Using the Framework of Uses and Gratification Theory, an investigation of interpersonal communication on social networking sites

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Abstract
Communication possibilities between people are getting more unlimited as information and communication technology advances in the twenty-first century. People have the ability to contact and follow anybody at any moment.
Social media has grown considerably more prevalent in people's lives, especially with the advent of web 2.0, which allows for interactive communication. People use social media to build social networks and maintain relationships, and it also secures communication between them.
As a result, it has a central position in people's lives. Renckstorf and his colleagues (1996) assessed people's media use in terms of social interaction, and they developed the Media Use as Social Action/MASA paradigm. As a social movement, the MASA model explains people's media use. Furthermore, according to MASA, individuals utilize the media to satisfy their own desires and needs. People utilize the media for interpersonal communication in four ways in this respect. Obtaining knowledge, cooperating, maintaining relationships, expressing and explaining, and strategic usage are some of these goals (Petric et al. 2011).
The purpose of individuals utilizing social media, particularly for the sake of interpersonal communication, is described in this study using theories.
In addition, the findings of structured interviews are assessed in this study using the MASA model's categorization, with the goal of determining which communication objectives individuals use social networking sites for.
When the results of research are evaluated in terms of Uses and Gratification theory, which focuses on what people do with the media rather than the effect of the media, users of social network sites indicate that social network sites are characterized by informational-cooperative, relational-socialization, expressive, strategic, and four-dimensional, but are responsive to the need for a la carte services.
Key words: Uses and Gratification Theory, social media, social network, social network sites, interpersonal communication

Introduction
Individuals sit in the café together, but they are linked to thousands of different people instead of one another; their fingers are constantly on the pages of social media, which they access via their phones.
Individuals' first sentences are similar to this: "Add me on Facebook," "Follow me on Twitter," "Did you see my Instagram photo?"
Social networking sites have become so ingrained in people's lives that they may be considered essential. So, do social media sites usher in a new era of communication?
Is it possible to assess that interpersonal communication is evolving into a new dimension?
Because of the advancement of Web 2.0 technology, the Internet has acquired the characteristic of interactivity, resulting in the emergence of a new social platform through which individuals may connect with a large number of people. As a result of this scenario, human contact and engagement has shifted to the internet realm. Furthermore, social networks, which are influenced by communication technology, have arisen as a new component of interpersonal contact in people's everyday lives.
Because of virtual settings, the quantity of communication between individuals who cannot connect in their everyday lives has risen. The twenty-first century, according to Van Dijk (2006), is a network era.He further claims that networks are similar to the nervous system in that they not only penetrate and influence people's social and personal lives, but they also provide highways for transferring old friendships and commodities. In this regard, he uses the phrase "information highway" to characterize it.
Additionally, he said that, like with any infrastructure, there are both possibilities and dangers.
Communication has acquired a timeless and spaceless definition in this instance. As a result, individuals may continue to engage with one another. People have various methods to maintain and grow their social relationships as

a result of these kinds of facilities, thus the structure of society and the way people communicate has been directly impacted.

Depending on this, the concept of network sociality is integrated. "In network sociality, social connections are informational rather than narrative; they are focused on data interchange and catching up rather than mutual experience or shared history" (Wittel, 2001:51).

According to Castells (2010)'s book "The Rise of Network Society," modern communication technologies guarantee network-organized communication, and virtuality is a key feature of our world. This age is defined by Levinson (2009) as "new new media," and he explains the most important characteristic of it with the phrase "every consumer is a creator." From this perspective, media material is created and released by the same person who consumes it. As a result, it is not required to be produced for academic reasons or to be professional. Another significant characteristic of this period, according to Levinson (2009), is that it has a social character. According to him, the new new media has unearthed new forms of communication, and it guarantees the creation of new civilizations, or the new media has the ability to communicate across cultures.

In this light, it is clear that the majority of the research has focused on the questions of "How do messages transfer to the audience in the most effective way?" "What can be done for the audience's gratification?" and "Uses and gratifications examine what people do with the media rather than what media do to the people?" (Blumler & Katz, 1974).

Review of the Literature

Social networking sites are the focus of the twenty-first century. The advancement of online technology in the twenty-first century has brought with it limitless and timeless communication.

The goal is to communicate via social media platforms. At this time, terminology like "social media," "social network," "social network sites," "social-networking sites," and "online social networking" are used interchangeably to describe the communication in question. The correct use of these concepts, which are also utilized as an online communication environment, will be ensured by explaining them.

"A collection of Internet-based apps that build on the conceptual and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0 and that enable the production and sharing of user-generated content," according to the definition of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61).

Collin et al. (2011: 8) define social media as "usually used to represent collaborative media production and sharing on a fairly large-scale (that may include SNS but also other participatory media activities such as news blogs) but can be expanded to encompass smaller user-generated content networks."

Blogs/vlogs, podcasts, wikis, and game modding are examples of microcommunities and things that occasionally fall outside of SNS. The term "social network" is defined by Ellison et al. (2007) as "communication networks that allow the organization of commercial connections, the formation of new relationships, and the gathering of individuals who have similar interests" (such as music).

The social network concept is defined by Ellison and Boyd (2013: 154) as "the collection of social connections of varied strength and significance that a person maintains," implying that the social network site concept should be used instead of the social network concept.

"A web-based service that allows individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded 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," according to Boyd and Ellison (2008:211).

Social network sites and social networking sites have the same meaning and may be used interchangeably. Networking is frequently used to describe the start of connections between strangers, while social networking is used to describe interactions on websites (Boyd and Ellison, 2008: 211).

Tong et al. (2008) describe online social networking as a method that allows users or members to establish new connections while maintaining current ones and creating impressions.

In this study, social network expression is used because of its benefits, such as the ability to maintain existing online relationships while also forming new ones, the ability to contact one another through a friend list, the ability to create links between users, and the ability to share in a system.

At the end of the 1990s, social networking sites began as a school-based initiative; nevertheless, they quickly grew in popularity as people of all ages joined. Users now prefer social networking sites over traditional communication tools such as e-mail or chat rooms; in fact, they trust these networks so much that they may disclose their most personal information or pictures in this environment. Even the information that individuals provide inside their profile/account poses a danger since they disclose all kinds of personal information (Henson et al., 2011: 254-255).

Communication on social networking sites may take many forms and cover a wide range of subjects as compared to everyday life. People may speak about a variety of topics, including personal matters and public problems. They provide various services to the public (Li, 2011:562):

• **Blogging:** users may post photos, text, and other media to their blogs. They may also share these chronologically and get comments from others.

• **User grouping**: Users may join groups based on a variety of subjects.

• **Social networking**: Users may interact with their friends and meet new people.

• **Instant Messaging:** Users may send and receive messages from their pals in real time.

When examining the functions of social networking sites, it is clear that they have both good and bad impacts on individuals, particularly in terms of interpersonal contact. The most fundamental characteristic of social networking sites is that they allow for interpersonal contact, or face-to-face discussion in a virtual setting. The socializing aspects of social networking sites are shown by a person's usage of these networks for the aim of keeping or dating old connections (Eke et al.2014).

Furthermore, social networking sites have social networking features since they allow individuals to form new connections, meet others who have similar interests, and even get access to people they would not otherwise be able to meet in their everyday lives. A social navigation function is another characteristic of social networking sites.The social navigation function means that a person may connect with his or her friends and, via them, find the resources, information, or people that he or she needs (Thelwall, 2009).

"Media literacy, formal educational outcomes, informal education and learning, creativity, individual identity and self-expression, strengthening social relationships, belonging and collective identity, building and strengthening communities, civic and political participation, self-efficacy and well-being," according to Collins et al. (2011).

Parks and Floyd (1996) discovered that interpersonal relationships increase personalized communication and commitment characteristics like wider and deeper interaction, interpersonal understanding, and predictability in their research on how to develop interpersonal relationships in online environments.

According to Houghton (2012), interpersonal contact formed in an online environment has a certainty characteristic, increasing the frequency of both passive and engaged conversation.The capacity of social networking sites to offer constant contact between individuals causes certain issues in terms of interpersonal communication as well as persons.

One of the most serious issues is that people are becoming concerned about not being able to access the virtual environment, as well as about not being able to refresh information in the virtual environment. Simultaneously, the urge to interact constantly in a virtual world leads to a lack of communication in real life (Bala, 2014).

Social networking sites promote the creation of new connections, but also decrease the quantity of communication and involvement between students and their families, according to Al-(2013) Khaddam's research on the effect of social networks on interpersonal communication among university students. In other words, since people are constantly engaging with others in a virtual environment, they may have less time to contact their personal relationships.At this time, real-world communication is engaging with virtual-world communication, and even fake identities are attempting to communicate and get closer to their true selves.

Social networking sites, on the other hand, regard all connected people as friends, enabling others to leave comments on their pages, control their expressions, and even participate in the network environment.Even if many of the persons mentioned who are Facebook friends have weak ties, the sharing continues in this virtual environment, or these people, whom they know nothing about, are kept up to speed on their personal situation.To put it another way, the individual relinquishes control over his or her own personal space in order to establish friends. Most of the time, information on a person can be quickly sent to a large number of others.This is referred to as "social convergence" in social networks (Boyd, 2008).

Individuals use social networking sites for a variety of reasons, according to the Uses and Gratification Theory. When reviewing the research on social media use (as it relates to media effects), it seems that four major theories are utilized to explain it. The theories in issue include Uses and Gratification Theory, Information Processing Theory, Social Identity Model, and Social Cognitive Theory. In 1968, Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin published a cognitive model explaining "how the mind processes information," which became known as Information Processing Theory. (Beitzel,2012).

The concept basically describes how a new person spends time in his long memory, and it's also expressed in terms: people's interactions with one another on social media are similar to the brain's process of processing new information and have the same effect.The Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects is a theory that explains how personal characteristics and differences may be reduced by using anonymity to identify a person as a group member, and how group salience and cohesion can be enhanced using a computerized effect (Lee, 2004).

Based on social learning theory, Social Cognitive Theory explains how emotional, cognitive, and biological events, as well as behavioral patterns, influence one's behavior.Symbolic communication on social media follows a similar pattern in this way, assisting in the understanding of how people engage online and form relationships (Bandura, 2001).

Gratifications and Uses

One of the Early Mass Communication ideas describes the listener as engaged and motivated in their media consumption. The idea focuses on what individuals do with the media rather than what the media has on them (Katz et al., 1974).

According to this viewpoint, the audience actively chooses and utilizes media to meet their particular requirements. The "how and why" of media usage is explained by the uses and satisfaction hypothesis. In this sense, individuals receive a feeling of pleasure from using the media for particular objectives (Stafford et al., 2004).

The U&G Theory is based on five basic assumptions:

The first is that communication is motivated and goal-directed.

Second, individuals are in control when it comes to selecting the communication medium that best meets their requirements.

People may identify their communicational motivations and gratifications, which is the third point.

The fourth is that media is primarily concerned with offering communication styles for paying attention to, selecting, and using.

As a result, there is a rivalry amongst communication tools.

The fifth is that individuals are influenced by a variety of social and psychological variables while deciding on communication options (Flaherty et al., 1998: 252).

"Medium as a source of influence within the context of other potential influences," is the fundamental premise of the usage and satisfaction method. The user is always engaged in choosing the appropriate media at this stage (Byrant and Oliver, 2008).

To put it another way, each user selects different media to suit their various requirements and develops certain motivations as a result of their usage. Users of social networking sites are considered while evaluating it in terms of social networking sites. They may satisfy their many requirements (e.g., having fun, conversing, and obtaining information) by utilizing social networks.

The phrase "The medium is the message," according to McLuhan (2016), is determinative and controlling in the sense of the medium's operational and practical reality. It is claimed at this time that the medium will be personal, that societal repercussions would occur, and that new technology will become an extension of each individual. The ability of medium or medium material to influence and lead individuals has resurfaced at this stage.

A Research on Determining the Use of Social Network Sites for Interpersonal Communication Objectives

Methodology of Study

The goal of the study is to find out why individuals use social networking sites in the first place, especially for interpersonal connection.

The goal of the study is to assess people's use of social networking sites and how they utilize them for interpersonal connection in terms of utility and satisfaction.

Research questions in this approach may be stated as follows:

RQ1: What are people's motivations for using social networking sites?

RQ2: Why do individuals utilize social networking sites for interpersonal communication?

In-depth interviewing was selected as a study technique for this aim.

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research method that entails conducting in-depth individual interviews with a limited number of respondents to learn more about their opinions on a certain concept, program, or issue (Boyce and Palena, 2006).

The in-depth interview covers all aspects of the study subject and, in most cases, relies on open-ended questions to get comprehensive information.

The most essential aspect of this study technique is face-to-face communication. Participants, emotions, information, and experiences may all be observed by researchers.This research technique is widely used in the social sciences, including journalism, law, business, and communication (Tekin, 2006:101).

At-depth interviews were performed with ten university lecturers of journalism faculty from Kabul university, Nangarhar University and Bakhtar private university. There are four female lecturers and six male lecturers among the participants. The average age of the ten participants was 28 years old, with a range of 25 to 30 years.

A random sampling technique was used to choose participants. They volunteered to take part in the study.The interviews lasted about 30 minutes.

MASA directed the development of the in-depth interview guide (Media Use as Social Action).The phenomenology of mass media encounters is typically the emphasis of the MASA model (Renckstorf et al., 1996). The MASA model was chosen since it aids in the defining process.

Provides a broad typology for the use of media in interpersonal communication (e.g., social networking sites), people utilize media for interpersonal communication for four distinct reasons: informational-cooperative, relational, expressive, and strategic (Petric et al., 2011: 120-121).

Two researchers coded and split the data collected as a consequence of the interview into groups. Another investigator examined the codes of the two investigators. (In the table below, the codes acquired as a consequence of the study are listed.). The MASA model's interpersonal communication goals were used to categorize the codes acquired in the second phase.

Results of research

Information, interaction / expressing, awareness/following, event, reaching, and relationships are the codes that are produced in the direction of the data acquired as a consequence of the inquiry.

In terms of use reasons, the six categories stated above were categorized and interpreted using the MASA model: relational, expressive, strategic, informational-cooperative

• **Use of information and cooperation:**

People acquire information, reach out to information, get fast response, and locate the information they desire, and learn about other people's sharing by utilizing social networking sites. Simultaneously, according to all participants, they utilize social networking sites because personal and public information spreads quickly and is easily accessible via social media. In this regard, some of the participants' responses are included below.

"Every day, the first thing I switch on is a computer, which allows me to access anything in seconds.

Go out and purchase a newspaper, on the other hand, or I don't know. Turn on the television and sit down to watch it. Furthermore, I am uninterested in news material. The internet is instantaneous, so I can view and read them anytime I choose. It is not required that you open it at a particular time. The news is accessible on the internet before it is distributed via conventional media."(Male Participant- M)

"It is easier to get information. We can get a lot more detailed information. The information is up to date. Information is always changing. We may be notified about events, organizations, and concerts or festivals via social media..." (Female participant-Z)

"Every day, I take a close look at it. What exactly is happening on? It's a way of quickly gathering information because there isn't enough space to write on. I have an opportunity to understand what is going on, what occurred in a short period of time..." (Female participant-D)

"Before I go to the news site, the first platform I look at is Twitter, since real information, true information, is on there due to the channels I follow..." (Male Participant-S)

• **Use of Relationships / Socialization:**

When people utilize social networking sites for relational or social purposes, the same objectives that they achieve in face-to-face interpersonal interaction are achieved online. According to studies, people use social networking sites to make/keep friends, make new acquaintances, build or maintain emotional connections, meet with faraway friends, learn social activities, and get together with others who have similar interests. According to the responses of the participants, those who are introverted or who prefer not to talk much have the chance to interact and socialize. There's also no other method to be with friends who are in different places at the same time. Some of the answers from the participants are given below in this respect.

"For example, we just arranged a reunion gathering and I ran into friends I hadn't seen in five or six years. It would be more difficult to create a conversation if social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter did not exist. What are they doing, and what aren't they doing... we'd have to start over..." (Female participant-D)

"With my closest friends, we prefer face-to-face contact first, but we also communicate through social media. We use social media to connect with family who live far away. As a result, we may communicate more effectively with distant relatives. People desire to be more sociable on such platforms as a new thrill. (Male participant-S)

"We can communicate with our pals who live far away through Facebook. When we send a message on Facebook, it remains there for my buddy to respond to anytime he or she wishes. Alternatively, we may make new acquaintances via social media sites. It is, in my opinion, a good step in our relationship..." (Ahmad, a male participant)

"I mainly use social media to keep up with my pals and find out what they're up to. Because I don't have all of my friends' phone numbers So I just use it to communicate..." (Male participant-G)

• **Examples of expressive usage include:**

It is critical for individuals to be able to use their expressive characteristic in interpersonal communication, both face-to-face and internally. In this way, the answers indicate that social networking sites are very successful at both interacting with others and expressing internal feelings. They are also said to be able to express themselves more readily in conversation with others, to disclose facts about themselves, and to explain and express their emotions more easily than in daily life. However, in daily life, it is often the expressions that cannot be provided in face-to-

face contact or the unexpressed feelings or ideas, that may be expressed very easily by posting on social media sites. In this regard, some of the participants' responses are included below.

"It functions as a kind of public speaker for our thoughts and desires. We were unable to express our thoughts and desires prior to the advent of social media. We were unable to integrate with society. We had no choice but to inform our pals. Only columnists, authors, journalists, and opinion leaders were allowed to speak to society. But, because to the rise of social media, I can now rapidly communicate with a thousand and five hundred individuals. If they like my sharings, they can also share them, perhaps reaching a million individuals. It's a really wonderful thing." (Male participant-M)

"I prefer to write or explain my psychological and spiritual changes on social media, if I think about it personally. My emotions may be expressed via music or words. Furthermore, I have been doing most of the time lately that "this music is playing inside of me." As a result, it expresses my emotions. On the other hand, I use Twitter to communicate my emotions and ideas about anybody or anything; for example, if I'm upset with someone, I can post to Twitter..." (Female participant-D)

"Actually, I can claim that social media allows me to more clearly express myself by allowing me to post and like items that assist me to explain myself. People will discover fresh and unknown facts about myself as a result of this." (Male participant-S)

"Whenever I go to a new location, I want to share my joy with people. I can express my emotions and ideas via social media. I can tell that I went there and it was lovely. In addition, I am able to share pictures of that location. So that others may see what I'm saying. However, if I am upset about anything, there is no longer a location where I can express myself..." (Female participant-Z)

• **Strategic applications include:**

Facial interpersonal communication necessitates individuals being in the same place at the same time, which is feasible at certain events. Social networking platforms can keep individuals informed about these activities, and they can also notify and invite others. At the same time, kids may keep up with current events and learn about subjects that interest them. Creating a group linked to an event, on the other hand, allows you to stay up to date on the information flow. At the same time, it is feasible to rapidly reach and engage the participants in a planned activity. Another significant issue raised by the attendees is that even if they do not attend the event, they may get all pertinent information.In this regard, some of the responses provided by the participants are included below:

"We scheduled our meetings on Facebook and were able to get together as a result of it. For example, I am a member of the Aegean Forest Foundation. On Facebook, I can keep track of the foundations to which I belong. It is possible for me to be notified about them. We may get information from them when they arrange a meeting or an event. This is how we may completely arrange an activity. I can join or not, and I can certainly respond there. It used to be very difficult; we couldn't respond fast enough. (Female participant-S)

"The structure of social media makes it simpler and more comfortable to use. Meetings, announcements, and events, in particular, may be shared, and the tools for creating questionnaires are excellent for gathering data. That is why I am actively utilizing it." (Female participant-S)

"If the meeting location, date, or time changes, I will make an announcement on social media as a result, I utilize everything I use in interpersonal communication on social media as well. I can acquire most things without fighting, and I can save time as well. (Male participant-S)

"For organizations, I utilize social media sites. I may also use Google Maps to share my location information or to get directions to a destination. We can organize ourselves on the networks..." (Male participant-M)

Conclusion

People's conventional communication and social structures have changed as a result of the growth of Web 2.0 technologies and social networking sites. As a new form of communication and socializing, social networking sites have developed. While these effects mainly impact young people, social networking sites are increasingly seen as places for all individuals to engage socially.

Thanks to its features that currently exist and are growing every day, social network sites fulfill the requirements of a huge number of people, such as education, research, talking, keeping existing friendships and establishing new connections, and so on. As a result, although social networking sites may not be able to completely replace face-to-face contact for many individuals, they have become essential.

As a consequence, Erlin and Arita Fitri (2015) report in their research that students spend 30-59 minutes per day on social networking sites (Facebook) and visit Facebook several times per day. Oloo (2013) emphasizes that this amount of time is far higher, with participants in his research reporting spending 2-4 hours each day on social networking sites.

The goal of this research is to find out why individuals utilize social networking sites and what personal communication goals they have. Simultaneously, it is desirable to conduct an evaluation within the context of the uses and satisfaction theory, since the goal is to meet the users' particular requirements.

Depth interviews were performed as part of the MASA (Media Use as Social Action) aspects for this aim.

The research's findings may be summarized as the usage of the MASA's four aspects for informational-cooperative, relational-socialization, expressive, and strategic objectives.

The study's most remarkable finding is that people's interpersonal communication has moved from face-to-face to online communication. Participants discover this at this time. With the goal of maintaining or continuing their contact with both near and distant friends, they see the medium as efficient and essential.

Whiting and Williams (2013) performed study to find out what individuals who use social networking sites want to accomplish.According to the findings, 88% of people use social networking sites for social interaction, 81% for information seeking, 76% for pass time, 64% for entertainment, 60% for relaxation, 56% for communicator utility, 56% for expression of opinions, 52% for convenience utility, and 56% for communicator utility.It is also used for high-level social contact, according to the results of this research.

As a result of a research into student-related behaviors to locate Friend-Networking Sites, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) found that 87.1 percent of participants use social networking sites for friend-networking.Even though all four elements were included in this study, participants stated that they favored the informational-cooperative and expressive dimensions. At the same time, the expressive dimension's weighted use encourages interpersonal and internal communication by enabling individuals to say things they wouldn't or couldn't say in a face-to-face discussion. The research also discovered that social media platforms may be used for strategic goals.

People can do anything they want while still enjoying the entertainment without having to be in the same place.People may also fulfill their contribution, discovery, social connection, and entertainment requirements via Facebook groups, according to Spiliotopoulos et al. (2013).

Participants also said that they can express themselves better on social media platforms, including explaining their emotions and ideas, which they couldn't do in real life for a variety of reasons. It is a highly effective setting for "sharing concerns and expressing love," according to Quan-Haase and Young (2010), and it makes it simpler to speak with their partners about their difficulties.

Mims et al. (2013) found that young people who communicate primarily through social networking sites (Facebook) do not have the opportunity to develop social relationships in real life, and that they may have poor interpersonal communication and interaction skills as a result of spending so much time in this environment. The study respondents said that social networking sites fulfill the requirements in all four aspects, but that they cannot replace face-to-face contact. While face-to-face contact provides real-time communication, it is seen to be more effective.

When the results of research are evaluated in terms of Uses and Gratification theory, which focuses on what people do with the media rather than the effect of the media, users of social network sites say that social network sites are characterized by informational-cooperative, relational-socialization, expressive, strategic, and four-dimensionality, but are responsive to the need for a la carte services.

At this point, McGuire (1974) agrees with the statement that social media provides additional opportunities for communication among individuals who are well-versed in the content's significance. Social networking sites, on the other hand, enable individuals to exchange pictures, comments, information, and connections; they are also efficient in fulfilling people's everyday needs and in instilling fundamental motivation (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010).

Simultaneously, examination of the research data shows that individuals possess adequate qualities to fulfill a substantial amount of their interpersonal interaction needs through social networking sites, if not satiation.For future research, it will be useful to evaluate the relationship between the use of social networking sites and satisfaction (Perse & Courtright, 1993), participants are now associated with being "every consumer is a producer" in the expression of Levinson (2009), and this is quite decisive for having more satisfaction.

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