

Exploring Cross-Cultural Self-Disclosure of Women Facebook Users

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Abstract

Anchored on Altman and Taylor's Social Penetration Theory and Hall's Iceberg Model of Culture, this study was conducted to explore self-disclosure among women from two actively involved countries on Facebook, India and the Philippines. This study analyzed the breadth (range of topics) and depth (degree of intimacy) of Facebook self-disclosure and proceeded to compare the two nationalities' public and private disclosures. The respondents of the study were 3 Filipinas and 3 Indians. The corpora used as data were the respondents' Facebook profiles, status updates, and transcripts of Messenger interviews. Research questions were answered through qualitative content analysis. Based on the findings of the analysis, the following are concluded: (1) Sharing a wide variety of topics and more intimate levels of information is the main route to social penetration; (2) Self-disclosure is culturally driven. Although Filipinas and Indians tend to disclose few similar types of information publicly, they still vary on the amount of information divulged. Indians are more restricted than the Filipinas; and (3) What we see in people in social media such as Facebook are just their external cultures. To know more about people's deep cultures, engaging in communication and building relationships with them are the keys.

Keywords: Self-Disclosure, facebook, breadth, depth, social penetration theory

Introduction

The rise of social media has become a social and cultural phenomenon. Creating and sharing of information, ideas, messages, and other forms of expression have been possible via virtual communities known as social networking sites (SNSs).

Social networking sites are defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007) as web-based applications that allow individuals to: 1) construct a public or semi-public profile within the system, 2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and 3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Additionally, the SNSs' main purpose, as given by Sheldon (2008), is to make new friendships or to maintain those that already exist.

Among these SNSs, Facebook (FB) is the biggest social media network on the internet, both in terms of total number of users and name recognition. Having accumulated 1.59 billion monthly active

users for the past twelve years since it was founded in 2004, Facebook becomes the best media for connecting people from all over the world (Maina, 2016).

Facebook, as a new “social media”, provides a one-to-many communication environment for people to communicate with close friends as well as with increasingly larger circles of acquaintances and relative strangers. Through wall posts, status updates, pictures, and liking others’ posts and links, users can reconnect and stay in touch with people they have known for years, project an identity to people they hope to meet, and self-disclose to relative strangers. How individuals use Facebook is highly individual, but also based on larger cultural norms (Elmasry et al., 2014).

On the latest statistics of Facebook usage, it is very apparent that people in Asia have tremendously embraced the most popular SNS in dealing with the world. Millward (2017), who has shown the newest data from the said social network, reveals that Asia is now Facebook’s biggest region in terms of daily active users. With 396 million people across Asia using Facebook each day, the continent is now larger than the “rest of the world”. Moreover, in the list of active users by country, India and the Philippines are among the top ten Asian Facebook countries with massive 157 million and 54 million, respectively (Internet World Stats, 2017). These aforementioned nations have rich and abundant cultural backdrops that have an impact on Indians’ and Filipinos’ self-disclosures in interpersonal communications.

Self-disclosure is defined by Ignatius and Kokkonen (2007) as a process of communication by which one person reveals information about himself or herself to another. The information can be descriptive or evaluative, and can include thoughts, feelings, aspirations, goals, failures, successes, fears, and dreams, as well as one’s likes, dislikes, and favorites. Self-disclosure, as an important factor in interpersonal communication, is definitely culturally driven because culture is a foundation of human behavior. In interpersonal relationships, cultural backgrounds of the parties contribute greatly to the way they seek to develop the relationship in general and disclose themselves in particular. Each culture fosters its own people in a different way, from formalities and etiquettes to everyday habits (Hoang, 2014). In other words, self-disclosure varies from culture to culture (Garcia, 2011).

Based from the Social Penetration Theory of Altman and Taylor, Tolstedt and Stokes (1984) identified two dimensions to self-disclosure: breadth and depth. Both are crucial in developing a fully intimate relationship. The range of topics discussed by two individuals is the breadth of disclosure. The degree to which the information revealed is private or personal is the depth of that disclosure. It is easier for breadth to be expanded first in a relationship because of its more accessible features; it consists of outer layers of personality and everyday lives, such as occupations and preferences. Depth is more difficult to reach, and includes painful memories and more unusual traits that we might hesitate to share with others.

In relation to culture, these two dimensions of self-disclosure can be linked with Edward Hall’s 1976 Iceberg Model of Culture. According to Hall, in cross-cultural communication, what we often see in people is just the external, conscious part of their culture which he called as “the tip of the iceberg.” Hall’s ideas about culture are associated with an iceberg in which majority of it is under the surface of the ocean, with just the tip visible. He felt that the visible aspects of culture are only the “tip of the iceberg” but most of what drives our culture is below the surface, unseen, and subconscious. This model emphasizes that the surface culture includes language, arts, literature, religion, music, dress, dance, games, sports, and food. The deep culture, on the other hand, includes ideas about modesty, beauty,

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 because it will provide a window of knowledge on one's understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of 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 today's women are empowered, even in global communities. Nearly gone are the days of 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 Philippines, by focusing on the two dimensions of self-disclosure: breadth and depth. Additionally, it was hoped to prove Hall's Iceberg 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 respective thoughts, perceptions, and feelings on issues that affect the women of today's generation. As what Patella-Rey (2012) put it, "We cannot simply understand social media (or any social phenomenon) from the perspective of what is visible, but we must also consider what is invisible.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What types of information are disclosed by Indian and Filipino women on their Facebook accounts?
2. How personal or intimate are the topics disclosed by these women on their Facebook accounts?
3. How are female Indians and Filipinos similar or different in their public and private self-disclosures on Facebook?

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on the Social Penetration Theory of Altman and Taylor (1973) which proposes that, as relationships develop, interpersonal communication moves from relatively shallow, non-intimate levels to deeper, more intimate ones. The social penetration theory states that the relationship development occurs primarily through self-disclosure, or intentionally revealing personal information such as personal motives or desires, feelings, thoughts, and experiences to others. Self-disclosure relates to what people feel comfortable talking about in social scenes. The amount of personal information such as experiences and thoughts is self-disclosure. How much we disclose is related to breadth and depth. Both dimensions explain different culture's amount of self-disclosure. *Breadth* refers to the range of topics that are revealed. *Depth*, on the other hand, is related to the degree of personal information that is disclosed or how personal, sensitive, or intimate the information is. Superficial topics may be about the kind of food or music you like, while something much more personal is private thoughts and feelings. As the degree of intimacy (depth) increases, the range of areas in an individual's life that an individual chooses to share (breadth) increases. When talking with one person over time, someone could make more topics to talk about so the other person will start to open up and express what they feel about the different issues and topics. This helps the first person to move closer to getting to know the person and how they react to different things. This is applicable when equal intimacy is involved in friendship, romance, attitudes and families.

PST also explains that it is possible to have depth without breadth and even breadth without depth. For instance, depth without breadth could be where only one area of intimacy is accessed such as a revelation of a summer romance. On the other hand, breadth without depth would be simple everyday conversations. An example would be when passing by an acquaintance and saying, "Hi, how are you?" without ever really expecting to stop and listen to what this person has to say is common. To get to the level of breadth and depth, both parties have to work on their social skills and how they present themselves to people. They have to be willing to open up and talk to each other and express themselves. One person could share some information about their personal life and see how the other person responds. If they do not want to open up the first time, the first person has to keep talking to the second person and have many conversations to get to the point where they both feel comfortable enough for them to want to talk to each other about more personal topics.

Wilson (2014) identified five levels of intimacy that people move through as they get to know someone. These were labeled Level 1 through 5, with 5 the highest, or most intimate level.

Level 1 (Safe Communication) is the lowest level of communication. We call it safe because it involves the exchange of facts and information. There are no feelings, opinions or personal vulnerability involved, and therefore no risk of rejection. This is the kind of interaction we have with people we don't know well. People communicating at this level share minimal intimacy. An example of this level would be, "Lousy weather we're having," "This is great pizza," "My team won last night."

Level 2 (Others' Opinions and Beliefs) is the level where we start sharing other people's thoughts, beliefs and opinions. We are beginning to reveal more of ourselves through our associations. We say things like, "My mother always says..." or "One of my favorite authors said..." Such statements test the other person's reaction to what we're sharing without offering our own opinions. This is slightly more vulnerable than level one, but because we're not sharing our own opinions we can distance ourselves from the opinion if we feel threatened by criticism or rejection.

Level 3 (Personal Opinions and Beliefs) is the level where we start taking small risks because we begin to share our own thoughts, opinions and beliefs. But like the previous level, if we begin feeling

too vulnerable, we can say we've switched our opinions or changed our mind in order to avoid conflict 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 or don't like. What makes us who we are. This level is more vulnerable because we can't change how we feel about something, the details of our past or current experiences. If we sense we may be rejected or criticized, all we can do is try to convince others that we're no longer impacted by our past. We're no longer that person. We're different now.

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. If I can't trust that you won't reject me, I'll never be able to share my 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 share things like, "I'm hurt when you don't call," "I need to feel respected by you," or "I want to spend my life with you," we're sharing not only our hurts but our desires and needs as 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 also anchored on Hall's Iceberg 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

Indian and Filipino Facebook users. The analysis generates the cross-cultural self-disclosure of women in Facebook which is the *output* or dependent variable of the study.

Review of Related Literature

The Structure of Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site that makes it easy for people to connect and share with their family and friends online. For many, having a Facebook account is now an expected part of being online. And because Facebook is so popular, other websites have worked to integrate Facebook. This means a person can use a single Facebook account to sign in to different services across the Web. Facebook allows one to send messages and post status updates to keep in touch with his or her friends and family. One can also share different types of content, like photo and links. But sharing something on Facebook is a bit different from other types of online communication. Unlike email or instant messaging, which are relatively private, the things people share on Facebook are more public, which means they will usually be seen by many other people (GCFLearnFree.org, 2016).

Strickland (2016) explains how Facebook works. To explore Facebook, you must create a free account on the site. Once you do this, you have your profile which has the following: a space where you can upload a profile picture; a friends section, which displays pictures of Facebook members you've befriended; and a section that shows the personal information you have decided to share with other members. When you log into your account, you arrive at your personal Facebook homepage. The basic homepage layout includes a news feed that keeps you updated about what your friends and networks are up to. There is also a status update section, which contains notices about messages you have received, invitations to events, notices about applications your friends would like you to try and a place where you can tell people how you are feeling or what you are up to.

A Facebook status is a feature that allows users to post and share a small amount of content on their profile, on their friends' walls and in Facebook news feeds. Users often use this space for updates about their day or to post clever quips; website, video and photos can also be shared this way. A Facebook wall is a part of a Facebook user's profile where the user can post status updates and receive messages from friends. The wall is a public portion of a user's profile in that the user's friends are able to see it (Technopedia, 2017).

Another important application that is powered by Facebook is the Messenger. The Facebook Messenger is a mobile tool that allows users to instantly send chat messages to friends on Facebook. Messages are received on their mobile phones. The Messenger also enables users to send chat messages to people who are logged onto their Facebook accounts. It is Facebook's official entry to the instant messaging (IM) arena. Although lacking some features of a true IM, it is a revamped and improved version of the Facebook chat bar. With Facebook Messenger, users can view their walls, post and comment on notifications from their Facebook friends and be alerted when new messages come in.

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

Self-disclosure

The concept of revealing one's inner self to other people has its roots in existential and phenomenological philosophy, but the phrase 'self-disclosure' was introduced into the psychological 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), defines disclosure as: "(1) it [self disclosure] must contain personal information about the speaker; (2) the speaker must verbally communicate this information; and (3) the speaker must communicate this information to a target person." Another more recent definition of the term, as provided by Adler & Towne (1999), is "the process of deliberately revealing information about oneself that is significant and that would not normally be known by others."

Bacal (2016) explains that self-disclosure is a simple (at least on the surface) approach to communication that involves sharing information about oneself, history, present, emotions and thoughts. The concept is very simple. When one shares information about himself/herself, he/she allows himself/herself to be "seen", and it is easier for people to relate to him/her as a real human being, with faults and strengths, and with thoughts and emotions. And, when people see him/her as human (and not someone easily depersonalized), communication and relationships improve.

Cultural influence on self-disclosure

Different cultures view self-disclosure differently. Some cultures view disclosing inner feelings as a weakness. Among some groups, for example, it would be considered "out of place" for a man to cry at a happy occasion such as a wedding, whereas in some Latin cultures, that same display of emotion would go unnoticed. Similarly, it is considered undesirable in Japan for workplace colleagues to reveal personal information, whereas in much of the United States, it is expected. Important similarities also exist across cultures. For example, people from Great Britain, Germany, the United States, and Puerto Rico are all more apt to disclose personal information – hobbies, interests, attitudes, and opinions on politics and religion – than information on finances, sex, personality, or interpersonal relationships (tcbdevito.blogspot.com, 2012).

Similarly, Hoang (2014) states that the differences in self-disclosure between people from different cultures are very evident. In most cases, people from different cultures will perceive the concept of disclosing the self with varied perspectives. For example, Americans do not typically eat with chopsticks like Asians, nor do people in China give tips when they go to restaurants.

Croucher et al. (2010) conducted a study on demographic and religious differences in the dimensions of self-disclosure among Hindus and Muslims in India. The study discussed a survey, carried out by the authors, of Hindu and Muslim men and women in six Indian states to determine if social/cultural identities influenced self-disclosure. Specifically, an individual's sex, religious, and state identity were investigated. Results indicated that across religions, women disclosed more than men.

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-Berman (1988) stressed in their study that Indian women like to hold hands with both sexes. They often sit very close to people they are speaking with and finally they will always hug the person they are greeting. Like the men, Indian women are more likely to self-disclose freely because of their characteristics and attitudes towards what is acceptable when conversing with others.

In a study conducted by Srivastava (2008) titled “Gender and Caste Differences in Adjustment”, the said researcher found out that there is a significant difference in the mean self-disclosure scores between females who were maritally adjusted and those who were unadjusted. It means that the extent of marital adjustment affects significantly the extent and magnitude of the self-disclosure of females belonging to Scheduled Caste. The adjusted females seem to be high disclosee than unadjusted females. This study also stressed that it is quite evident that in modern set-up of Indian society, increasing literacy rate and better job opportunities as well as the facilities provided by Indian government altogether have made a lady quite bold and daring to express herself. An adjusted woman can disclose herself frankly and freely in her family as well as in society.

In the Philippines, there is limited literature on self-disclosure, especially about the women. One article by Ocampo (1974), however, gives a glimpse about Filipinas and how they disclose their feelings. The author states that the traditional Filipina maiden is shy and secretive about her real feelings for a suitor and denies it even though she is really in love with the man.

Jamandre & Arce (2011) made a study on self-disclosure of Filipinos in relation to work. The objectives were to determine the content and intimacy level of self-disclosure of Filipino Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) to their co-CSRs and immediate supervisors and if their self-disclosure affected their work relationships. One hundred CSRs participated in the survey and 10 CSRs and 10 immediate supervisors were interviewed. Results showed that CSRs are more likely to disclose to their co-CSRs and immediate supervisors on tastes and interest, work, and attitude more, than they did on the topics about body, personality, and money. Furthermore, the CSRs are more likely to disclose to their co-CSRs in general than in full details; and they are more likely to not disclose to their immediate supervisors.

Self-disclosure on Facebook

There are several studies that are conducted to address the issues on Facebook self-disclosure. These are the following:

People have always disclosed information about themselves to enact virtual friendship in social networking sites particularly in Facebook. The types of messages disclosed about themselves posted in Facebook wall have shown the initiative of Facebook users to share the happenings in their life with their Facebook friends. The case study aims to examine the ways in which Facebook users reveal themselves to others through their Facebook wall posts in order to better understand self-disclosure as

a resource for enacting friendship in Facebook. Facebook posted messages from the participants' Facebook profiles were collected in one year's time, then the messages were analyzed and categorized into various types of self-disclosure. Content analysis was used to collect data. The majority of the posted messages are self story-telling through state and action statements and affective statements. The Facebook users acted as story-tellers were noted as they tell about their personal experience as a form of self-disclosure to enact friendship (Ying et al., 2016).

Day (2013) investigated the use of the social networking site Facebook to self-disclose and analyzed the responses of a small group of Facebook users surveyed about their own willingness to self-disclose. An online survey was used to ask Facebook users about their level of Facebook use, what types of personal information they are willing to reveal and the frequency of these personal revelations. The survey also asked the participants to take a look at their publicly viewable profile and the types of information revealed there. Results indicated that overall, most people tended to be cautious about the types of information they revealed, posted mainly positive statements about themselves and were aware of personal privacy issues.

Wu (2017) investigated the cultural and gender differences in self-disclosure in online social networks (OSNs). A probability sample is drawn from popular online social networks in the US (Facebook), China (Kaixin001), and Germany (studivZ). This study used content analysis to examine the differences of self-disclosure among various cultural contexts and genders in OSNs. The result indicated that: (1) there are salient differences in self-disclosure among Americans, Chinese, and Germans; (2) self-disclosure differs between genders; and (3) the relationship between the number of friends and privacy setting is negative.

Pennington (2008) described that the relationship between the two dimensions to self-disclosure (breadth and depth) can be similar to that used in technology today. Pennington revealed that "With a click of the mouse to accept them as a *friend*, FB users can learn: relationships status (single, engaged, it's complicated), favorite movies, books, TV shows, religious views, political views, and a whole lot more if someone takes the time to fill out an entire Facebook profile." Because of social media sites like Facebook, the breadth of subjects can be wide, as well as the depth of those using the platforms. Users of these platforms seem to feel obligated to share simple information as was listed by Pennington, but also highly personal information that can now be considered general knowledge. Because of social media platforms and user's willingness to share personal information, the law of reciprocity is thrown out the window in favor of divulging personal information to countless followers/friends without them sharing the same level of vulnerability in return. In cases like this, there is depth without much breadth.

Subsequently, Facebook introduced privacy controls that allowed users to determine what was shown on the news feed and to whom. Hence, the visible part of Facebook, innocent-looking user profiles and social interactions, must be neatly separated from the invisible parts. As in the case of an iceberg, the visible part makes up only a small amount of the whole. The invisible part, on the other hand, is constantly fed by the data that trickle down from the interactions and self-descriptions of the users in the visible part (Debatin et al., 2009).

The cultural dimensions of self-disclosure and of FB as a platform for such social practice must be explored further. With India and the Philippines as the focus of this study, "national" differences on the concept of self-disclosure can be established.

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-disclosure. Emphasizing the need of participation of women Indians and Filipinos, the researcher gave the rationale to them. Three (3) Indians, and three (3) Filipinas expressed their willingness to be respondents of the study.

To draw out answers for the research questions, the following types of data were employed in the analysis: (1) respondents' Facebook profiles; (2) ten latest status updates; and (3) transcripts of Messenger interview.

The Facebook profile is an important portion for self-disclosure in a user's account since it contains his/her personal information such as name, address, occupation, etc. Likewise, the status updates are also useful since they contain anything that an FB user wants to share to others such as: informing about a task, showing images of themselves, sharing quotes, etc. In this study, the status updates were limited only to ten (10) for every respondent as it would help determine the respondents' activeness on Facebook. The dates of these updates would determine how often the respondents' disclose something about themselves using this platform. Finally, engaging with the respondents in an in-depth individual interview through Facebook Messenger provides a much wider range of topics and more penetration on their personal lives. The online interview conducted includes topics that are not visibly seen on the respondents' profiles. It includes their thoughts, ideas, and feelings on issues necessary in discovering what is invisible in their accounts. The interviews were conducted from April 3, 2017 to April 29, 2017.

All three types of data were retrieved through print-screening on April 29, 2017. For ethical considerations, the researcher ensured the confidentiality of all data presented in this research by blackening or scratching out the profile pictures and profile names to hide the subjects' identities.

In order to make sense of the data gathered, this research made use of the qualitative content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define qualitative content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of text and data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns." There are five types of texts in content analysis: (1) written text, such as books and papers; (2) oral text, such as speech and theatrical performance; (3) iconic text, such as drawings, paintings, and icons; (4) audio-visual text, such as TV programs, movies, and videos; and (5) hypertexts, which are texts found on the internet. Since this study is an exploration of self-disclosure on Facebook, the corpora found on this platform include all these types of texts. Hence, the choice of content analysis is an appropriate method.

Content analysis has three distinct approaches: conventional, directed, and summative. For this particular study, the researcher employed the summative content analysis in order to attain the objectives identified. A summative approach to qualitative content analysis goes beyond mere word counts to include latent content analysis. The focus of this analysis is on discovering underlying meanings of the words or the content (Sharif, 2016). Moreover, summative content analysis involves

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.

When we look at a person's Facebook account, the first thing that catches our attention is his/her 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 interaction with a person's facial appearance as the first point of reference, 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

pictures of the respondents of the study, the 3 Indians and 3 Filipinas, the researcher found out that all 6 of them use their original solo pictures.

The cover photo is the biggest element in the profile. It consists of picture/s that may provide an additional feature about the user that he/she wants to present to the public. Just like the profile picture, it is also accessible to anyone because it does not have any privacy setting. From the cover photos analyzed, all three Filipinas include people who are close to them in their photos, e.g. husband, children, grandmother, and boyfriend (Figure 2). Two Indians employ the same approach in their cover photos by using their pictures with a sister and some friends. One Indian, however, just uses her solo picture.

The bio which is found below the profile picture (Figure 2 and 3) contains personal information about the FB user. All three Filipinas reveal their work/profession, workplace, and education or school attended. One Indian reveals that she is a student (Figure 3); the other two do not make any revelation about their works. All three Indians do not divulge their workplace. Only one Indian provides the school she has attended. In terms of home address, only two Filipinas and two Indians reveal it. In terms of relationship, two Filipinas and one Indian reveal their civil statuses. The rest do not make any disclosure of such kind.

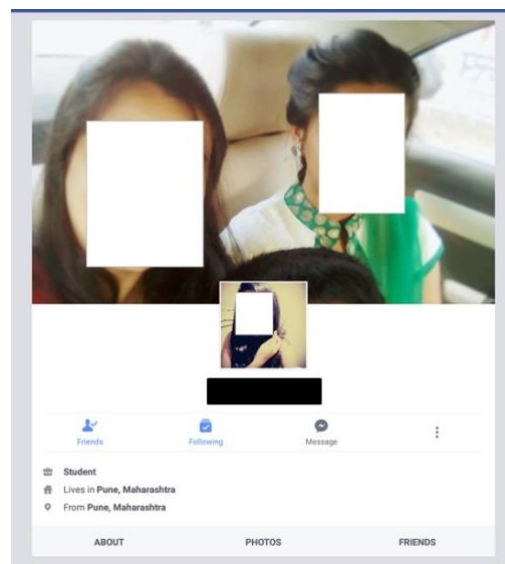


Figure 2. Sample FB Profile

Another essential part of FB is the status updates wherein users are able to post anything on their walls – a text/message, a photo, an audio, a video, or a link –that they want to share anytime to their virtual friends.

The ten (10) latest status updates of the respondents analyzed in this study include those posts that were made as of April 29, 2017. Tagged posts on their walls were not counted as part of these updates. Tagging is an FB feature wherein a friend could include a user in his/her post by letting it appear on the user's wall. Tagged posts are not included as they are made by others and not the users themselves. Since other people make the tagging, tagged posts may or may not be the type of information that the user wants to display on their walls.

Table 1 presents the frequency of updates made by each group. Based from the data on the table, it is found out that all 30 updates made by the Filipinas (10 for each) were posted during March and April of 2017. However, out of the 30 status updates of the Indians, only 14 (11 in April, 2 in March, and 1 in February) were posted in 2017; 13 were posted in 2016; and 3 in 2015. The data here reveal that the Filipina respondents are more active in FB than the Indians.

Table 1. Frequency of Status Updates

Dates of Updating	No. of Updates Made	
	Indians	Filipinas
April 2017	11	23
March 2017	2	7
February 2017	1	
2016	13	
2015	3	
	30	30

Through analyzing their status updates using qualitative content analysis, the researcher was able to identify eight (8) types of information that are visibly revealed on Facebook by the respondents. These include the following:

Language

From the posts, it is a fact to say that the Filipina respondents are multilinguals. They use at least 3 languages: Cebuano, Filipino, and English. Sometimes, they code-switch using 2 or 3 languages they know. The Indians' posts usually use English and sometimes Hindi (Figure 4).



Figure 3. Sample Status Update

Clothing or Dress

Clothing is also visible. Filipinas mostly wear modern clothing, e.g. blouse with or without sleeves, pants, jeans, dress, and workplace uniforms. Indians wear two different types of clothing, modern and traditional *sari*, depending on the occasion (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Sample Status Update

Hobbies/Habits/Interests

From the status updates, it is easy to detect the respondents' inclination for particular activities. With 2 Filipinas and 2 Indians posting solo photos, it is observable that both groups of women have an inclination for the "selfie phenomenon". One Filipina is obviously fond of cosmetology as she always posts 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 totally extracted through someone's posts, still a part of it may be 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 a part of someone's character.

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.

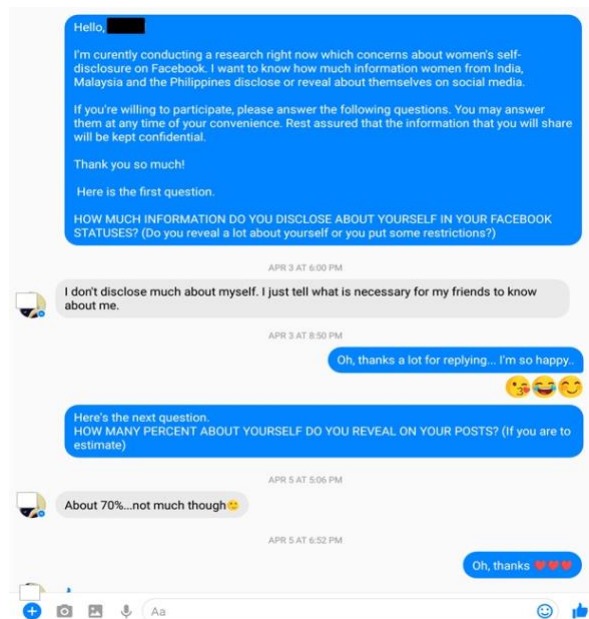


Figure 6. Messenger Interview

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 their public image or reputation. With all of them describing their public image as “very important”, they do not want controversies or issues to affect them as women and as professionals. As one Indian respondent said, “I don’t want to give my friends a good reason to bitch about me.” Hence, they only post what is appropriate.

These findings from the interview reveal why the respondents usually have the same pattern of posts on their walls, e.g. one Filipina is always posting about beauty products, another Filipina is usually sharing quotes, one Indian is posting quotes from books, and one is just posting her solo pictures.

These findings also explain why the researcher did not notice any inappropriate posts that can tarnish the respondents’ reputations.

Women’s expression

Both groups were obviously very vocal and expressive during the interviews. Both groups agreed that women should be given freedom of speech at home, at workplaces, and in the neighborhood. Two Filipinas claimed that “women are more expressive than men” and that “women’s ideas are better than men’s”. The Indians, on the other hand, put emphasis on women to be given rights of expression because male domination is still present in their country especially in rural areas. One Indian related, “There are times when women are considered submissive and there are situations where male-dominated societies try to tone down their voices. There are times that they are beaten, raped and

anything possible so that they can't voice out their thoughts." In spite of this, she explained that "time is changing and so do women's thoughts regarding themselves. Women of today fight, no matter what the consequences are." Lastly, she narrated that "I am criticized because of being vocal with my thoughts but that does not stop me from expressing." The women's replies truly indicate how open and expressive the modern female society is.

These opinions on women's expression somehow drive these respondents to post quotes about girl/woman power and feminism.

Wife's role in the family

Filipina respondents see the role of the wife being equal with the husband in the family. For one Filipina, "the wife is basically a husband's partner in building up a happy home including educating the children, making decisions, solving trials, and even a partner in doing household chores" but one Filipina still acknowledges that "the husband is the head of the family." For Indian women, on the other hand, the wife is "the pillar and backbone of the family" and that "her worth is beyond household chores and taking care of the kids". One very important statement that the researcher found to be a reflection of the Indian culture is that "the wife should take care of the entire family... and in family, I mean, her husband's parents and siblings." This statement reveals that a lot is to be expected of an Indian wife because she does not only take care of her procreated family but also her husband's family.

Courtship, dating, and marriage

According to the Filipinas, knowing the person first is the best preparation for marriage. One of them emphasized that "the best way to choose a partner is to go on dating first, knowing each other well and, once they both learn how they feel for each other, then marriage follows." The Filipinas expressed that arranged marriages are no longer present in their communities. They also do not agree with such kinds of arrangement for according to one, "they will just lead to miserable marriage lives." However, the Indian respondents informed that arranged marriages are still happening in their society. According to two of the Indian women, "arranged marriages are a priority and they are not bad as most parents want to choose the right man for their daughter and vice versa". The other one Indian, on the other hand, expressed that "I personally don't agree with the concept of arranged marriages." Courtship and dating is important for her since she believes that understanding and loving a person should come first before marriage. She even added, "I know that love can happen in such arrangements and it happens. But what if love doesn't happen and the marriage is all about compromises?"

These opinions greatly reveal that courtship, dating, and marriage practices differ from culture to culture. These also reveal that even if the most common way of finding a partner in India is through arranged marriages, not all Indian women are in favor of such kind of arrangements.

Beauty

Through analysis of their opinions, it has been found out that both groups agreed on the definition of beauty. For them, beauty does not talk about physical appearances. Beauty is a person's inner self. It is inner beauty that matters in the end. One Filipina said, "Beauty for me should not be based on the outer look of a person because I could not call a woman beautiful, even with her pretty face, when deep inside she possesses an ugly character. For me, even if a woman does not possess a really good looking outer appearance, so long as she has a genuine heart, she is then beautiful."

Similarly, one Indian stated, “Beauty is not something that reflects your outer self. It’s your inner self. Your soul. How you behave around people...”

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 behavior. To prove this, one Filipina said, “A modest woman is a person who has a refined manner and unwilling to draw attention to what she wears, does, and says in public.” One Indian, on the other hand, articulated that “the definition of a modest woman or any person is when she is not pretending and when she is just being herself.”

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 Filipina expressed, “There should be limitations in the upload and download of images or videos especially those that are dirty and vulgar because it is the minors who usually use the internet without parents’ supervision. And minors can easily be influenced.”

Two Indians also gave a common answer, i.e. making laws protecting the rights of women to be stricter and firmer, as one expounded that “laws regarding crimes against women do not seem to work” (Figure 7).

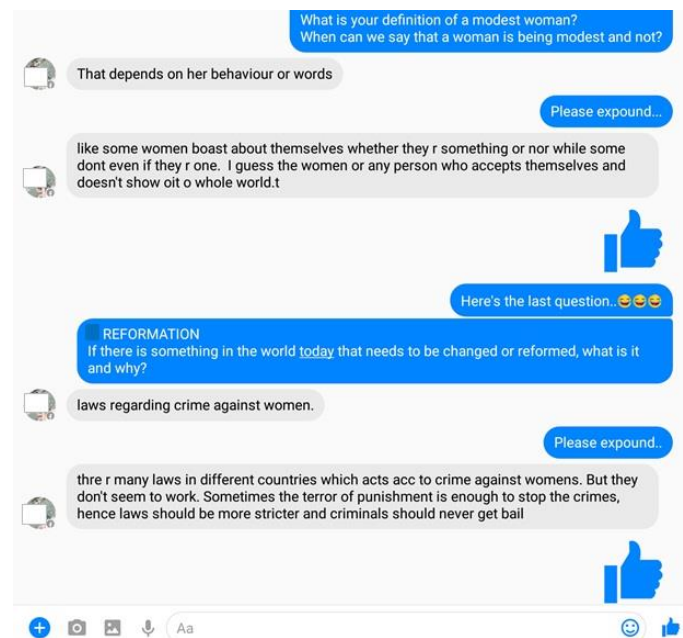


Figure 7. Messenger Interview

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.

Degree of Intimacy of the topics

The second research question investigates how personal or intimate the topics are disclosed by the women respondents on their Facebook accounts. This question explores on the depth of women's self-disclosure in this study. This can be answered by analyzing the intimacy level of the information found in the respondents' FB accounts.

On the basis of the 5 levels of intimacy identified by Wilson (2014), the contents of the Facebook profiles, status updates, and Messenger interviews used in this study were categorized. Although these levels of intimacy are basically based on a face-to-face interaction, they are also applicable in identifying the depth of self-disclosure on Facebook.

All information found in each of the respondents' profiles belong to the lowest level of intimacy. The name, gender, age, network (workplace/school/address) exhibited in one's profile are all facts about the user and no feelings, opinions, or personal vulnerability are involved. This means that any data found in the FB profile do not reveal any intimate information about the user. Depth in self-disclosure here is very low.

With regards to the status updates, they vary in depth. For language, clothing/dress, work/profession, and food/drinks, they all belong to the first level of intimacy (Safe Communication). All these types of information about the users only display facts about themselves. It is just the same with having a conversation with someone when you disclose simple facts about yourself such as saying, "I love coffee," "I'm a teacher," or "I speak English."

Religion may be of different levels depending on how it is manifested in the post. One post showing a picture of a Filipina inside a church is only in the first level of intimacy because it is only disclosing her religious affiliation. It is only similar to informing everyone, "Hey, I am a Roman Catholic." That is a fact and nobody else can change it. However, her Bible verse post moves on to level 2 (Other's Opinions and Beliefs) wherein she starts to make a small risk in sharing her religious belief. This is disclosing a deeper part of herself, her faith. This post cannot be labeled level 3 (Personal Opinions and Beliefs) because this is just a quoted verse, and not her own words. She is just sharing something that she hears and believes.

Hobbies/habits/interests and literature can also vary in depth. When some of the respondents display pictures on Facebook about their activities (i.e. the Filipina posting beauty products and the Indian exhibiting the books she has read), this belongs to the first level of intimacy. But the Indian who posts quotations from novels and poems discloses level 2 (Other's Opinions and Beliefs) of intimate information about herself. This means revealing more of herself because the opinions of the authors may also reflect her inner thoughts.

Values/behavior also shows different levels of intimacy. Pictures of both Filipina and Indian respondents with families and friends show level 1 of intimacy. What the other FB users can see is just the current moment that they are spending time with those people close to them. Although these pictures may imply their belief of valuing relationships and experiences, these cannot be classified in the higher levels unless they wrote a caption that explains the meaning behind these pictures. Quotes shared by

Filipinas displaying their importance of the values of faith, positive thinking, humility, friendship, and moving on belong to level 2 (Other's Opinions and Beliefs). Similarly, the quotes shared by the Indian respondents, on the other hand, emphasize the values of girl/woman power, change, and vocal expression belong to level 2. For example, the quote posted by a Filipina that says "Good things come to those who believe, better things come to those who are patient and the best things come to those who don't give up" shows level 2 of intimacy because it shows someone else's opinion on how to achieve things in life. However, it may be something that she believes. If others would criticize this particular quote, she may either defend it by expressing her own opinion or tell the critics that it is someone else's opinion and not hers to shut off the criticism. In the event that she defends the content of the quote, the intimacy moves up to the next higher level (Personal Opinions and Beliefs). Another quote shared by an Indian, i.e. "I still remember that one book which was my first great book, the one that changed my life, the one that made me a great reader and better human", also shows level 2 of intimacy. Although quotations are a good way to express someone's opinions, feelings, experiences, or even greatest desires, these still do not show much higher levels of intimacy because the sources are other people and not the poster (person who posts) herself. These types of expression are rampant on Facebook newsfeeds. On the other hand, one post made by one of the Filipina respondents that is addressed to someone, "I know that you don't like me as a friend. I know that only a few people in this world want to stand by me no matter what..." expresses her opinion. This is an example of level 3 because the poster starts to open up what she thinks about a person.

As to the interviews conducted via the Messenger, topics discussed with each of the respondents show all levels of intimacy. Discussions on *online self-disclosure* generally tackle level 1 intimacy because the respondents only shared factual information on how much they have disclosed in social media. Level 3 (Personal Opinions and Beliefs) types of information are those that tackle *wife's role; courtship, dating, and marriage; beauty; modesty; and reformation* since the respondents shared their personal opinions on each of these topics. Topic about *women's expression* reveals level 3, and a little on level 4 (My Feelings and Experiences). Sample response for level 4 is "Yes, I am very expressive and vocal about my thoughts. I try out if something goes wrong in my home or workplace," as stated by one Indian. Though a little can be extracted for level 4, still they are not sufficient in being able to know the respondents completely. Any of the conversations does not reach the highest level of intimacy (My Needs, Emotions, and Desires).

Table 2. Summary of Breadth and Depth of Topics

Disclosure	Types of Data	Breadth	Depth
Public	FB Profiles	Profile Picture	Level 1
		Cover Photo	Level 1
		Bio	Level 1
	Status Updates	Language	Level 1
		Clothing/Dress	Level 1
		Hobbies/Habits/Interests	Level 1 & 2
		Literature	Level 1 & 2
		Values/Behavior	Level 1, 2, & 3
		Work/Profession	Level 1
		Food/Drinks	Level 1
Religion	Level 1 & 2		
Private	Messenger Interviews	Online Self-Disclosure	Level 1
		Women's Expression	Level 3 & 4
		Wife's Role	Level 3

		Courtship, Dating, and Marriage	Level 3
		Beauty	Level 3
		Modesty	Level 3
		Reformation	Level 3

Comparative analysis of public and private disclosure between Indian and Filipina FB users

After drawing out the breadth (range of topics) and depth (degree of intimacy) of information, this study moves on to identifying both public and private self-disclosure between the Indian and the Filipina respondents. Public disclosure refers to those data that are displayed on the user's FB wall. These can be seen by anyone including people who are not even the user's friends or even people who do not have any Facebook account. These include those that are seen in one's profile and status updates (table 2). Private disclosure means those data that are not visible on anyone's Facebook but can only be accessed through engaging intimate talks with them. Even if Facebook is a virtual platform, there is still a space where virtual friends can communicate privately and that is through private messaging.

From the analysis of the profiles of the respondents, it is found out that the Filipinas disclosed more personal information than the Indians. The Indian respondents are more careful on revealing about themselves by including very little information in their bio. In fact, one of them does not put anything in the bio section.

Through the status updates, it has been revealed that the Filipina FB members update their statuses more frequently than the Indian users. This shows that the Filipina group reveals frequently about themselves publicly than the Indian group. From the eight themes of cultures identified, Filipina respondents are found to disclose more surface cultures than the Indian respondents. While Filipinas freely share *work/profession, food/drinks, and religion* on FB, Indian women rarely share them.

Privately, during the interviews, it has been observed that both groups are willing to extend their innermost thoughts, feelings, and opinions on any topic tackled. Generally, Filipinas and Indians agreed on their opinions on topics such as *online self-disclosure, women's expression, and beauty*. They differed on their views regarding *wife's role in the family; courtship, dating, and marriage; modesty; and reformation*.

From the above-mentioned interviews, salient thoughts are drawn out:

1. Majority from both of the Filipina and Indian groups put on restrictions on their use of FB. Majority of them stated that a large portion of themselves are not disclosed on FB. Family protection and public image maintenance are two of the main reasons of such actions.
2. Both groups value women's freedom of speech.
3. While Filipinas see the wife as equal with the husband, Indians see the wife as the pillar and backbone of the family because of the tasks she is expected to do at home.
4. While Filipinas go for dating first before marriage, majority of the Indians consent to arranged marriages.
5. Both groups believe that beauty is one's inner being.
6. As to modesty, Filipinas define it by putting emphasis on decency in action and in clothing while Indians stress on humility and unpretentious behavior.

7. Restriction on social media use is the main concern for reformation among the Filipinas; protecting women's rights is for the Indians.

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 intimacy (depth). This means that looking at a woman's FB account does not automatically enhance 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 information that is core to one's self concept. Similarly, for Edward Hall, these topics are surface cultures, the ones that we can see only at the outer part. How these topics are manifested on Facebook's 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 quotations that describe their current thoughts and emotions or sharing their own opinions. In times like this, there is a higher level of depth in this disclosure. The user divulges a great deal of herself without receiving the same depth from her FB friends. As Pennington (2008) stated, "users of these platforms seem to feel obligated to share simple information but also highly personal information that can now be considered general knowledge. Because of social media platforms and user's willingness to share personal information, the law of reciprocity is thrown out the window in favor of divulging personal information to countless followers/friends without them sharing the same level of vulnerability in return."

Facebook's contribution to social penetration is private messaging through the Messenger. To know more about an FB user, it is necessary to chat with her on a variety of topics and, as much as possible, transcend from "small talks" to deeper, more intimate, and more substantial conversations. For example, when on one of her photo posts, you are informed about her choice of food or clothing, you can engage on an online conversation about the reasons of her preference. That entails moving towards the depth of self-disclosure.

Through the interviews conducted via FB Messenger, it is also found out that the breadth of information may also vary from safe communication through personal needs, emotions, and desires. Within a period of four weeks, a lot of topics have been discussed. More importantly, it is discovered that private disclosures (i.e. disclosures via Messenger interview) contain more depth than public disclosures (i.e. disclosures via FB profiles and status updates). Engaging in conversations with people through Messenger enables more personal exchanges because people are more open and trusting when

they know that there is a limited audience. Still as observed, the breadth and depth of the conversations cannot satisfy full social penetration. As Wilson (2014) stated, “it takes time, effort, some pain, criticism and rejection, to reach level 5. Both people in a relationship need to move through the levels together.” 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 by Hall as the invisible cultures that are not seen publicly on FB. 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 FB accounts. They do not provide as much information in their bio as their Filipina 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: breadth and depth. Additionally, it was hoped to prove Hall’s Iceberg 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 respective thoughts, perceptions, and feelings on issues that affect the women of today’s generation.

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 FB Messenger. The corpora used as data of the study were the respondents’ Facebook profiles, status updates, and transcripts of Messenger interviews. Qualitative content analysis was employed in extracting the answers of the research questions.

Based on the findings of the analysis, the following are concluded:

1. Sharing a wide variety of topics (breadth) and more intimate levels of information (depth) is the best way to social penetration.
2. Self-disclosure is culturally driven. Although Filipinas and Indians tend to disclose few similar types of information publicly, they still vary on the amount of information divulged. Indians are more restricted than the Filipinas.
3. What we see in people in social media such as Facebook are just their external, surface cultures. To know more about people’s unseen and deep cultures, engaging in communication and building relationships with them are the keys.
4. However, this analysis was based on a small corpus. Therefore, these findings cannot be generalized. Further research on this topic is necessary with more participants from both nationalities and more time to spend in engaging in Messenger conversations.

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