MEDIA MOTIVES AND SELF-DISCLOSURE IN BLOGS: A COMPARIISON OF CHINESE AND AMERICAN CULTURE

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A Comparison of Chinese and American Culture

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by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dearly loved father, now and forever. I cannot be who I am and achieve what I achieved without you.
Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another.

---- Ernest Hemingway
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Media Motives and Self-Disclosure in Blogs: A Comparison of Chinese and American Culture
by
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Based on previous research on Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), this study applied the research paradigm of uses and gratifications to study media motives and self-disclosure behaviors to a very new computer application: weblog. Self-administered surveys were conducted in both United States and China to compare cultural variations on blogging motives and different aspects of self-disclosure: the amount of, depth, honest, positive-negative dimension, and intention. Sample of 283 American college students and 141 Chinese college students were included in the survey. Data from this study indicated that blogs were used in both countries as functional alternatives to face-to-face communication in gratifying information and entertaining motives, however, Chinese students had more “professional” usages of blogs than American students. Meanwhile, blogs appeared to have its own unique function the other communications cannot provide or are not good at providing, as to gratify the self-expression motive for people from both countries. When it comes to self-disclosure, results from this study revealed that Chinese students engaged in more amount of, more honest and deeper self-disclosure than their American counterparts, a tendency different from what has been found in interpersonal communication.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Early research on mediated communication regarded computer-mediated communication as task-oriented, impersonal, and “lean” in transmitting ambiguous meanings as compared to interpersonal communication (e.g., Daft & Lengel, 1986; Rice & Case, 1983; Siegel, Dubrovsky, Kiesler & McGuire, 1986; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). These scholars viewed computer-mediated communication as incapable of transmitting complicated and subtle messages rich in social-emotional cues. Now, several researchers agree that the socio-emotional aspect of computer-mediated communication is strengthened over time. The depersonalizing effects occur only during the initial stages of adopting computer-mediated communication (Walther, 1992; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). The anonymity (as people can communicate without revealing self identity) and asynchrony (as communication can be conducted at different times) of computer-mediated communication permits people to generate stronger group identities and to control relational interaction to a greater extent (Flanagin, Tiyaamornwong, O’Connor & Seibold, 2002; Postmes, Spears, Sakhel & De Groot, 2001; Walther, 1996).

Many of the contemporary studies support the view that computer-mediated communication—once thought to hamper relational development—has unique capabilities to improve personal relations. Research subjects include, but are not limited to, electronic mail (e-mail) (e.g., Tidwell & Walther, 2002), computer-based conference systems (e.g., Postmes et al., 2001; Spears, Lea, Corneliusen, Postmes & Ter Haar, 2002; Walther, 1993, 1995; Walther & Burgoon, 1992), ICQ (e.g., Ma & Leung, 2005), and Internet dating systems (e.g., Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimons, 2002; Donn & Sherman, 2002; Gibbs, Ellison & Heino, 2006), personal homepage (see Döring, 2002 for brief review).

However, as a new form of computer-mediated communication, Weblog (blog) has not been studied systematically, as have other computer-mediated communication channels. Blogs, defined as websites containing updated entries (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2004), have gained popularity around the world. Although many studies have tried to count
the exact numbers of blogs currently online, experts still cannot enumerate the ever-growing number of blogs. According to statistics from Pew Internet and American Life Project (2006), the population of people posting to blogs was around 12 million in the U.S., or about 8% of adult Internet users. The number of blog readers was about 57 million American adults, or 39% of the online population in 2006.

Few previous research projects have studied blogs from a relational perspective (except Lu & Hsiao, 2007; Miura, 2007; Miura & Yamashita, 2007) as have studies on other forms of computer-mediated communication. Instead, previous research on blogs focused mainly on three issues: (1) gender and age differences in blogs use (e.g., Harp & Tremayne, 2006; Herring, Kouper, Scheidt & Wright, 2004; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005), (2) the characteristics of blogs (e.g., Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004; Langellier & Peterson, 2004), and (3) the revolutionary influences blogs introduced to mass media and society (e.g., Dearstyne, 2005; Kahn & Kellner, 2004; Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005; MacDougall, 2005; Ramos & Piper, 2006; Stanyer, 2006). This study, in contrast, is based on relational development, focusing on users’ activities in using blogs instead of analyzing blogs’ functions. This study, thus, extends the theoretical tradition of computer-mediated communication to weblogs, and gives communication scholars a framework for studying blogs.

To examine blogger’s activities, this study borrowed uses and gratifications theory as its theoretical paradigm. The uses and gratifications approach explains communication outcomes in terms of audiences’ initiative and involvement (Windahl, 1981). Uses and gratifications theory assumes that media effects are influenced by the “terms of the purposes, functions or uses (that is, uses and gratification) as controlled by the choice patterns of receivers” (Fisher, 1978, p.159). Audiences are not passive targets for media’s “magic bullet,” but are active and initiative in media consumption (Windahl, 1981). Media contents have to filter through people’s social and psychological circumstances to shed influence (A. Rubin, 1993). Audiences’ media motives and activities are central concepts in uses and gratifications studies.

The uses and gratifications perspective provides a framework for studying new media technologies since it can reveal not only the outcomes of media consumption, but also why people are exposed to certain types of media (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). Many studies have sought to discover media functions and consumption outcomes by studying media
motives (e.g., Elliott & Quattlebaum, 1979; Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; Perse & Courtright, 1993; R. Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985; William & Rice, 1983). For examples, previous studies have found that user-generated content, such as blogs and homepages, satisfy self-expression and self-actualization needs that other media can hardly fulfill (Shao, 2008; Papacharissi, 2002). Actively involved in producing content, users present their “true” or inner self to the outside world, allowing others know them as they know themselves (Goffman, 1959; McKenna & Bargh, 1999; Swann, 1983).

Based on uses and gratifications theory, this research focuses on the motives of writing blogs and the self-disclosure involved in writing blogs, when compared to other types of communication, such as face-to-face communication. The aim of this comparison is to reveal whether blogging is a functional alternative to other communication types. That is, does blogging satisfy some unique motives not addressed by other modes of mediated communication?

Culture, among many other factors, was examined in particular as an independent variable of influencing blogging motives and self-disclosure. Culture influences human behaviors by screening external stimuli that reach our sensory system, as well as by attributing meanings to these stimuli (Porter & Samovar, 1997). Culture, thus, may have influence on media motives and self-disclosure involved. Understanding communication within a cultural context is important. Cultural differences will have a negative effect if they impede the flow of communication; such differences will have a positive effect if they motivate two individuals to understand each other (Casmir & Asuncion-Lande, 1989).

This study compares Chinese and American cultures as factors that may influence motives and self-disclosure when writing blogs. Most research on computer-mediated communication is based on data gathered from Western cultures. Such research cannot reveal the possible influence that culture may exert on people’s media behavior. In the few intercultural studies of computer-mediated communication, most focused on the adoption of the Internet as an innovation in different countries (e.g., Gong, Li & Stump, 2007; Ishii, 2004). Few have studied computer-mediated communication from a communication perspective. However, the practice of computer-mediated communication is a global phenomenon, with information flowing across national boundaries. For example, according to the survey published in July, 2009, by China Internet Network Information Center
(CNNIC), there were an estimated 338 million Internet users in China, an increase of 40 million since late 2008. By introducing culture as a factor affecting users’ computer-mediated communication behaviors, this study serves to fill the gap between computer-mediated communication theory building and practice, and hopes to facilitate the communication between these two different cultures.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a brief review of the theories and research that served as the basis for this study. The major theories covered in this chapter include computer-mediated communication theories, uses and gratification theory, cultural theories, and research done within each field. Important concepts used in this study, including weblogs, culture, self-disclosure, are defined and clarified in this chapter. Based on the literature review, research questions and hypotheses are proposed to examine the relations between culture and motives of writing blogs; between gender and motives of writing blogs; between culture and self-disclosure involved in writing blogs; and between time and self-disclosure involved in writing blogs.

COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

Whether computer-mediated communication has the capability of maintaining and facilitating relational development has been an interesting academic question for a long time (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). Early research reported depersonalizing communication effects of computer-mediated communication when compared with face-to-face communication. Social presence theory, the lack of social context cues hypothesis, and media richness theory provide a theoretical framework for arguing that computer-mediated communication is devoid of nonverbal cues. However, contemporary research has found that computer-mediated communication is able to transmit social and emotional messages, similar to interpersonal communication. Moreover, computers and the Internet setting provide an asynchronous and anonymous environment which encourages the formation of more intimate and equalized relations among its users, when compared to interpersonal communication.

This section reviews some of the most important theories in studying computer-mediated communication, both from earlier research and from a more contemporary perspective. This section provides the theoretical background for this study.
Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Cues

The ability of computer-mediated communication to transmit complicated social-emotional messages depends on the perceived verbal cues embedded in the communication. Verbal cues can be divided into linguistic cues and message content. Linguistic cues refer to the manner and style in which the message is sent (Buller, Burgoon, Buslig & Roiger, 1996). Examples of linguistic cues in computer-mediated communication include verb tenses, qualifiers, indefinite pronouns, verbal hedges, use of emoticons, text styling, punctuation, and so on. Linguistic choices may reflect the extent to which communicators are able to plan, craft, rehearse, and edit a message before transmission (Carlson, George, Burgoon, Adkins & White, 2004).

Message content cues, on the other hand, are the specific informational attributes, sent or perceived, of a message (Carlson et al., 2004). The content cues can be easily manipulated to meet communicator’s interpersonal goals. For instance, Buller and his colleagues (1996) reported that, in deception language, message content manipulation is strategic. Deceivers intentionally manage messages by delivering incomplete, obfuscated, irrelevant, and less elaborated information to obscure the truth.

Verbal cues are widely used in both computer-mediated communication and face-to-face communication. Although spoken language was uncommon in traditional computer-mediated communication (e-mail, instant message), technological developments are providing more phonetic applications to modern computer-mediated communication (online telephone, live computer conferencing) which helps increase the utilization of verbal cues in computer-mediated communication.

On the other hand, non-verbal cues are not part of the message content. These cues accompany the delivery of messages by transmitting facial expressions, posture, physical appearance, vocalic behavior, and so forth (Carlson et al., 2004). Nonverbal cues are often considered rich in impression-bearing and interpersonal information (Walther, 1993; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). For example, communicators depend more on nonverbal cues than verbal cues in deception detection, because nonverbal cues convey more subtle messages reflecting true feelings and emotions of the deceiver (Hurd & Noller, 1988).

Even with the introduction of virtual technology to computer-mediated communication, this new type of communication still depends largely on text for information
transition. This has led traditional researchers to consider computer-mediated communication as containing few non-verbal cues. Thus, computer-mediated communication was regarded as less personal and socio-emotional than face-to-face communication (e.g., Daft & Lengel, 1986; Hiltz & Johnson, 1990; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986; Steinfield, 1986, 1992).

**Early Research on the Depersonalization of Computer-Mediated Communication**

Social presence theory was originally devised to explain the process of the adoption of computer-mediated communication in organizations, in order to discover its most appropriate applications. The theory claims that computer-mediated communication is task-oriented and impersonal due to its limited capability to convey social presence (Culnan & Markus, 1987; Rice, 1984; Steinfield, 1986, 1992). Social presence is defined as the feeling that a medium is personal, warm, and sociable, as perceived by the communication partners jointly involved in the interaction (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976). With a paucity of non-verbal cues, computer-mediated communication may hamper information exchange in the types of communications requiring significant interpersonal and sensitive interactions. Therefore, computer-mediated communication is only appropriate for routine information exchange (e.g., Hiltz & Johnson, 1990; Rice & Case, 1983). In contrast, face-to-face communication is associated with personal linkages and intimacy (Kraut, Steinfield, Chan, Butler & Hoag, 1999).

Because computer-mediated communication lacks social context cues, researchers have hypothesized that computer-mediated communication filters out important attributes of communication, attributes that regulate the exchange of information between people (Siegel et al., 1986; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). Social context cues are composed mainly of a person’s physical environment; organizational position such as hierarchy and social status; and situational variables such as gender, topics, and social rules (Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). With social context cues largely unavailable, computer-mediated communication provides a mechanism for the expression of antisocial opinions; extreme and hurried decisions, self-absorption (“What are you doing right now?”); excited and uninhibited communication, such as “flaming” (insulting, swearing, hostile, and intense language); bad and negative news, and
messages reflecting status equalization (Kiesler, Siegel & McGuire, 1984; Kiesler & Sproull, 1986; McGuire, Kiesler & Siegel, 1987; Siegel et al., 1986).

Indeed, social presence theory and theorizing about the lack of social context address the structural characteristics of computer-mediated communication; both emphasize that the structure and bandwidth of media alters the nature and effects of communication. Culnan and Markus (1987) dubbed these two theories the “cues-filter-out” approach, positing that the physical incapability of computers to transmit non-verbal cues is the critical difference between computer-mediated communication and face-to-face communication, and the consequential effects of this incapability are inherent and constant. Media richness theory, on the other hand, takes into account the nature of communicative interaction as well as the structural features of media (Walther, 1992).

Information richness is the ability of information to exchange understandings within a time interval (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Communication transactions that are able to overcome different frames of reference or clarify equivocality in a timely manner are considered information rich. On the other hand, messages that are hard to transmit in an understandable manner, contain ambiguous perspectives, or require long transmission periods are considered lower in richness (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Lengel & Daft, 1984). Media channels vary in their capacities to process rich information (Lengel & Daft, 1984). The richness of a medium is based upon four criteria: (1) feedback which allows equivocality to be cleared and corrections to be made; (2) multiple cues, including verbal cues and non-verbal cues; (3) language variety, including the range of meaning that can be conveyed with language symbols; and (4) personal focus, including the infusion of personal feelings and emotions in communication (Daft, Lengel & Trevino, 1987).

According to media richness theory, face-to-face communication is the richest medium because it provides immediate feedback, contains personalized languages, and includes non-verbal cues and multiple meaning transitions. By contrast, computer-mediated communication is considered as a very “lean” communication medium, since few nonverbal cues are provided and the language utilized is impersonal and less varied (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Daft et al., 1987; Lengel & Daft, 1984).

Media richness theory encourages the consideration of media richness when making media decisions (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Daft et al., 1987; Lengel & Daft, 1984).
richness are appropriate for standard, routine, unequivocal, and efficient communication; rich media should be used for subjective, ambiguous, emotional, and unstructured issues that involve divergent perspectives. Therefore, in most organizations, computer-mediated communication is best used for low-level operations rather than in support of top management decision making. Traditional face-to-face communication discussions and other forms of rich communication forms are better suited for executives and other top managers engaged in nuanced dialogue (Daft et al., 1987).

To summarize, several theories suggest that computer-mediated communication is incapable of transmitting non-verbal cues, resulting in a cold, impersonal, task-oriented, and lean medium that’s inappropriate for socio-emotional, sophisticated, and equivocal communications.

**Contemporary Perspective of Computer-Mediate Communication**

Walther (1992, 1996) questioned the findings from traditional computer-mediated communication studies that are summarized above. He argued that the impersonal feature of computer-mediated communication, if any, do not always harm communication results. Indeed, for some applications, computer-mediated communication may be beneficial. As addressed in various theories of channel richness, less personal interaction is preferred for low socio-emotional communications, such as advocating discipline, equality, and efficiency. For example, Phillips and Santoro (1989) found that computer-mediated communication discourages users from irrelevant interpersonal and theoretical issues while focusing on the essence of problem-solving discussions.

Secondly, the conclusion that computer-mediated communication is inherently impersonal remains a tentative and conditional assertion. Traditional studies were conducted over a limited time which may constrain development of relationships using computer-mediated communication. As Walther (1992) argued, the conclusion that “computer-mediated communication is task-oriented may be a result of cutting off the experiment before other, more socio-emotional phases, such as ‘emergence’ or ‘performance’ stage, occur” (p. 62). The underlying premise of early theories was that computer-mediated communication is insufficient in exchanging nonverbal messages. This assumption can be challenged, however,
especially given the new technologies that permit the transmission of richer cues using computer-mediated communication (Burgoon, 1985).

To address the findings from research conducted over short periods of time, Walther (1992) developed the social information processing theory to explain how relational communication evolves from an impersonal stage in the early phases of computer-mediated communication to more developed levels during the later phases. The underlying assumption of social information processing theory is that verbal and textual behaviors in computer-mediated communication also convey relational meanings (Burgoon, 1985). Given that computer-mediated communication provides little non-verbal information, the progression of relational development in computer-mediated communication often is slower than in face-to-face communication. However, when computer-mediated communication users have the same relational goals as face-to-face communication communicators and also have sufficient time to communicate, differences in the socio-emotional communication between face-to-face communication and computer-mediated communication tend to disappear (Walther 1992, Walther & Burgoon, 1992). Therefore, the impersonal effects of computer-mediated communication are limited exclusively to initial stages of usage within communication pairs. Arguably, this impersonal effect will last longer for unacquainted partners.

Several other theories contrast with the traditional theories of computer-mediated communication that assert that the meager non-verbal cues weaken communicators’ social identities. The social identity and deindividuation theory assert the salience of group membership in an anonymous communication environment (Lea & Spears, 1991). Social identity and deindividuation theory argues that, although computer-mediated communication filters out some social cues, the most important ones related to social category membership remain (Spears et al., 2002). Moreover, in communications where social cues are rare, such cues as membership are given greater value. This over-reliance on minimal cues leads to attribution of greater similarity and liking (Lea & Spears, 1991; Spears & Lea, 1992). Visual anonymity obscures personal features, thus diminishing the relative importance of interpersonal concerns. Greater focus is placed on characteristics of a group as a whole (Postmes et al., 2001). Therefore, the effect of anonymity in computer-mediated communication, once posited to make people less self-aware and less socially aware, may actually encourage the awareness of shared group identity and the group identity of others.
While social information processing theory and social identity and deindividuation theory postulate that computer-mediated communication can perform many of the same functions as face-to-face communication, the Hyperpersonal perspective takes this argument one step further by positing that computer-mediated communication is more socially desirable than face-to-face communication (Walther, 1996).

Hyperpersonal perspective asserts that the partial-cue and the asynchrony features of computer-mediated communication encourage impression and relationship management behaviors that are hardly feasible in face-to-face communication (Walther, 1996). The hyperpersonal approach analyzes computer-mediated communication process separately by sender, receiver, channel, and feedbacks. Compared to face-to-face communication, message senders in computer-mediated communication are given more opportunities to engage in deliberative and selective self-expression and presentation to achieve their social goals. Such impression management could be detected more readily in face-to-face communication by unintentional messages embedded in appearances and behaviors. At the receivers’ end, computer-mediated communication users are likely to engage in “over-attribution” by idealizing and stereotyping their partners, based on the limited non-verbal cues available. Such “over-attribution” may be further enhanced because communicators are released from the simultaneous message construction and ongoing, time-constrained interactions required by face-to-face communication (Walther, 1996). Therefore, the hyperpersonal perspective argues that computer-mediated communication bestows its users with more power to achieve their social goals than does face-to-face communication.

To conclude, contemporary theories of computer-mediated communication suggest that computer-mediated communication is no less personal than face-to-face communication if users are given enough time to exchange information. Meanwhile, computer-mediated communication is hyper-personal in that users are allowed to create impressions and manage relationships more actively than they might be able to conduct in face-to-face communication.
USES AND GRATIFICATIONS IN COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

Uses and gratifications theory provides a perspective regarding the psychological motives that influence people to consume media (A. Rubin, 1993). Uses and gratifications theory asserts that people expose themselves to different communication channels and content to gratify their needs. These needs, in turn, are influenced by various social and societal factors. Therefore, uses and gratifications researchers evaluate communication by examining gratifications obtained from the consumption of media content. Following the suggestion of applying uses and gratifications to computer mediated communication research (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996), this study explores the motives behind writing blogs and two factors that may affect blogging motives: gender and culture. The aim of examining blogging motives and its antecedents is to discover the gratification niche blog fulfills, so to answer whether blog is a functional alternative to other communication channels or a communication outlet with its unique functions.

This section provides a brief review of uses and gratifications theory and some of the important research. This study applies uses and gratification theory as the theoretical paradigm based on which research questions were designed.

Uses and Gratifications Perspective

First formally outlined by Katz (1959), the uses and gratifications perspective was developed in opposition to the “magic bullet” approach that emerged in 1940s. The magic bullet perspective viewed the media as exerting powerful and direct influence on audiences. Uses and gratifications perspective, by contrast, assumes that people’s communication choices are purposive and goal-directed (Katz et al., 1974). People select, pay attention to, and become involved in communication that stimulates their interest and gratifies a psychological need or want. On the other hand, they avoid, ignore, or feel skeptical about the communication that cannot provide them with desired gratifications (Kim & A. Rubin, 1997). Therefore, communication motive becomes a crucial concept for explaining media effects (A. Rubin, 1993).

Motives are derived from basic human needs to generate decisions and behaviors to gratify needs (Rosengren, 1974; A. Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Early uses and gratifications
research developed various typologies to identify motives for media consumption, and most of the early research focused on some aspects of television (e.g., Abelman, 1987; Atkin, Bowen, Nayman & Sheinkopf, 1973; Korpi & Kim, 1986; Palmgreen, Wenner & Rayburn, 1980, 1981; Pettersson, 1986; A. Rubin, 1979).

Based on previous research findings, A. Rubin (1983, 1984) categorized TV consumption motives into instrumental motive and ritualized motive, which are, later, widely applied in contemporary uses and gratifications research. Instrumental motive refers to the use of media to gratify informational needs, while ritualized motive is a use of a medium to gratify diversionary needs. In contrast with the instrumental motive, which is goal-directed, ritualized motive is a more or less habitualized use of media. Scholars in uses and gratifications research found that audiences with instrumental motives tend to be more selective, attentive, and involved in media than audiences with ritualized motives (e.g. Levy & Windahl, 1984; Perse, 1990a, 1990b; Perse & A. Robin, 1988). Therefore, the media is believed to have a greater cultivation effect under instrumental motive than under ritualized motive (A. Rubin, 1986, 1993). Windahl (1981) labeled the outcomes of instrumental use of media as “effects.” He labeled the outcomes of ritualized use of media as “consequences.”

Uses and gratifications research has also studied motives in variety of other media, such as print media (e.g., Elliott & Quattlebaum, 1979; Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973; Payne, Severn & Dozier, 1988; Salwen & Anderson, 1984), radio (e.g., Armstrong & A. Rubin, 1989; Avery, Ellis & Glover, 1978; Surlin, 1986), movie (e.g., Katz et al., 1973), telephone and cell-phone (e.g., Leung & Wei, 1998, 2000; O’Keefe & Sulanowski, 1992), videocassette recorders (VCRs) (e.g., Cohen, Levy & Golden, 1988; A. Rubin & R. Rubin, 1989; Williams & Rice, 1983), and remote control devices (RCDs) (e.g., Walker, 1989; Walker & Bellamy, 1991). New media technologies such as the Internet have also been studied (e.g., Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Papacharissi & A. Rubin, 2000; Papacharissi, 2002).

At the same time, uses and gratifications studies have also examined how psychological and social traits affect motives. Scholars of uses and gratifications believe that communication needs interact with psychological and societal factors to produce communication motives (Rosengren, 1974; A. Rubin, 1984). Studies have reported a variety of social and psychological factors that have explicit influences on media motives, such as
age, education, gender, income, family communication patterns, residence, interpersonal conversation, membership in organization, potential for social interaction and parasocial interaction (see Rayburn, 1996, for a brief review).

The Uses and Gratifications Perspective in a Multi-Media Environment

Since audiences approach certain communication channels based on their motives, the uses and gratifications perspective posits that people select and evaluate communication based on the extent to which certain types of communication can gratify their needs and wants (Katz et al., 1974). Uses and gratification research after the 1970s are contextualized more in a multi-media context (Rayburn, 1996), where media compete with each other and with other forms of non-mediated communication for selection, attention, and use.

Researchers gradually realized that few media are capable of fulfilling all needs; people select from among functional alternatives (Perse & Courtright, 1993). Katz et al. (1973) claimed that if two communication channels serve the same needs equally, they are functional alternatives. Conversely, if they are designed especially to serve different needs, they are specialized. The functional alternative approach has been applied to various uses and gratifications research (e.g., Elliott & Quattlebaum, 1979; Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Katz et al., 1974; Perse & Courtright, 1993; Williams & Rice, 1983). For example, comparisons of mediated and interpersonal communication show that they can serve similar functions (e.g., Elliott & Quattlebaum, 1979; Katz et al., 1973). Thus, they are considered to be complementary.

Later, Dimmick (1993, 2003) developed the theory of niche to express a similar perspective that media, especially those that possess common attributes, compete to coexist in limited resource environments. The niche is the position of a medium in a multidimensional resource space, representing medium’s strategy for survival and growth. The niche of a media is determined by its combination of gratification utilities, gratification opportunities, advertising, consumer time, and consumer spending (Dimmick, 2003). Gratification utilities and opportunities, derived from the uses and gratifications perspective, are properties of a medium to amplify the abilities of audiences to gain satisfaction (Dimmick, 2003). The theory of niche proposes that there is no universal set of gratifications
applicable to all media; domains of gratification are particular to each medium (Eastin, 2005; Eastin & Cooper, 2003).

A medium’s gratification niche may be general or specialized. If a media’s gratification niche overlaps with another media, these two media are perceived as similar and can substitute for each other. If a media provides greater gratifications in certain domains, this media is considered “superior” to its competitors (Dimmick, 2003). Previous niche studies found that in order for newer media to compete successfully, they must first gratify similar needs as the older medium. Secondly, the new medium must provide superior gratification utilities (e.g., Ramirez, Dimmick, Feaster & Lin, 2008; Dimmick, Kline & Stafford, 2000; Dimmick, Sikand & Patterson, 1994; Li, 2001). Media that fail to do so will be partially or completely replaced by other media.

**Uses and Gratifications in New Media Technology**

With the development of new technology, media research has been extended to include various new media. The uses and gratifications perspective has been recommended as a framework to study new media technologies since it can reveal not only the consequences of media consumption, but also why people engage in certain types of media behavior (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996).

Most uses and gratifications research on new media technology has adopted the functional alternative approach by comparing computer mediated communication motives with motives for other forms of communication. Findings from contemporary uses and gratifications studies provide support for social information processing theory and the hyperpersonal perspective. Computer mediated communication is capable of gratifying some of the interpersonal needs, such as: social interaction, interpersonal utility (Papacharissi & A. Rubin, 2000; Parker & Plank, 2000; Kaye & Johnson, 2002). More importantly, computer mediated communication provides greater satisfactions for some interpersonal motives. For example, Internet provides social venues for internally oriented, shy, or reticent people to widen their social circle, thus decreasing loneliness, depression, estrangement, and isolation while increasing self-acceptance and self-liking (e.g., Chan, 2006; Cole, 2000; Flaherty, Pearce & R. Rubin, 1998; Kelly & Keaten, 2007; Papacharissi & A. Rubin, 2000; Stritzke,
Regarding competition between computer-mediated communication and traditional media, studies have also found that the Internet can serve as an alternative for many mass media outlets. Using information needs as an example, researchers have found that while the TV network news broadcasts continued to slide in popularity, the audience was expanding for news distributed on the Internet (The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2005). The reason for the proliferation of digital news consumption is that people are motivated to search for the most updated and specific information (Flavian & Gurrea, 2009). The fast speed, low cost, and direct interaction with other users bestow the Internet with several advantages to fulfill these needs and, thus, threaten traditional media. Gratifying diversion needs is the most salient motive for both Internet and TV usage. However, the Internet provides a more convenient way to satisfy this need, replacing TV for satisfying the entertainment needs for some audience members (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Shao, 2008).

Meanwhile, the unique functions of computer mediated communication allow this new medium to satisfy some motives that other media can hardly gratify, which makes it “superior” than many other media. For example, in online virtual communities like Youtube and Facebook, online users can “co-view” and “share” information with each other although being physically apart. This unique experience satisfies people’s needs of belonging and accompanying. Meanwhile, as addressed by social identity and deindividuation theory, the physical absence of online community members, once thought to result in individual isolation, actually strengthens the identity as a group (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Wellman, 2001; Shao, 2008). Soukup (2006) described cyberspace as the virtual “third place” for social interaction, where community is formed, maintained, and revitalized for informal social interaction.

CULTURE AS A MEDIA CONSUMPTION ANTECEDENT

Culture has various definitions. For example, Hofstede (1984) defined culture as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” (p. 25). Collier (1997) defined culture as “a historically transmitted system of
symbols, meanings, and norms” (p. 36). Culture is also defined as a “symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process in which people create shared meanings” (Lustig & Koester, 1993, p. 25). However, the conceptual boundary of culture cannot be drawn from these various definitions. Distinguishing characteristics can be identified for almost any defined group, yielding endless possibilities for defining specific meanings of culture. Therefore, the conceptual boundary of culture is drawn arbitrarily by outside observers, based on what makes sense from their own standpoints. This study uses culture to designate characteristics at the national level, in order to compare the use of blogs within Chinese and American cultures. Within each nation, however, multitudes of cultural subgroups can be identified, based on race, ethnicity, gender, and occupation. The present study does not seek to distinguish these subgroupings.

This section reviews some of previous research on cultural studies and introduces several ways of defining cultural dimensions. A brief comparison between Chinese and American cultures is drawn as preparation for future discussion.

**Culture that Influences Behaviors**

Culture provides a highly selective screen between people and the outside world. According to Hall (1981), people must contend with a huge volume of information. To maximize the information-handling capacity of the sensory system, only a little information is allowed to be processed in the system, thus avoiding system overload. Culture serves to protect the nervous system from information overload by taking in some information while filtering out other information. In many ways, culture designates what we pay attention to and what we ignore.

Meanwhile, what a person chooses to take in, either consciously or unconsciously, gives meaning to his or her world. Events are devoid of meaning until someone assigns meaning to them. Culture provides the context within which meaning is generated (Barnlund, 1997; Hall, 1981). From a linguistic perspective (e.g., Hall, 1981), language is a highly abstracted code of the real event. Creation of this code is based on the norms of the culture. By encoding and decoding the language, people form a more complete picture of the event through the process of contexting. Meaning and context are inextricably bound together:
“Cultures exist primarily to create and preserve common systems of symbols by which their members can assign and exchange meanings” (Barnlund, 1997, p. 29).

The attribution of meanings is always a creative process. Each individual has only limited cultural experience so that what people know is but an abstraction of what there is to know (Porter & Samovar, 1997). On the other hand, people who share a common culture can usually be counted on to behave in a similar way. “Culture reduces the chances of surprise by shielding people from the unknown” (Porter & Samovar, 1997, p. 12). First, culture defines the boundaries of different groups. Despite these boundaries, people outside of a culture sometimes can become members of that culture. Cultural similarities make the sharing of meaning possible. All human beings have some understanding of each other. A degree of homogeneity is required for communication to be initiated (Casmir & Asuncion-Lande, 1989). Second, culture can be learned through explicit teaching or implicit acquisition (Banks, 2000).

**Culture Dimensions Reflected in Chinese and American Culture**

Cultures such as those found in China and the United States differ widely with regard to context. According to Hall (1981), in high context cultures, most of the meaning is either implied by the physical setting or is presumed to be part of the individual’s internalized beliefs, values, and norms. Very little is provided in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. In a low-context culture, in contrast, the majority of the information is vested in the explicit code. China is considered as a high-context culture, while American locates on the other side of this continuum. This cultural distinction leads to different communication patterns.

In a high-context culture, as in China, meanings are internalized and nonverbal codes are highly emphasized. In a low-context culture like the United States, details of the message are expressed precisely and specifically in the words that people use to communicate (Hall, 1981). Therefore, non-verbal cues, such as facial expression and gesture, are more important for people from high-context culture when they interpret communication. Thus, people from high-context culture have a greater tendency to make assumptions about strangers based on their background. They are more reluctant and cautious to talk with strangers, when
compared to people from low-context culture (Gudykunst, 1983). In Korea, if a person said “Hello” or “Good morning” to a stranger, he or she would be looked upon as a rather odd person (Yum, 1997). This is because high-context cultures make greater distinctions between insiders and outsiders than low-context cultures do. People in high-context cultures use different codes when communicating with group-members and outsiders (Hall, 1981). In a high-context culture, the commitment between people is very strong and deep; responsibility to others takes precedence over responsibility to oneself (Lustig & Koester, 1993).

Hofstede (1983) identified four cultural dimensions that may influence people’s perceptions and behaviors: power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Power distance indicates the degree to which members of a society accept that power in this society is distributed unequally. Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. Such discomfort leads them to support beliefs and institutions promising conformity. Individualism is defined as a preference for a loosely tied society in which individuals takes care of themselves and their immediate families only. Collectivism, on the other hand, is based on a preference for a tightly knit society in which individuals expect group members to look after them, in exchange for enhanced group loyalty. Masculinity indicates a social preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material success, while femininity involves a social preference for relationships, modesty, caring for the weak, and the quality of life.

Compared to American culture, Chinese culture exhibits greater power distance, favoring collectivism and femininity over individualism and masculinity. Chinese people are more tolerant of uncertainty and focus more on long-term rewards. Characteristics of culture influence the patterns and habits of interpersonal communication. For example, people in higher power-distance cultures tend not to question the reasons for issues, while people in low power distance cultures prefer a participative, autonomous, and independent communication environment (Lustig & Koester, 1993). According to Hofstede (1991), in a collectivistic culture, maintenance of harmony with social environment is highly emphasized. Direct confrontation of another person is considered rude and undesirable. This makes the word “no” hard to express. By contrast, in an individualistic culture, competition among opinions is believed to lead to higher truths. Also, people with higher demands for
uncertainty avoidance tend to gather more background information in their conversation with strangers than do people with lower demands to avoid uncertainty (Gudykunst, 1983). Gender also plays a role in differentiating communication. For example, males are generally less willing to disclose intimate details than females (Goodwin & Lee, 1994).

This study views culture as an antecedent factor that influences people’s behavior regarding computer-mediated communication. Specifically, this study focuses on blogs, a very new form of computer-mediated communication, to explore people’s blogging motives and the levels of self-disclosure involved in blogs between people embedded in American and Chinese cultures.

CULTURE AND INDIVIDUAL MOTIVES FOR BLOGGING

Blogs are a recent form of computer-mediated communication that has attained widespread popularity (Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004). However, only a few studies have examined blogs from a relational communication perspective (e.g., Lu & Hsiao, 2007; Miura, 2007; Miura & Yamashita, 2007). This section provides a brief review of blogging development, and discusses some features of blogs that are similar with other computer-mediated communication. Based on the reviews of computer-mediated communication, uses and gratifications perspective, and cultural studies, three research questions are proposed in this section to study cultural influence and gender differences on motives of writing blogs.

Conceptualization of Blog

Early research conceptualized blogs as continually updated websites containing dated entries in reversed chronological order (Herring, Kouper, et al., 2004; Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Blogs originated from paper dairies, journals, and chronicles (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht & Swartz, 2004). The first present-day format of blogs appeared in 1996; the term “weblog” was first applied in 1997 by John Barger, founder of one of the contemporary blog websites. Since 1999, blogging grew dramatically, spurred by the release of the first free blogging software, Pitas (Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004). Pitas allows people to easily create their own blogs. Updated online posts, like personal homepages, were available on the Internet for years prior to the invention of blog software. However, the introduction of blog software and Web 2.0 made the maintenance of personal
online posts feasible for a much larger and less technically versed population (Miura & Yamashita, 2007). Without the need to write HTML code, blog systems gave the public true power to play the role of the sender or source in mass mediated communication.

Early research (Blood, 2002) distinguished three basic types of blogs: filters, personal journals, and notebooks. Filters contain little original content, but include more links to other websites that the blog’s authors found online. By contrast, personal journals are used to express bloggers’ lives, and inner thoughts and feelings, which are usually written by the authors themselves. Notebooks are either external or internal; they are distinguished from other blogs by longer, focused essays. After analyzing 203 randomly selected blogs, Herring, Scheidt, and their colleges (2004) found that the use of blogs as personal journals (70.4%) is overwhelmingly the most common among all types of blogs.

**Blogs as a Member of Computer-Mediated Communication**

Operated online, blogs share three basic characteristics with other forms of computer-mediated communication: paucity of nonverbal cues, anonymity, and asynchrony.

Among the very few studies of blogs from a uses and gratifications perspective, Lu and Hsiao (2007) analyzed two factors that may influence people’s intentions of continuing informational blogs: self-efficacy and personal outcome expectations. They found out that people tend to undertake behaviors that they believe will lead to a “better” outcome. Self-efficacy is used to explain people’s judgments of their capabilities to execute courses of action that can result in a designated outcome. In blogging, the perceived performance accomplishment (i.e., information creation ability and knowledge-sharing experience) has direct and significant influence on intentions to update blogs. People’s information motives are reinforced when they receive rewards or enhancements of their self-images on blogs. This research indicates that blog feedback plays an important role in affecting blogging outcome expectations. This study asserts that social persuasion, such as the reputation system of the blog service provider, exerts less influence on people’s blogging behavior than predicted by early research in this area (e.g., Lucas & Spitler, 2000; Taylor & Todd, 1995).

Miura and Yamashita (2007) conducted a survey in Japan, providing further evidence of the importance of feedback in influencing blogging motives. They concluded that positive
feedback from readers (i.e., sympathy, support, and encouragement) provided strong social-emotional support for blog authors to continue posting to their blogs. Negative feedback (i.e., criticism, complaints, and quibbles) reduces the perceived quality of blog entries. The satisfaction that comes from being accepted by others exerted the strongest influence on bloggers’ intentions to continue blogging.

Nardi and his colleagues (2004) conducted a qualitative research among 23 different kinds of blog authors and identified five major blogging motives: (1) To document personal life, (2) to provide commentaries and opinions, (3) to channel deep emotions, (4) to articulate thoughts, and (5) to form and maintain communities. Papacharissi (2004) conducted content analysis to discover blogging motives, and found out that personal expression and social utility are the primary motives for blogging.

Combining uses and gratifications and computer-mediated communication methodology, this study conducted a quantitative survey to study blogging motives. Since motive is a core concept in understanding media use and outcomes, exploring blogging motives helps to form a clearer view of the uses of this new media technology.

RQ1: What are the individual motives for blogging?

Meanwhile, blogs have gained worldwide popularity. In China, the population of Internet users with personal blogs/spaces had reached 182 million by late June, 2009. The number of users increased by a net 19.84 million, with rate accelerating at 53.8% from late 2008 (China Internet Network Information Center, 2009). Since the cultures of China and America vary widely on different dimensions, it’s quite likely that Chinese and Americans use blogs for different reasons. Therefore, besides identifying the motivations for blogging, another aim of this study is to analyze the blogging motives between Chinese and American Internet users to determine the influence of culture on blogging behaviors and outcomes.

RQ2: What are the differences, if any, of blogging motives between Chinese and Americans and what role does culture play in those differences?

Besides culture, this study also tested gender as an independent variable that may influence blogging motives. Previous research has shown that gender is related to different blogging behaviors. For example, females create more personal journals than males, while filter blogs and notebooks blogs are created almost exclusively by males (Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Also, men and women exhibit different patterns
in language usage, choice of topics and revelation of identity through communication (Flanagin et al., 2002; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005). These differences may be from the products of different blogging motives. Therefore, this study asks whether gender has any influence on blogging motives:

RQ3: What are the differences, if any, of blogging motives between males and females?

### SELF-DISCLOSURE IN BLOGS

Previous research on blogs has found that self-expression could be one of the primary blogging motives (e.g., Papacharissi, 2004). This study examines self-disclosure, in particular, as one of the most important blogging outcomes. Self-disclosure, the self-related information one reveals through communication, is vital in developing and maintaining interpersonal communication. Arguably, self-disclosure fosters closeness and intimacy, and help to form a more coherent and integrated self identity (Gibbs et al., 2006; Pennebaker, 1989).

Although many studies have examined self-disclosure in interpersonal communication, similar research in computer-mediated communication is quite rare. Most research on self-disclosure in computer-mediated communication is limited to a single cultural context (e.g., Gibbs et al., 2006; Papacharissi & A. Rubin, 2000; Wysocki, 1998). This study, however, explores self-disclosure in two distinct blogging context to analyze the influence that culture may exert on different aspects of self-disclosure. Studying self-disclosure in computer-mediated communication may extend the scope of some well-established theories of relational development. For example, uncertainty reduction (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) has been studied almost exclusively in the context of interpersonal communication. Meanwhile, comparing cultural influences on self-disclosure in blogs and those in face to face communication as found in previous research illuminates the functional relationship between blogs and face to face communication.

### Conceptualization of Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure was conceptualized as any information about the self that an individual communicates to others (Wheeless, 1978; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). Holtgraves
(1990) identified four components of self-disclosure: (1) information about the self is communicated verbally to others, (2) the disclosure is voluntary and intentional, (3) the information provided is not readily evident to another, and (4) the disclosure must have implicit or explicit reference to the self.

Previous research provides evidence that self-disclosure plays an important role in both the initiation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships; appropriate self-disclosure fosters closeness and intimacy (e.g., Greene, Derlega & Mathews, 2006; Levinger & Rands, 1985; Lippert & Prager, 2001; Marston, Hecht, Manke, McDaniel & Reeder, 1998; Monsour, 1992; Parks & Floyd, 1996; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). In contrast to factual self-disclosure, emotional disclosure of self, in particular, contributes to the development of relational intimacy (Laurenceau, Barrett & Pietromonaco, 1998).

The strengthening of closeness and intimacy, as enhanced by appropriate self-disclosure, increases the length or duration of personal relationships. For example, Berg and McQuinn (1986) found that heterosexual couples who reported greater self-disclosure at the initial contact dated longer than did those who reported lesser self-disclosure. More importantly, the strengthening of intimacy improves the quality of relationships. For example, marital satisfaction is associated with disclosure of private information and emotions, as well as the perception of being understood by one’s partner (Lippert & Prager, 2001; Hendrick, 1981). The same principle applies to friendships, too. Self-disclosure is associated with the strength of friendships (Broder, 1982; Wong & Bond, 1999).

On the other hand, when self-disclosure is insufficient about such pivotal events as shame or guilt, physiological stress and obsessive thinking are likely to increase (Derlega, Metts, Petronio & Margulis, 1993; Lippert & Prager, 2001).

However, self-disclosure can pose risks to relationships if not practiced appropriately. Inappropriate self-disclosure may invite ridicule or even rejection, leaving the self-discloser in a socially awkward or vulnerable position (Pennebaker, 1989). Several factors contribute to judgments about the appropriateness of self-disclosure, including the degree of intimacy in the relationship, the participants’ expectations about appropriateness, cultural norms regarding self-disclosure, the degree of reciprocity with regard to self-disclosure, the degree of intimacy of the disclosure itself, potential risks, and the effects of self-disclosure (Hastings, 2000b). For example, too much negative self-disclosure in the early stage of a relationship
may have a negative effect on relationship enhancement (Greene et al., 2006).

**Different Dimensions of Self-Disclosure**

Wheeless (1976) explicated five dimensions of self-disclosure: depth, intent to disclose, amount of disclosure, positive or negative nature of disclosure, and honesty/accuracy of disclosure.

People use different disclosure strategies according to their communication motives (Derlega, 1984; Martin & Anderson, 1995). People in a trusting relationship tend to self-disclose more information, deeper information, and more honest information (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). However, when self-disclosure to spouses, friends, and parents are compared, people usually disclose more information and deeper information to their spouses and friends than they do to their parents (Gilbert & Whiteneck, 1976). R. Rubin, A. Rubin, and Martin (1993) provided evidence that people who have a greater motive for affinity are more positive, more intentional, and more honest in their self-disclosure than people who are less motivated. Wheeless and Grotz (1976) found that healthy communicators tended to disclose more positive than negative information; positive self-disclosure, in turn, leads to a greater marital satisfaction (Lippert & Prager, 2001). Within a family, parents are more open and honest than their children in disclosing self-related information and opinion (Barnes & Olson, 1985). Youths use more positive self-disclosures to their parents, but disclose with greater depth and honesty with their friends (Tardy, Hosman & Bradac, 1981). Research findings have also shown that loneliness is inversely related to self-disclosure: lonely people are more dishonest, more negative, and less revealing through self-disclosure (Leung, 2002), when compared to people who are not lonely. Although the sheer frequency of self-disclosure is important, equally important are the various dimensions of self-disclosure that people invoke in interpersonal communication and computer-mediated communication.

**Culture and Self-Disclosure**

Self-disclosure is a pathway through which cultural identity is expressed, since self-disclosure is performed for reasons that make sense within a specific group (Hastings, 2000a). As Carbaugh (1990) argued, people “symbolize a common identity that is historically grounded, socially constrained, and invokes patterns that are uniquely meaningful to a group”
Culture plays an important role in assessing the appropriateness of self-disclosure (Hastings, 2000b). According to Collier and Thomas (1988), “because rules are so central to identity, and because identities vary in such dimensions as scope, salience, and intensity, it follows that rules also vary along these dimensions” (p. 109). Current theorizing regarding self-disclosure may be bounded or constrained by individualistic American or Western cultural identity. The influence of collective culture on self-disclosure has received little attention (Hastings, 2000b).

SELF-DISCLOSURE IN INDIVIDUALISTIC AND COLLECTIVISTIC CULTURES

Studies have examined how individualistic and collectivistic cultures influence the degree to which people express themselves. People in individualistic cultures, such as in American and Western European cultures, have an independent concept of “self.” People embedded in individualistic cultures willingly express their unique, individual attributes through self-disclosure. People in collectivistic cultures (such as in Japan, elsewhere in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, and in many southern European cultures) have an interdependent construction of self. People in collectivistic cultures tend to restrain unique attributes in interpersonal communication, especially when significant others are involved (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). By withholding some of their opinions, people in collectivistic cultures try to maintain group harmony and cohesion; individualistic cultures foster personalized relationships which are characterized by riskier interpersonal exchanges (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). Therefore, in interpersonal communication, people in individualistic cultures are more frequent self-disclosers and more intentional in their use of self-disclosure than people in collectivistic cultures (e.g., Barnlund, 1989; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984; Wolfson & Pearce, 1983).

For example, Chen (1995) found that Americans consistently showed a higher level of self-disclosure than the Chinese on topics of opinions, interests, work, financial issues, personality, and body. In Chinese culture, one’s “acts,” rather than one’s speech, is considered the more effective way to develop of interpersonal relationships. This belief is grounded in the traditional Chinese perspective that people should reject debate and argumentation in the process of communication. Barnlund (1975) argued that the Japanese
“are more formal and cautious in expressing themselves and communicate less openly and freely” (p. 64), when compared to Americans. Ting-Toomey’s (1991) research further supported this conclusion by discovering that Japanese participants had significant lower scores on self-disclosure than did Americans, because the collectivism orientation made them more careful about their individual behaviors that had consequences for the group. Goodwin and Lee (1994) also found that Chinese respondents exhibited more taboos than did British respondents when talking to their friends. Escaping taboos helped Chinese respondents regulate self-disclosure in order to save “face.” Unconstrained reactions could threaten the face of the discloser or damage the social esteem of others in the group.

**SELF-DISCLOSURE IN LOW-CONTEXT AND HIGH-CONTEXT CULTURES**

The cultural dimension of context also is used to explain differences in self-disclosure in conversations. Nakanishi’s (1987) studied the perceptions of self-disclosure in initial interactions among the Japanese. Compared to Americans, Japanese generally showed a high reluctance to initiate conversations with strangers. However, when people from high-context cultures seek to avoid uncertainty in communication, they engage in greater collection of background information (Gudykunst, 1983). The sharing of background information may lead to greater depth of self-disclosure, although the frequency of self-disclosure may not increase. In high-context cultures, the bonds between group members are very strong. Thus, the extent of involvement and commitment to long-term relationships is higher than in low-context cultures (Lustig & Koester, 1993). For example, Wheeless, Erickson and Behrens (1986) indicated that deeper self-disclosure was associated with participants with non-Western cultural origins; more frequent self-disclosures were associated with American participants.

Regarding the positive and negative dimension of self-disclosure, Wheeless and his colleges (1986) found that more positively intended disclosiveness (i.e., the tendency to disclose) was associated with American participants than non-Westerners. Nakanishi (1987) also indicated that the Japanese reported lower levels of positive self-disclosure than the Americans.
Findings are ambiguous with regard to the honesty dimension of self-disclosure among Chinese and American people. On the one hand, people in high-context culture, with collectivistic orientation, show great loyalty to their group (Lustig & Koester, 1993), which should lead to the honest exchange of information. The emphasis on long-term rewards in Asian culture is also posited to deter dishonesty. On the other hand, the imperative to save face and preserve relationships, both strong features of Asian culture, may encourage dishonesty.

Self-Disclosure in Computer-Mediated Communication

This study examines different dimensions of self-disclosure in computer mediated communication setting, particularly to compare self-disclosure within Chinese and American culture. Although similar in many aspects, the features of computer mediated communication, such as asynchrony, anonymity, lack of non-verbal cues, may encourage people engage in different kinds of self-disclosure than in face to face communication. For example, Wysocki (1998) provided evidence that self-disclosure in computer mediated communication is richer and progresses faster than in face to face communication. Perhaps the anonymity of Internet reduces feelings of discomfort one may experience in face to face communication. From a functional alternative perspective, research indicates that people who are not satisfied with their real lives use the Internet as an alternative to face-to-face communication. Through computer mediated communication, dissatisfied people may find it easier to self-disclose (Kraut et al., 1998; Papacharissi & A. Rubin, 2000). Based on the uncertainty reduction theory, Tidwell and Walther (2002) provided evidence that people in computer mediated communication produced significantly higher proportions of self-disclosures than did people in face to face communication. Computer mediated communication partners usually form deeper, though not broader, impressions during their communications.

This study examines all five dimensions of self-disclosure in blogs from Chinese and American respondents. Although comparisons have been made of self-disclosures in interpersonal communication, cultural differences regarding self-disclosures in blogs is largely unexplored.
RQ4: What are the differences, if any, regarding the five dimensions of self-disclosure between Chinese and American bloggers?

As previously mentioned, the passage of time plays an important role in the development of self-disclosure online (Wysocki, 1998). Social information processing perspective asserts that time is essential for developing online relationships, since extended interactions provide communicators with sufficient exchange of information to build stable relationships (Walter, 1992). With the passage of time, computer-mediated communication enhances intimacy and familiarity; arguably, self-disclosure should occur along all five dimensions. Ma and Leung (2005) provided support for this conclusion after conducting research for ICQ (I seek you), an online chatting software. They found that heavy users of ICQ, (people who use ICQ for an extended period of time) tended to be more intimate and open in their online communication and disclosed more about themselves. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that the frequency and quality of self-disclosure will increase as a function of the amount of time spent on blogging activities.

H1: The more hours spent on blogging, the more frequent the number of self-disclosures.
H2: The more hours spent on blogging, the deeper the self-disclosures.
H3: The more hours spent on blogging, the more honest the self-disclosures.
H4: The more hours spent on blogging, the more intentional the self-disclosures.
H5: The more hours spent on blogging, the more negative the self-disclosures.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify and compare blogging motives for both Chinese and Americans, and to ascertain any influence of gender on blogging motives. At the same time, this study examines any differences regarding self-disclosures in blogs between Chinese and Americans to reveal cultural influences. Time is also posited as an independent variable that affects self-disclosures in blogs. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed in both the U.S. and China. Survey methodology was used since this method is appropriate when studying a population that is “too large to observe directly” (Babbie, 2002, p. 240). Data collected from a survey can be tested for reliability; results from probability samples can be generalized to describe characteristics of large populations (Babbie, 2002).

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of San Diego State University on the purpose of protecting research subjects. IRB approval was not needed in China to conduct any social research.

MEASUREMENTS

The questionnaire consisted of 43 items and divided into 4 sections (see Appendix). The first section contained 4 questions asking participant’s length of time of blogging and frequency of renewing blogs. The second section was composed of 17 items measuring blogging motives. The third section contained 19 items measuring five dimensions of self-disclosure; and the last section consisted of 3 items asking participants’ major, gender, and age.

Blogging Motives

Aggregating motives from interpersonal communication, other mediated communication, and Internet communication, Papacharissi (2002) developed a 21-item, Likert-type Personal Homepage Motives Index, which categorized six major motives for using personal homepage: (1) passing time, (2) entertainment, (3) information, (4) self-
expression, (5) professional advancement, and (6) communication with friends and family. This study developed its own 16-item Blogging Motives Index based on Papacharissi’s study. Blogs and personal homepages share similar functions and features; blogs, however, require less technological expertise of users. Items were adjusted to fit the blogging context. Respondents were asked to rate their levels of agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree.” Negatively worded items were reverse coded (reflected) during data analysis.

Principal-component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to identify blogging motives. Eigenvalue of 1.0 or greater was set to retain factors. Responses to the retained items were summed and averaged to form the scales indicating each factor. Meanwhile, data from China and the U.S. were consolidated into one data file with a variable added to indicate nationality (China = 1, U.S. = 2). Analysis of variance was executed on all 16 items in the Blogging Motives Index as dependent variables, with nationality as the independent variable. Results from these tests were analyzed across the two nationalities to test for the influence of culture on blogging motives.

To test gender’s influence on blogging motives, analysis of variance was used to test all items measuring blogging motives as dependent variables, with gender as the independent variable. Analysis of variance was conducted separately on the data from China and the U.S. to reveal possible cultural differences.

**Self-Disclosure**

Self-disclosure was measured as a multi-dimensional concept, including five subscales. A 40-item General Disclosiveness Scale (GSD) developed by Wheeless (1976) was used in this research. Reverse worded and repetitive items, and items low in reliability were eliminated to form a 19-item Self-disclosure Scale for this research. Each item was further revised to reflect the specifics of the blogging context. For example, one item measures the amount of self-disclosure as follows: “Only infrequently do I express my personal beliefs and opinions.” This was modified to: “I rarely express my personal beliefs and opinions in my blogs.” Respondents were asked to rate their levels of agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree.” Negatively worded items were reverse coded in data analysis.
There were 5 items measuring the amount of self-disclosure (Cronbach $\alpha = .78$ for China and .65 for U.S.); 2 items measuring the honesty dimension of self-disclosure (Cronbach $\alpha = .73$ for China and .62 for U.S.); 4 items measuring depth of self-disclosure (Cronbach $\alpha = .62$ for China and .71 for U.S.); 2 items measuring positive/negative dimension of self-disclosure (Cronbach $\alpha = .82$ for China and .67 for U.S.), and 2 items measuring intention of self-disclosure (Cronbach $\alpha = .55$ for China and .60 for U.S.).

Analysis of variance was conducted using combined data from both countries to analyze the five different dimensions of self-disclosure. Respondents’ nationality was used as the independent variable to reveal cultural differences in self-disclosure.

To examine the association between blogging hours and self-disclosure, two items asked respondents about frequency of renewing blogs, as well as the average minutes of blogging spent each time they renewed. Respondents’ hours spent on writing blogs per month was calculated to indicate blogging hours. Blogging hours were calculated by multiplying blogging renewing frequency times minutes spent on blogging each time. For example, respondent A spent 20 minutes every time on blogging, and renewed blogs once a week. The blogging time for respondent A will be: 20 mins $\times$ 4 (times/month) = 80mins. Respondent B spent 40 minutes every time on posting to blogs, and renewed blogs twice a year. The blogging time for respondent B will be: 40 mins $\times$ 0.17 (times/month) = 6.67mins. For respondents who renewed blogs once or less than once a year, a frequency as 0.13 times/month was assigned in order to calculate blogging time. Subsequently, the square root was calculated on blogging time to correct for the distortion of outliers. One-tail Pearson correlation coefficients were tested between blogging time and self-disclosure for each country separately.

**Questionnaire Design and Pilot Study**

The questionnaire was designed in English, and was later translated into Chinese to obtain a better understanding among Chinese respondents. No back-translation was done. However, a pilot study including 25 Chinese students and 27 American students at San Diego State University was conducted to test the wordings of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was posted on the researcher’s social webpage to collect responses from American participants. The American respondents were asked to not only finish the questionnaire
online but also to provide feedbacks of whether they encounter any difficulties in understanding any questions, and what do they think can be done to achieve a better understanding.

The Chinese respondents of the pilot study were obtained from the researcher’s personal contact. Paper questionnaires were sent to Chinese respondents. Besides finishing the questionnaire, the Chinese respondents were also asked to write down their suggestions on how to improve the wordings of the translations, if they have any difficulties in understanding any questions. Personal interviews were also conducted with some Chinese respondents to discuss the translations and wordings of the questionnaire.

After the pilot study, several reverse-worded questions in the U.S. questionnaire were reframed. For example: A question as “In writing blogs, I do NOT often reveal more desirable things about myself than undesirable things”, was revised to: “In writing blogs, I often reveal more undesirable things about myself than desirable things.” For the Chinese version, 2 questions testing the consciousness of self-disclosure was revised to reach a better understanding.

**SAMPLING AND PROCEDURES**

Research participants of the final survey were composed of young people 19 years to 29 years old. Previous research found out that young people (aged between 20 to 25) form the largest population of bloggers (Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004). Thus, recruiting young people as research subjects was expected to yield a larger proportion of bloggers (valid sample) from the larger sample frame.

In the U.S., college students enrolled in several undergraduate classes at San Diego State University were invited by their graduate teaching associates and professors to participate in an online survey. Participation in the study was voluntary. Extra credits were offered as a reward of survey participation.

A sample of 283 students initially accessed the online questionnaire. Of those, 267 completed the questionnaire, which yielded an early termination rate of 6%. More females (199) than males (68) completed the questionnaire, with a female/male ratio of approximately 3:1. The uneven distribution of gender is due to the population characteristics from which this sample was drawn. More females than males are enrolled in courses at the
particular journalism school studied. Overall, female students make up 57% of the students at the university. The average age of the respondents was 22.6. Among the 267 American respondents, about 26% (n=70) had their own blogs, about 37% (n=99) didn’t have their own blogs, but either read or posted to the blogs of others, and another 37% (n=98) neither posted nor read blogs.

In China, sample was drawn from Shaanxi Normal University, located in the central part of China. Students from 3 undergraduate classes were invited to participate by their professors. Students came from various majors in the Arts, Sciences, and Business. At the same time, researchers asked 3 of her personal contacts to post the survey link on their social networks, and invited their friends to participate. Finally, a sample of 141 students accessed to the online survey. Of those, 132 completed the questionnaire, which yielded an early termination rate of 6%. Among the 132 participants, 66% (n=81) posted to their own blogs, around 30% (n=40) had read or posted to the blogs of others, although didn’t have their own blog. Only 4% (n =5) never wrote or read blogs. Participation in the study was completely voluntary with no participation incentives offered. Chinese respondents were almost evenly divided by gender with 54% female and 46% male. The average age of the respondents was 24.3.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

With the methodology reviewed in previous chapter, this study identified several major motives for posting to blogs, and detected significant cultural differences among Chinese and American bloggers on their blogging motives. Gender was also found to have influence on some of the blogging motives among American respondents. Regarding self-disclosure, culture had significant influence on some dimensions of self-disclosure. This chapter provides a detailed report of the research outcomes.

PRIMARY BLOGGING MOTIVES AMONG CHINESE AND AMERICAN RESPONDENTS

The first research question is to identify blogging motives. The factor analysis for Chinese respondents yielded five interpretable factors: communication and information, pass time, self-expression, professional advancement, and entertainment. The first factor, communication and information (Cronbach $\alpha = .72$), included all three items measuring the communication motive and both items measuring the Information motive from Papacharissi’s (2002) research. Self-expression (Cronbach $\alpha = .77$) was composed of three items revealing bloggers’ motives of disclosing self-related information. Pass time (Cronbach $\alpha = .80$) contained three items indicating a passive usage of blogging, i.e. to kill time when respondents have nothing else to do. Professional advancement motive (Crobach $\alpha = .65$) included three items that revealed bloggings as a way to establish academic reputation and to build professional careers. One item that described the trial use of blogs as an interesting experience also fell in this professional advancement index. The last factor: entertaining (Crobach $\alpha = .24$) contained only two items that described blogging as an entertaining experience. Table 1 summarizes the factor analysis for blogging motives in China. The factor analysis for U.S. respondents resulted in 5 interpretable factors: communication, pass time, self-expression, professional advancement, and traditional media motives. Communication index (Cronbach $\alpha = .77$) contained four items: the same three
Table 1. Factor Loadings for Blogging Motives Among Chinese Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogging Motive Items</th>
<th>Blogging Motive Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I write blogs...</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Communication and Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To communicate with friends far away</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share information I’m interested in</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To know and understand more people</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share useful and interesting information with others</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep contact with family and friends</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue for Communication and Information Motive</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>16.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Self-Expression</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share with others my life and experience</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To tell others a little about myself</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To express my feelings and thoughts</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue for Self-Expression Motive</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>13.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3: Pass Time</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have no other things to do</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To kill time when I’m bored</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To fill up my time</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue for Pass Time Motive</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>13.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4: Professional Advancement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make my academic essays well-known</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To put my resume online</td>
<td>-.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To try new things as blog is very interesting</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue for Professional Advancement Motive</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>12.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 5: Entertaining</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it’s entertaining</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because others are all wring blogs</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue for Pass Time Motive</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
communication motive variables as in China part, and one item describing blogging as an entertaining experience. Pass time (Cronbach $\alpha = .82$) and self-expression (Cronbach $\alpha = .66$) were composed of the same items as their China counterparts. The fourth factor was also named professional advancement (Cronbach $\alpha = .64$) including 2 items as to popularize academic essay and to put resume online. The last factor was called traditional media motive index (Cronbach $\alpha = .48$), since all the items included were either for information needs or for entertainment needs. One item which described blogging as a way to follow social trends was eliminated to improve index reliability. All the 3 items in the traditional media motive index revealed a more conventional orientation to the use of blogs, similar to the motives for consuming traditional media, such as TV, newspapers, and magazines. Table 2 summarized the factor analysis for blogging motives in the U.S.

Among all the items measuring blogging motives, motives related to self-expression ranked as the most important reason for blogging in both countries. In China, students used blogs to share their personal life and experience with others ($M=4.18$, $SD=.94$), and to express their feelings and thoughts ($M=4.35$, $SD=.71$). In the U.S., besides sharing life experiences ($M=4.01$, $SD=.82$) and feelings ($M=3.81$, $SD=1.05$), blogs were also used as an arena to introduce one’s self and to present various aspects of the self ($M=4.03$, $SD=.82$).

Besides motives of self-expression, American students also used blogs quite often to share useful and interesting information with others ($M=4.12$, $SD=.87$), and to entertain themselves ($M=3.97$, $SD=.89$). Chinese students, on the other hand, also considered blogs as an important way to share useful information ($M=4.19$, $SD=.86$) and information of a personal interest ($M=4.16$, $SD=.77$). However, entertainment wasn’t quite as strong a motive for Chinese students to blog.

In contrast, professional advancement scored the lowest for both Chinese and American students. The means for using blogs to post a resume scored 2.03 for American students (SD=1.07) and 1.99 for Chinese students (SD=.91). Using blogs to make one’s academic resume well-known averaged 1.93 for American students (SD=.95), and averaged 2.30 for Chinese students (SD=1.02).

The second research question asked about the relationship between culture and blogging motives. Tests using analysis of variance detected several blogging motives that differed significantly across the China and U.S. samples.
### Table 2. Factor Loadings for Blogging Motives Among American Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogging Motive Items</th>
<th>Blogging Motive Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I write blogs...</em></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To communicate with friends far away</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep contact with family and friends</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is entertaining</td>
<td>.60 .31 .30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To know more people</td>
<td>.59 .43 .30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eigenvalue for Communication Motive</strong></td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Variance</strong></td>
<td>16.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Pass Time</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To fill up my time</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have no other things to do</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To kill time when I’m bored</td>
<td>.24 .77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eigenvalue for Pass Time Motive</strong></td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Variance</strong></td>
<td>15.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3: Self-Expression</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To tell others a little about myself</td>
<td>.77 -.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share with others my life and experience</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To express my feelings and thoughts</td>
<td>.73 .31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eigenvalue for Self-Expression Motive</strong></td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Variance</strong></td>
<td>12.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4: Professional Advancement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make my academic essays well-known</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To put my resume online</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eigenvalue for Professional Advancement Motive</strong></td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Variance</strong></td>
<td>11.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 5: Traditional Media Motives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share interesting and useful information with others</td>
<td>-.36 .72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because other people are all writing blogs</td>
<td>.54 .20 -.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To try new things like blogs are very interesting</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share information I’m interested in</td>
<td>.39 .40 .34 .44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eigenvalue for Traditional Media Motive</strong></td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Variance</strong></td>
<td>10.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The blogging motives related to entertainment needs had a higher mean in the U.S. than in China. Specifically, American students post to blogs more to fill up time when they’re bored, to kill time, or when they have nothing else to do. Also, American students appeared to be more likely than the Chinese students to consider writing blogs as an entertaining and fun experience.

On the other hand, although self-expression was the most important reason for writing blogs in both U.S. and China, Chinese respondents were more likely to use blogs as a way to express self feelings and thoughts. They also posted to blogs more for knowing other people and sharing information with personal interest than did their American counterparts. Meanwhile, although professional advancement motive scored the lowest averages for both Chinese and American students, Chinese respondents posted a higher mean on using blogs as a platform to make their academic papers known.

Table 3 summarizes the analysis of variance used to test for differences in blogging motives between China and the U.S.

**Gender and Blogging Motives**

The third research question examined the influence of gender on blogging motives. Among Chinese respondents, analysis of variance showed no significant differences between men and women with regard to blogging motives. However, U.S. respondents demonstrated several differences on blogging motives with gender as the independent variable. For U.S. respondents, analysis of variance showed that the females were more likely than the males to use blogs as a way to pass time (i.e. to kill time when they are bored, to fill up time, to write blogs when they have nothing better to do). Also, female American respondents also posted to blogs more for communicating with friends and expressing personal feelings and thoughts than did male American respondents.

Table 4 summarizes the analysis of variance tests of gender differences in blogging motives in the U.S.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I'm blogging:</th>
<th>To kill time when I'm bored*</th>
<th>To share interesting and useful info</th>
<th>To know more people*</th>
<th>Because it's entertaining *</th>
<th>To express my feelings and thoughts*</th>
<th>To share info I'm interested in*</th>
<th>To fill up my time*</th>
<th>To put my resume online</th>
<th>To keep contact with family and friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>China</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Value</td>
<td>19.05</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>10.62</td>
<td>27.19</td>
<td>13.05</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.f.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>&lt;.01*</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>&lt;.01*</td>
<td>&lt;.01*</td>
<td>&lt;.01*</td>
<td>&lt;.01*</td>
<td>.01*</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Because others are all writing blogs</td>
<td>To share life and experience</td>
<td>To make my essay well-known*</td>
<td>To try new things like blogs are interesting*</td>
<td>To communicate with friends far away</td>
<td>To tell a little about myself</td>
<td>When I have no other things to do*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>China</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Value</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>8.83</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>19.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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Table 4. Gender Differences in Blogging Motives Among American Respondents

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<th></th>
<th>To share info I’m interested in</th>
<th>To fill up my time*</th>
<th>To put my resume online</th>
<th>To make my essay well-known</th>
<th>To try new things like blogs are interesting</th>
<th>To communicate with friends far away</th>
<th>To tell a little about myself</th>
<th>Because others are all writing blogs</th>
<th>When I have no other things to do*</th>
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(table continues)
Table 4. (continued)

<table>
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<th>I’m blogging:</th>
<th>To kill time when I’m bored*</th>
<th>To share interesting and useful info</th>
<th>To know more people</th>
<th>Because it’s entertaining</th>
<th>To express my feelings and thoughts</th>
<th>To keep contact with family and friends</th>
<th>To share life and experience</th>
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<td>1.73</td>
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<td>Within Group</td>
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<td>.66</td>
<td>.19</td>
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<td>.18</td>
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**CULTURE’S INFLUENCE ON SELF-DISCLOSURE**

The forth research question concerned the relationship between culture and self-disclosure in blogs. Analysis of variance was used to test for differences in the amount of self-disclosure, the depth of self-disclosure, positiveness of self-disclosure, honesty of self-disclosure, and the conscious use of self-disclosure as dependent variables. Nationality was the independent variable. Test results showed Chinese respondents scored higher on the amount of self-disclosure, and the depth of self-disclosure. The honesty dimensions of self-disclosure also differed. All relationships were statistically significant. No significant differences between U.S. and Chinese respondents were found on the positiveness and conscious dimension of self-disclosure. The results of the tests for culture and self-disclosure are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5. Differences in Self-Disclosure in China and the U.S.**

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</table>
**BLOGGING TIME AND ENGAGED SELF-DISCLOSURE**

In general, American respondents spent more time on writing blogs every month than Chinese respondents. Specifically, American students spent an average of 15.63 minutes every month on posting to blogs, while Chinese respondents spent an average of 5.84 minutes every month on posting to blogs. Time was included in the hypothesis to examine its influence on self-disclosure. However, zero-order coefficients detected no significant correlations between minutes spent blogging and any of the dimensions of self-disclosure.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Findings from this research revealed that blogging serves as a functional alternative to some traditional media as well as an alternative to interpersonal communication. Meanwhile, blogging serves a very unique function gratifying self-expression needs. People from the U.S. and China use blogs for different motives and perform different levels of self-disclosure when writing blogs. This chapter discusses findings from this research from a uses and gratifications perspective, and provides cultural comparisons of blogging usage. Limitations of this research and directions for future research are detailed at the end of this chapter.

**SELF-EXPRESSION AND BLOGS AS A FUNCTIONAL ALTERNATIVE**

One of the most important findings from this research is that self-expression was scored the highest as a motive to stimulate blogging behaviors in both China and the U.S., although respondents from each country varied somewhat in their specific blogging habits. In China, blogs were used to record the blogger’s life experiences, emotions, and thoughts. For the Americans, in addition recording blogger’s life experience, emotions, and thoughts, blogs were also used to discuss and introduce one’s self to a wider audience. This finding of self-expression as one of the primary reasons for blogging is consistent with the results from several other studies that looked at a single culture (e.g., Kawaura, Yamashita & Kawakai, 1999; Papacharissi, 2004). This study provides evidence that writing blogs to gratify the self-expression motive is not specific to any one culture. Rather, this desire for self-expression may be a universal motive; in any case, this motive is strongly present in both China and the U.S.

The function of blogging—to gratify self-expression needs—bestows this new medium with a unique competitive strength in the multi-media environment, since self-expression is difficult to satisfy through traditional mass media. Even when compared to other forms of computer-mediated communication, which also allow users to participate in the creation of content, blogging has several “superior” features to help gratify self-
expression in a superior way. First, blogging technology doesn’t require users to create and maintain their own servers or write complicated computer code. Blogging utilizes free space on public servers, requiring only a few minutes to set up (Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004; Ramos & Piper, 2006). User-friendly blogging software provides real power for grassroots involvement in public discussions and facilitates personal presentations. Second, the advanced feedback systems of blogs facilitate online relational interaction. For example, TrackBack, a blog mechanism for communicating among different blogs and readers, can “ping” the entries of other blogs that mention, comment, or refer to the original blog. This allows conversations to flow across several related blogs, forming the so-called “blogosphere”—the web environment in which blog authors are “forming connections with others while progressing along their own paths” (Badger, 2004, Quotation, para. 2). Commenting systems like TrackBack help to build online communities within which members feel more comfortable to exchange self-related information.

Compare to face-to-face communication, blogs provide a functional alternative to satisfy needs for self-expression. Scholars believe that people tend to share more accurate and honest information of a private nature with random strangers than they do with acquaintance, because disclosures to strangers permit feelings of impunity. The anonymous environment of computer-mediated communication reduces feelings of discomfort one may experience in face-to-face communication and encourages communicators to engage in more intimate questions and interrogations (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). Findings from this study support this functional alternative perspective by showing that self-expression was the primary reason for writing blogs among both Chinese and American respondents.

Especially for Chinese respondents, blogs were used significantly more for reaching out to know more people, and to express self feelings and thoughts. This is not surprising given the fact that Chinese media serve as the information tool of the Communist Party (Zhang, 2002). Blogging, as a new computer-mediated communication with less government censorship, serves as a media alternative for people to present their opinions and feelings which they may feel uncomfortable expressing in interpersonal communication.
OTHER BLOGGING MOTIVES

Data from both China and the U.S. also identified several blogging motives that were similar to motives that apply to traditional media, such as the information and the entertainment motives. In the China responses, blogs were largely used to share useful and interesting information. Besides information motives, the U.S. respondents indicated that blogging was also an entertaining experience. This result reveals some “gratification overlaps” (Dimmick et al., 2000) between blogs and traditional media. Previous research claimed that gratification overlap can be considered as an index of the substitutability of two media (e.g., Dimmck, 1993; Dimmick et al., 2000). That is to say, if some media can better gratify overlapping motives, those media will have a competitive advantage.

However, blogs were not considered an “academic” or “professional” medium by respondents in either China or the U.S. Neither nationality fully utilized the benefits of blogging’s world-wide connection to enhance their careers or to popularize their academic achievements. Professional advancement was the lowest rated motivation for blogging, compared to all other motives. That said, Chinese respondents wrote blogs significantly more for popularizing their academic essays, while American respondents posted to blogs more to satisfy entertainment needs than did Chinese respondents.

GENDER, BLOGGING MOTIVES AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

This study also examined the relations between gender and blogging motives. Findings showed that although no significant relations were detected among Chinese respondents, the American respondents did have significant gender difference in writing blogs. The female Americans posted to blogs more from “entertainment” and “communication” motives than did male Americans. This is an interesting finding in that, in past cultural studies, Asian cultures were perceived as having a more distinguished gender differences than did Western cultures. However, from this study, we found that, among Chinese respondents, the gender difference on writing blogs was diminishing, and even less detectable than the gender difference among American respondents. This finding supports the “female individualization” (Kim, 2010) movement undergoing in many Asian countries, such as China, Japan, and Korea. With the process of globalization and the improvement of women’s education, women in these countries have a stronger desire to participate in all
kinds of social activities. However, with social controls denying women the ability to act their own, women’s willingness to be more independent is expressed in their media consumption, where more freedom can be gained. This “overcompensation” of women individualization online may explain the blurring of differences between men and women with regard to writing blogs.

**CULTURAL DIFFERENCES ON SELF-DISCLOSURE IN BLOGS**

Regarding self-disclosure, Chinese respondents reported more frequent self-disclosures while blogging than did their American counterparts. Previous research in interpersonal communication found the opposite tendency: people in individualistic cultures disclosed more about themselves than did people in collectivistic cultures (e.g., Barnlund, 1989; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984; Wolfson & Pearce, 1983). This difference provides further evidence that when one channel is restricted or fails to fulfill a need, individuals will choose a functional alternative (R. Rubin & A. Rubin, 1992). In collective cultures like China, where self-disclosure in face-to-face communication is discouraged and habituated, blogs become a safe arena where people can reveal more of the self.

Along a similar line, this research also found that Chinese students posted deeper, more negative, and more honest self-disclosures in their blogs than did American students. Previous interpersonal research also found that—although people from collective cultures disclose less frequently about the self—deeper self-disclosures and more negative self-disclosures were found among non-Western communicators within their group (e.g., Wheeless, Erickson & Behrens, 1986).

The individualism-collectivism dimension of culture is often used to understand the differences in honesty, depth, and positive/negative dimension of self-disclosure. Chinese culture is widely considered as collectivist-oriented, which emphasizes group or group-based interests or activities (e.g., Sriramesh, 2004; Chen & Culbertson, 2003) over those of the individual. However, this notion of collectivism is based on the Western understanding of self, which misses or ignores several nuances of Chinese collectivism. First, the western interpretation of self represents autonomous, unitary, and independent individuals (Choi & Cameron, 2005). Based on this definition, the collectivism means a generalized collectivity of people (Hui & Triandis, 1986), in which they choose to “voluntarily join or voluntarily
withdraw from” (Yum, 1997, p. 79). According to Varenne (1977), Americans perceive collectivity “not as a system made up of different groups considered to be in a symbiotic relationship, but rather of different individuals who come together to do something” (p. 53). However, Asian collectivism is based on the view that individuals are physically present but psychologically invisible and unrecognized, making We-ness the fundamental substructure of its culture (Choi & Cameron, 2005). The concept of “We-ness” encourages all members to stay together with a shared sense of belonging to a team and a strong dedication to group goals. Therefore, collectivism in China fosters a greater within-group intimacy and trust than does the individualism of Western culture and the U.S. Issues of saving face to the contrary, Chinese culture encourages self-disclosures to be deep, more negative, and more honest and self-disclosures among members of individualistic cultures.

With regard to blogging, this deeper, more negative, and honest communication applies to a larger population of strangers. Blogs are read not only by friends, but also by people whom the blogger has never met. This wider self-disclosure in blogs may be the result of reduced hierarchy and shortened power distance. In blogging communities, people are perceived as having more equal status, rather than highly different and hierarchical backgrounds. Meanwhile, the anonymous environment of blogging largely eliminates possible punishments from the “significant others” in face-to-face communication. These features of blogs further blur the boundaries between the “within group” and the outsiders, extending the concept of “We-ness” to a larger population.

**OTHER FINDINGS**

This study also found out some other interesting blogging phenomena among Chinese students and American students. More American students participated in the survey than Chinese students. That is, 65% of the Americans from total sample responded, compared to only 35% from the Chinese total sample. However, actual bloggers included in the survey contained more Chinese than Americans (59% vs. 41%). In China, for every ten people, almost seven of them have their own blogs. In the U.S., only around four out of ten people are bloggers. However, American students who do blog spent more time blogging than did Chinese students. Therefore, although authoring blogs has greater penetration (reach) in China, American students are more frequent consumers of blogs than their Chinese
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings from this research should be interpreted with caution as there are several limitations. First, this study used purposive or judgmental sampling method (Babbie, 2004), which is not a representative sampling method. Therefore, findings from this research may not generalize to a larger population, i.e. the whole Chinese and American population. Respondents to this survey are college students from China and U.S. and not representative of all segments of their cultures. Young students do form the majority of online bloggers; however, caution is still needed when generalizing research results to a larger population with diverse demographic features not represented in the sample. This is especially problematic, given the fact that Web technology has popularized blogs to a population that varies with regard to age, education, occupation, etc. (Miura & Yamashita, 2007). Meanwhile, the sample size in this research was comparatively small for a multi-national research. This was because students who had their own blogs were only a portion of the total sample recruited, which dramatically reduced the amount of valid data. Future research with a larger and more diverse sample would be helpful to draw a more precise picture on blog usage.

Second, this research relied on a self-administered survey to collect data. Besides the inherit limitations of survey methods, Walther (1992) critiqued the effectiveness of measuring computer-mediated communication for a variety of functions through self-reports. Assessing actual performance would provide more reliable and accurate data. This may be an even bigger concern for surveys conducted across nations, since people from different countries might have different standards to assess the same feelings. In Chinese culture, respondents tend to favor the middle of the two extremes, which may result in more “neutral” assessments to each statement. Americans, on the other hand, might be more “extreme” about their self-judgments. Future research can use more direct observational methods, such as content analysis, to examine blogging motives and self-disclosure included to compare with findings from this study.

Finally, as an exploratory study, this project focused on discovering relationships worthy of further exploration. These included an exploration of blogging motivations and the frequency and type of self-disclosures. These dependent variables were only tested as a
function of culture, gender, and length of time devoted to blogging. The empirical findings of this study suggest areas for the development of theory. For example, this research provides evidence that culture and gender are two factors that influence the motivations for blogging. Many other factors may also affect blogging motives and self-disclosure and have different influence across nations. Scholars has found that the types of blogs (e.g., Herring, Scheidt, et al., 2004; Papacharissi, 2002) and feedback (e.g., Laurenceau et al., 1998; Lu & Hsiao, 2007; Miura, 2007) exert influences on blogging motives and self-disclosure, although these influences in cultures other than the U.S. are still largely unknown. Other psychological factors can be tested in the context of blogging. These include relational goals and unwillingness to communication, which have been studied in computer mediated communication outlets other than blogs (e.g., Gibbs et al., 2006; Ma & Leung, 2006; Papacharissi, 2000). Such research can help develop a more precise understanding of this new communication technology and the psychological functions it serves.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN STUDY
Thank you for taking part in this pilot study! This survey is about people’s blogging habits. Blogs is conceptualized as continually updated websites containing dated entries in reversed chronological order. It will take you about 15 minutes to complete all the questions. Please remember, YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND ONLY REPORTED IN THE AGGREGATE. Your opinions are very important to us. THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Part 1

In this section, we would like to know some of your blogging habits. Please honestly indicate your answers by placing a CHECK mark in the [ ] beside the answers that can reflect your true experience or feelings.

1. Regarding blogs, have you ever… (Mark ALL that apply)
   [ ] Created a blog.                      (Please continue to Q2)
   [ ] Posted to a blog.                     (Please continue to Q2)
   [ ] Read information on a blog.            (Please continue to Q2, but skip Part 3)
   [ ] None of the above.                    (Please go to Part 4)

2. About which year did you begin reading and/or posting to blogs?
   Year I began blogging ________

3. How often do you usually read and/or write to blogs?
   [ ] Almost everyday
   [ ] Almost every week
   [ ] About 2-3 weeks
   [ ] Almost every month
   [ ] About 2-3 months
   [ ] About half a year
   [ ] More than half a year
4. On days when you reading and/or posting to blogs, about how many minutes do you typically spend?
Minutes of blogging every time: __________

**Part 2**

In this section, we want to find out your blogging motive. Listed below are some statements related to the aims of maintaining blogs. Based on your own experience, please honestly indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree Somewhat (A), Undecided (U), Disagree Somewhat (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD) with the following statements. If any item doesn’t apply to you, please leave it blank.

I write and/or read blogs….
1. because it passes the time away when I’m bored.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

2. to share information that may be useful and/or interesting to others.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

3. because it’s entertaining.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

4. to tell others a little bit about myself.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

5. when I have nothing better to do.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

6. to communicate with distant friends.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]
7. to share with other people my life and experience.
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

8. to present information on my special interests.
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

9. to occupy my time.
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

10. to put my professional resume online.
    [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

11. to keep in touch with friends and family.
    [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

13. because everybody else is doing it.
    [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

14. to express my thoughts and feelings.
    [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

15. to make my academic paper well-known.
    [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

16. to know more people.
    [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

17. because it is fun to try out new things like this.
    [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]
Part 3

In this section, we would like to know different levels of self-disclosure you are experiencing in maintaining your blogs. Self-disclosure is defined as any self-information you communicate with others, i.e. personal habits, name, feelings, opinions toward certain events, family background, etc. Here are some statements about self-disclosure in blogs. Based on your blogging experience, please honestly indicate whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree Somewhat (A), Undecided (U), Disagree Somewhat (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD) with these statements. If any item doesn’t apply to you, please leave it blank.

1. I do NOT often talk about myself in my blogs.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

2. I am always honest in my self-disclosure in my blogs.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

3. I normally express “bad” feelings about myself in my blogs.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

4. I intimately tell people who I really am, openly and fully in my blogs.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

5. When I am writing my blogs, my statements of my feelings are usually brief.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

6. When I reveal my feelings about myself in my blogs, I am always aware of what I am doing and saying.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

7. I RARELY express my personal beliefs and opinions in my blogs.
   
   [SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]
8. When I am writing blogs, I feel that I sometimes do not control my self-disclosure of personal or intimate things I tell about myself.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

9. When I am disclosing myself in my blogs, I am consciously aware of what I am revealing.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

10. My blog posts are shortest when I am discussing myself.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

11. My statements about my feelings, emotions, and experiences are always accurate self-perceptions.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

12. I usually reveal positive things about myself in my blogs.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

13. I often discuss intimate and personal things about myself without hesitation.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

14. I usually talk about myself for fairly long periods at a time in my blogs.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

15. When I am disclosing myself in my blogs, I consciously intend to do so.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

16. In writing blogs, I often reveal more undesirable things about myself than desirable things.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

17. Once I started in my blogs, my self-disclosure lasts a long time.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]
18. I always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings, emotions, behaviors, and experiences in my blogs.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

19. On the whole, my disclosures about myself are more positive than negative in my blogs.

[SA] [A] [U] [D] [SD]

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Part 4

1. What is your major in college: ______________________

2. May we know your age?

3. At last, please indicate your gender:
   a. [  ] Male
   b. [  ] Female

***THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE***