Exploring the Motivation in Using Facebook :
A Comparative Study between Generation
X and Y in Indonesia

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Abstract

Social reason was mostly the motivation for using Facebook among Generation Y, but results on Generation X were still inconclusive due to limited studies. By using content analysis of 93 participants' written statements gathered on April to May 2012, this study compared motivations among Facebookers from two generations. The study finds that Generation X and Y shared similar motivations. The majority of both generations use Facebook to keep in touch with their friends, as well as to seek updated information. A smaller number use Facebook for entertainment, online business, and self-expression. In addition, participants were willing to continue using Facebook in the future despite the fact that they had Twitter accounts.

Keywords : Social Networking Sites, Motivation for Using Facebook, Generation X, Generation Y, Indonesia

1. Introduction

The internet has become an essential component in the navigation of everyday life [Amichai and Vinitzky, 2010]. This condition has doubled the world internet population in the last five years, from 1.3 billion in 2007 to 2.3 billion in 2012; in which Asia's internet population has gone from 418 million users in 2007 to 1 billion in 2012 [Internet World Stats, 2012a; 2012b]. As the internet population grows, so does the size of social networking sites (SNS) which has changed the way people communicate and relate to each other.

This situation occurs because SNS is a form of virtual community, which has integrated the uses of its sites into their daily routines. Moreover, SNS is based on the premise of relationship creation and maintenance, either with existing members of a social circle or connecting people with similar or shared interests [Boyd and Ellison, 2007]. SNS also provides a virtual platform where people of similar interests may gather to communicate, share and discuss ideas [Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008].

Based on its nature, the motivation for using SNS from previous empirical studies was mostly social reasons. The second motivation was spending leisure time in order to kill boredom, have fun, or release stress, followed by information seeking, self-expression, and commerce. But the samples in the previous studies were mostly college [Hart, 2010; Gangadharbatla, 2009; Sheldon, 2008; Bonds and Raacke, 2010; Dogruer et al., 2011; Al-Saggaf, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007] and highschool students [Hart, 2010; Subrahmanyam et al., 2008]. From the age groups, these students

belong to Generation Y (born between 1977 and 1991) and Generation Z (born between 1992 and 2009).

Generation Y and Z grew up with technology such as the internet, computers, voice mail, and video games [Saleh, 2010] which have turned them into generation who use web to network everyday for 24 hours [United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, 2012]. Both generations give value to the need to connect with their peers and need to belong [William and Page, 2010]. That is why one of the most popular SNS among these generations is Facebook.

There were abundant of empirical studies in the United States (U.S.) and outside the U.S. on the motivations for using Facebook among Generation Y. However, there were very scarce researches on Generation X. If there were, the samples were not purely Generation X but also Generation Y and Z [Joinson, 2008; Lin and Lu, 2011].

With very little academic research on the motivations for using Facebook among Generation X, therefore this study specifically compare motivations of Generation X and Y. Born between 1965 and 1976, Generation X is the first generation to grow up with computers and the Internet [United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, 2012]. Generation X use technologies to support their lifestyle needs, such as online banking and online shopping, while Generation Y have integrated technology into their everyday lives [Leggatt, 2008].

Therefore the objective of this study is to explore whether Generation X and Y in Indonesia have different motivations for using Facebook

by adopting the content analysis approach.

2. Motivation for Using Facebook among Generation X and Y

Considering that we are human beings, we cannot live in isolation from others, and so socialising is the common factor that links us together [Dyson, 1998]. Therefore many SNS researchers argued that the major reason behind people joining SNS is often to maintain social ties; particularly existing ones, to gain emotional support and fellowship as a result of these relationships [Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Jones et al., 2008], or to maintain contact with friends and family, aside from meeting new people [Boyd, 2007].

Many researchers in the U.S. supported those findings. For examples, stay in touch with friends [Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Lenhart, 2007], keep in touch with friends they do not see often, keep in touch with relatives and family [Hart, 2010], make new friends [Lenhart, 2007], and relationship maintenance [Bonds and Raacke, 2010]. Empirical studies outside the U.S. also claimed social reasons as the motives for using SNS. In China, the motivation was to stay in touch with a friend [Egros, 2010], while in South Korea was for relationship maintenance [Shin, 2010].

Moreover, motivational reasons for using SNSs in Turkey were to get in contact with new people and keep in touch with their friends [Brandtzæg, and Heim, 2009], while in France and Australia was to stay in touch with friends [Egros, 2010].

Aside from social reasons, empirical studies showed that there were some other motivations

behind the use of SNS in the U.S., such as information seeking [Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000], researching products to buy [Egros, 2010], opportunity to impress the users' audience [Birnbaum, 2008; Zarghooni, 2007], and a need to express and actualize their identities [Livingstone, 2008]. Previous studies outside the U.S. also found various motives aside from social factors. For example, in Japan and U.K. was researching products to buy [Egros, 2010], while in South Korea was staying up-to-date on news and events [Egros, 2010]. In Saudi Arabia, motivations to use Facebook were enjoying themselves, relaxing, having fun, forgetting about the problems or killing free time [Al-Saggaf, 2003]. Moreover, in the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and Russia were staying current on news and events [Egros, 2010] and in Brazil was researching how to do things [Egros, 2010].

When motivations of using Facebook are classified based on Generation X and Y, only few studies used Generation X as their samples. The samples of Generation X did not only consist of age groups between 36 and 47 years but also Generation Y. Z. and even Baby Boomers. For examples, in United Kingdom (U.K.), motivation of respondents aged 15 to 66 years was keeping in touch [Joinson, 2008], while in Taiwan motivation of respondents aged below 18 and more than 54 years were enjoyment and usefulness [Lin and Lu, 2011].

Most of the previous empirical studies on Generation Y showed there were various motivations for using Facebook. For examples, in the U.S., motivations for using Facebook were social reasons [Hart, 2010], maintain relationships with

people they know, passing time [Gangadharbatla, 2009; Bonds and Raacke, 2010], and look for entertainment [Kim et al., 2011]. Other motivations were entertainment, need to belong, need for information, commercial exchange, and self-expression [Sheldon, 2008].

Generation Y outside the U.S. also have a range of motivations. In Saudi Arabia, motivations were: maintain close ties with older friends, express their feelings and sharing their thoughts with others, and (3) have fun by taking quizzes [Ellison et al., 2007]. Motivations of students in Turkey were: having fun, contacting friends, and following news [Akyildiz and Argan, 2012].

In China, three major motivations of the majority of students were social interaction, self-image building, and information seeking [Zhang and Huang, 2011], while in South Korea was to seek social support from already established relationships [Kim et al., 2012].

In Pakistan, students are more likely to use these sites to find old friends, maintain their existing offline relations, pass time, and be entertained [Mirani, 2011]. Whereas students in India had motivations of: self reflection and image building, utility, information-gathering and problem solving, networking, spending leisure time, revisiting memories, and peer influence [Bolar, 2009].

Overall, motivations for using SNS among Generation X could not be concluded because there was very limited study, but motivations of Generation Y were predominantly for social purposes, just like the main reason SNS was created. The second is for spending leisure time in order to kill boredom, have fun, or release stress. The other motivations are information seeking, self-

expression, and commerce.

3. Research Method

Content analysis was the primary tool used for analyzing this study to explore the motivation for using SNS Facebook. Content analysis is "a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text" [Neuman, 2003] through analyzing the different usages of verbs [Martin and Ernst, 2005]. Written comments of participants were content analysed by measuring the quantity of text associated with each category by using the Microsoft Word "word count" function.

This research design incorporated both manifest coding and latent coding in which manifest coding analyzes the obvious and observable content in a text, whereas latent coding identifies underlying and implicit meaning in the content of a text [Neuman, 2003].

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section was prepared to collect demographic information about participants, such as gender, age, status, education, years of using Facebook, number of friends, length of time opening Facebook, and time range opening Facebook. The second section consisted of 5 questions. In this section, participants were asked to write down: (a) other SNS beside Facebook, (b) willingness to continue using Facebook, (c) their criteria for adding new friends to their contact list (friend request), (d) reasons to continue using Facebook, and (e) at least three motivations for using Facebook.

Data was gathered on April to May 2012 from individuals with age groups of Generation X

(36–47 years) and Generation Y (21–35 years) who had Facebook accounts. Participation was voluntary, but participants with no Facebook accounts were excluded for further analysis.

4. Results

Participants who were willing to fill up the questionnaire and had Facebook accounts were 93 Facebook users. Majority of the participants were Generation Y (83.9%).

Generation X was comprised of female (60%) who were married (66.7%), aged 36~40 years (80%), and worked as employees (86.6%). Generation Y contained of 56.4% female, single (78.2%), aged 21~25 years (44.9%), and worked as employees (89.7%) (see <Table 1>).

Majority of Generation X had been registered

on Facebook since 2009 (53.3%), had friends between 251 and 500 (40%) linked to their Facebook profile. They spent less than an hour on Facebook (80%) at least once a day (40%). They usually opened Facebook between 7 and 8 a.m., 12 to 1 p.m., and 7 to 10 p.m.

Generation Y had started using Facebook since 2008 (60.2%) and had friends between 751 and 1,000 (26.9%). They spent less than an hour on Facebook (72.7%) at least once a day (52.6%). They opened Facebook between 7 and 10 p.m., 12 to 1 p.m., and 10 to 12 a.m.

From 93 participants, 288 motivation statements were collected. These written statements were content analysized and classified into five factors, namely social connection, seeking information, entertainment, commerce, and self-expression (see <Table 2>).

<Table 1> Demographic Data

	Gen-X (n = 15)	%	Gen-Y (n = 78)	%
Gender:				
Female	9	60.0	44	56.4
Male	6	40.0	34	43.6
Status:				
Single	5	33.3	61	78.2
Married	10	66.7	17	21.8
Age:				
21~25 years			35	44.9
26~30 years			32	41.0
31~35 years			11	14.1
36~40 years	12	80.0		
42~45 years	3	20.0		
Working Status:				
Employees	13	86.6	70	89.7
MBA Students	1	6.7	5	6.4
Entrepreneur	1	6.7	3	3.9

<Table 2> Motivation for Using Facebook

	Gen-X	%	Gen-Y	%
Social connection	27	52.9	133	56.1
Seeking information	13	25.5	54	22.8
Entertainment	5	9.8	20	8.4
Commerce	5	9.8	16	6.8
Self-Expression	1	2.0	14	5.9
Total	51		237	

4.1 Social Connection

It was called social connection because it focused on staying connected with existing acquaintances (term of [Joinson, 2008]). Majority of both generations rated first in this factor (52.9% for Generation X and 56.1% for Generation Y). This factor predominantly concerned with relationship maintenance which contained e.g.

"maintain relationship with old friends", "stay in touch and communicate with friends, family, colleagues, and lecturers." It also included "searching for old friends" in which old friends refered to childhood friends, since elementary until high school or university, who they could no longer meet face-to-face because they lived in different city or abroad.

One participant stated that he joined Facebook to reconnect with people he had lost contact with; while other participant explained he wanted to join groups, such as elementary school group. Examples of participants' statements were "to know my friends' conditions and where they live now."

4.2 Seeking Information

In seeking information (term of [Sheldon, 2008]) participants "check invitation to attend wedding, gathering, or exhibition", "up-date with new technology, latest news, trend", and "obtain information needed such as music and film". In this factor, Generation X and Y only rated 25.5% and 22.8% respectively.

4.3 Entertainment

Entertainment (term of [Sheldon, 2008; Bonds and Raacke, 2010]) included playing online games, spending leisure time and relieving stress, in which Generation X rated 9.8% and Y 8.4% (less than 10%). One participant mentioned his motive was to spend leisure time because majority of his friends had accounts in Facebook; while another said that online game could be used to kill boredom. A male participant specifically mentioned that he wanted to play exciting game such as Texas HoldEm Poker.

4.4 Commerce

Participants' motivation which was classified under commerce (term of [Sheldon, 2008]), included online shopping and selling, and promoting services or products. Several participants used Facebook for trend analysis and social media marketing. This factor ranked fourth at 9.8% for Generation X and 8.4% for Generation Y.

4.5 Self Expression

The last factor, self expression (term of [Bolar, 2009]), was for creating a nice impression about them in people's mind and building an impressive profile. This factor ranked 2% for Generation X and 5.9% for Generation Y.

Participants in this study joined Facebook because they wanted to express themselves and share their thoughts, personal opinions, personal experiences, and words of wisdom with friends. For example, a lady participant tried building better world by writing inspirational thoughts in her status; whereas another lady stated that she wrote unique and fun status, and occasionally wrote grudges when having bad mood.

In addition to these five motivations, participants were also asked to write their criteria for adding new friends to their contact list as a respond to friend request. Majority of the participants stated as long as they know the person, they will accept the friend request. The person they know could be friend in real life, family, colleague, friend who belonged to the same in-

terests, or classmate from elementary school, highschool and university. If they did not recognize, at least they have several mutual friends.

Aside from Facebook, majority of the participants had Twitter (Generation X 40% and Generation Y 84%) and LinkedIn (Generation X 26.7% and Generation Y 13.3%) as another SNS. Although they had Twitter, most of them were still willing to continue using Facebook (Generation X 93.3% and Generation Y 88.3%) in the future (see <Table 3>).

<Table 3> Data on other SNS and Willingness to Continue Facebook (FB)

	Gen-X (n = 15)	%	Gen-Y (n-78)	%
Other SNS besides FB :				
Twitter	6	40.0	63	84.0
Linkedin	4	26.7	10	13.3
Others	5	33.3	2	2.7
Willingness to continue FB :				
Yes	14	93.3	68	88.3
No	1	6.7	9	11.7
Reasons to continue FB:				
Social connection	8	66.7	42	66.7
Information seeking	3	25.0	8	12.7
Entertainment	0	0.0	11	17.5
Commerce	1	8.3	2	3.2

When asked "reasons to continue using Facebook", the reasons were similar to participants' motivation for using Facebook, except self-expression. Respectively, reasons of Generation X and Y were social connection with friends and family (rated 66.7% and 66.7%), seeking information to keep up-to-date with the latest news around them (25% and 12.7%), entertaining because Facebook still has benefit (0% and 17.5%), cause Facebook still has benefit (0% and 17.5%),

and doing online business (8.3% and 3.2%). According to one participant, until now there is no other social media which has advanced applications such as Facebook. Another participant also stated that "Facebook is a tool for keeping in touch with friends which enable me stay in contact with them; therefore I will still use Facebook".

5. Discussion

This study finds that motivations of 93 Indonesian participants who belong to Generation X and Y for using Facebook have the same order. Respectively, Generation X and Y use Facebook primarily for social connection (52.9% and 56.1%) and seeking information (25.5% and 22.8%); followed by entertainment (9.8% and 8.4%), commerce (9.8% and 6.8%), and self-expression (2% and 5.9%).

Consistent with previous research [Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Subrahmanyam, 2008], Generation X and Y mainly used Facebook for social purposes in order to communicate and stay in touch not only with family and friends, but also with distant acquaintances. Previous empirical studies showed that the major reasons behind people joining Facebook are often to maintain social ties; particularly existing ones [Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Jones et al., 2008, Young, 2009], maintain relationships with people they know [Bonds and Raacke, 2010], and maintain contact with users they had offline contact with on the site [Lampe et al., 2006].

In this study, majority of Generation X and Y worked as employees. Therefore they still wanted to maintain relationship with their school-

mates in the elementary until college by holding class or school reunions. Events that could disrupt the maintenance of relationships of people are not only entering college and graduating, but also entering the professional workforce [Cummings et al., 2006]. Therefore they wanted to maintain connections with their previously inhabited network, while still being open to new relationships. But both generations did not want to have relationship with complete strangers unless they have mutual friends.

Moreover, considering that Indonesian people have collectivist culture, it is not surprising that social connection is the major reason for using Facebook. In collectivist culture, the relationships between members of social organizations emphasize the interdependence of its members [Hofstede, 1984]. Thus, Facebook can serve as a support system because individuals in collectivistic cultures are more likely to have frequent interaction and form a close circle of Facebook friends [Nadkarni and Hofmann, 2012].

The interactions in this study include getting information to keep themselves up-to-date with the conditions of friends, family, and colleagues, sharing their latest information with them, and occasionally seeking social support from friends when they had rough days. This is because people often want to gain emotional support and fellowship as a result of these relationships [Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Jones et al., 2008; Young, 2009]. Their friends' latest conditions can also be used as topics for conversation when they see each other face-to-face. Therefore, both generations still want to continue using Facebook because they do not want to lose contact with their friends.

Rated second above 20 percent, seeking information among Generation X and Y was used to obtain the latest information on the issues not only around them but also around the world. Many Facebook users, either Generation X or Y, would like to share headline news or incidents around them in their status to inform friends. They also ask questions in Facebook wall to get feedbacks. This is in line with earlier studies [Sheldon, 2008] which stated seeking information as a desire to keep themselves up-to-date by checking each other's status on profiles constantly.

The first and second motivations of this study are in line with the previous studies [Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008], which concluded need to belong and information seeking as the most salient motivations to use Facebook. Both generations in this study are familiar with internet and prefer watching or reading news from their smartphone, thus they can get information they want to know while updating friends' conditions.

The third motivation was entertainment in which participants spent their leisure time by playing online games or sending jokes in order to relieve stress. Although the percentage of this motive was below 10 percent for both generations, they still wanted to continue using Facebook because most of them had been using Facebook for 4 years and had friends more than 500. They still found Facebook as a place to escape when they got bored, especially when being stuck in a traffic jam. Some studies [Sheldon, 2008; Boyd, 2007] also found entertainment as recreation, killing time, fun and escapism in order to avoid boredom.

The fourth motivation was commerce which

had low percentage (9.8% for Generation X and 6.8% for Generation Y) because majority of the participants worked as employees (87.1%). They seldom buy unique stuffs or essential products via online shopping during break time. Commerce in other study [Sheldon, 2008] also included self or group promotion which was not found in this study.

The last motive, self-expression, was the lowest motive (2% in Generation X and 5.9% in Generation Y). They used Facebook to write personal feelings or what they were doing as if Facebook is an online diary. In self-expression a person is concerned about one's image, and with an objective to socialize, tries to build an impressive profile which may attract other persons [Bolar, 2009].

However, self-expression was not stated as their reason to continue using Facebook because most of them had started using Twitter to write their personal opinions, grievance, where they are, etcetera. For example, one participant commented that he still wanted to continue using Facebook because "it still gives him benefit although Twitter has started to take over." They switched to Twitter because its focus is on the sharing of opinion and information [Kwak et al., 2010] rather than on reciprocal social interaction [Huberman, 2008], while the main use of Facebook was to keep in touch with old friends [Lampe et al., 2008].

In summary, Facebook becomes part of their everyday lives. Consequently, Facebook has changed the way Generation X and Y communicate, keep in touch and seek information in their daily lives with the help of smartphones. Both generations seem to know and be friend with a lot more people and they probably will not meet most of these friends face-to-face, but their relationship are good, and sometimes, best friends [Internet World Stats, 2012]. As long as they keep in touch by sending greeting during birthday or certain event, their friendship will remain.

6. Conclusion

Although Generation Y is more technologically savvy than Generation X, this study found that the majority of Generation X in Indonesia have the same order of motivations in using Facebook with Generation Y, namely social connections and seeking information. Only a small number of these generations use Facebook for entertainment, online business, and self-expression.

The same order of motivatons could be because both generations grew up in the internet era. Therefore, further study should compare motivations of Generation Baby Boomers and Generation Z. Born in 1944 to 1964, Generation Baby Boomers' general uptake of mobile phone technology is high, but they are perceived to have a limited use and understanding of functions beyond simple voice calls and SMS [McLeod, 2009], while Generation Z are accustomed to high-tech and have never lived without the Internet [William and Page, 2010].

Participants in this study perceived Facebook is no longer convenient for self-expression. They find Twitter is a better SNS to build impressive profile. Further research should make comparative study between motivation to use

Facebook and Twitter.

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