

Exploring Cross-Cultural Self-Disclosure of Women Facebook Users

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education, courtship/dating, justice, leadership, cleanliness, sanity, friendship, etc. (Global Trade and Logistics Org., 2016).

To date, prior literature has explored self-disclosure in online social networks along the lines of privacy concerns and risks (Krasnova et al., 2009), liking and self-disclosure (Shaw, 2000), and social values and self-disclosure (Jacki et al., 2006). Some authors investigated self-disclosure by comparing face-to-face interactions and online communication and also looking into gender differences in self-disclosure (Tidwell and Walther, 2002; Sheldon, 2010).

Furthermore, Lou (2014) states that there has been relatively little number of studies emphasizing upon cultural differences in self-disclosure and these studies focus mostly on Western contexts, which means that they may be valid and useful in Western socio-cultural contexts but fail to work outside non-Western contexts. Few studies, on the other hand, were focused on revealing personal information on Facebook and cultural differences dealing with Asian and American respondents (Elmasry, et al., 2014; Chen, 1995). An exploration of cross-cultural self-disclosure is important how people open themselves to others. This will also provide awareness and increase intercultural communication and competence in this global village that we are part of. Communication in social networking sites is an important fraction of this global village.

With the aforementioned reasons, the researcher was motivated to conduct a research study that employed Asian women as the leading characters that gave facts and information about the way they disclose themselves in social media, specifically Facebook. The researcher employed women because it cannot be denied that the women of today play important roles in the society. In fact, Saylor (2017) stresses that the limited roles of women, thanks to the encouragement women are receiving and the training readily available, much of which is nurtured through the internet. Thus, this study was conducted in order to explore self-disclosure on Facebook among women from two of the most actively involved countries on Facebook, India and the Philipp

too vulnerable, y g ecp uc{ y gæg uy ke j gf qwt qr kpkpu qt ej cpi gf qwt o kpf kp qtf gt vq cxqkf eqphiev or pain.

Level 4 (My Feelings and Experiences) is sharing feelings and experiences. At this level, we talk about our joys, pain, and failures; our mistakes in the past, our dreams, and our goals. What we like qt f qpøvknng. Y j cvo cngu wu y j q y g ctg. Tj ku ræxgnku o qtg xwpgtcdng dgecwug y g ecpøvej cpi g j qy we feel about something, the details of our past or current experiences. If we sense we may be rejected qt etkkek gf, cmy g ecp f q ku v{ vq eqpxkpeg qy gt u vj cvy gæg pq mpi gt ko r cevgf d{ qwt r cuv. Y gæg pq mpi gt vj cvr gt uqp. Y gæg f hgt gvpvqy .

Level 5 (My Needs, Emotions and Desires) is the highest level of intimacy. It is the level where we are known at the deepest core of who we are. Because of that, it is the level that requires the greatest amount of trust. IhI ecpøvtwuvj cv{ qwy qpøvtglgevo g, Iæmpgxgt dg cdrng vq uj ctg o { deepest self with you. Unlike the other levels, there is no escape at this level. Once I let someone see who I really am, I can no longer convince them otherwise. Communicating at this level means we offer someone the most vulnerable part of ourselves. And the greatest fear is that they could use it against us later. When we uj ctg vj kpi u rknng, ðIæ j wtv y j gp { qwf qpøvecmø I pggf vq hggntgur gevfg d{ { qwö qt ðl y cpvq ur gpf o { rknng y kj { qwö y gæg uj ct kpi pqvqpn{ qwt j wtu dwvwt f guktgu cpf pggf u cu well. It is also the level where we let others see our emotional reaction to things which is not a pretty sight. That is why we save those for the ones closest to us, like our families.

In relation to the two dimensions to self-disclosure, this study is cnq cpej qtgf qp Hcmæu legdgti Model of Culture developed by an American anthropologist, Edward T. Hall in 1976. Hall reasoned that if culture is an iceberg, there are some aspects which are visible and can be seen (above the water), and a larger aspect which is hidden beneath the surface (below the water). The external *conscious* part of culture is what we can physically see (i.e. the tip of the iceberg). These parts of culture are those which are often encountered first when emerging yourself into a new country or culture, such as architecture, food, art, music, dance, religious practices, types of dress, language or greetings and more. This includes behaviors which you can see such as people kissing as they greet others, shaking hands, queuing, holding eye contact or hand/facial gestures. The internal *unconscious* part of culture, on the other hand, is beneath the surface of what we can see (i.e. below the water line). These parts of culture are those which are related to or cause those parts which you can see, such as beliefs, values, motivations, world views, gender roles, etiquette, social or familial rules, importance of time, concepts of self and many more. These patterns of thought underlie the behaviors which can physically be seen (Cultural Kinetics, 2013).

The analysis consists of three parts: input, throughput, and output. Facebook profiles, status updates, and transcripts of online interview were the *input* of the study. In other words, they operate as the independent variable or the subject of analysis. The analysis is the *throughput* or process of the study which includes three stages. First, the two dimensions of self disclosure, breadth (range of topics revealed) and depth (how personal or sensitive the information is), are analyzed and extracted through the qualitative content analysis. Second, from the areas of topics revealed and the degree of personal information revealed, both the visible (public) and invisible (private) types of information on Facebook are extracted. This analysis is possible since the more topics are revealed and the more personal or intimate they are, the more deep (invisible) culture is being drawn out from the respondents. This proceeds to the comparative analysis of the visible and invisible types of information disclosed by

What is great about this handy app is that it has a dynamic group conversation feature (Technopedia, 2017).

Self-disclosure

There is a lot of research on self-disclosure in the literature, and communication literature by the work of Sidney Jourard. For Jourard, a humanistic psychologist and practicing psychotherapist, self-disclosure is the process of making the self known to others. His message, to put it simply, is that in appropriate circumstances it is healthier to reveal feelings, and other personal matters, than to suppress them. Disclosing oneself is a positive and desirable thing to do (Antaki et al., 2005).

Chelune (1979), in Antaki et al. (2005), found that self-disclosure contains personal information about the speaker; (2) the speaker must verbally communicate this information; and (3) the speaker must be in a context where disclosure is appropriate. Another more recent study by Antaki et al. (1999), in Jourard & Jourard (1999), found that self-disclosure is a positive and desirable thing to do.

Bacal (2016) explains that self-disclosure is a simple (at least on the surface) approach to

Comparisons based on religious identification and state of birth revealed significant differences between Hindus and Muslims and between states of birth on self-disclosure. Results also suggest the predictive power of religious identification and state of birth vary dependent upon the dimensions of self-disclosure.

Berman & Murphy-

Methodology

To collect the data used in the study, the researcher sent a message to her Facebook friends on FB Messenger inviting them to be part of her study on self-

counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context. Keywords are identified before and during data analysis. Keywords are derived from interest of the researcher/s or review of literature (Nieuwenhuis, 2014).

Results and Discussion

Types of information disclosed by Indian and Filipino women on their Facebook accounts

The Social Penetration Theory of Altman and Taylor (1973) posits two dimensions of self-disclosure: breadth and depth. Both explain the amount of information revealed. Although Facebook is not a face-to-face form of communicating with people, it is still a platform where everyone can build friendships depending on the breadth and the depth of self-disclosure.

The first question asks about types of information that are disclosed by Indian and Filipino women on their Facebook accounts. This question explores on the breadth of social disclosure or the range/variety of information revealed on social media. This was identified by extracting the common contents found in the Facebook profiles, status updates, and Messenger interviews.

Y j gp y g m q m c v c r g t u q p a u f c e g d q m c e e q w p v j g h k t u v j k p i v j c v e c v e j g u q w t c w g p v k p k u j k u j g t profile. An FB profile usually consists of a profile picture, a cover photo, and bio (fig. 2).



Figure 1. Sample FB Profile

The profile picture (found at the center of the profile when using Android phones) contains the photo of the user. Similar to a face-to-face meeting, the profile picture itself is the first thing to be noticed in our virtual friends. Likewise, it is the most basic type of information that an FB user may disclose publicly on social media. Some people choose to use their own image while others choose to use other images for privacy reasons. A very important aspect of profile is that it is publicly accessible for anyone, either he/she is a member of Facebook or not, by default. Anyone can click on it and see it in full size. Looking into the profile



Figure 4. Sample Status Update

Hobbies/Habits/Interests

From the corpus of data, it is observable that both groups of women have an interest in posting images of beauty products. One Indian, who constantly posts pictures of books and quotes from the books she has read, reveals her interest in reading. Another Indian, who posted a picture while she was in the mall, discloses her love for shopping or mall hangout.

Literature

From the corpus of data, literary genres preferred by the respondents are also revealed. One Filipina posted a verse from the Bible, while one Indian posted quotations from novels and poems she has read, including their titles and their authors.

Values/Behavior

Although behavior cannot be fully revealed, how a person handles activities with families and friends can be displayed through photographs. Even facial expressions such as the quirk of eyebrows, smiling, and frowning, and gestures or actions such as hugging another person, wearing sunglasses, eating with others, etc. shown in the photos can say something about a person. Posts in texts, whether directed to someone or not, may also reveal something about a person's behavior.

Pictures of both Filipina and Indian respondents with families and friends show that both nationalities value relationships. Quotes shared by Filipinas display their importance of the values of faith, positive thinking, humility, friendship, and moving on. The quotes shared by the Indian respondents, on the other hand, emphasize the values of girl/woman power, change, and vocal expression.

Work/Profession

All 3 Filipinas update posts and pictures informing their FB friends about their activities in their workplaces. However, no such thing is noticed in the status updates of Indians.

Food/Drinks

Two Filipinas show images of food they have eaten and their eating preferences. No such thing is noticed in the updates of Indians.

Religion

One Filipina has displayed a picture of her inside a Roman Catholic church (Figure 5) and posted a Bible verse. No posts about religion are observed in the Indian status updates.

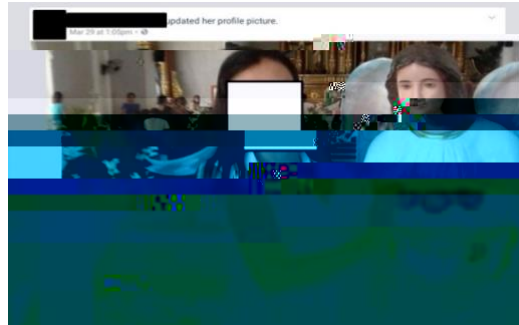


Figure 5. Sample Status Update

Another way of drawing out information from an FB friend is using private messaging through the FB Messenger. The Messenger is a private feature of FB since friends can exchange and read messages exclusively to themselves. Wanting to extract information from each of the respondents using the private arena, the researcher conducted online interview with each of them using the Messenger.

Interacting with each of them for 4 weeks (from April 3, 2017 to April 29, 2017), the researcher was able to discuss with the respondents several topics that are not normally displayed on their FB walls. The following are the themes of the interviews/conversations:

Online self-disclosure

Both groups of respondents explained that they do not disclose much about themselves on FB. The Filipinas were exactly similar when they stated that they only reveal about 40% of themselves. The Indians varied on their answers. One said she revealed only 70% of herself (Figure 6); another said 40%; and the last said she only revealed her selfie photos and nothing else more.

Figure 6. Messenger Interview

Both groups informed that they put on restrictions on their use of FB especially in updating their statuses. Two Indians and two Filipinas, in fact, exposed that they make privacy adjustments in their FB accounts. The last one Indian and one Filipina expressed that, although they do not make any privacy adjustments, they still make sure to choose types of information they share on the platform. The reasons of the Indians in making FB restrictions are making their family life private and avoiding cybercrime. For the Filipinas, family secrets and safety purposes are the main reasons of putting on some restrictions. What is common to both groups in their limited self-disclosure is their concern on

cp{vj kpi rquidrg uq vj cvvj g{ ecpøvxqleg qwvj gkt vj qwi j w.ö Ip ur kg qh vj ku, uj g gzt rclpgf vj cvõlo g
kuej cpi kpi cpf uq fq y qo gpø vj qwi j utgi ctf kpi vj go ugrkgu. Y qo gp qh vqf c{ hki j v, pq o cwgt y j cv
the consequences ctg.ö Lcun{, uj g pcttcvgf vj cv õl co etkkek gf dgecwug qh dgkpi xqecn y kj o {
vj qwi j wdwyj cvf qgupqvuxqr o g htqo gzt rguulpi .ö Tj g y qo gpø tgr rgu vwn{ kpf lecvg j qy qr gp cpf
expressive the modern female society is.

Tj gug qr kpkpu qp y qo gpø gzt rgsion somehow drive these respondents to post quotes about

Slo kctn{, qpg Ipf kcp ucwgf, ðBgcw{ ku pqvuqo gj kpi vj cvtghgew {qwt qwgt ugrh Iw{ {qwt kppgt ugrh [qwt uqwn Hqy {qwdgj cxg ctqwpf r gqr rgi ö

Modesty

Opinions on modesty are different between the Filipina groups and Indian groups. Filipinas put emphasis on decency in action and in clothing while Indians stressed on humility and unpretentious dgj cxkqt. Tq r tqxg vj ku, qpg Fkkr kpc uckf, ðA o qf guvy qo cp ku c r gtuqp y j q has a refined manner and wpy kmp{ vj ftcy cwgpv{qj vj y j cvuj g y gctu, f qgu, cpf uc {u k p r wdike.ö Opg Ipf kcp, qp vj g qvj gt j cpf, ctvewwv{ vj cvöj g f ghkpkqj qhc o qf guvy qo cp qt cp{ r gtuqp ku y j gp uj g ku pqvr tgv{pf kpi cpf y j gp she is just being hersgrhö

Reformation

When the respondents were asked about things nowadays that they would like to be changed if given a chance, two Filipinas gave the same answers, i.e. change in how and when people use social media, stressing on putting limitations on the upload and download of pictures and videos online. One Fkkr kpc gztguugf, ðTj gtg uj qwf dg rko kcvkqpu k{ vj g wr uqcf cpf f qy p{qcf qh ko ci gu qt xkf gqu especially those that are dirty and vulgar because it is the minors who usually use the internet without r ctgpw{uw gt xkukqj. Apf o k{qtu ecp gcuk{ dg k{hvgpegf.ö

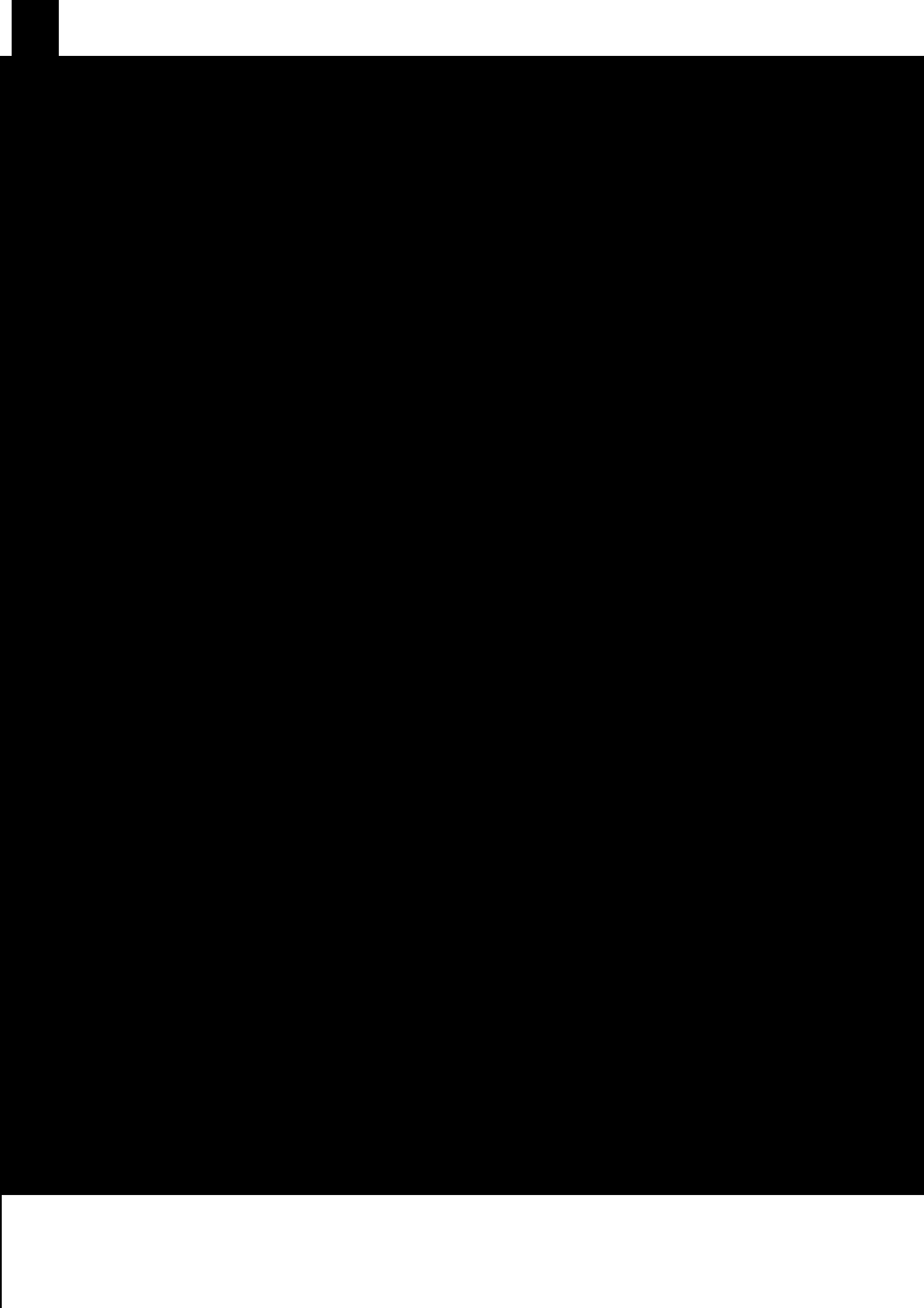
Two Indians also gave a common answer, i.e. making laws protecting the rights of women to dg utlevgt cpf hko gt, cu qpg gzt qwpf gf vj cvörcy u tgi ctf kpi etko gu ci ckpuy qo gp f q pqvuggo vj wornö (Fki wtg 7).



Figure 7. Messenger Interview

Truly, these opinions show the kinds of environment that these groups of women are exposed nowadays. Also, these show their innermost thoughts on issues that affect them.

Filipinas displaying their importance of the values of faith, positive thinking, humility, friendship, and o qxlpi qp dgrpi vq ngxgn2 (Ovj gtøu Or kpkpu cpf Bgrkhu). Sko kctn{, vj g s wqgu uj ctgf d{ vj g Indian respondents, on the other hand, emphasize the values of girl/woman power, change, and vocal gzrt guukqp dgrpi vq ngxgn2. Fqt gzco r ng, vj g s wqg r quvgf d{ c Fkdk kpc vj cvuc{ u ðGqqf vj kpi ueqo g to those who believe, better things come to those who are patient and the best things come to those who f qpøvi kxg wr ö uj qy u ngxgn2 qh kpkø ce{ dgecwug kvuj qy u uqo gqpg gngøu qr kpkqp qp j qy vq cej kxg



7. Restriction on social media use is the main concern for reformation among the Filipinas;
 r tqvge vki y qo gpøutki j w ku hqt vj g lpf kcpu.

Implications on self-disclosure

To be able to know a person more, the best channel is face-to-face. Face-to-face disclosures may feel more genuine or intimate given the shared physical presence and ability to receive verbal and nonverbal communication. There is also an opportunity for immediate verbal and nonverbal feedback, such as asking follow-up questions or demonstrating support or encouragement through a hug. However, we cannot deny the fact that communications through mediated channels like the social media have gained more popularity nowadays.

From the previous analysis, it is discovered that, just like face-to-face interactions, social media communication covers a variety of topics (breadth). In their status updates, eight types of information were observed, namely: (1) language, (2) clothing/dress, (3) hobbies/habits/interests, (4) literature, (5) values/behavior, (6) work/profession, (7) food/drinks, and (8) religion. Still, with this number, it is not enough for achieving a more intimate relationship. Also, most of these topics contain low degree of kpvlo ce{ (f gr vj). Tj ku o gcpu vj cvmqmki cvc y qo cpø FB ceeqwpvf qgu pqvcwqo vkecm{ gpj cpeg our relationship with her. We may know some things about her through her account but that does not guarantee that we have inferred already her innermost thoughts. According to Altman and Taylor (1973), the main route to social penetration is sharing a wide range of topics and personally revealing kphqto cvkpp vj cv ku eqtg vq qpgøu ugrh eqpegr v. Sko kctn{, hqt Efy ctf Hcm vj gug vqpics are surface ewwntgu, vj g qpgu vj cvy g ecp ugg qpn{ cvj g qwgt r ctv Hqy vj gug vqr leuctg o cplkgugf qp Fcegdqqrø public space are shallow and superficial and would remain only at the beginning stage of relationships.

Yet, there are times that an FB user tends to disclose deeper in a public post such as citing

they know that there is a limited audience. Still as observed, the breadth and depth of the conversations cannot satisfy full social requirements. Au-Yang (2014) observed, however, that, in general, people do not disclose much information on their Facebook profiles. In this case, the researcher is the counterpart of each of the respondents. Even so, a great deal of information is gathered through private chatting with them. The topics discussed privately are referred to by Hall as the invisible cultures that are not seen publicly on Facebook. As most of the respondents divulged, only 40% of themselves are disclosed on Facebook. The rest is hidden for privacy and safety purposes.

Self-disclosure indeed is culturally driven. Indians tend to be more careful in posting personal information or data on their Facebook accounts. They do not provide as much information in their bio as their Filipino counterparts. They also do not include posts about their *work/profession*, *food/drinks*, and *religion*. However, they are as expressive as the Filipinas in expressing their opinions on some issues that concern them through private messaging.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was conducted in order to explore self-disclosure on Facebook among women from two of the most actively involved countries on Facebook, India and the Philippines, by focusing on the two dimensions of self-disclosure: disclosure of personal information and disclosure of opinions. The Model of Culture that what women disclose in their Facebook walls are just the tip of the iceberg and that there is more to themselves that they tend to hide from the public. Finally, it was also hoped that this research may shed light on the unseen, subconscious culture for better understanding of their communication patterns and behaviors.

The respondents of the study were 3 Filipinas and 3 Indians who willingly gave a positive response on the request letter sent by the researcher through Facebook Messenger. The data used as data

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