process	3.7450
Content	3.7240
Social	3.5825

Of the three motivation types, process motivations have proven to be the strongest construct with a mean score of 3.75 (rounding off 3.745). In other words, the degree to which the respondents agree to all statements under this construct in general marks the highest (1 represents “strong disagree”, 3

represents “neutral”, and 5 represents “strongly agree”). This is followed by content motivations with a mean score of 3.72. Surprisingly, social motivations in this social media study only manage to score a mean of 3.58, thus registering the lowest level of agreement on the continuum compared to the other two constructs.

The analysis above is further complemented by the next one known as the “multiple regression analysis”, which will provide useful insights into the strength and direction of which the three motivation types (acting as independent variables), correlate with users’ overall social media experience (the dependant variable). Results of the multiple regression analysis are reflected in the tables below.

**Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SM_Experience	3.02	.652	400
Process Motivations	3.7450	.53787	400
Content Motivations	3.7240	.63232	400
Social Motivations	3.5825	.69757	400

This first output of the regression analysis is illustrated in Table 4.9. One of the assumptions in regression analysis is that the minimum ratio of valid cases to independent variables has to be 5: 1 (“Introduction to regression,” 2006). Given that there are 400 valid cases and three independent

variables in this research, the ratio for this analysis is calculated to be 133.3:1, thereby satisfying the minimum requirement.

**Table 4.10: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.307 <sup>a</sup>	.094	.087	.914

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Process Motivations, Content Motivations, Social Motivations*

*b. Dependent Variable: SM\_Experience*

In Table 4.10, the Multiple R for the relationship between the three independent variables and the dependent variable is 0.31 (rounding off 0.307), which by using the rule of thumb would be characterised as weak because the value is far from 1. The coefficient of multiple determination (see the “Adjusted R Square” value) reads 0.09; therefore, the linear regression explains about 9% of the variance in the data.

**Table 4.11: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	34.351	3	11.450	13.692	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1	Residual	331.159	396	.836		
	Total	365.510	399			

*a. Dependent Variable: SM\_Experience*

*b. Predictors: (Constant), Process Motivations, Content Motivations, Social Motivations*

In Table 4.11, we can see that the “Sig.” value (reported as the probability or p-value) of the F statistic for the overall regression relationship is 0.00, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. As the null hypothesis of the F-test is expressed as  $H_0 : R^2 = 0$ , we can thus reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the variables. In other words, we assume that there is a statistically significant linear relationship between the three independent variables and the dependent variable.

**Table 4.12: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.703	.331		5.142	.000	1.052	2.355
Process	.485	.122	.272	3.977	.000	.245	.724
Content	.071	.107	.047	.668	.505	-.139	.281
Social	.000	.088	.000	.003	.998	-.173	.174

*a. Dependent Variable: SM\_Experience*

In the next output as illustrated in Table 4.12, where the significance level is capped at 0.05, the rejection region is defined such that the null hypothesis  $H_0 : \beta = 0$  (variable is not useful for predicting social media experience) is rejected if the “Sig.” value or p-value is less than or equal to



0.05. Of the three variables, it can be observed that only the first one – process motivations, yields a “Sig.” value of 0.00. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that this variable is useful for predicting social media experience. Since the  $\beta$  coefficient associated with process motivations (0.49 – rounding off 0.485) is positive, this indicates a linear relationship in which higher process motivations in users are associated with better social media experience or satisfaction. The “Sig.” value of the other two variables, namely content and social motivations, respectively exceeds 0.05; this indicates that their estimated  $\beta$  coefficient is unreliable. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that they are significant predictors of social media experience (i.e., we fail to reject the null hypothesis).

In finding out whether or not there is any gender-related difference in the respondents’ U&G, the independent samples t-test will be run twice to provide insights into two distinct perspectives: 1) process, content, and social motivations across gender; and 2) overall social media experience across gender.

Tables 4.13 and 4.14 are results of the independent samples t-test that compares the the three motivation types of process, content, and social between the male and female users. From Table 4.13, we can see that the mean score of process motivations is 3.7 (rounding off 3.703) for males and 3.78 for females. As for content motivations, the mean score reads 3.68 for males and 3.76 for females. Lastly for social motivations, the mean score is

3.62 for males and 3.55 for females. The number of participants (N) in the male and female groups is 188 and 212 respectively.

**Table 4.13: Group Statistics of Process, Content, and Social Motivations**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Process	Male	188	3.7030	.55779	.04068
	Female	212	3.7822	.51805	.03558
Content	Male	188	3.6809	.68557	.05000
	Female	212	3.7623	.57999	.03983
Social	Male	188	3.6234	.70951	.05175
	Female	212	3.5462	.68645	.04715

The table does not reveal the results for that test; nevertheless, it does tell some important and relevant information because it shows the magnitude of the difference across gender. Although it may be difficult to tell if the differences in the mean value across gender are significant, the subsequent analysis will be able to provide some insights on this.

**Table 4.14: Process, Content, and Social Motivations across Gender**

		Process		Content		Social	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed	Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed	Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	1.145		5.325		1.021	
	Sig.	.285		.022		.313	
	t	-1.472	-1.466	-1.286	-1.274	1.105	1.102
	df	398	383.585	398	368.238	398	388.847
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.142	.144	.199	.204	.270	.271
t-test for Equality of Means	Mean Difference	-.07922	-.07922	-.08141	-.08141	.07718	.07718
	Std. Error Difference	.05381	.05405	.06329	.06393	.06986	.07000
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper

In Table 4.14, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances determines if the two groups have about the same or different amounts of variability between scores, which is one of the assumptions to be met in the independent samples t-test. As this table consists of information on the three motivation types, we will need to look at each of them one by one. For process

motivations, the value in the “Sig.” row under “Equal variances assumed” is 0.29 (rounding off 0.285). According to Terrell (2012), any value greater than or equal to 0.05 means that equal variances are assumed. Since the “Sig.” value or p-value is greater than 0.05, the assumption of equal variance has been fulfilled. Put scientifically, it means the variability in the two gender groups does not differ significantly and we fail to reject the null hypothesis  $H_0 : \mu_{male} = \mu_{female}$  that the scores in the male group do not vary too much from the scores in the female group. Therefore it does not require the column reading “Equal variances not assumed” to be looked into.

From the same table, the “Sig. (2-Tailed)” value tells if there is any latent mean difference across gender. The “Sig. (2-Tailed)” value under “Equal variances assumed” reads 0.14. Since its value is greater than 0.05, there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. In other words, there is no statistically significant difference across gender in terms of their social motivations and the difference of mean between the two groups is likely due to chance and not likely due to manipulation of the independent variable – gender.

As for content motivations, the “Sig.” value reads 0.02, alerting that the assumption of equal variance has been violated. Due to this reason, the “Sig. (2-Tailed)” value will have to be read from the “Equal variances not assumed” column, which gives 0.20. As such, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference across gender in terms of their content motivations.

Social motivations give a “Sig.” value of 0.31 and have therefore met the assumption of equal variance. Its “Sig. (2-Tailed)” value marks 0.27, which again indicates a lack of evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Put differently, there is no gender-related difference in users’ process motivations behind their social media use.

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 are results of the independent samples t-test that compares the overall social media experience between the male and female users. In Table 4.15, the mean for males is 3.85 and females 3.73. The standard deviation for males is 0.97 and for females, 0.95. The number of participants (N) in the male and female groups is 188 and 212 respectively.

**Table 4.15: Group Statistics of Overall Social Media Experience**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SM_Experience	Male	188	3.85	.966	.070
	Female	212	3.73	.948	.065

In Table 4.16, the value in the “Sig.” row under “Equal variances assumed” is 0.85 (rounding off 0.846), which means the assumption of equal variance has been fulfilled. The “Sig. (2-Tailed)” value reads 0.23, indicating there is no statistically significant difference across gender in terms of their social media experience and for this, the test has failed to reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 4.16: Overall Social Media Experience across Gender**

		SM_Experience	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	.038	
	Sig.	.846	
t-test for Equality of Means	t	1.196	1.195
	df	398	390.432
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.232	.233
	Mean Difference	.115	.115
	Std. Error Difference	.096	.096
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower -.074	Upper .303

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Synopsis of Main Findings

This sub-chapter will provide a summary of the main findings from Chapter 4. Out of the several types of social media defined within the context of this study, social networking sites are the most used platform; social network aggregators, however, are the opposite and least used. Besides, while more than half the 400 respondents have had three years and above of experience in using social media, almost three quarter of them are satisfied with their social media experience with their feedbacks ranging from “quite satisfied” to “very satisfied”.

The five most agreed statements on why respondents use the social media are: 1) social media is convenient to use; 2) social media allows them to keep up with current issues and events; 3) social media is user-friendly; 4) social media allows them to share information useful to other people; and 5) I use social media to search for information. On the other hand, it is least agreed that respondents use the social media to show their personalities. In terms of the degree to which respondents agree to each of the three motivation types, namely process, content, and social motivations, the mean score for “process”

marks the strongest, which is followed by “content” and “social”. As such, the social motivations are rendered the least pronounced construct.

Of the three motivation types, only process motivations exemplify a statistically significant linear relationship with users’ overall social media experience. There is little evidence to suggest that the content and social motivations demonstrate any relationship with social media experience. Lastly, there is also insufficient evidence to suggest any statistical gender-related difference when it comes to social media U&G.

## **5.2 Discussion and Interpretation of Findings**

Research findings will be discussed and interpreted accordingly in the respective sub-chapters after this paragraph. More detailed findings can be found in Chapter 4.

### **5.2.1 Subjects’ Uses of Social Media**

There is a plethora of motivations behind respondents social media use. Before interpreting the findings, it crucial to understand that of all statements pertaining to social media use presented to the respondents in the questionnaire, not all of them were agreed to. Therefore just because the certain statements have scored a mean of 3 and above out of 5 (where 1 signifies strongly disagree, 3 being neutral, and 5 means strongly agree), this



does not mean the respondents did not disagree to certain statements. The mean scores merely represent the average scores of the sample.

From the research results, the top five most agreed motivations for respondents to use the social media are: 1) social media is convenient to use; 2) social media allows them to keep up with current issues and events; 3) social media is user-friendly; 4) social media allows them to share information useful to other people; and 5) I use social media to search for information. It can be observed from these top five motivations that none of them consists of the social aspects. Such a lack of social motivations in social media use is rather consistent with another key finding in this research, which is discussed in sub-chapter 5.2.4.

The top five motivations of social media use, comprised of both process and content motivations, summarise the following attributes about social media that users are looking for: social media convenience, as well as information seeking and sharing qualities. This suggests that it is pivotal for social media to encompass the mentioned attributes as failure to accommodate respondents' needs in these aspects may cause them to simply turn to alternative social media platforms. This is based on the basic assumption that audience is regarded as active and goal-oriented rather than passive consumers of information (McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, as cited in Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974), and that they choose and consume certain media and content that would satisfy their psychological needs (Katz, Gurevitch, & Hass, 1973;

Rubin, as cited in Roy, 2009; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, as cited in Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2010).

### **5.2.2 Convenience in Social Media Use**

The “convenient” aspect of the Internet is much evident and has become one of the major reasons why people embrace the platform. In studies like Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), as well as Charney and Greenberg (as cited in Johnson & Yang, 2009), convenience is commonly attributed as a motivator of Internet use. Besides, in choosing information sources, convenience or ease of use has also been regarded as one of four main criteria for adults (Griffiths & Brophy, as cited in Baden & Vilar, 2006; Griffiths & King, as cited in Connaway, Dickey, & Radford, 2011). The notion that web search is fast and easy, as well as being able to provide immediate access to information and give users what they want, is something users today would see (Baden & Vilar, 2006).

Other instances where convenience on the Internet is found and contended to be important – as parallel to this current study – are illustrated in this paragraph. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), for example, reveal that convenience is a good predictor of the duration of overall Internet use. Furthermore, the amount of online activities also correlates positively with how convenient it is to access political information on the Internet (Kale and Johnson, 2004). Ko et al. (2005) also finds that users are likely to indulge themselves in human-human interaction on the web if it is able to fulfill their

convenience needs. In another study by Cha (in press), two salient factors that influence the frequent use of video-sharing websites such as Youtube are found to be the perceived usefulness and ease of use associated with the website.

The relationship between the lifecycle of a technology and consumers is illustrated by Norman (1998) as such: while a small portion of the innovators and early adopters drive the technology, the pragmatists and conservatives – who dominate the market – usually do not jump on the bandwagon until it is safe to do so; these dominant customers demand convenience, ease of use, and reliability out of the technology. To put technology in the online context, based on the model of technology lifecycle put forth by Norman (1998), the web would keep advancing due to the demanding nature of the mass customers as a result of their “pragmatic” and “conservative” manner in the decision-making process. An example of such technological advancement is exemplified in the transformation of the Internet from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. But of course, such advancement does not stop there; it will continue to evolve.

As the demand for convenience, ease of use, and reliability in technologies continues, what is to be expected in social media subsequently, as Crum (2010) reports, is the decentralisation of social media which is poised to bring users a greater degree of convenience in communication – this time cross-platform. Should convenience or ease of use becomes absent in any of the technologies today, users would move on to seek better alternatives. This

is much like what is reported in “Alternatives to YouTube” (2012), where individuals now turn to Youtube alternatives like Socialcam and Viddy that allow them to reach out to the kind of niche audiences they seek, the convenience of which is missing in Youtube.

### **5.2.3 Information Seeking and Sharing in Social Media Use**

The social media’s ability to gratify consumers’ information-seeking desire is what has been found crucial as far as social media users’ motivations are concerned. According to Lasswell (as cited in Haridakis & Hanson, 2009), information-seeking has, since a long time ago, been considered a function of traditional media use. As the traditional media revolutionises into what has become even more relevant in today’s context – the Internet, the information-seeking quality continues to stay pertinent. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), Luo (2002), as well as Charney and Greenberg (as cited in Johnson & Yang, 2009), for instance, assert that information-seeking is a major motivator of web use. Kale and Johnson (2004) find that users are motivated to turn to the Internet for political information due to its ability to fulfill users’ information-seeking desire, among others.

Besides, the information that users seek is also crucial in explaining why the Internet content gratifications contribute to a significant part of the findings in Stafford (2005). Lin et al. (2005) also note that information scanning is significantly relevant to online news use due to users’ need to stay up-to-date with current happenings. Uçak (2007) finds that students are

motivated to choose electronic media over print media in seeking information due to its easy accessibility. This finding is also consistent with that attained in Niemand (2010).

Weinschenk (2011, p. 121) posits that people's information-seeking behavior can be explained by what is generally known as "dopamine" released in various parts of the brain to allow people to feel the enjoyment in the process. According to Berridge (as cited in Weinschenk, 2011, p. 121), while there is the "dopamine" system that generates the "wanting", another system known as "opioid" also exists to control the feelings of pleasure associated with "liking". The wanting system will motivate users to act (e.g., search for information) and the liking system gives them the satisfaction. These processes will induce a loop that causes users to repeat the cycle. Such a mechanism of how the brains function is very much consistent with the U&G theory, where it posits users are motivated by certain reasons to use or do something, after which gratification – or non-gratification, will follow.

Weinschenk (2011, p. 123) also holds that unpredictability causes people to keep searching. For example, the virtual cue of how many unread messages or new notifications there are on the Facebook menu bar will keep users in a dopamine loop, thereby prompting them to click into cue to see what is new.

In terms of information-sharing, Rogers (as cited in Lee & Ma, 2012) posits that users tend to do so in order for others to have access to the relevant

content. The main motivator to share information is the “opinion leader” quality they would like to be associated with – if the information they share turns out to be credible, they in turn will be deemed credible (Rogers, as cited in Lee & Ma, 2012). Research also suggests that users share certain content parallel to what they perceive as their ideal self and image and such motivation can occur after reading other users’ posts (Dunne et al.; Shao, as cited in Wang, Tchernev, & Solloway, 2012).

Another argument about people’s information-sharing behavior is parallel to the notion of dopamine release in human brains that is heavily discussed in Weinschenk (2011). According to Tamir and Mitchell (2012), individuals take opportunities to communicate their views and emotions to others as the act activates the neural and cognitive mechanisms in the brains that seek intrinsic rewards. To put this theory in context, the phenomenon where people go on social networking sites like Facebook today to perform self-disclosure, such as incessantly updating their daily activities, is due to the brain's dopamine reward system that rewards us for talking about ourselves (Saadat, 2012). As a result, most social networking sites are designed in a way that will conveniently display, on the main page, a barrage of status updates from friends about their activities and whereabouts.

#### **5.2.4 Process, Content, and Social Motivations**

In terms of how process, content, and social motivations fare in this study, the test of comparison of mean scores between the three constructs

reveals that the social gratifications have shown to be the least agreed construct. From the research data, the respondents can be observed agreeing to some of the statements under the construct of social motivations but the agreement in general does not come in as strong as the process and content motivations.

In the idea of Kaplan and Haenlein (2009), social media, serving as a platform that facilitates exchange of information between people, is deemed to have a certain degree of social presence. Based on the generally-accepted definition of “social media” and what its name suggests, it is only sensible to presume that the social dimension is an important factor due to the media’s ability to engage interaction of users to a greater degree compared to the traditional Internet or Web 1.0. Nevertheless, the social dimension has surprisingly lived under the expectation – much like what happened in Stafford et al. (2004) in their pioneer research on traditional Internet.

When Stafford et al. (2004) suggested a third potential gratification type – the social gratifications – in their Internet U&G research, they believed the new aspect could have been overlooked in studies that adapted previously developed dimensions of “process” and “content” intended for the industrialised media such as TV and radio. Stafford et al. (2004) also highlighted the importance of the social dimension based on the notion that the Internet as a social environment has been recognised to serve both communicative and transactional activities. Despite the presence of the social dimension in their Internet U&G research, unfortunately it has not seen the

social dimension fare as well as the generic dimensions of “process” and “content”. Similarly in Aoki & Downe; Leung & Wei; Rubin; Stafford & Gillenson; Stafford et al. (as cited in Chigona et al., 2008), social motivations have also been found to be the least pronounced motivation types in traditional Internet use.

In terms of Web 2.0, it is found that Twitter users are not completely socially motivated although Facebook is able to satisfy more of such user needs (Smeele, 2010). Besides, in Xu et al. (2012), social presence is said to have positive impact on the use of social networking sites, except that it does not come in as strong as other motivations.

Perhaps one important reason could explain the underperformance of the social impact in social media. In Weinschenk (2011, p. 151), it is discussed that people assume social rules in online interactions. In other words, web users cannot help but to transfer the social rules they follow in the physical setting into the online realm; assumptions are naturally developed about how the website will respond to them and what the interaction will be like, much like human-human interactions in the physical environment. Among the factors that will violate the “social rules” online include websites having high loading time or that is unresponsive, websites that ask for personal information too early in the process of user interaction, and not saving information from one session to another to allow users to recall what was going on before (Weinschenk, 2011, p. 152). Some of the social media platforms that the



subjects engage in may have violated these social rules, which in theory will result in their social motivations being curtailed.

Despite the underperformance of the social dimension in social media use, there are a few things worth noting. Firstly, such underperformance of the social motivations cannot be applied to other social media studies, nor can it be generalised to explain the whole of Malaysian social media user base. As the research survey was based on purposive sampling to look for social media users who met certain criteria, such a sampling technique, which is a subset of non-probability sampling, does not follow mathematical probability as per Wimmer and Dominick (2006) and therefore results are only unique to the population being studied.

Secondly, as exemplified in Smeele (2010), Facebook is able to provide social motivations to its user at a degree more than that of Twitter due to the extended social features it offers. It can thus be concluded that the level of social motivations differs from one social media platform to another depending on how it can engage users socially. In this research, nevertheless, social media is being studied as a whole and its social influence does not necessarily equate to that of individual social media platforms. Therefore there are also a number of social media studies that find their social performances faring rather significantly as contrary to this research's (e.g., Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Kim et al., 2010).

### **5.2.5 Hedonism in Process and Content Motivations**

The fact that process and content motivations are performing slightly better than the social motivations may be explained by an important perspective known as “consumer hedonism” – something that was already evident in the traditional Internet study by Stafford et al. in 2004. Hedonism can be generally defined as a doctrine that pleasure is the only intrinsic good and that pain is intrinsically bad (Hubin, 2002). In other words, pleasure may be what motivates users to consume social media content. But how does such hedonistic consumption have to do with process and content motivations?

Prior research has demonstrated evidence of hedonistic qualities in both process and content motivations of offline and online consumer behaviors. Stafford et al. (2004) propose that Internet search activities may have similar hedonistic qualities as those identified in offline consumer product-searching behavior in prior retail research. Research by Hoffman and Novak (as cited in Stafford et al., 2004) also finds the presence of user enjoyment in the unregulated Web-browsing process beyond just utilitarian purpose, thereby prompting Stafford et al. to highlight the close association between hedonistic consumption and the process dimension of media use. On the other hand, message content and delivery is deemed to also possess the hedonistic qualities that users may find enjoyment and appreciation in (Holbrook & Hirschman; Turban et al., as cited in Stafford et al., 2004).

In understanding user adoption of social networking sites, Pai and Arnott (in press) also find hedonism that is derived from social networking sites' ability to allow users to customise their own page and to browse the pages of others. Similarly in Scarpi (2012), based on the findings of the research, it is suggested so that hedonistic users are given the opportunity to customise their online purchases, the colour of the webpage, and the number of items they can see on a page, as well as empower them to watch videos and listen to music. Both examples are closely related to and to some extent put together the dimensions of content delivery and style, as well as the process of browsing.

It is, however, worth noting that even though the researcher is unable to find evidence to support the linkage between social motivations and hedonism, it does not mean that users who opt for social media to meet their social needs do not necessarily find hedonism out of such use. This only means that future research in the similar context may want to also include this perspective.

#### **5.2.6 Process, Content, and Social Motivations, as well as Social Media Experience**

Another perspective to look at this U&G study would be to look into the gratification aspect of social media users, which in the case of this study employs users' overall social media experience as a proxy measure. After running the multiple regression analysis to identify the strength and direction

of the relationship between the three motivation types and users' overall social media experience, results have revealed that process motivations show a statistically significant relationship with user experience. As the type of this relationship is positive – characterised by its  $\beta$  coefficient value of 0.49, it also means a higher degree of process motivations in users are likely to result in greater gratification in social media experience. On the contrary, both content and social motivations do not contribute to any statistically significant relationship with users' overall social media experience.

Having said that, the two key research findings discussed in this sub-chapter and the preceding ones are best summed up this way: the respondents are in general socially motivated to use social media, except that such social motivations do not fare as significantly as process and content gratifications. Despite users demonstrating a higher degree of process and content motivations nevertheless, only the content motivations are able to translate into gratification in users. How the three motivation types fare in this study may be a factor impacting how they correlate with users' social media experience. To be specific, the process motivations, as the most pronounced construct in this study, may be responsible for its significant linkage to the overall social media experience in users. Nevertheless, a more legit way to explain this situation is that a majority of the respondents who have agreed to most of the items under the construct of process motivations also record a higher satisfaction level in their overall social media experience, as compared to the other two constructs. As such, the correlation between the two variables has been rendered significant.

The findings from both aspects of user motivations and their gratification exemplify that being motivated by content and social factors to use the social media does not guarantee content- and socially-driven gratifications, and the following studies, too, show a good example of this view. Liu et al. (2010), for instance, posit that the social dimension is “unexpectedly” one of the motivation types, but without any significant effect on users’ Twitter satisfaction. Besides, Wang et al. (2012) also find that users are socially motivated to use the social media, although they do not report being socially gratified.

The reason why content and social motivations do not translate into user gratification can be argued such that the reward system in human mind has not been satisfied. While rewards can be instant at times, in certain occasions, one will have no choice but to sacrifice immediate gratification to either achieve a greater satisfaction later on, or become disappointed. According to Berridge (as cited in Weinschenk, 2011, p. 121), the “opioid” system in human mind controls the feelings of pleasure associated with “liking”. The research findings indicate that the “liking” that stems from content and social motivations has not been strong enough to be translated into user satisfaction. Besides, it is also posited in Leonard, Beauvais, and Scholl (1999) that intrinsic motivations are influenced by the enjoyment received from performing a task. The said “enjoyment” refers to the reward system in the mind, which decides the level of user satisfaction. The “enjoyment” is clearly absent in this study as far as content and social motivations are

concerned, which explains the low satisfaction level in social media experience associated to the two motivation types.

While the lack of content and social impact on user gratification may serve as a wake-up call for social media developers, the findings nevertheless can provide them with useful and crucial insights on the general behaviors of social media users in Malaysia. This can, in turn, allow developers to make improvements on their social media platforms based on the existing limitations. To illustrate a good example, Asia Pacific's first and leading blog advertising community Nuffnang ([nuffnang.com](http://nuffnang.com)) in Dec 2012 launched its Android and Apple mobile app known as NuffnangX that screens through content from thousands of blogs to deliver important descriptions to smartphones and mobile devices. The app also facilitates text-style communication between readers and bloggers.

While the Internet has long been saturated with similar platforms like this, one common issue that threatens most developers is that users are reluctant to go on these platforms due to the not-so-user-friendly nature of these platforms on the mobile devices, although they function just fine on computers or laptops. Nevertheless, the developer of the NuffnangX app is one step ahead to circumvent this major limitation by releasing a mobile-friendly rendition of the platform. This way, users can fulfill more easily and conveniently their needs to keep with the current events and stories in the blogosphere without having to be confined in one location.

### **5.2.7 Gender-related Difference in U&G**

From the analyses in Chapter 4, we can conclude that there is no gender-related difference in respondents' social media U&G. For this we will have to look at two aspects for better insights and understanding. Firstly, regardless of whether it is process, content, or social motivations associated to respondents' social media use, there is no significance statistical difference between males and females. Secondly, as far as their social media experience is concerned, there is also no significance statistical difference across both gender groups. In other words, the reasons why the male respondents use the social media and how they gratify from it observe a similar trend as their female counterpart.

The lack of evidence to suggest gender-related differences in social media U&G in this research corresponds with research results from Acquisti and Gross (2006), which reveals that online college men and women are equally likely to share their personal information such as their birthday, schedule of classes, partner's name, AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), and political views. Online men and women are just as likely to check on information of those whom others are dating or in a relationship with (Madden & Smith, 2010). Besides, there is also no significant gender differences when it comes to deleting comments others have made or removing photo tags on the social media profile (Madden, 2012). These research outcomes actually refute other research findings that show gender-related differences in new media U&G (i.e., Leung, 2003; Okazaki, 2006; Ran, 2008; Roy, 2009) and

social media U&G (i.e., Sveningsson Elm, 2007; Joinson, 2008; Jones et al., 2008; Thelwall, 2009; Thelwall, et al., 2010).

### **5.2.8 The Diminishing Technological Gender Gap**

It is not uncommon to see a large literature reporting on gender divide in the use of technologies. According to Gill, Brooks, McDougall, Patel, and Kes (2010), technological gender divide is especially evident in low- and middle-income countries and this has been on-going ever since the agricultural period, where innovations were specially designed for men. Gill et al. (2010) suggest that the only way to improve such technological gender divide is to provide women with opportunity and access to technologies. Besides, Deyoung and Spence (as cited in Sáinz & López-Sáez, 2010) contend that getting women involved in computers from an early period could reduce gender differences in their computer attitudes.

Today, with education opportunities being extended to include more females, there is an abundance of evidence to suggest the closure of the technological gender gap. In Malaysia, records show that the number of male undergraduates used to outpace that of female undergraduates, until the latter gradually rose to 50% of the total undergraduate population in 1990 to mark a milestone (Kapoor & Au, 2011). Ng (2011) also reports the rapid closure of gender gap in Malaysia, with the ratio of female-to-male university graduates marking an astonishing 60:40. Besides, in an effort to bridge the country's digital divide, Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture (KPKK)



had, by the end of 2011, distributed notebooks to over 470,000 students across the country (“Malaysia is bridging the digital divide,” 2012).

With females now being granted equal access to education and job opportunities previously dominated by males, it is likely that they would have also acquired similar skills and knowledge as their male counterpart. For instance, it is a common practice for undergraduates to make use of computer equipments and services provided by the university to seek information for assignment, do presentations, and participate in online course registration. This brings about homogeneity in technology attitudes and behaviors across gender since the model is standard across the all universities.

In terms of work, women are reported to be making up close to 48% of the country’s labour force (Ng, 2011). Due to such changes taking place in the society, it is no surprise that this research finds no significant gender-related difference in social media U&G as traditional values revolving around what a man and a women should be doing have become increasingly blurred. To sum it up, the diminishing gender-related differences in technologies can be attributed to the important roles played by the educational institutions and society in their efforts to bring down the digital divide, not only between the technology “haves” and “have-nots”, but also between males and females.

The significance of incorporating gender studies in this social media U&G research is threefold. Firstly, this study will contribute to the knowledgebase of information about gender-related differences with respect to

social media behavior in Malaysia. Secondly, it will allow developers of social media platforms, especially those that are location-based, to design systems that are free from gender stereotypes and biases to serve the population more effectively. Lastly, it is hoped that this study will raise some social awareness about gender equity and its impact on many terrains of the society, as well as some practices our institutional interventions should maintain in order to bring the gender gap and digital divide to a minimal.

### **5.2.9. Importance of Social Media to Subjects**

From the research results, it can be seen that respondents' feedback on the importance of social media in their life, are heavily skewed towards the left, positive side of the continuum. Those who think social media is "very important" and "quite important" in their lives have outweighed those who find it "not very important" and "not at all important". Perhaps a result like this is not surprising, considering social media is reported to be responsible for one third of the time Malaysian users spend online (Russel, 2011). Besides, based on such attributes as perceived convenience and ease of use, as well as information sharing and seeking that subjects have described of social media in this research, that may also explain why social media in general plays an important role in their lives.

The importance of social media lies in the fact that there is a complete communication process on the media that fulfill its function. Wilbur L. Schramm's basic model of communication developed in the 1954 illustrates

that communication involves feedback and is a complex two-way process between the sender and receiver. We can observe that almost all social media platforms follow the principle of this model, with its users assuming social rules in online interactions as what Weinschenk (2011, p. 151) posits. With individuals now pushing communication and various activities online, this clearly indicates a paradigm shift in communication as a result of ICT advancement.

By putting aside the attributes and influence of the social media, here are a few scenarios to ponder. Given that Malaysia is reportedly taking the fifth place globally in terms of digital media consumption (as cited in “Malaysians Rank 5<sup>th</sup>,” 2009; Russell, 2010), would social media still remain important if it had suffered a setback in media traffic one day? What does social media’s perceived convenience or ease of use mean to users now? Will users stay as motivated to share information or perform self-disclosure on social media? What about information-searching on the now lackluster social media platforms?

Therefore what is worth noting is that the importance of social media not only lies in its ability to facilitate communication, also in the fact that practically everyone in our social circle today flocks to the social media to find fulfillment of various needs. In other words, there is traffic on the social media, which is important to both its users and social media developers. By taking away the media traffic, it will, without a doubt, take a toll on the perceived importance of social media in the eyes of its users.

To illustrate a good, realistic example in the right context, the rapidly-changing nature of communication today has resulted in political representatives or candidates making use of everyday social media to reach out to constituents and voters (Rozana Sani, 2008a). Besides, individuals also take information-sharing to the social media due to the “opinion leader” quality they would like to be associated with (Rogers, as cited in Lee & Ma, 2012). If there is little traffic or few users, social media will thus become irrelevant to the political representatives as they simply cannot communicate messages to the audience. Information-sharing, too, will be rendered meaningless when there is no receiver on the other end to consume the shared information and to compliment the individual who shares. This way, it works against the nature of the brain's dopamine system that rewards users for sharing information and talking about themselves. Dopamine is a kind of chemical released in the human brain and is responsible for driving us to perform a range of functions like eating, sleeping, and promoting the act of self-disclosure due to the feeling of pleasure it rewards us with (Saadat, 2012).

To put in a nutshell, there may be various reasons why many individuals use the social media. However, it must be noted that its influence is not self-existent. The important role social media plays in people’s lives today is due to the fact that the platform is able to facilitate communication as if in the physical setting, and that many other users adopt the media to form their virtual communities while taking on the roles of both senders and receivers of information.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **6.1 Conclusions**

The researcher has identified, in the introduction of this thesis, the five main research objectives this study aimed to attain and the five research questions this study aimed to answer. To achieve the aim of this research, which was to look into social media U&G among young adults aged from 15 to 29 in the Klang Valley, the following research objectives (RO's) were to be met:

- RO1. To study the reasons why subjects use the social media.
- RO2. To study how process, content, and social motivations of social media use fare among the subjects
- RO3. To study the relationship between process, content, and social motivations, as well as the overall experience of social media use among the subjects.
- RO4. To study how social media U&G differs between male and female subjects.

To achieve the RO's as outlined above, this study was poised to answer the four key research questions (RQ's) by which this research is framed.

RQ1. For what reasons do subjects use the social media?

RQ2. How do process, content, and social motivations of social media use fare among the subjects?

RQ3. How do process, content, and, social motivations correlate with the overall experience of social media use among the subjects?

RQ4. How does social media U&G differ between male and female subjects?

Based on the research findings, the answers to the aforementioned RQ's are summarised below:

RQ1. Subjects use the social media for a slew of reasons. The top 5 reasons are associated to the process and content motivations and they cover such qualities as information seeking and sharing, as well as convenience.

RQ2. This research interestingly reveals a finding similar to that found in the pioneer study by Stafford et al. (2004): social motivations are the weakest variable in social media U&G compared to the process and content motivations.

- RQ3. Of the three motivation types, only process motivations exemplify a statistically significant linear relationship with users' overall social media experience. Higher process motivations in users are likely to result in greater gratification in social media experience.
- RQ4. There is insufficient evidence to suggest any statistical gender-related difference when it comes to social media U&G; why the male respondents use the social media and how they gratify from such use observe a similar fashion as their female counterpart.

Academically, this research is thought to be extremely insightful as the outcome is poised to contribute to the field of social media studies and act as a reference for future research in the related areas. While U&G research from the Asian perspective is already said to be lacking (Roy, 2009), the researcher was, prior to conducting this research, unable to retrieve any local literature on social media U&G studies. Therefore, this research deemed pioneer in the context of Malaysia will contribute to the knowledgebase of the field of social media, thereby making it beneficial for any succeeding studies in the related areas.

The findings of this study are regarded to also be beneficial to social media developers who would like to target on the Malaysian user base, and to quarters like politicians, corporations, companies, or advertisers who intend to use the social media to interact with its audience. The analysis of social media

U&G in this research will help the said parties possess a better understanding of the psychographic behaviors of Malaysian users in general and ways to utilise the social media for more effective communication.

## **6.2 Assumptions of Research**

There are a few assumptions associated with this research. Firstly, it is assumed that the survey instrument has attained some degree of face validity, construct validity, content validity, and reliability, like discussed in Chapter 3. Secondly, since this study revolves around the U&G theory, it is also assumed social media users participating in the survey are active and goal-oriented individuals with their own agenda and who opt for the social media platforms that could meet their needs. Another assumption is that the respondents have answered the survey questionnaires both carefully and truthfully. Besides, research data from the actual survey is also assumed to be normally distributed. Lastly, it is assumed that the sample represents the population, given that guidelines on accuracy factors in sample size determination have been followed accordingly.

## **6.3 Research Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies**

As with most studies, the scope of this research has drawn several limitations, which nevertheless offer perspectives for future studies. Firstly, this social media research has not been able to cover the whole of Malaysian population given constraints on time, budget, and resources. Although the



limitation has been, in a way, translated into the strength by rendering the scope of this research deemed pioneer in Malaysia much more focused and in-depth, the researcher believes future research model should include nationwide coverage considering the knowledge could assist local social media developers to design more relevant social media platforms that are both competent and competitive in the social media marketplace. A slew of existing made-in-Malaysia social media sites such as frienster.com, 1malaysia.com, youkawan.com, and 1tube.my have yet to redeem themselves in the stiff competition against top international social media sites.

Secondly, this research attempts to study social media from the communication aspect. Hence the platforms this research has looked at include blog, micro-blogs, social networking sites, and social network aggregators. However, besides communication, the social media also constitute other areas such as collaboration (e.g. Wikipedia), and multimedia (e.g., Youtube) (*Social media: A guide for researchers*, 2011). Since Malaysians have been reported to be watching YouTube “in huge numbers” (Alphonsus, 2012), it is only rational to presume other areas outside communication have had a significant impact on the lives of Malaysians. Therefore, as like the area of communication, they are also worth researching.

Thirdly, since this study solely adopts the quantitative approach, it is believed that the qualitative perspective is also essential. A slew of U&G studies on the new media employing the qualitative method (e.g., Roy, 2009; Chigona et al., 2008) have uncovered detailed experiences of the subjects that

cannot be expected out of the numerical data and statistical analysis used in the quantitative research. Had this research also incorporated the qualitative perspective, it would most likely push the quality of this research to a higher level. That is why the researcher would propose so that future research may use what is known as the methodological triangulation technique by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods with a view to double-check results. This way, the belief that the research is valid and reliable, if they reach the similar conclusions, would be enhanced.

Lastly, instead of looking at what motivates people to use the social media, it would be interesting to look at it from an inverse perspective that is unfortunately overlooked in this study: the inhibitors of social media use. What is not a motivator may not necessarily be the inhibitors. For example, Chigona et al. (2008) have identified factors like “speed” and “ease of use” as the inhibitors of mobile Internet use, although they emerged in previous studies as motivators.

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## APPENDIX A

### Survey Questionnaire (Sample)



Hi, my name is Kenneth Lee. This questionnaire is distributed in order to collect valuable information that will assist my research on social media among Malaysian young adults. Your participation will help facilitate the findings of this research and it is much appreciated if you could spare some time to answer this questionnaire. Please be assured that all information collected is strictly confidential and for academic purposes only. Thank you.

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**Kindly choose only one option unless otherwise stated.**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender:  
 Male  Female
3. Ethnicity:  
 Malay  Indian  
 Chinese  Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which of the following best describes your occupation?  

<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Art & Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Building & Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Analysis & Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/> Education & Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance & Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> Health & Medical Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance/Operation/Technician	<input type="checkbox"/> Management/Planning/Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Sales/Marketing/Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> Student
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	
5. Which of the following social media do you use? *Kindly select all options that apply.*  
 Blogs (e.g., Blogger, WordPress, LiveJournal, Xanga, etc)  
 Micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter, Plurk, Tumblr, etc)  
 Social networks (e.g., Facebook, Friendster, Myspace, etc)  
 Social network aggregators (e.g., Friendfeed, NutshellMail, etc)  
 Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long have you been using social media?  
 1 year or less  
 1 to 2 years  
 2 to 3 years  
 3 years or more

7. Kindly encircle the most relevant option for each of the following statements to explain your social media use:

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Social media is enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5
b. Social media is entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
c. Social media helps pass the time	1	2	3	4	5
d. I use social media when I have nothing better to do	1	2	3	4	5
e. I use social media to show my personality	1	2	3	4	5
f. I use social media to post things I want to say or tell	1	2	3	4	5
g. Social media is a cost-effective way to publish	1	2	3	4	5
h. Social media is easy to maintain	1	2	3	4	5
i. Social media is convenient to use	1	2	3	4	5
j. I can get what I want more easily with social media	1	2	3	4	5
k. I can use social media anytime, anywhere	1	2	3	4	5
l. Social media is user-friendly	1	2	3	4	5
m. I use social media to share information useful to other people	1	2	3	4	5
n. I use social media to present information about my interests	1	2	3	4	5

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
o. I use social media to keep record of what is happening in my life	1	2	3	4	5
p. I use social media to search for information	1	2	3	4	5
q. I use social media to keep up with current issues and events	1	2	3	4	5
r. I use social media to connect with people who share some of my values	1	2	3	4	5
s. I use social media to maintain a personal relationship with friends or family	1	2	3	4	5
t. Using social media makes me feel less lonely	1	2	3	4	5
u. I participate in discussions on social media	1	2	3	4	5
v. I make new friends using social media	1	2	3	4	5

8. What is your overall experience of using social media?

- Not at all satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not sure
- Quite satisfied
- Very satisfied

9. How important is social media in your life?

- Not important at all
- Not very important
- Not sure
- Quite important
- Very important

*Thank you for your most valuable participation.*

## APPENDIX B

### Respondent's Feedback (Sample)



Hi, my name is Kenneth Lee. This questionnaire is distributed in order to collect valuable information that will assist my research on social media among Malaysian young adults. Your participation will help facilitate the findings of this research and it is much appreciated if you could spare some time to answer this questionnaire. Please be assured that all information collected is strictly confidential and for academic purposes only. Thank you.

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**Kindly choose only one option unless otherwise stated.**

1. Age: 22
2. Gender:  
 Male  Female
3. Ethnicity:  
 Malay  Indian  
 Chinese  Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which of the following best describes your occupation?  

<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Art & Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Building & Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Analysis & Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/> Education & Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance & Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> Health & Medical Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance/Operation/Technician	<input type="checkbox"/> Management/Planning/Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Sales/Marketing/Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> Student
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	
5. Which of the following social media do you use? *Kindly select all options that apply.*  
 Blogs (e.g., Blogger, WordPress, LiveJournal, Xanga, etc)  
 Micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter, Plurk, Tumblr, etc)  
 Social networks (e.g., Facebook, Friendster, Myspace, etc)  
 Social network aggregators (e.g., Friendfeed, NutshellMail, etc)  
 Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long have you been using social media?  
 1 year or less  
 1 to 2 years  
 2 to 3 years  
 3 years or more

7. Kindly encircle the most relevant option for each of the following statements to explain your social media use:

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Social media is enjoyment	1	2	3	④	5
b. Social media is entertainment	1	2	3	4	⑤
c. Social media helps pass the time	1	2	3	④	5
d. I use social media when I have nothing better to do	1	2	3	④	5
e. I use social media to show my personality	1	2	③	4	5
f. I use social media to post things I want to say or tell	1	2	3	④	5
g. Social media is a cost-effective way to publish	1	2	3	④	5
h. Social media is easy to maintain	1	2	3	④	5
i. Social media is convenient to use	1	2	3	4	⑤
j. I can get what I want more easily with social media	1	2	3	④	5
k. I can use social media anytime, anywhere	1	2	3	4	⑤
l. Social media is user-friendly	1	2	3	④	5
m. I use social media to share information useful to other people	1	2	③	4	5
n. I use social media to present information about my interests	1	②	3	4	5

(Continued)

(Continued)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
o. I use social media to keep record of what is happening in my life	1	2	3	4	5
p. I use social media to search for information	1	2	3	4	5
q. I use social media to keep up with current issues and events	1	2	3	4	5
r. I use social media to connect with people who share some of my values	1	2	3	4	5
s. I use social media to maintain a personal relationship with friends or family	1	2	3	4	5
t. Using social media makes me feel less lonely	1	2	3	4	5
u. I participate in discussions on social media	1	2	3	4	5
v. I make new friends using social media	1	2	3	4	5

8. What is your overall experience of using social media?

- Not at all satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not sure
- Quite satisfied
- Very satisfied

9. How important is social media in your life?

- Not important at all
- Not very important
- Not sure
- Quite important
- Very important

*Thank you for your most valuable participation.*