

**MOTIVATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ONLINE IDENTITY
RECONSTRUCTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY
BETWEEN CHINA AND MALAYSIA**

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KUALA LUMPUR**

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**MOTIVATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ONLINE
IDENTITY RECONSTRUCTION: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY BETWEEN CHINA AND MALAYSIA**

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**MOTIVATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ONLINE IDENTITY
RECONSTRUCTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN CHINA AND
MALAYSIA**

ABSTRACT

Social network platforms (such as Facebook and QQ) provide people with a unique opportunity to communicate and interact with others. Individuals are able to construct their own profile and share messages, photos or other media with their friends online. Given that individuals have control over what to post on social network platforms, it is possible that they may reconstruct an online identity that is partly or totally different from their real identity. In this case, with a reconstructed online identity, people are able to become more attractive, express themselves more freely and better protect their privacy. Previous studies have suggested that people may reconstruct an online identity due to various reasons (such as vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns). However, it is not clear whether people of different genders and from different countries are motivated differently when it comes to identity reconstruction on social network platforms. Adopting social role theory and Hofstede's cultural dimension framework as the theoretical background, the present study aims to identify gender and cultural differences in the motivations for identity reconstruction on social network platforms in two countries: China and Malaysia. An online survey was conducted to collect data. A total of 815 respondents (418 Chinese and 397 Malaysians) participated in this study. T-test and ANOVAs were used to analyze the data. Gender differences in the motivations for identity reconstruction were examined in the Chinese and Malaysian samples respectively. The results revealed that gender differences in the Chinese sample were more salient than in the Malaysian sample. Specifically, Chinese men and women were motivated differently by all the four factors, whereas few gender differences were

found between the Malaysian men and women. For example, Chinese men were more likely to be motivated by achievement vanity and less likely to be motivated by physical vanity than Chinese women. Cultural differences were examined between the Chinese and Malaysian samples, as well as between different ethnic groups (such as between the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays). Significant differences were identified. In comparison with Malaysian people, Chinese people were more likely to be motivated by bridging social capital and disinhibition when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms, but less likely to be motivated by physical vanity and privacy concerns. The Malaysian-Malays were more likely to be motivated by physical vanity and bridging social capital than the Malaysian-Chinese when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. Theoretically speaking, this study extends the research of online identity reconstruction by taking gender and national culture into account. It also contributes to the cross-cultural research concerning social network platforms. The findings of this study also add knowledge to the research on gender and shed light on the specific culture of China and Malaysia. Practically speaking, the results of this study can provide guidelines for practitioners when it comes to deploying suitable strategies for different groups of users to better fulfill their needs.

Keywords: online identity reconstruction; social network platforms; motivations; gender; cultural dimensions

**PERBEZAAN MOTIVASI DALAM PEMBINAAN SEMULA IDENTITI
DALAM TALIAN: KAJIAN KOMPARATIF ANTARA CHINA DAN
MALAYSIA**

ABSTRAK

Platform rangkaian sosial (seperti Facebook dan QQ) memberi pengguna peluang yang unik untuk berkomunikasi dan berinteraksi dengan individu lain. Individu dapat membina profil mereka sendiri dan berkongsi mesej, foto atau media lain dengan rakan-rakan mereka dalam talian. Selain itu, Individu juga untuk mengawal kawalan ke atas apa yang perlu dipasang pada platform rangkaian sosial, mereka dapat membina semula identiti dalam talian yang sebahagiannya atau sama sekali berbeza dengan identiti sebenar mereka. Dalam hal ini, identiti dapat dibina semula secara atis talian, Oleh itu, individu dapat menjadi lebih menarik, boleh menyatakan diri dengan lebih bebas, dan melindungi ruang kerahsiaan mereka dengan lebih baik. Kajian terdahulu mendapati bahawa individu mungkin mampu membina semula identiti secara atas talian disebabkan oleh pelbagai sebab (seperti keangkuhan, merapatkan modal sosial, penghilangan, dan kebimbangan privasi). Walaubagaimanapun, tidak jelas sama ada individu yang berbeza jantina dan dari negara-negara yang berbeza didorong secara berbeza dalam pembinaan semula identiti pada platform rangkaian sosial. Mengamalkan peranan teori sosial dan kerangka dimensi budaya Hofstede sebagai latar belakang teori, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti perbezaan jantina dan budaya dalam motivasi untuk pembinaan semula identiti pada platform rangkaian sosial di antara dua negara timur, China dan Malaysia. Satu kaji selidik dalam talian dijalankan untuk mengumpul data. Sejumlah 815 responden (418 Cina dan 397 rakyat Malaysia) mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Ujian T dan ANOVA digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Perbezaan jantina dalam motivasi untuk pembinaan semula identiti masing-masing diperiksa di

dalam sampel rakyat China dan Malaysia. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa perbezaan jantina dalam sampel individu Cina adalah lebih penting daripada sampel di Malaysia. Khususnya, lelaki dan wanita Cina dimotivasikan secara berbeza oleh empat faktor, di mana sedikit perbezaan jantina ditemui di antara lelaki dan wanita Malaysia. Contohnya, lelaki Cina lebih cenderung dimotivasi oleh pencapaian terhadap sesuatu dan kurang cenderung dimotivasi oleh rupa paras fizikal berbanding daripada wanita Cina. Perbezaan budaya diperiksa antara sampel individu Cina dan Malaysia, serta antara kumpulan etnik yang berlainan (seperti antara Malaysia-Cina dan Malaysia-Melayu). Perbezaan penting telah dikenalpasti. Berbanding dengan rakyat Malaysia, orang-orang Cina lebih cenderung didorong dengan merapatkan modal sosial dan kurang tekanan ketika membina semula identiti mereka di platform rangkaian sosial, tetapi mereka kurang cenderung dimotivasi oleh kebiasaan secara fizikal dan kebimbangan privasi. Orang Melayu Malaysia lebih cenderung dimotivasi oleh rupa paras fizikal dan merapatkan modal sosial berbanding daripada rakyat Malaysia-Cina apabila mereka membina identiti mereka di platform rangkaian sosial. Secara teorinya, kajian ini bagi memperluaskan penyelidikan tentang pembinaan semula identiti secara atas talian dengan mengambil kira jantina dan kebudayaan nasional di dalam akaun. Kajian ini dijalankan di dua negara timur, ia bagi memperluaskan penyelidikan rentas budaya berkaitan platform rangkaian sosial. Penemuan kajian ini juga menyumbang kepada penyelidikan jantina dan memberi penerangan mengenai budaya tertentu China dan Malaysia. Secara praktikal, hasil kajian ini boleh memberi panduan kepada pengamal untuk menggunakan strategi yang sesuai untuk kumpulan pengguna yang berbeza untuk memenuhi keperluan mereka.

Kata kunci: pembinaan semula identiti dalam talian; platform rangkaian sosial; motivasi; jantina; dimensi budaya

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	:	The Analysis of Variance
AVE	:	Average variance extracted
CA	:	Cronbach's alpha
CN	:	The Chinese
CN-CN	:	The Chinese from China
CNNIC	:	China Internet Network Information Center
CR	:	Composite reliability
DOSM	:	The Department of Statistics Malaysia
GW	:	Global Web Index
KMO	:	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
K-S	:	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test
MY	:	The Malaysians
MY-CN	:	The Malaysian-Chinese
MY-MY	:	The Malaysian-Malays
NBS	:	The National Bureau of Statistics of China
S-W	:	Shapiro-Wilk test

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Social network platforms

As a convenient avenue for communication and interaction, social network platforms facilitate the formation of social relationships and the establishment of social networks among people who share backgrounds, interests or real-life connections (Jackson & Wang, 2013). Social network platforms are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). While the terms “social network site” and “social networking site” are often used in existing studies to describe social network service, “social network platform” is used in the present study. When Boyd and Ellison (2007) conceptualized social network services, the social network services at that time (such as Facebook and Myspace) were mainly known as websites, accessed through a browser on personal computers. Nowadays, people can access social network services not only through web browsers on computers but also through various mobile devices (such as smartphones and tablets). The social network service is more than just a *site*; it is a complex *platform* that integrates various features (such as different applications).

Social network platforms are taking up an increasing amount of people’s time. According to a report from the Global Web Index (GWI), people spend approximately six hours online every day and two hours are spent on social network platforms (GWI, 2016), which means that around one-third of the time people spend online is devoted to social networking. Recent years have been a rapid growth in people’s participation on social network platforms. By the end of March 2018, Facebook had 2.2 billion monthly active users worldwide, an increase of 13% from the previous year (Facebook, 2018b).

The average number of daily active users of Facebook was 1.45 billion in March 2018 (Facebook, 2018b). By the end of June 2018, Instagram had 1 billion monthly active users (Instagram, 2018). Concurrent with the fast expansion of social network platforms on a global scale, many of the social network platforms that mainly serve their local audiences have also developed rapidly. For example, QQ, a social network platform operated in China, had approximately 803 million monthly active users by the end of June 2018 (Tencent, 2018).

1.1.1.1 Facebook and QQ

As mentioned above, Facebook and QQ are two popular social network platforms. Facebook was launched in 2004, while QQ was launched in 1999. Facebook started as a social network site, aiming to build connections between people (Facebook, 2018a). QQ started as an instant messenger service. The latter's social network service, QZone, was launched in 2005. QZone was built on the basis of QQ. Users access the social network service of QZone through their QQ account. Although different in terms of the structure of services, QQ and QZone share a lot of similarities in features with Facebook.

First of all, Facebook and QQ have similar user profiles features. After registering with a valid phone number or an email address (Cain, 2008), individuals can create their profiles on Facebook and QQ. Similar to most social network platforms, the profiles of Facebook and QQ consist of different kinds of personal information, such as basic demographic information (e.g., name, gender and date of birth), contact information (e.g., email address and phone number), referent information (e.g., hometown, school information, and location of residence), and preference information (e.g., about me, favorite movies, music, books, and quotes) (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2007). Moreover, QQ users can create an additional profile in QZone for social networking

purposes. Examples of Facebook, QQ, and QZone profiles are shown in Appendix A, B, and C.

Second, Facebook and QQ have similar networking features. Once having joined Facebook or QQ, an individual can search for anyone he or she is interested in and can view their profiles (Hew, 2011). An individual can send a friend request to other users. Once the request is accepted, they will become online friends and will both be listed on one another's friend list (Kolek & Saunders, 2008). On Facebook, users can edit the settings of their friend list, making it public, private, or visible to friends only. On QQ, the friend list is only visible to the users themselves. People cannot see other users' friend list. On QZone, the list of recent visitors is visible to others. In addition to adding other individuals as friends, people can also join groups on Facebook and QQ. People share common interests (such as video games) or offline connections (such as classmates) can get together and discuss topics of mutual concern (Hew, 2011).

Third, Facebook and QQ have similar communication features. On Facebook, users can interact with each other through both private and public communications (Green et al., 2016). Private communication includes sending private messages and chatting in real-time with specific individuals (Hew, 2011), while public communication includes status updates (whereby messages are broadcasted to a large group of people), wall posts (where individuals can post messages on other users' profiles and the messages can be seen by a large group of people), and comments on content shared by others (Green et al., 2016). Similarly, on QQ, users can communicate privately with other people using the instant messaging service. On QZone, they can also update statuses, make comments on their friends' statuses or photos, and post public messages on others' QZone.

Fourth, Facebook and QQ have similar entertainment features. Various games and applications are available on Facebook and QZone. Popular games on Facebook include Candy Crush Saga, Clash of Clans, 8 Ball Pool, and Farm Heroes Saga (Statista, 2018b). Popular games on QZone include QQ Farm, QQ pasture and various role-playing games.

1.1.1.2 Social media statistics of China and Malaysia

Facebook is the most popular social network platform in Malaysia, while QQ is the most popular social network platform in China. As the target countries in this study, China and Malaysia have some similarities and differences in social media use (such as Internet use and social media pervasiveness). The following are some basic social media statistics of China and Malaysia.

(a) *China*

Based on a report from the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), by the end of 2017, the number of Internet users in China had reached 772 million, accounting for 55% of the total population (CNNIC, 2018). Interestingly, the number of active social media users was 911 million, exceeding the number of Internet users (We Are Social [WAS], 2018). A possible explanation for this may be that many people have multiple social media accounts. Indeed, the number of Internet users and active social media users increased by 5.6% and 10% respectively as compared with 2016 (CNNIC, 2018; WAS, 2018). In 2017, Chinese Internet users spent, on average, 6.5 hours per day on the Internet, while 2 hours were spent on social media. The most popular social network platforms in China are WeChat, QQ (including QZone) and Sina Weibo (CNNIC, 2018). WeChat and QQ are social network services operated by the Tencent Company, based on instant messaging. On WeChat and QQ, users can post messages, share photos and videos. They can also see the posts of their friends and make comments on said posts. By the end of June 2018, the number of monthly active users

of QQ was 803 million, while the number of monthly active users of WeChat was 1.057 million (Tencent, 2018). Sina Weibo is a social network platform similar to Twitter, with the one difference being that users can share richer media content on Sina Weibo (such as videos, audios, and emoticons) (Lyakina, 2018). By the end of July 2018, Sina Weibo had nearly 411 million active users (Statista, 2018a).

(b) *Malaysia*

By the end of 2017, the number of Internet users in Malaysia was 25.08 million, accounting for 79% of the total population (WAS, 2018). Moreover, the number of active social media users stood at 24 million, accounting for 75% of the total population (WAS, 2018). The number of Internet users and active social media users increased by 14% and 9% respectively as compared with 2016 (WAS, 2018). In 2017, Malaysian Internet users spent an average of 8.5 hours per day on the Internet, while 3 hours were spent on social media. The most popular social network platforms in Malaysia are Facebook and Instagram (WAS, 2018). Facebook focuses on maintaining and establishing social networks, while Instagram focuses on sharing photos and videos. By the end of 2017, the number of monthly active users of Facebook in Malaysia was 24 million, while the number of monthly active users of Instagram in Malaysia stood at 11 million (WAS, 2018).

1.1.2 Online identity reconstruction

It has been suggested that maintaining existing relationships is one of the most important purposes of social network platform use (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Some people regard social interactions in the online world as an extension of their offline life (Tosun & Lajunen, 2010); for instance, a portion of their online friends are actually their offline friends, such as classmates and colleagues (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011). In addition, the personality traits that people present on social network

platforms are similar to their personality traits in the offline world (Back et al., 2010; Gosling et al., 2011; Marriott & Buchanan, 2014).

Despite the tight connections between the online and offline worlds, people try to build a different identity online to some extent. For example, it has been suggested that game players are likely to create their game characters based on their ideal selves rather than on who they actually are (Bessièrè, Seay, & Kiesler, 2007). In addition, people tend to present the “hoped-for possible self” on dating websites to improve their attractiveness in the eyes of potential romantic partners (Yurchisin, Watchravesringkan, & McCabe, 2005). Moreover, on Facebook, some users tend to build an identity that is better than their real identity to make themselves become more socially desirable online (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008).

People tend to manipulate the information they post online in order to reconstruct an online identity that is partly or even totally different from their offline identity, which is referred to as online identity reconstruction (Hu, Zhao, & Huang, 2015). While identity construction is defined as the process through which an individual claims an identity and others endorse the claimed identity (Zhao et al., 2008), online identity reconstruction focuses on the process whereby people make changes to their identity in the online environment to reconstruct an online identity that is different from their existing identity. Some people reconstruct their identity online because of vanity (Hu et al., 2015). They want to attract attention and gain admiration from others. For example, a poor man could pretend to be rich by posting a picture of himself wearing an expensive watch. Some people want to gain bridging social capital online (Hu et al., 2015). Reconstructing their online identity may provide them new chances to make friends with people from different backgrounds. Disinhibition and privacy concerns are also important motivations for online identity reconstruction (Hu et al., 2015). A

reconstructed identity (such as an identity with a fake name) protects an individual's privacy and makes him or her feel free to talk. The extent of online identity reconstruction varies from one person to another. Some people may only alter their identity slightly, while some others may reconstruct a completely different identity online in extreme cases.

1.2 Problem statement

Although, some studies have investigated people's identity and self-presentation on social network platforms (e.g., Kapidzic, 2013; Krämer & Winter, 2008; Lee, Ahn, & Kim, 2014; Ong et al., 2011; Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011; Seidman, 2013), not much research focused on online identity reconstruction. Only two existing studies have tried to explore the phenomenon of online identity reconstruction (Hu et al., 2015; Huang, Kumar, & Hu, 2017). However, they were limited to a single culture and did not take into account the effect of gender.

Previous research suggested that gender and cultural differences are salient in people's online self-presentation (e.g., Arroyo & Brunner, 2016; Grasmuck, Martin, & Zhao, 2009; Haferkamp et al., 2011; Hum et al., 2011; Rui & Stefanone, 2013; Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014). Considering that self-presentation is an important means to establish an identity (Schau & Gilly, 2003), it is likely that gender and culture may affect people's behavior of online identity reconstruction. However, existing studies mainly focused on gender or cultural differences in users' behavior patterns (such as the intensity of social network platform use) and self-presentation (such as profile management and self-presentation strategies). Although a prior study has investigated the motivations for online identity reconstruction (Hu et al., 2015), the effects of gender and culture were neglected. Indeed, there is a lack of research when it comes to exploring gender and cultural differences in online identity reconstruction on social

network platforms. Therefore, more effort should be made to investigate whether people of different genders and from different countries are motivated differently when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. To fill the research gaps mentioned above, the present study aims to explore gender and cultural differences in online identity reconstruction, thereby, providing deeper understandings on people's needs in online identity reconstruction from different perspectives.

It is suggested that people may be driven by motivations like vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns when they reconstruct their identity online (Hu et al., 2015). Given that the motivations for online identity reconstruction were proposed on the basis of a Chinese sample (Hu et al., 2015), China was thus selected as one of the target countries in this study. Additionally, as a developing country with the highest proportion of Chinese in its population, Malaysia was selected as the other target country in the present study. The Malaysian-Chinese accounted for 23.2% of the total population of Malaysia in 2017 (DOSM, 2017). As one of the ethnic groups in Malaysia, the Malaysian-Chinese are influenced by both Chinese and Malaysian culture. The multiracial society of Malaysia provides good opportunities for comparisons between not only the Chinese with the Malaysians but also different ethnic groups. The comparisons of different ethnic groups may offer deeper insights into the effect of culture.

Although studies related to vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns have been conducted in China (Mo & Leung, 2015; Zhou & Belk, 2004; Zhou & Li, 2014), as well as in Malaysia (Almadhoun, Lai, & Dominic, 2012; Balakrishnan, 2015; Chui et al., 2011; Helou, 2014; Mohamed & Ahmad, 2012), none of these studies adopted the perspective of online identity reconstruction, neither did they make comparison between Chinese and Malaysian people. It is not clear whether users from

China and Malaysia are motivated differently by the above-mentioned factors when they reconstruct their online identity. In this case, the current study chooses China and Malaysia as two target countries to explore the motivational differences in online identity reconstruction on social network platforms.

1.3 Research objectives and research questions

Considering that significant differences have been found in the online self-presentation between men and women, as well as between people from different countries, it is likely that people of different genders and with different cultural backgrounds are motivated differently when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. To better understand the effect of gender and culture, and as mentioned above, this study aims to investigate the motivations for online identity reconstruction in two countries: China and Malaysia. The objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) To identify gender differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction.
- 2) To identify the cultural differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction between Chinese and Malaysian social network platform users.
- 3) To investigate the effects of other demographic variables (i.e., age, educational background, and online status) on the motivations for online identity reconstruction.

Based on the objectives, the following research questions are explored in this study:

RQ1: Are men and women motivated differently by the factors of vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms?

RQ2: Are Chinese and Malaysian users motivated differently by the factors of vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms?

RQ3: Regarding the motivations for online identity reconstruction (i.e., vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns), are there any differences between people from different ethnic groups (e.g., the Malays, the Malaysian-Chinese, the Chinese from China)?

RQ4: What are the effects of other demographic variables (i.e., age, educational background, and online status) on the motivations for online identity reconstruction?

1.4 Scope and limitations of the study

This study aims to examine gender and cultural difference in the motivations for online identity reconstruction. Given that a prior study implied direct associations between the motivations and online identity reconstruction (Hu et al., 2015), the present study focuses on the effects of gender and national culture on four motivations (i.e., vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns). Therefore, group differences, rather than causal relationships, are examined in this study. Statistic techniques that can detect differences between groups (such as t-test and ANOVA) are used for data analysis to investigate whether people of different genders and from different countries are motivated differently.

Social role theory and the cultural dimension framework serve as the theoretical foundations of this study. Social role theory suggested that women and men behave differently because the requirements of their social roles are different and people's expectations about each gender are different. The cultural dimension framework proposed that national culture has six dimensions: power distance, individualism vs.

collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). People from different countries differ in these cultural values (Hofstede et al., 2010).

These two theories have provided detailed frameworks and explanations of gender and cultural differences, respectively. Many existing studies used these two theories to investigate users' behavior on social network platforms without measuring gender stereotypes and cultural values (e.g., Jackson & Wang, 2013; Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011; Lin et al., 2013; Lin, Zhang, & Li, 2016; Thomson, Yuki, & Ito, 2015; Tsoi & Chen, 2011). In this case, the current study also adopted the social role theory and the cultural dimension framework in hypotheses development without measuring the elements in the theories. In addition, the length and complexity of the survey questionnaire of this study will increase significantly if gender stereotypes and cultural values are measured together with other variables of interest. It is found that long and complex questionnaires were more likely to lead to a lower response rate and a higher drop-out rate (Ganassali, 2008; Jepson et al., 2005).

Another scope of this study is that the present study evaluates participants' perceptions of the motivations based on their overall experiences in using social network platforms, rather than the use of a specific one. Although Chinese people and Malaysian people use different social network platforms (as mentioned in section 1.1.1.2), the main features of these platforms are similar (as mentioned in section 1.1.1.1). Most importantly, the features of social network platforms may only affect the way people present themselves (such as posting pictures or posting texts). The motivations for self-presentation and online identity reconstruction are not likely to be affected (Hu et al., 2015).

1.5 The significance of the study

This study may contribute to the literature in several ways. First of all, the current study can extend the research concerning online identity reconstruction by examining the effects of gender and culture, thus providing a better understanding of the motivations for online identity reconstruction. The findings of this study can also add to the body of knowledge produced by gender research. In addition, the present study will contribute to cross-cultural research on social network platforms. Given that existing studies mainly examined cultural difference from the perspective of individualism vs. collectivism, this study aims to investigate cultural differences by taking into account all the six dimensions proposed by Hofstede et al. (2010). By using Chinese and Malaysian samples, this study can also shed light on the specific cultures of China and Malaysia.

This study also has important practical implications. It has been suggested that the growth of the social network market in the Asia-pacific region is one of the main drivers behind the global growth of the social network market (eMarketer, 2016). China and Malaysia are two important social network markets in Asia with great growing potential (WAS, 2018). The findings of this study could help practitioners to better understand users' needs so that they can deploy better strategies that benefit the growth of social network markets in China and Malaysia. Considering that males and females may be motivated differently, the providers could offer gender-specific services to male and female users. To satisfy people's unique needs in China and Malaysia, the providers can improve their service quality by providing customized services in certain countries.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

In this chapter, the rationale of the present study has been introduced. I first presented the background of this study, following which I identified the knowledge gaps in existing research. I then presented the objectives and the significance of this study.

In Chapter 2, a detailed review of existing research related to this study is presented, along with the theoretical foundations of the present study (social role theory and the cultural dimension framework). In Chapter 3, based on the theoretical foundations of the study, research hypotheses are proposed regarding the motivations for online identity reconstruction.

Chapter 4 introduces the methodology of this study, including the sampling method, data collection method, and the data collection procedure. The reliability and validity of the measurements used during the data collection are examined in this chapter, as are the potential biases in the data.

In Chapter 5, the data of this study are analyzed using various statistical techniques. The detailed results of the hypotheses testing are presented, thus answering RQ1 and RQ2. Further tests are also conducted to examine the differences between different ethnic groups and the effect of other demographic variables, thus answering RQ3 and RQ4.

Chapter 6 presents the discussion and conclusion of the results. The findings of this study are examined in reference to previous studies. The theoretical and practical contributions of the findings are also introduced, while the limitations of the present study and directions for future research are presented at the end of this chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter provides a detailed review of the existing research related to the present study. The chapter starts with discussions on identity, online identity, and online identity reconstruction. Subsequently, the motivations for online identity reconstruction (the main variables of this study) are introduced, followed by a review of studies concerning gender and cultural differences in social network platform use and online self-presentation. Once this has been accomplished, the theoretical foundations of this study (social role theory and the cultural dimension framework) are presented. This chapter ends with a short summary.

2.1 Identity

2.1.1 Definitions of identity

Identity is a complex concept which has no universal definition. Existing research on identity indicated that people are able to act as both individual persons and social groups, thus meaning that people can develop two principal identities: personal identity and social identity (Tajfel, 1981). Personal identity comprises the unique aspects of an individual's self-definition and personal characteristics, such as values, beliefs, self-esteem, goals, personalities, and experiences, etc. (Hitlin, 2011). Social identity is defined as "that part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p.255). Social identity can be further distinguished into two levels: relational identity and collective identity. Relational identity, which derives from interpersonal relationships and interdependence with specific others, refers to the aspects of self that are associated with a person's relationships with significant others (Chen, Boucher, & Tapias, 2006). It reflects one's roles in relation to others (such as children, parents, and friends). Collective identity,

which derives from membership of larger, more impersonal collectives, refers to an individual's identification with social groups or categories, such as nationality, religion, gender, families, or work groups (Hunt & Benford, 2004). It is a shared sense of belonging that is based on group members' common beliefs, attitudes, or experiences. Taking these aspects together, Vignoles et al. (2011) came up with an integrated definition of identity:

“Identity consists of the confluence of the person's self-chosen or ascribed commitments, personal characteristics, and beliefs about herself; roles and positions in relation to significant others; and her membership in social groups and categories (including both her status within the group and the group's status within the larger context)” (p. 4).

Personal identity and social identity are closely related (Hitlin, 2003). Some parts of personal identity derive from the social roles people adopt and the group memberships they have. At the same time, the values and beliefs people hold will affect their identifications within the groups to which they belong (Hitlin, 2003). Here is an example can be used to explain the different levels of identity. Indeed, even though there are thousands of students in China, all students have unique personalities and experiences that distinguish them from others. The specific characteristics that make them distinct make up their personal identity. If a student is humorous when he or she interacts with his or her family or friends, but this student is not humorous when he or she is around strangers, then, humorousness is part of his or her relational identity. For a female Chinese student, her sense of being a girl, a Chinese, and a student is her collective identity. Her collective identity can also be part of her personal identity, which makes her different from others (e.g., different from Malaysian male workers).

2.1.2 Identity and self-presentation

Given that some aspects of identities are intangible (such as personal beliefs), people usually employ self-presentations to present their identity to others (Goffman, 1959). Self-presentation is considered a concrete subset and an embodied representation of identities (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Goffman (1959) borrowed metaphors from dramaturgy to conceptualize people's self-presentation in social interactions. He proposed that face-to-face interactions are just like theatrical performances. The individuals are the actors and the persons with whom they are interacting are the audiences. In theatrical shows, actors try to present their best performances to make the audiences satisfied (Goffman, 1959). Similar to what actors do on the stage, most people will try their best to make a desirable impression on others, because they are concerned about others' evaluations (Goffman, 1959). In addition, people engage in different situations and meet different persons. Individuals tend to adjust the way they present themselves when in different contexts or facing different persons (Goffman, 1959). For instance, most people will speak and act differently when they are hanging out with their close friends compared to when they are at their workplace. Thus, identity is flexible and changeable (McRobbie, 1994); it is socially constructed and subject to the situation and audiences in the context (Gee, 2000).

Although identity is subjectively constructed and changeable based on contexts (Gee, 2000), the construction of identity in the physical world is restrained by a unique set of factors (Zhao et al., 2008). When interacting with acquaintances, the shared knowledge of each other's personality traits and social background prevents an individual from pretending to be what he or she is not. Although it is possible for an individual to produce a new identity by hiding his or her background and personality when interacting with a stranger, such an identity is still restricted by the presence of the corporal body (Zhao et al., 2008). People cannot claim identities that are not in line with

their visible physical characteristics (such as gender, race, and looks) in face-to-face interactions. However, the advent of new Internet-based technologies has significant impacts on the way people present themselves online (Belk, 2013). It is possible to construct and present different online identities (Hu et al., 2015).

2.2 Online identity

Online identity has been defined as “a configuration of the defining characteristics of a person in the online space” (Kim, Zheng, & Gupta, 2011, p. 1762). As a fundamental element of online communication, online identity has attracted much attention from scholars. Early research focused on the effects of anonymity. For example, Turkle (1995) argued that the anonymity of the online environment enables people to disguise certain aspects of their real identity to reduce discrimination. People usually have different expectations of others based on physical cues (such as gender, race, or physical appearance). When compared to an offline identity, an online identity provides less physical cues, which diminishes the expectations based on these physical cues, thus reducing discrimination (Dubrovsky, Kiesler, & Sethna, 1991). In addition, the anonymity of online interactions creates a more equal environment for people with social roles that have lower power traditionally (e.g., women). Online identities help to diminish the existing hierarchical relationships (e.g., hierarchy based on authority) (Poster, 1995). However, disguising physical cues with an online identity can also bring about some negative effects. People feel it is less likely that they will be held accountable for their behavior, and thus, some may engage in irresponsible or anti-normative behavior (such as deception and flaming) (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012).

2.2.1 The connections between online and offline identities

Even though new communication tools enable people to create online identities and interact with others in different ways, some researchers have asserted that online

identity is interconnected with the aspects of offline identity (Hongladarom, 2011; Kendall, 1998). People's understandings of identity do not change when they participate in online interactions. Their social perceptions in the offline world are closely associated with their presentation of the online identity (Hongladarom, 2011). Therefore, it is not surprising to find that people's behavior online is affected by the social norms in the offline world, and race issue remains salient in computer-mediated communications, just as it is in face-to-face communications (Burkhalter, 1999).

In addition, some people consider the social interactions online as an extension of their offline life (Tosun & Lajunen, 2010). For example, the existing research found overlaps between college students' online and offline networks (Subrahmanyam et al., 2008), while social network platforms were often used to connect with friends and family members (Ellison et al., 2007). Similar results were found in a study that involved 92 undergraduates. It indicated that college students primarily use Facebook to interact with offline friends (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). In a study concerning the changes in the use and perception of Facebook, researchers found that maintaining existing relationships was a consistent motivation over time (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2008).

When people view the online environment as an extended social context, they are likely to express their actual personality characteristics. People reveal various types of personal information that mirror their personalities in online contexts (Vazire & Gosling, 2004). A prior study found that, on social network platforms, people could discern relatively accurate personality traits of a profile owner through his or her photos, quotes, interests, and number of friends (Gosling et al., 2011).

Several studies have compared self-reported ratings and observers' ratings on personality traits and found that the traits that people presented on social network

platforms were similar to their personality traits in the offline world (Back et al., 2010; Marriott & Buchanan, 2014; Vazire & Gosling, 2004). Vazire and Gosling (2004) suggested that people use various identity claims on personal websites to present themselves. Identity claim refers to “symbolic statements made by individuals about how they would like to be regarded; these statements may be directed at the self or used to convey messages to others” (Vazire & Gosling, 2004, p. 124). Using the five-factor model, Vazire and Gosling (2004) compared 89 self-ratings with 11 observers’ ratings and found that people conveyed an accurate message about who they are on personal websites. The five-factor model involves five personality dimensions that describe different personalities broadly: extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae & John, 1992). Among the five personality traits in the five-factor model, openness to experience can be judged accurately by observers most easily, while observers’ impressions of extraversion and agreeableness tend to be enhanced (Vazire & Gosling, 2004), thus meaning that people are able to idealize themselves to some extent.

Similarly, Back et al. (2010) examined people’s presentation of personality traits using the five-factor model in the context of social network platforms. Their study involved US and German samples. The observers’ impression of profile owners’ personality traits were accurate in both samples. Back et al. (2010) found that the profile owners’ self-reports of ideal self were not associated with observer impressions, thus meaning that self-idealization was not observed (Back et al., 2010). Back et al. (2010) indicated that it is difficult to create idealized identities on social network platforms because it is difficult for people to control their reputation online and their friends can provide feedback on their posts.

More recently, Marriott and Buchanan (2014) carried out a study to investigate the correlations between personality and people's preference for self-expression, as well as the authenticity of people's self-expression. They compared three ratings of the participants' personalities: the participants' self-ratings, the ratings from online friends, and the ratings from offline friends. It was found that the online friends rated extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness similarly to participants, while offline friends rated extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism similarly to participants (Marriott & Buchanan, 2014). The similarity in ratings suggested that there is no great difference in the authenticity between people's self-expression online and offline.

2.2.2 Online identity as a tool for identity exploration

Although people are likely to present their actual personalities in online contexts, some researchers view online identities as fluid and are different from offline identities. Turkle (1995) stated that the Internet is like a laboratory in which individuals can conduct identity experimentations. By creating unique and personally-meaningful identities, people can experience identities that are unavailable to them offline (Poster, 1995; Turkle, 1995). For example, a person can create multiple identities to interact with others, or game players can switch their gender in online games (e.g., a male can play a female character). The identity play online enables people to perform alternate or multiple characters of self, which may make them more aware of what to project with offline identities (Turkle, 1995).

More recent research has focused on adolescents' identity development online. Identity development is a process through which people gradually integrate their evolving identity elements (such as values, personality traits, goals, and roles) (Erikson, 1980). The online context provides unique opportunities for identity development. In

comparison to offline contexts, online contexts are less limited by time and geographical distance, which may create more opportunities for identity exploration (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014). In the online context, people perceive increased disconnectedness from offline contexts and lower levels of surveillance (Selwyn, 2008). Therefore, young people tend to perceive that there exists relatively less adult supervision online, which enables them to experiment with new values, ideas, and behavior to a greater extent (Erikson, 1968). For example, a noteworthy study showed that sexual minority adolescents (such as homosexuals) felt more comfortable expressing their sexuality to others in online contexts (Hillier & Harrison, 2007).

In addition, people tend to engage in selective self-presentation online (Walther, 2007). They present themselves strategically to manage their public images. Adolescents need to make conscious choices in selective self-presentation based on their views of who they are and who they want to be. This selective self-presentation could benefit adolescents' development of identity as it strengthens their sense of identity (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). When presenting themselves online, adolescents receive feedback from audiences. They also compare their own profile with others' profiles. The feedback and social comparison may, in turn, influence adolescents' sense of identity (Walther et al., 2011).

Michikyan et al. (2015) found that adolescents' sense of identity was associated with their presentations of the real self and the false self. It has been suggested that adolescents with a more coherent sense of identity are likely to present more of the real self in online contexts, whereas those with a less coherent sense of identity are likely to present more of the false self online. The online context also makes it easier to become affiliated with others. On the Internet, adolescents are able to join groups and make

connections with like-minded individuals, which allows them to explore the specific aspects of their identity and develop group identities (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014).

2.3 Online identity reconstruction

2.3.1 Online communication tools facilitate online identity reconstruction

The rapid development of information technology has provided people with various tools to create and present their identity online. In addition to conducting identity experiments, individuals can also reconstruct their identities online to some extent. Identity reconstruction refers to the phenomenon that people build an online identity that is partly or even completely different from their real identity by hiding or faking certain characteristics (Hu et al., 2015). For example, an unattractive girl could reconstruct her identity online by posting edited photos that make her look attractive; she could also choose not to post personal photos so that others will not know what she looks like and will not judge her based on her appearance.

On the Internet, the physical cues are absent (Suler, 2004). People cannot physically see or hear each other. This physical detachment increases the perceived distance between people and the audiences at which their self-presentation is aimed (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). People's online identity is usually determined by the information they disclose to others (Marwick, 2013), which makes it easier to hide or fake aspects of the offline identity. Previous research suggested that game characters created by a game player are more similar to the player's ideal self than to their actual self (Bessière et al., 2007). Moreover, research concerning online dating sites indicated that some people may engage in deceptive self-presentation, providing exaggerated or false information about themselves. For example, people tend to present the "hoped-for possible self" on dating websites to make themselves more attractive (Yurchisin et al., 2005). Some

people lie about their height, while some lie about their weight (Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008).

In comparison with other online self-presentation tools, social network platforms enable people to present themselves in a more structured and personalized way (Manago et al., 2008). In social network platform profiles, people can share their basic personal information (such as gender, age, education, etc.), describe their preferences (whom they are interested in), list their own interests (such as hobbies and favorite movies), and so on. In addition to profiles, people can also present themselves through other features on social network platforms, such as updating their status and sharing photos. Given that users can decide what information to post, the construction of identity on the social network platforms is flexible and customized (Manago et al., 2008). This means that identity reconstruction becomes possible because people can design and create their own online identity, choosing what to present to others and what not to present. People can hide or even make changes to their identity if they want (Suler, 2004). Previous research concerning Facebook found that people tended to build an online identity that is more socially desirable than their offline identity to make themselves appear more popular (Zhao et al., 2008). Therefore, individuals are able to reconstruct their online identity based on their own ideas (Hu, Zhao, & Huang, 2014). Their identity on social network platforms could be partly, or even totally, different from their existing identity in the offline world.

2.3.2 Online identity reconstruction and strategic self-presentation

A concept that is similar to identity reconstruction is strategic self-presentation. As proposed by Goffman (1959), people are concerned about their public images. To control the impressions they make on others, individuals tend to employ various strategies for self-presentation during both online and offline interactions (Rui &

Stefanone, 2013; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Arkin (1981) suggested that the various self-presentation strategies actually fall into two types: a) acquisitive self-presentation, through which individuals seek approval from others; and b) protective self-presentation, through which individuals avoid disapproval from others. When people engage in acquisitive self-presentation, they try to make the best possible impressions on others (Arkin, 1981). For example, in face-to-face environments, people tend to employ strategies that enhance their images, such as emphasizing the attractive aspects of themselves (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Similar to what occurs during offline interactions, those who are not content with certain aspects of themselves are more likely to engage in self-enhancement online when compared with people who are satisfied with their identity (Bessière et al., 2007). For instance, on social network platforms, people selectively post favorable personal information in their profiles and share positive life events more than negative ones (Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, & Shahar, 2016).

Even though people are more likely to focus on acquisitive self-presentation, they may turn to protective self-presentation when a) the expectations of the self-presentation target are not clear; b) there are multiple self-presentation targets whose expectations are different. In these situations, people usually show modesty and conformity and try to make neutral expressions to avoid rejections from others (Arkin, 1981). If their positive image is likely to be undermined by information disclosed previously, people tend to use protective tactics to manage the impression they make on others, such as forwarding compensatory self-presentations regarding other aspects that are irrelevant to the negative information about them (Arkin, 1981; Baumeister, 1982). On social network platforms, people endeavor to remove undesired information using various protective tactics, such as untagging photos, making compensatory comments, or removing unwanted posts (Rui & Stefanone, 2013).

Strategic self-presentation is mainly about the strategies people employ during the self-presentation process (such as acquisitive self-presentation and protective self-presentation), while the main motivation of strategic self-presentation is to build a positive public image. When engaging in strategic self-presentations, people are usually still telling the truth, but mainly highlighting positive facts strategically. However, in online identity reconstruction, people are no longer limited to the truth. They may stretch the truth, hide or exaggerate facts, or even tell lies. In addition, the motivations for identity reconstruction are more complicated. People are seeking the benefits brought about by the reconstructed identity, which is more than a positive image. Some people reconstruct their identity to pursue positive outcomes, such as the satisfaction of their need for vanity and access to new social networks. Some people reconstruct their identity to avoid negative outcomes, such as privacy risks (Hu et al., 2015).

2.4 Motivations for identity reconstruction

Previous research suggested that individuals may reconstruct their identity online due to various reasons, such as vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns (Hu et al., 2015). These motivations for online identity reconstruction will be introduced in this section in detail, from definitions to related research on social network platforms and the relevant studies in the cross-cultural context.

2.4.1 Vanity

2.4.1.1 The concept of vanity

Vanity is a concept that has been discussed for decades. The literature on vanity can be found in various disciplines, such as economics, consumer research, and even linguistic studies (Watson et al., 1999). It has been proposed that vanity is one dimension of narcissism (Raskin & Terry, 1988). People with a narcissistic personality believe they are better than others and overestimate their attractiveness. They have a

highly-inflated, unrealistic positive self-concept and employ various strategies to make them look positive and special. Narcissistic people are often strongly self-focused, thinking about how others could benefit them rather than how they could benefit others (Campbell & Foster, 2007). Raskin and Terry (1988) indicated that narcissism has seven components: authority, exhibitionism, superiority, vanity, exploitativeness, entitlement, and self-sufficiency. However, the vanity in narcissism mainly focuses on physical appearance.

Later, Netemeyer et al. (1995) proposed a more comprehensive definition of vanity. They suggested that vanity has two primary dimensions: physical vanity and achievement vanity. Physical vanity refers to “an excessive concern for, and/or a positive (and perhaps inflated) view of, one's physical appearance” (Netemeyer et al., 1995, p 612); moreover, achievement vanity has been defined as “an excessive concern for, and/or a positive (and perhaps inflated) view of, one's personal achievements” (Netemeyer et al., 1995, p 612). People with a high level of vanity have a strong desire to attract attention from others. They are eager to showcase their appearance and/or achievements (Huang et al., 2013).

2.4.1.2 Existing research on vanity

Physical attractiveness plays an important role in the establishment and maintenance of one's self-concept. It has been suggested that physical attractiveness is positively associated with self-esteem (Thornton & Ryckman, 1991). It is also related to social popularity and power. Dion et al. (1972) suggested that there is a physical attractiveness stereotype. People tend to believe “what is beautiful is good”. In comparison to unattractive individuals, physically attractive individuals are perceived as being more likely to possess various positive personal qualities, such as favorable personality traits, prestigious occupations, marital happiness, career success, and so on (Dion et al., 1972).

Achievement vanity is related to materialism (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Vain people use material possessions to display their achievement and social power, such as showing off expensive cars. Achievement vanity is also connected to money attitude (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2010). Vain people may regard money as a tool to impress others. They feel that money is a statement of success (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2010).

Previous research has investigated the connection between the vanity trait and consumption behavior. It has been found that consumers' physical vanity is associated with the proliferation of products and services related to appearances, such as cosmetics, clothing, cosmetic surgery, dieting programs, and products (Netemeyer et al., 1995). Individuals who are concerned about physical attractiveness may engage in positive activities, such as exercising regularly. Achievement vanity can lead to conspicuous consumptions (Belk, 1985). People consume products and services that can demonstrate their achievements. They consume in a conspicuous manner, such as buying products that can be easily seen by others (e.g., luxury jewelry), or consume services that can be easily talked about in daily communications (e.g., vocations) (Belk, 1985). Individuals who have a high level of achievement vanity tend to be sensitive to price and prestige. They express a greater interest in expensive products that attract others' attention and make them feel superior (Chui et al., 2011).

Durvasula and Lysonski (2008) indicated that concerns over physical appearance and personal achievements vary in different cultures. Asian people are more concerned about physical appearance than western people, while the concerns over achievement are higher in western cultures than in eastern cultures. As economics develops, vanity is becoming increasingly prominent in Asian countries. Previous research suggested that physical and achievement vanity are important antecedents of luxury brand purchase intention for Chinese consumers (Hung et al., 2011). Chinese consumers tend to buy

luxury goods to show their reputation and success (Zhou & Belk, 2004). Similarly, achievement vanity is positively associated with the Malaysian people's intention to buy luxury goods (Mamat, Noor, & Noor, 2016). Malaysian women with a high level of vanity tend to buy products that demonstrate social status (Chui et al., 2011).

2.4.2 Bridging social capital

2.4.2.1 The concept of bridging social capital

Bridging social capital is one kind of social capital. Before looking into bridging social capital, there is a need to clarify the concept of social capital itself. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) defined social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 119). Putnam (1995) proposed that social capital refers to "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (p. 67). Similar to Putnam's definition, Woolcock (1998) defined social capital as "the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks" (p. 153). Put simply, social capital denotes the resources linked to relationships.

Given that different forms of relationships lead to different resources, Putnam (2000) distinguished social capital into two types: bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital refers to the resources derived from close relationships. It is usually found in "strong ties" and "internal ties". Strong ties are the strong connections between individuals (such as the connections between family members) (Granovetter, 1973), and internal ties are the connections within collectivities (such as organizations and communities) (Adler & Kwon, 2002). People in bonding networks have strong personal connections. They commit a lot of time and effort to maintain a

strong relationship (Donath, 2007). In return, people in bonding networks are more likely to provide extensive emotional and substantive support (such as physical succor and financial help) to each other compared to acquaintances with loose relationships (Putnam, 2000). However, people in strong tie networks usually have similar backgrounds. They have multiple commonalities, and thus there is less diversity in the information and resources they possess (Granovetter, 1973).

Bridging social capital describes the benefits which come from casual relationships. It is found in relationships that connect individuals from different social networks. Bridging social capital is often associated with “weak ties” and “external ties”. Weak ties are the loose connections between individuals (such as a friend of a friend) (Granovetter, 1973), while external ties are the relationships that connect a person with those who are not inside his or her close collectivities (Adler & Kwon, 2002). People in bridging networks usually have different backgrounds, which lead to diverse resources and different life situations. Therefore, bridging relationships may broaden worldviews and provide novel information and new perspectives that are not available in bonding relationships (Putnam, 2000). People may also gain access to new resources and opportunities (Granovetter, 1973). However, individuals in bridging networks have loose personal connections, which lack depth. They are less interdependent and have fewer commonalities. Thus, people are less likely to gain strong emotional or substantive support from bridging relationships (Granovetter, 1973).

2.4.2.2 Bridging social capital and social network platforms

A previous study suggested that social network platforms are well suited for fostering bridging social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Several studies have investigated the associations between social network platforms and social capital. Donath and Boyd (2004) postulated that social network platforms help people to make connections with

an extended network and meet new friends. Through the features of social network platforms (such as friend lists, photo directories, searching, and tagging), individuals may access broad and diverse social networks (e.g., make friends with people from different backgrounds). They can easily reach out to strangers whom they are interested in. Their weak ties are likely to increase on social network platforms because these platforms enable them to form and maintain loose relationships cheaply and easily (Donath, 2007), which may in turn increase bridging social capital, because bridging social capital lies in the large number of available weak ties and the diversity of the people connected to the ties (Granovetter, 1973).

Previous research found that the intensity of social network platform use was positively associated with the perceived bridging social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Using a student sample, Ellison et al. (2007) found that the more intensively the participants used Facebook, the more bridging social capital they perceived online. The positive association between intensity of Facebook use and perceived bridging social capital was significant even after controlling for other factors (such as demographic factors and Internet use statistics). In addition, the association was stronger for people with low self-esteem and low satisfaction (Ellison et al., 2007), suggesting that the use of Facebook might be more beneficial for these people.

However, it is not clear whether the use of Facebook leads to bridging social capital or bridging social capital leads to the use of Facebook. To clarify this, Steinfield et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal study on Facebook users, which confirmed the positive association between Facebook use intensity and perceived bridging social capital (Steinfield et al., 2008). They found that students who used Facebook more intensively in year one reported a higher level of bridging social capital in year two. The longitudinal study also suggested that it is the use of Facebook which leads to the

increase in bridging social capital rather than the reverse situation, because the association between Facebook use intensity in year one and bridging social capital in year two was stronger than the association between bridging social capital in year one and Facebook use intensity in year two (Steinfeld et al., 2008).

Most participants involved in research concerning Facebook reported a high number of total friends. Burke et al. (2010) found that the number of total Facebook friends was associated with bridging social capital. However, Ellison et al. (2011) suggested that only the number of “actual friends”, which refers to friends who share some offline connections with the person (such as shared interests, affiliations), predicts perceived bridging social capital. The number of total friends on Facebook is not a significant predictor.

2.4.2.3 Cross-cultural research on bridging social capital

Existing studies have also investigated the association between social network platform use and bridging social capital in the cross-cultural context, and the results are mixed. Comparing young users in America and China, Chu and Choi (2010) found no significant differences in bridging social capital generated on social network platforms. In contrast, some scholars suggested that American college students perceive a higher level of bridging social capital on social network platforms than Korean college students (Choi et al., 2011). The American students have larger social networks, and they reported a higher proportion of weak ties in their networks than the Korean students. Although the association between social network platform use and bridging social capital may be stronger in western countries, bridging social capital plays an important role in the use of social network platforms in eastern countries. For example, in China, social needs (such as meeting new friends and getting to know people with shared interests) is one of the factors that drive users to engage in social network platforms, and

the gratification of social needs predicts the perceived bridging social capital (Mo & Leung, 2015). Additionally, perceived bridging social capital has a positive influence on users' satisfaction and their continued intention to use social network platforms (Chang & Zhu, 2012). Studies conducted in Malaysia also indicated that making new friends online is one of the most important reasons why college students use social network services (Almadhoun et al., 2012; Helou, 2014).

2.4.3 Disinhibition

2.4.3.1 The concept of disinhibition

Inhibition is defined as the phenomenon that people restrict their behavior because they are worried about factors such as social situations, public evaluations and so on (Zimbardo, 1977). Based on the definition of inhibition, Joinson (2007) argued that disinhibition refers to the situation in which the constraining factors of inhibition are absent or relieved and people can behave with “an apparent reduction for self-presentation and the judgment of others” (p. 75). The online disinhibition effect was defined as the phenomenon that, on the Internet, people could behave in a way that in which they would not ordinarily behave in the offline world (Suler, 2004).

Suler (2004) proposed six factors that may weaken psychological barriers and lead to online disinhibition: dissociative anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, solipsistic introjection, dissociative imagination, and minimization of authority. Dissociative anonymity enables individuals to hide and alter their real identity so that others do not know who they really are. People feel less vulnerable. They can separate what they say or do online from their offline life and avert responsibility for their online actions (Suler, 2004). After interacting for a period of time, people may get to know each other and become less anonymous online. In this case, invisibility can facilitate disinhibited behavior. People cannot see or hear each other physically, and so they cannot see the

disapproving body language or facial expressions from others directly, which makes them less inhibited during self-presentation (Suler, 2004). Asynchronicity means that individuals don't have to respond immediately in online communications. They can respond to a message after minutes or hours. They also don't have to deal with the immediate reactions of others (Suler, 2004). Solipsistic introjection means that people create characters for others in their mind based on others' self-presentation and their personal expectations. People tend to feel disinhibited when interacting with the introjected character (Suler, 2004). Dissociative imagination means that people think that the online world is a different dimension with different rules and norms; they regard the online world as an imaginary world with no connections to reality (Suler, 2004). Minimization of authority means that the effect of social cues (such as status, power, or wealth) is diminished on the Internet. The equal atmosphere makes people feel less inhibited in expressing themselves (Suler, 2004).

The six factors proposed by Suler (2004) mainly focused on the nature of the online environment. Joinson (2007) provided an explanation of online disinhibition from the perspective of people's psychological states. He suggested that deindividuation may lead to disinhibition (Joinson, 2007). Deindividuation is a state in which a person's awareness of his or her individual identity is minimized (Zimbardo, 1969). People may become deindividuated due to factors such as submergence in a group, anonymity, drugs and alcohol use (Postmes & Spears, 1998). Deindividuation leads to reduced self-regulation and less concern for social evaluation (Zimbardo, 1969). The anonymity of the Internet could facilitate deindividuation, thus potentially resulting in disinhibited behavior online.

The online disinhibition effect can be distinguished into two types: benign disinhibition and toxic disinhibition (Suler, 2004). Benign disinhibition promotes

positive behaviors, such as openness in self-disclosure, kindness, and generosity. Toxic disinhibition is related to negative behaviors, such as rude language, harsh criticism and cyberbullying (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012; Suler, 2004). Suler (2004) pointed out that, sometimes, the boundary between benign disinhibition and toxic disinhibition is blurry. A behavior can be regarded as benign disinhibition and toxic disinhibition at the same time. For example, expressing negative emotions online (such as anger) could be a relief for one person, but may be considered inappropriate by others.

2.4.3.2 Benign disinhibition

Previous studies have investigated both benign disinhibition and toxic disinhibition online. With regards to benign disinhibition, most studies have focused on the effect of anonymity (the major factor that induces online disinhibition) on self-disclosure (a prominent example of benign disinhibition). In the context of Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, the players who feel more disinhibited tend to create an avatar (the virtual self) that is more similar to their ideal self and more discrepant from the self they present in the physical world (Wang, Yang, & Shen, 2014). In instant messages interactions, the reduced nonverbal cues (such as visual and context cues) and the control over communications make people less inhibited. The feeling of disinhibition enhances people's online self-disclosure (Schouten, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2007). People disclose more emotion online when they are anonymous and invisible to others (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2015).

Conversely, Hollenbaugh and Everett (2013) found that anonymity was negatively associated with the amount of self-disclosure on blogs. They suggested that people who are less visually anonymous (sharing pictures of themselves or other people) tend to disclose more private information on blogs. Moreover, they found no significant differences in the amount, breadth, or depth of self-disclosure between those who used

real names on blogs and those who did not (Hollenbaugh & Everett, 2013). Lapidot-Lefler and Barak (2015) also suggested that, in most cases, anonymity does not have an effect on self-disclosure. They pointed out that the inconsistent results on anonymity may be explained by the different definitions of anonymity in different studies (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2015).

Online disinhibition could be especially beneficial for those who have difficulty in face-to-face communications, such as people with low self-esteem and those who are introverted, socially anxious, or lonely. Amichai-Hamburger et al. (2002) postulated that the online social service provides an excellent opportunity for introverted people to form social contacts. Given the anonymity, physical invisibility, and controllability online, introverted people tend to share more of their true self (the important aspects that exist psychologically but are usually not fully expressed to others) with their online friends (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2002). Green et al. (2016) suggested that socially anxious people tend to feel disinhibited in private communications on Facebook (e.g., private messages), but not in public communications (e.g., wall posts). In private communications, socially anxious people perceive more reduced cues and greater controllability which in turn promotes their self-disclosure of personal feelings and concerns (Green et al., 2016). Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2003) found that, in comparison with others, lonely people were more likely to enjoy the disinhibition online. The study suggested that, on the Internet, such people feel opened up and share more intimate secrets with others. They are more likely to gain emotional support from, and have fun with, online friends. The Internet also helps lonely people to modulate their negative moods, such as isolation, depression, and anxiety (Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2003).

In addition, Chester (2006) postulated that the benign disinhibition effects benefit educational practices. The above author also contended that most student experience strong and positive disinhibition on the online course. They feel more confident and become less shy in online discussions. The online disinhibition effect makes it relatively easy for them to interact with others on the course, which facilitates the learning process (Chester, 2006).

In some cases, negative outcomes can derive from benign disinhibition. In a study concerning pathological Internet use, online disinhibition was found to be associated with Internet addiction (Niemz, Griffiths, & Banyard, 2005). People who felt more liberated and confident online used the Internet more excessively. They were more socially disinhibited online and preferred online communications to face-to-face communications (Niemz et al., 2005). In a review of cybercrime and cyber victimization, Agustina (2015) suggested that people may engage in risky behaviors (such as disclosing sexual images and a lot of personal information) due to online disinhibition, which means that they can become potential victims of cybercrime.

2.4.3.3 Toxic disinhibition

Even though online disinhibition can lead to various positive effects, it can also result in negative behavior online. It has been suggested that anonymity, invisibility and lack of eye contact are significant predictors of flaming behavior (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012). People report more flaming and threatening incidents when there is no eye contact through webcams. They produce a more negative atmosphere when they are invisible to others. When people are anonymous (without identification information), a greater number of threatening expressions are perceived in their online chatting (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012).

In addition, online disinhibition is also associated with cyberbullying (Udris, 2014; Varjas et al., 2010). Online disinhibition has been identified as one of the internal motivations for cyberbullying (Varjas et al., 2010). People engage in cyberbullying because they are anonymous online. The victims do not know who they are, which makes the cyberbullies feel free to misbehave. Additionally, the physical and emotional disassociation between the cyberbullies and the victims frees the cyberbullies from the immediate impact of their actions (Varjas et al., 2010). Udris (2014) found that the minimization of authority and the reduced concerns over social norms were also significant predictors of cyberbullying. According to a cyberbullying survey conducted in 25 countries, China reported the highest rate of cyberbullying (70%) among youth aged 8-17 years old, while Malaysia reported a rate of 33% (Microsoft, 2012). Cyberbullying is not only limited to children; for example, a study involving 393 Malaysian young adults (17–30 years old) indicated that 33.6% of the sample had bullied others and 61% of the participants had seen others being cyberbullied (Balakrishnan, 2015).

2.4.4 Privacy concerns

2.4.4.1 Privacy and privacy concerns

Before talking about privacy concerns, there is a need to understand exactly what privacy is. Privacy can be regarded as a human right. The first definition of privacy can be dated back to an article published in the nineteenth century in which Warren and Brandeis (1890) defined privacy as “the right to be left alone.” Similarly, Clarke (1999) suggested that “privacy is often thought of as a moral right or a legal right” (p. 60). Privacy can also be defined as a state. For example, Westin (1967) proposed that privacy has four sub-states: solitude, intimacy, anonymity, and reserve. These sub-states refer to different degrees of privacy when people are alone, with a small intimate group, and when people do not disclose identification information or limit the disclosure of

identification information in public. Later, privacy was defined as a state of being apart from others (Weinstein, 1971), and a state of “limited access to a person” (Schoeman, 1984, p. 3). In addition to defining privacy as a right and a state, many scholars suggested that privacy is an ability of control. Altman (1975) defined privacy as “the selective control of access to the self” (p. 24). Margulis (1977) proposed that “Privacy, as a whole or in part, represents the control of transactions between person(s) and other(s), the ultimate aim of which is to enhance autonomy and/or to minimize vulnerability” (p. 10). Moreover, Westin (1967) defined privacy as “the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others” (p. 7).

The concept of privacy concerns has been defined as the extent to which people are worried about the acquisition and subsequent use of their personal information (Smith, Milberg, & Burke, 1996). Said concept refers to “the apprehension and uneasiness over the acquisition and use of personal data” (Wirtz & Lwin, 2009, p. 192) and “a sense of anxiety regarding one’s privacy” (Lanier & Saini, 2008, p. 19). Privacy concerns reflect a person’s awareness and assessment of the potential risks related to privacy violations (Tan et al., 2012). Nowadays, in the era of big data, people generate a huge amount of information every day. The development of technology is leading to many concerns about privacy (Bélanger & Crossler, 2011).

2.4.4.2 Privacy concerns on social network platforms

Prior research has investigated the effect of privacy concerns in different contexts. Generally, privacy concerns have a negative impact on an individual’s feeling of trust toward a website, and people who are worried about privacy issues are less willing to provide personal information online (Wu et al., 2012). In online shopping, privacy concerns are negatively associated with people’s online purchasing attitudes (Lian &

Lin, 2008). People prefer to purchase from a website that provides better protection for their privacy (Tsai et al., 2010). Privacy concerns also play a significant role in the adoption and use of location-based services (Xu & Gupta, 2009; Zhao, Lu, & Gupta, 2012).

With the increasing popularity of social media, privacy has attracted considerable attention from researchers. To understand the privacy concerns that social network platform users perceive, Krasnova et al. (2009) assembled two focus groups to explore privacy issues related to social network platform use. They identified four main categories of privacy concerns: 1) general accessibility concerns, i.e., the worries about unwanted access by those who are not among the intended audiences for the posted information; 2) concerns about social threats, i.e., the concerns derived from the social environment, such as inappropriate comments from others and bullying; 3) organizational threats, i.e., the fears associated with the collection and secondary use of personal data by various organizations; and 4) identity theft (Krasnova et al., 2009).

It has been observed that privacy awareness, privacy policy, and privacy control mitigate people's concern for their online privacy, which means that people who are more aware of privacy issues, read the privacy policy, and perceive a greater personal ability to control their own personal information are less worried about their privacy on social network platforms (Zlatolas et al., 2015). Using a student sample, Jeong and Kim (2017) found that people's concerns about privacy varied according to the content shared, the form of posting, and the type of intended audiences. Feng and Xie (2014) conducted research on teenagers' privacy concerns in relation to social network platforms and discovered that parents' concerns about their teenage children's privacy along with the frequency with which the teenagers used social network platforms were

important predictors of the level of concern teenagers had about privacy on social network platforms.

2.4.4.3 Privacy concerns and social network platform use

Privacy concerns can influence people's behavior on social network platforms. A prior study suggested that privacy concerns affect social network adoption (Tufekci, 2008). Non-users were more worried about online privacy issues than regular social network platform users, thus indicating that people with more prominent privacy concerns are less likely to start using social network platforms (Tufekci, 2008). Privacy concerns also affect the way in which social network platforms are used. The study conducted by Ku et al. (2013) indicated that people who are more concerned about their privacy are less likely to use social network platforms on a continuous basis. Zhou and Li (2014) also found similar negative associations between privacy concerns and the continuance of use in the context of mobile social network platforms.

Previous studies have also examined the effects of privacy concerns on self-disclosure via social network platforms; mixed results were obtained. Some researchers found that privacy concerns had negative influences on self-disclosure (Krasnova et al., 2009; Zlatolas et al., 2015). People were less willing to disclose personal information online when they were worried about their privacy. It was found that concerns over organizational threats (information collected by service providers or third party) were negatively associated with the amount of information users were willing to disclose (Krasnova et al., 2009). People with more prominent concerns about their privacy revealed less information about themselves on social network platforms (Zlatolas et al., 2015).

Some studies postulated that privacy concerns are not associated with self-disclosure. Tufekci (2008) found that there was little to no relationship between one's general

privacy concerns and information disclosure. People's concern about privacy was only related to the disclosure of phone numbers, and not significantly related to other information disclosure (such as real name, romantic status, and interests) (Tufekci, 2008). The study conducted by Hallam and Zanella (2017) yielded similar findings, suggesting that privacy concerns do not have a direct effect on information disclosure behavior.

The phenomenon that people disclose information regardless of privacy concerns is referred to as the privacy paradox (Norberg, Horne, & Horne, 2007). Different explanations of the privacy paradox have been documented. Some researchers claimed that people with a high level of privacy concerns tend to deploy privacy protecting strategies, which in turn diminishes their concerns during self-disclosure (Young & Quan-Haase, 2013). Other researchers suggested that people disclose information because the perceived benefits have a greater impact on self-disclosure than do the perceived risks (Krasnova et al., 2010). Another explanation of the privacy paradox is that people perceive the risks related to self-disclosure as being abstract and distant while the social rewards related to self-disclosure are seen as concrete and near. The near-future intention has a significant positive impact on self-disclosure behavior, but the distant-future intention does not (Hallam & Zanella, 2017).

2.4.4.4 Cultural differences in privacy concerns

It has been suggested that culture plays an important role in people's privacy concerns (Lowry, Cao, & Everard, 2011). Researchers have contended that the privacy concerns of Chinese users are positively associated with their perceptions of risks and uncertainty when using social network platforms (Zhou & Li, 2014). A study conducted in Malaysia also found that, if individuals thought that the consequences of privacy loss were serious, they would be more concerned with privacy (Mohamed & Ahmad, 2012).

Previous research postulated that people from individualist cultures are more concerned about privacy than those who from collectivist cultures (Chen & Tsoi, 2011; Cho, Rivera-Sánchez, & Lim, 2009; Ku et al., 2013; Wang, Norice, & Cranor, 2011). Surveying 1,261 respondents from 5 countries (Australia, America, South Korea, Singapore, and India), Cho et al. (2009) found that Internet users from Australia and America were more concerned about online privacy than users from South Korea, Singapore, and India. Moreover, in a study that investigated privacy attitudes among three countries, American social network platform users also reported the highest level of privacy concerns, followed by the users from China and India (Wang et al., 2011). Comparing French and Chinese social network platform users, Chen and Tsoi (2011) found that French users had significantly more prominent concerns about their privacy than Chinese users, which led to stricter privacy settings and less information disclosure among French users. In addition, Ku et al. (2013) analyzed privacy concerns and continuance intention between American and Taiwanese users, with the findings suggesting that privacy concerns have a stronger influence on the continued use intention among American users.

2.4.4.5 Privacy protection strategies

The concerns over privacy lead to privacy protection behavior. Teens tend to set their profiles on social network platforms to private when they are concerned about their privacy. To protect their privacy, teenagers may also adopt strategies such as deleting or editing posted content and deleting friends from their network (Feng & Xie, 2014). Young people with a large social network maintain their privacy by employing a conformity strategy when posting; simply put, they share only a part of themselves so that they are neither too public nor too private when interacting with their entire social network (Brandtzæg, Lüders, & Skjetne, 2010). In a study on privacy concerns and privacy strategies, Young and Quan-Haase (2013) found that people deployed different

strategies to protect their privacy on Facebook. The most common strategies were communicating with private messages, changing default privacy settings, excluding personal information from profiles, and untagging oneself from images posted by others. The less common strategies included deleting wall posts, limiting profile access, blocking unwanted contacts, and providing fake or inaccurate information (Young & Quan-Haase, 2013).

2.5 The effects of gender

2.5.1 Gender and Internet use

Early research suggested that men use the Internet more than women (Morahan-Martin, 1998). Indeed, said research found that males made up a greater portion of Internet users and they spent more time online than females. The gender gap in Internet use may be explained by females' less favorable attitude toward technology (Morahan-Martin, 1998). With the extensive growth in the accessibility, connectivity, and functionality of the Internet, the number of Internet users has grown rapidly, especially with regards to female users (Jackson et al., 2001).

2.5.1.1 The intensity of Internet use

Even though Internet users tend to be evenly divided by gender (Weiser, 2000), the gender differences in Internet use still constitute a heated topic. Some studies have investigated the intensity of Internet use and found mixed results regarding gender differences. Some researchers suggested that men spend more time online than women. For example, Odell et al. (2000) discovered that the average time spent online for males was 7.1 hours per week – more than that spent by females (5.4 hours per week). Similarly, Bressers and Bergen (2002) found that males college students spent 61 minutes a day online in 2002, while the females spent 43 minutes. Jones et al. (2009) concluded that more male than female college students spent over 3 hours a day online.

However, some researchers suggested that there is no gender difference in the intensity of Internet use. Using a sample of 630 undergraduate students, Jackson et al. (2001) discovered that men and women used the Internet equally often. Wolfradt and Doll (2001) also found no significant differences between men and women for the intensity of Internet use. Indeed, in the latter study, the frequency and duration of Internet use for men and women were nearly the same (Wolfradt & Doll, 2001).

2.5.1.2 The purposes of Internet use

A more consistent pattern regarding gender differences has been found in the purposes of Internet use and the attitudes toward the Internet. Jackson et al. (2001) suggested that interpersonal communication, information, and entertainment are the main motivations for Internet use. They also postulated that females are more likely to use the Internet for interpersonal communication, while males are more likely to use the Internet for information gathering and entertainment (Jones et al., 2009; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001). Online entertainment was more important for men than for women (Wolfradt & Doll, 2001). Based on a representative sample of 7,421 college students, Jones et al. (2009) found that the online activity most frequently reported by female college students was social communications, while entertainment activities were most frequently reported among male college students.

Using a sample of 843 students from different districts, Odell et al. (2000) found similar patterns. They suggested that females use the Internet for e-mails more than males (91% vs. 85.7%), while males are more likely than females to play games (43.6% vs. 26.6%) and listen to music online (49.6% vs. 26.9%) (Odell et al., 2000). Weiser (2000) contended that females tend to chat online and use e-mail more than males, while males tend to listen to audio broadcasts online more than females. These patterns also appear among children. With a sample of 515 children, Jackson et al. (2008) found

that females used the Internet for communications more than males. They opined that females use emails and instant messages to communicate with friends more intensively, while males play video games and visit game websites more intensively than do females (Jackson et al., 2008; Joiner et al., 2005).

In comparison with women, men are more likely to use the Internet for information gathering. It has been suggested that males use the Internet for web surfing more than do females (Wolfradt & Doll, 2001). Males are more likely to search for items and products that are difficult to find (Weiser, 2000). When compared with women, men read more newspapers online (Bressers & Bergen, 2002). They tend to use the Internet to look for news and stay informed of what has happened lately (Odell et al., 2000; Weiser, 2000).

In other online activities, gender differences are also salient. For instance, women are more inclined than men to use the Internet for academic purposes (Jackson et al., 2008). Jones et al. (2009) found that a greater portion of female college students reported using the Internet for activities related to academic work. Similarly, Weiser (2000) showed that females were more likely to use the Internet for research, educational assistance, and obtaining course information. The above author also suggested that, in comparison with females, males are more likely to use the Internet for adult content, such as visiting sex sites online and viewing pornography (Bressers & Bergen, 2002; Odell et al., 2000; Weiser, 2000). Males were also more likely to use the Internet for other purposes, such as downloading software, pictures, and videos (Joiner et al., 2005; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001), politics/government, personal finance/stocks (Bressers & Bergen, 2002), shopping, searching for romance, and pursuing a sexual relationship (Weiser, 2000).

2.5.1.3 The attitude toward the Internet

In addition to the differences in Internet usage patterns, men and women also differ in their attitude toward the Internet. Studies have found that, when using the Internet, women expressed a higher level of anxiety and men expressed a higher level of self-efficacy (Jackson et al., 2001; Wolfradt & Doll, 2001). While most studies were based on a student sample, Chou (2003) produced consistent findings with a sample of 136 high school teachers, suggesting that female teachers are more anxious toward the Internet than male teachers. Similarly, Zhang (2005) found significant gender differences in Internet anxiety among business employees, with females reporting more Internet anxiety than males.

2.5.2 Gender and social network platform use

With the rapid development of social network platforms, much of the time which people spend online is occupied by social networking. Considering the increasing popularity of social network platforms and the gender differences in Internet use, the effect of gender on social network platform use has attracted much attention from scholars.

2.5.2.1 The intensity of the social network platform use

Existing studies have suggested that gender has a significant impact on social network platform use (Barker, 2009). Previous research found that men visited their social network platform account 5 times per day on average, while women visited 3.45 times per day on average, thus indicating that men use social network platforms more frequently than women (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). More recently, various studies suggested that females use social network platforms more intensively than males. Using a sample of 1,026 Facebook users from 54 different countries, McAndrew and Jeong (2012) found that women spent more time on Facebook than men. The average time

women spent on Facebook was 10.16 hours per week, while the average time for men was 7.5 hours per week (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). It has been suggested that female college students use social network platforms more frequently than their male counterparts, with females reporting more frequent visits and longer time spent on social network platforms (Barker, 2009; Sheldon, Abad, & Hirsch, 2011). Research has shown similar results among younger user groups. Girls in middle and high school reported using social network platforms more intensively than boys (Sampasa-Kanyinga & Lewis, 2015).

2.5.2.2 The purposes of social network platform use

In addition to the intensity of use, previous studies have suggested that men and women use social network platforms for different purposes. Indeed, significant gender differences have been identified in the motivations for social network platform use. Barker (2009) found that women were more inclined to use social network platforms for entertainment, passing time, and communicating with peer group members, while men tended to use social network platforms for social identity gratification, seeking social compensation, and social learning. However, Horzum (2016) suggested that there are no gender differences when it comes to the motivation of entertainment and passing time. The inconsistency in Barker's and Horzum's findings may be explained by the different social network platforms investigated in their studies. While Barker (2009) focused on general social network platforms (such as Facebook, Myspace, and Friendster), Horzum (2016) concentrated on a specific platform, Facebook. Regarding Facebook, Horzum (2016) found that females were more likely to use Facebook for informational and educational purposes (such as joining educational groups), while males were more likely to treat Facebook as an avenue through which to become more popular and as a tool to manage tasks (such as organizing activities and appointments). Men were also

more inclined to use social network platforms for dating (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012).

2.5.2.3 The patterns of social network platform use

Existing research has suggested that men and women use social network platforms in different ways. Gender differences have been identified in social network platform activities. Aiming to investigate the use of Facebook among adolescences, Frison and Eggermont (2016) found that girls engaged in a higher level of active private Facebook use than boys, thus meaning that girls use Facebook more often for private communications (such as sending personal messages and chatting personally). Using an undergraduate student sample, Muscanell and Guadagno (2012) suggested that female college students are more likely to send private messages, and to post public messages, than are their male counterparts. Women write on others' profiles more than men (Fogel & Nehmad, 2009). It has also been postulated that females are more likely to look at the pages of same-sex people when compared to males (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). When viewing others' profiles, women pay more attention to obtaining information about others than do men (Haferkamp et al., 2011). They are more likely to seek personal information about others and check others' relationship status (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). In addition, women engage in social comparisons on social network platforms more often than men (Haferkamp et al., 2011). Moreover, women spent more time on activities related to photos, such as posting photographs (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012), while men reported playing games on social network platforms more often than women (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012).

2.5.2.4 The interaction effect of gender on social network platform use

Apart from direct effects, studies have suggested that the interactions between gender and other factors also have an impact on social network platform use. For example,

McAndrew and Jeong (2012) found some interesting interactions between gender and relationship status. They suggested that in comparison with single men, men who are in a relationship spend more time viewing other men's personal pages, but less time viewing other women's pages. There is also a reduction in activities related to photographs (such as posting, viewing and making comments on photos) (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). However, relationship status does not have an effect on women's Facebook use. There is no significant difference in Facebook use between women who are committed to a relationship and those who are not (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). The interactions between gender and personalities predict specific social network platform use. Muscanell and Guadagno (2012) found that, for men, agreeableness was associated with the frequency of postings, but not with the frequency of instant messaging. Conversely, for women, agreeableness predicted the frequency of instant messaging, but not the frequency of postings. In addition, openness to new experiences was a significant predictor of playing games for men, but not for women (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). Gender can also interact with different factors that are associated with the continuous use of social network platforms. For instance, Lin et al. (2017) proposed six factors that may influence social network platform continuous use: perceived usefulness, satisfaction, perceived privacy risk, perceived enjoyment, perceived reputation, and community identification. They found that women's continuance intention was associated with satisfaction, perceived enjoyment, perceived reputation, and community identification, while men's continuance intention is associated with perceived usefulness, satisfaction, and perceived enjoyment (Lin et al., 2017). This indicates that perceived reputation and community identification are significant predictors of continuous usage for women, but not for men. In contrast, perceived usefulness predicts men's continuance use, but not that of women. Furthermore, satisfaction has a stronger positive influence on women's continuance intention, while

perceived enjoyment has a stronger positive impact on men's continuance intention (Lin et al., 2017).

2.5.3 Gender and self-presentation

2.5.3.1 Differences in profile photos

Apart from the differences in Internet and social network platform use, males and females also differ in self-presentation. Hum et al. (2011) conducted content analysis on the Facebook profiles of college students. They found that most people had multiple profile pictures in their profile picture album, meaning that those people would change their profile photo. However, there was no significant differences between males and females' profiles with regards to the number of profile pictures, the number of people in the photos, the physical activity level, the candidness, or the appropriateness of the photos (Hum et al., 2011). Although men and women are not different in their frequency of posting profile photos, they post different content, emphasizing different features when they present themselves through profiles (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014).

Gender differences have been identified in relation to profile photos. It has been suggested that women often use the portrait as their profile photo, whereas men prefer to choose full-body photographs that show the surroundings and people nearby (Haferkamp et al., 2011). Instead of personal photos, men are also more likely to use other pictures as their profile photo (such as cartoons, symbols, or a picture of a celebrity) (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). Females express more emotions on social network platform profiles, displaying photographs that show more facial cues (such as smiles and eye contact) (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014), whereas men are more likely to have a serious profile photo (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). In addition, women post

more family photos in their profile, while men post more photos of outdoor activities (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014).

2.5.3.2 Differences in impression management

Females tend to portray a dependent image, while males prefer to present an independent image (Rose et al., 2012). Women are more likely to present themselves as being in relationships, thus building an affiliative image (Manago et al., 2008). They tend to join groups that facilitate their self-presentation (Haferkamp et al., 2011). After analyzing 100 Myspace profiles, Magnuson and Dundes (2008) found that in comparison with males, females were more inclined to mention their significant other in the “About me” and “Interest” parts of their profile, and females mentioned love in general more often than males (Magnuson & Dundes, 2008). Similarly, Bond (2009) found that women were more likely to post written information and photos related to their family, friends, and significant other; men were more likely to post content related to sports (Bond, 2009). Women preferred to use family photos as their cover photo on Facebook more than did man (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014). In addition, women were more inclined to engage in family activities on social network platforms than men, such as viewing relatives’ pages and appearing in family photos (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). A previous study suggested that women forward more content about “relationships” and “feelings,” while men’s self-presentation is more related to “status” and “technology” (Sveningsson Elm, 2007). Women use more words that express their feelings and emotions (such as “excited”) in Facebook messages, while men are more inclined to use words related to politics and the economy (such as “government,” “income,” and “tax”) in their Facebook messages (Schwartz et al., 2013). Gathering information from over 2 million Pinterest users, Ottoni et al. (2013) postulated that women are more active in generating content. They post more pictures in more variable categories (Ottoni et al., 2013).

2.6 The effects of culture

In addition to gender, culture also has a significant influence on the behavior of different groups of people, given that culture and people's behavior are interrelated. In this section, a review of various definitions of culture is first put forward, followed by a review of the cultural differences related to social network platform use and self-presentation. Subsequently, the cultural dimension framework is introduced.

2.6.1 Culture definitions

Before looking at the effects of culture, a review of the definitions of culture is necessary. "Culture" has always been a complex concept, and has been studied for a long time by scholars from different disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and other academic areas (Straub et al., 2002). The numerous researchers in these fields have produced various definitions of culture.

2.6.1.1 Culture as shared cognitive patterns

Some researchers have defined culture as patterns or structures. Among the structural definitions, some focus on cognitive structure, which considers culture as a system of cognition (e.g., information, ideas, and concepts) that guides the behavior (Reber, 1995), such as systems of values. A number of scholars believe that shared values are the core feature of a culture. For example, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) argued that: "Culture consists of pattern, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values" (p. 181). Hofstede (1980) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (p. 260). Later, Porter and Samovar (1991) proposed an extensive definition of culture, stating

that it is “the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving” (p. 51).

2.6.1.2 Culture as shared behavioral patterns

Some definitions of culture have focused on the behavior pattern shared within groups. In addition to the cognitive aspects, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) definition of culture also mentioned the behavioral aspects. They proposed that: “Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action” (p. 181). Harris (2001) argued that culture is “the behavior patterns associated with particular groups of peoples, that is to ‘customs’ or to a people’s ‘way of life’” (p. 16). Similarly, Marsella (1994) proposed that “Culture is shared, learned behavior which is transmitted from one generation to another for purposes of promoting individual and social survival, adaptation, and growth and development” (p. 166). Later, Salzmann (1998) stated that “The term culture...is understood to refer to the total pattern of human learned behavior transmitted from generation to generation” (p. 46). Salzmann (1998) also noticed the existence of subculture and proposed that “The terms of society and culture in anthropology are useful as general concepts, but no society’s culture is uniform for all its members. Any complex of learned patterns of behavior and thought that distinguishes various segments of a society (minorities, castes, and the like) is referred to as a subculture.” (p. 217).

2.6.1.3 Defining culture from other perspectives

While a certain group of researchers has focused on the structural aspects of culture, aiming to define what culture is, another group of researchers has focused on the outcomes of culture, trying to define culture from the perspective of its functions. These

scholars have looked at what culture can accomplish. First, it must be noted that culture helps people adapt to circumstances. Harris and Moran (1996) proposed that culture is a “distinctively human capacity for adapting to circumstances and transmitting this coping skill and knowledge to subsequent generations” (p. 10). Culture is defined by Binford (1968) as “all those means whose forms are not under direct genetic control...which serve to adjust individuals and groups within their ecological communities” (p. 323). Second, culture also helps people solve problems. Ford (1942) proposed that problem solving is one of the outcomes of culture. He defined culture as a tool for “traditional problem solving through accepted responses that have met with success. It consists of learned problem-solutions.” (p. 546). In addition, Moran and Stripp (1991) defined culture as “a group problem-solving tool that enables individuals to survive in a particular environment” (p. 43). Third, culture fosters a sense of belonging. For example, Harris and Moran (1996) stated that: “Culture gives people a sense of who they are, of belonging, of how they should behave, and of what they should be doing” (p. 10). Culture makes people feel connected with something larger than themselves, from a social group to a nation (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999). Sometimes, however, culture may have negative effects (such as limited access to resources) on those who are not perceived as members of the group (Turner, 1985). Fourth, culture can distinguish people from different groups, given that culture involves the shared patterns within groups; as stated by Tokarev (1973): “Culture, apart from its primary function of active adaptation to the environment, has another, derivative but no less important, function as an exact material and spiritual environment which mediates and reflects within human collectives and among them. [Thus, culture serves the functions of] ... segregation and that of the integration of human collectives” (p. 167-168). Hofstede's (1980) definition of culture also mentioned the distinguishing function of culture.

In addition to the structural and functional aspects, Winkelman (1993) proposed that people are also a part of the culture. “The people who share culture, the learned patterns of behavior, are also referred to as a culture. A culture thus refers to a group of people, as well as to the common patterns of behavior which characterize the group and link its members together” (p. 86).

In summation, culture denotes the mental and behavioral pattern shared within groups. The people in the group are also a part of the culture. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation. It helps people adapt to circumstances and solve problems. It also fosters a sense of belonging and distinguishes people from different groups. In this study, Hofstede's (1980) definition of culture was adopted. Hofstede (1980) suggested that the value patterns shared within groups are not only the core feature but also the distinguishing feature of a culture. The differences in cultures are rooted primarily in the differences in values.

2.6.2 Cultural differences in social network platform use

2.6.2.1 The intensity of the social network platform use

Previous research has investigated the effect of culture on the use of social network platforms. Significant differences have been identified regarding the use of social network platforms for people from different countries. Some studies found cultural differences in the intensity of social network platform use. With Chinese and American samples, Jackson and Wang (2013) found that American participants used social network platforms more intensively than Chinese participants. 19% of the Chinese participants almost never use social network platforms, while the rate was only 4% for the American participants (Jackson & Wang, 2013). Among the frequent social network platform users, American people spent more time on social network platforms than Chinese people. Specifically, the US participants used social network platforms for

51.52 minutes per day on average, while the Chinese participants spent 28.36 minutes (Jackson & Wang, 2013). A study conducted by Xu and MocarSKI (2014) reported similar results, indicating that the average time American students spent on social media was 3.44 hours per day, while Chinese students spent 1.78 hours on average. However, some other studies indicated that Chinese users use social network platforms more intensively. In a cross-cultural comparison, Tsoi and Chen (2011) found that Chinese people visited social network platforms more frequently (once or more than once per day) than French people (several times a week). Chinese users also reported spending more time on social network platforms than did Korean and American users (Ji et al., 2010).

In addition to the intensity of use, people from different countries use social network platforms in different ways. For instance, German users tend to use more “Likes” on Facebook “Fan pages” than Russian users (an average of 66 “Likes” compared to an average of 43 “Likes”). Additionally, German users join more groups, while Russian users use more applications (such as game applications) on Facebook (Brailovskaia & Bierhoff, 2016). Ji et al. (2010) examined the association between social network platform functions and the formation of social capital for Chinese, Korean, and American users. They found that the use of the “Expert search” and “Connection” functions (such as searching for people with professional knowledge and keeping in touch with distanced friends) was related to the formation of both bridging and bonding social capital for Chinese and Korean users; in addition, the use of the “Communication” functions (such as sharing opinions with others) was associated with bonding social capital for American users (Ji et al., 2010).

2.6.2.2 The purposes of social network platform use

Existing studies have suggested that the major motivations for social network platform use (such as maintain existing relationships, meet new friends, seek social support, obtain information, entertainment, etc.) are similar between different countries, but people from different countries weight the motivations differently (Jackson & Wang, 2013; Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011; Ku et al., 2013). For example, Jackson and Wang (2013) examined the differences in the motivations for social network platform use between Chinese and American college students. They found that Chinese participants mainly used social network platforms to keep in touch with friends and to obtain information, whereas American participants had higher scores on all the motivations, indicating that American users are more likely than Chinese users to use social network platforms to maintain existing relationships (including parents, family members, and friends), to meet new people, to obtain information, and “other” (Jackson & Wang, 2013). In another study concerning motivations for social network platform use, Kim et al. (2011) found that seeking social support and obtaining information were more important motivations for Korean users than for American users, while seeking entertainment on social network platforms was more important for American users than for Korean users.

Ku et al. (2013) found that, in comparison with American users, Chinese users placed more weight on entertainment, obtaining information, meeting new friends, and being cool when they use social network platforms. Moreover, the obtained gratifications had a significant effect on Chinese users’ intention to use social network platform continuously, although the effect was not significant for American users (Ku et al., 2013). Tsoi and Chen (2011) suggested that “seeking information” and “meeting new people” are more important motivations for Chinese users than for French users. In addition, when compared with French people, Chinese people were more likely to use

social network platforms to meet new friends and make contact with those newly-met friends through other communication channels afterward (such as instant messenger, e-mail, telephone) (Chen & Tsoi, 2011). Chinese people were also more likely to learn about friends' updates and find out more information about newly-met friends on social network platforms (Tsoi & Chen, 2011).

Even though maintaining existing relationships is one of the main purposes of social network platform use for people from different countries, researchers have found significant differences in the size and structure of people's online social networks (Cho, 2010; Jackson & Wang, 2013; Kim et al., 2011). People from western countries tend to have larger online social networks than those from eastern countries. For example, the American users had significantly more friends (an average of 487 friends) on social network platforms than did Chinese users (an average of 43 friends only) (Jackson & Wang, 2013). German users reported having more friends (an average of 286 friends) than Russian users (an average of 207 friends) (Brailovskaia & Bierhoff, 2016). With a sample of 589 undergraduate students (349 American and 240 Korean), Kim et al. (2011) found that American students had larger online social networks than Korean students. American students had 412 friends on average, while Korean students had an average of 81 friends. In addition, the online social networks of the Korean students consisted of a great proportion of close social ties, with families and close friends accounting for 70.4% of their online social networks (Kim et al., 2011). American students had significantly fewer socially close others in their friend list, with families and close friends accounting for only 23.7% of their online social networks (Kim et al., 2011). Similarly, Cho (2010) found that Korean social network platform users had fewer but more intimate friends online than American users. This small and tight online social network suggests that Korean students may be more exclusive when building online connections, while the large and loose online social network indicates that

American students may be more inclusive when establishing online relationships (Kim et al., 2011).

2.6.3 Cultural differences in self-presentation

While the studies reviewed above indicated that people from different countries use social network platforms differently, existing research has also suggested that cultural background affects the way people present themselves on social network platforms. For example, Grasmuck et al. (2009) found that students with an immigrant background in the United States (such as African Americans, Latinos and Indian Americans) tended to display ethno-racial aspects in Facebook identities. They put more effort into presenting a cultural self. However, Caucasian students rarely added ethno-racial content to their profiles, strategically presenting themselves as non-racist (Grasmuck et al., 2009).

2.6.3.1 Differences in profiles

Generally speaking, people from different countries present themselves differently in some aspects (Chu & Choi, 2010; Kim & Papacharissi, 2003; Rui & Stefanone, 2013; Zhao & Jiang, 2011). In particular, people from different countries differ in their sharing of information in profiles and have different preferences for profile photos. For instance, Chen and Tsoi (2011) found that Chinese people presented themselves differently from French people. They suggested that Chinese people update their social network platform profiles more frequently (once or several times a week) and share more identification information in their profile, while French people update their profiles less frequently (once or several times a month) and are more likely to share their relationship status (Chen & Tsoi, 2011). Specifically, in their study, it was found that a great proportion of Chinese participants posted their gender, e-mail address, location, instant messenger account, biography, and education information in their profile, while a greater proportion of French participants indicated whether they were single or married. Zhao

and Jiang (2011) suggested that Chinese users tend to customize their profile picture (such as using edited personal photos, objects or animals as a profile photo), while American users are more likely to use a group photo in their profile. Karl et al. (2010) investigated the effect of culture and personality traits on the types of information people post in Facebook profiles, indicating that American users are more likely to post problematic information (such as information related to substance abuse or sexuality) than German users.

Moreover, people from different countries share different content on social network platforms. For example, it has been suggested that the posts of Chinese and French users are different (Chen & Tsoi, 2011). Chinese users have been found to post more messages about their hobbies, personal life, and interesting observations, and to forward others' posts, whereas French users are more likely to post news (Chen & Tsoi, 2011). Singaporean users share significantly more photos on social network platforms, while American users more frequently update their profiles with text-based content (Rui & Stefanone, 2013).

2.6.3.2 Differences in self-presentation strategies

In addition to information sharing, people from different countries also differ in their self-presentation strategies. It has been suggested that American users are more likely to engage in positive self-presentation than Korean users (Lee-Won et al., 2014). In comparison with Korean people, American people are more inclined to share photos that make them look positive and avoid posting negative events (Lee-Won et al., 2014). Koreans prefer to present themselves in a less direct manner and use manipulated pictures, while US people are more likely to structure their online identity in more direct ways and use still graphics (Kim & Papacharissi, 2003). The self-presentation strategies employed by Chinese college students also differ from those employed by American

college students (Chu & Choi, 2010). Rui and Stefanone (2013) found that American users were more likely to manage unwanted photo tagging to maintain their public impressions than were Singaporean users. They also found a moderation effect of the promiscuous intention to make friends on the relationship between culture and the management of unwanted wall posts. With regards those who have a regular willingness to make new friends, American users were more active in managing unwanted wall posts than Singaporean users, thus confirming that American users are more active in strategic self-presentation (Rui & Stefanone, 2013). With respect to those who have a strong willingness to make new friends, American users were less likely to manage unwanted wall posts than Singaporean users, thus suggesting that American users might pay less attention to maintaining their public image than Singaporean users when they want to seek attention (Rui & Stefanone, 2013).

2.7 Social role theory

Gender differences in social behavior could be explained from the perspective of social roles. Social role theory proposes that people act according to certain socially-defined categories, namely social roles (e.g., doctor, driver, and police) (Mead, 1934). Different social roles have different rights and duties. People are supposed to meet the expectations and follow the norms of the social role they engage in (Linton, 1936). For example, police officers are expected to be brave and righteous.

Social role theory suggests that the behavioral differences between women and men originate in the differences between men and women's social roles (Eagly, 1987). The distribution of social roles between two genders is primarily determined by the division of labor and gender hierarchy (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). In ancient times, the physical differences between men and women led to the division of labor (Eagly & Wood, 1999). For example, the biological characteristics of women enable them to

carry out reproductive activities (such as pregnancy and lactation). Thus, women's tasks include gestating, nursing and taking care of children, thus resulting in that women are less likely to be involved in tasks that cannot be performed at the same time as childcare (Brown, 1970; Friedl, 1978). Compared with women, men are stronger physically. The physical strength makes men more capable of performing tasks that demand speed and force, such as farming and hunting large animals (Murdock & Provost, 1973). Therefore, women usually engage in domestic work, while men are more often involved in productive work (Ember, 1983). Gradually, these different gender-typed activities produce different gender roles (Eagly et al., 2000).

Gender roles are the shared beliefs and expectations of men and women (Wood & Eagly, 2012). People expect men and women to behave in certain ways and have the characteristics that are required by their social roles. The characteristics that make men and women more competent for the gender-typical roles gradually become stereotypic for the males or females (Eagly et al., 2000). For instance, some occupations are dominated by women, such as nurse and babysitter. The characteristics that aid women in performing these roles (such as friendly, caring, and tender) are highly valued by society and gradually become stereotypic for all women (Eagly, 1987). Similarly, in men-dominated occupations (such as the military), the masculine traits (such as independent and assertive) are important for successful role performance, and these characteristics gradually become stereotypic of all men (Eagly, 1987). The beliefs that people hold about men and women are widely shared in society (Eagly et al., 2000). They become a part of the culture and become the norms (Wood & Eagly, 2012).

Therefore, according to social role theory, people are expected to fit their social roles, and the social roles of men and women are often distributed along gender lines (Eagly et al., 2000). Men and women behave differently because the social roles that

they engage in have different requirements. They need to acquire different skills and resources to perform their roles successfully. In addition, men and women are supposed to behave in gender-specific ways to meet the expectations people have of each gender. Thus, women and men may behave differently because: 1) the requirements of their social roles are different; 2) people's beliefs and expectations about each gender are different.

2.8 The cultural dimension framework

2.8.1 The definitions of cultural dimensions

The cultural dimension framework was developed based on a large scale survey pertaining to values and sentiments, in which approximately 116,000 employees of IBM were involved (Hofstede, 1980). The initial framework included four dimensions: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). The fifth dimension – long-term vs. short-term orientation – was developed later on the basis of research on Asian cultures (Hofstede, 2001). More recently, the sixth dimension – indulgence vs. restraint – was added based on the World Values Survey (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Individualism vs. collectivism stands for the extent to which people are tied to groups (Hofstede, 2011). In societies with high individualism, people prefer to act as individuals. The social framework is loose. People are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate family. In societies with low individualism (namely high collectivism), the social framework is tight. People are integrated into strong in-groups (such as relatives and friends). In-group members are expected to look after each other and be loyal to the group (Hofstede, 2001).

Power distance refers to “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is

distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 9). It reflects the extent of inequality in the society. In societies with high power distance, followers endorse the inequality of power as much as the leaders do. Followers expect to be guided and be told what to do. In societies with low power distance, leaders and followers consider each other as equals. Leaders are expected to consult their followers in the decision-making process (Hofstede, 2001).

Masculinity vs. femininity refers to the degree to which masculine values prevail over feminine values (Hofstede et al., 2010). In societies with high masculinity, the dominant values are masculine (such as assertiveness, competitiveness, success, and ambition). People place emphasis on achievements and performance. In societies with low masculinity (namely high femininity), the dominant values are feminine (such as caring for others, warm personal relationships, quality of life, and modesty). People prefer a friendly atmosphere and cooperation (Hofstede, 2001).

Uncertainty avoidance has been defined as the extent to which people feel uncomfortable with ambiguity (Hofstede, 1980). In societies with strong uncertainty avoidance, people feel threatened by uncertainty and try to avoid it; conversely, in societies with weak uncertainty avoidance, people are comfortable with ambiguous situations and accept uncertainty (Hofstede, 2011).

Long-term vs. short-term orientation is related to people’s focus: the future or the present and past (Hofstede, 2011). In long-term oriented societies, future-oriented values are encouraged (such as persistence and thrift). People foster virtues to prepare for the future. In short-term oriented societies, past- and present-oriented values are highlighted (such as respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and personal steadiness and stability). People have a suspicious attitude toward societal changes, focusing more on achieving quick results (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Indulgence vs. restraint is defined as the extent to which people gratify their basic desires related to enjoying life and having fun (Hofstede et al., 2010). In societies with high indulgence, the control of basic desires gratification is relatively weak. People place more emphasis on leisure time and have a tendency toward optimism. In societies with low indulgence (namely high restraint), the control for the gratification of basic desires related to enjoying life and having fun is relatively strong. People feel restrained by strict social norms and feel that leisure is not important (Hofstede et al., 2010).

2.8.2 Using the cultural dimension framework at different levels

Even though the cultural dimension framework was originally developed based on work-related data and initially applied to human resource management, it is now widely referenced in psychology, sociology, business, marketing, and management studies, particularly when examining the effect of cultural differences on people's emotions, attitudes, behavior, and job performance (Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010). This framework has been used at different levels (i.e., country level, group/organization level, and individual level). For example, at the country level, a prior study found that power distance and individualism were significantly associated with the development of e-government (Zhao, 2011). Additionally, it was suggested that national culture is closely related to the IT adoption rate of a country (Erumban & de Jong, 2006). The IT adoption rate was higher in countries with smaller power distance and/or lower uncertainty avoidance (Erumban & de Jong, 2006).

Some other studies have also used the cultural dimension framework at the group/organization level (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001; Oetzel, 1998). For instance, it has been suggested that groups with more members from collectivistic culture (e.g., Japanese-American groups) have more cooperating tactics, less competing tactics, and fewer conflicts than groups with more members from individualistic culture (e.g.,

European-American groups) (Oetzel, 1998). A study by Kirkman and Shapiro (2001) postulated that collectivism is negatively associated with members' resistance to the self-managing work teams, and further influences team productivity, cooperation, and empowerment.

In addition to the country level and the group/organization level, a majority of researcher have adapted the cultural dimension framework for individual-level studies. For example, Baptista and Oliveira (2015) used the cultural dimension framework in a single country to examine the effects of cultural values on people's adoption of mobile banking service. They found that cultural values moderated the relationship between individuals' behavioral intention and the actual use of mobile banking service (Baptista & Oliveira, 2015). In the cross-cultural context, Chiu and Kosinski, (1999) found that nurses from Individualistic cultures (i.e., Australia and America) showed a higher level of job satisfaction and a lower level of work strain than those from collectivistic cultures (i.e., Singapore and Hong Kong).

In order to provide more precise explanations for people's behavior at the individual level, Srite and Karahanna (2006) proposed the espoused national cultural values on the basis of Hofstede's (1980) research, which included the initial four cultural dimensions. According to Srite and Karahanna's (2006) study, individualism vs. collectivism is defined as the extent to which people prefer to act as an individual rather than as a member of a group. Power distance is defined as the extent to which the individual considers the large differentials of power as normal and accepts that people in higher positions have more power. Uncertainty avoidance is defined as the extent to which the individual tolerates risk. Masculinity vs. femininity refers to the extent to which the individual espouses gender inequalities.

2.8.3 The cultural background of China and Malaysia

China is the most populous country in the world. In 2017, the population of China stood at approximately 1.4 billion. The Chinese population consists of multiple ethnicities (56 in total). The Han ethnic group is the largest group, accounting for over 91% of the population according to a report from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBS). The other 55 ethnic groups make up the remaining population (NBS, 2011). The national language of China is Mandarin, which is spoken by most Chinese people.

According to a report released by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), in 2017, the population of Malaysia was 32.3 million (DOSM, 2017). The major ethnic groups are the Malaysian-Malays (also known as *Bumiputera*, the indigenous people of Malaysia), the Malaysian-Chinese, and the Malaysian-Indians. The Malaysian-Malays, who represent the majority in Malaysia, accounted for 68.8% of the total population, while the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Indians accounted for 23.2% and 7% respectively in 2017 (DOSM, 2017). People from different ethnic groups prefer their mother tongues or English. For example, the Malaysian-Malays speak *Bahasa Melayu* (the Malaysian language), while the Malaysian-Chinese prefer Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hakka, and the Malaysian-Indians speak Tamil (Tamam, 2011; Wan Jafar, 2014).

2.9 Chapter summary

Existing studies have suggested that social network platforms provide good opportunities for people to reconstruct their online identity. People may reconstruct their online identity due to various reasons, such as vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns. However, existing research concerning these factors has mainly focused on the general aspects of social network platform use, such as the association between the intensity of social network platform use and users' perceptions

of these factors, and how said factors affect users' self-presentation and continuance intention. There is a lack of research when it comes to providing a detailed understanding of these motivations on social network platforms.

Additionally, the existing studies concerning online identity reconstruction did not take into account gender and culture. Previous research on gender and culture in the context of social network platforms mainly focused on the differences in users' behavioral patterns (such as the intensity of social network platform use) and self-presentation (such as profile management and self-presentation strategies). More attention should be paid to the effect of gender and culture on the motivations for online identity reconstruction.

Conducted in China and Malaysia, the current study aims to fill these gaps by investigating gender and cultural differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction based on social role theory and the cultural dimension framework. While the social role theory may provide some explanation of the gender differences, the cultural dimension framework may be useful in interpreting the cultural differences.

CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In this chapter, the connections between the motivations for online identity reconstruction and the two theories adopted in this study (social role theory and the cultural dimension framework) are illustrated. Hypotheses regarding gender and cultural differences in motivations for online identity reconstruction are proposed based on existing literature and theories.

3.1 Vanity

According to the social role theory, females are expected to acquire feminine characteristics, whereas males are expected to acquire masculine characteristics (Eagly et al., 2000). Previous research has suggested that physical attractiveness is associated with feminine attributes and it is a demonstration of “success” for women (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976). Women can use physical attractiveness as a tool to ensure social power or influence, especially in cultures where women’s roles are more subservient (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2008). The connection between physical attractiveness and social status is more ascertainable for females than it is for males (Vaughn & Langlois, 1983). In contrast, men’s social values are usually measured by their performances and achievements (Stake, 1979). It has been postulated that personal achievement is significantly associated with career success (Kiker & Condon, 1981) and it is an important element of becoming a successful leader (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Moreover, accomplishments and achievements are dominant images of masculinity for men (Pleck, 1976), and men are more achievement-driven (Elizur & Beck, 1994). Therefore, men are likely to value personal achievements more than women.

A substantial body of literature has supported the notion that women tend to be more concerned about physical attractiveness, whereas men tend to be more concerned about personal achievements. When compared with men, women have more awareness of the

observable aspects of the body (Miller, Murphy, & Buss, 1981). They are more concerned about body weight (Pliner, Chaiken, & Flett, 1990) and make more of an effort with their physical appearance (Aune & Aune, 1994). The literature has shown that, while physical attractiveness was positively associated with women's feelings of happiness (Mathes & Kahn, 1975), men's self-esteem was connected with personal achievements (Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992).

Prior studies have also suggested that there are significant gender differences in men and women's self-presentation on social network platforms. For example, women are more concerned about how they are perceived by others (Manago et al., 2008). In comparison with men, women change their appearances on social network platforms more frequently (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). They are more likely to manage their impressions through profile pictures and spend significantly more time on impression management activities (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). Similarly, Manago et al. (2008) found that women placed more emphasis on impressing others with their profile. They tended to use flattering photos to show their physical beauty and attractiveness (Manago et al., 2008).

In contrast, men pay more attention to demonstrating their achievements (such as success and social status) and tend to focus on strength and power, which display their masculine characteristics (Manago et al., 2008). For instance, men are more inclined than women to post photos of objects that show their status, such as cars. Men also tend to post more photos in which they are wearing formal clothing (Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014) because formal clothing is related to others' perceptions of the credibility and success of men (Sebastian & Bristow, 2008). Additionally, male users prefer to employ words related to work, achievement and money to describe themselves on social

network platforms (Ottoni et al., 2013); they also pay more attention to their occupational status and prestige (Haferkamp et al., 2011).

Previous research suggested that identity reconstruction on social network platforms could better fulfill people's need for vanity (Hu et al., 2015). By hiding undesirable characteristics and presenting selected or even fake information, people can build an ideal online identity for themselves. For example, an unattractive girl can build a better image by posting selected or edited beautiful photos. The reconstructed online identity increases people's attractiveness, thus making them more socially desirable. With the reconstructed online identity, people are more likely to be praised and valued by others, and thereby their needs for vanity are fulfilled (Hu et al., 2015). Considering that men and women focus on different aspects of vanity when they present themselves on social network platforms, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: In comparison to men, women are more likely to be motivated by physical vanity when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

H2: In comparison to women, men are more likely to be motivated by achievement vanity when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

According to Srite and Karahanna's (2006) study, people who are masculinity oriented place more emphasis on masculine values (e.g., achievements). Their behavior is mostly motivated to fulfill their work goals (Hofstede et al., 2010; Srite & Karahanna, 2006), such as performance, assertiveness, advancement, competitiveness, and earnings. In contrast, people who are femininity oriented place more emphasis on feminine values (e.g., physical attractiveness) (Hofstede et al., 2010). Their behavior is usually motivated to fulfill their personal goals (Srite & Karahanna, 2006), such as life satisfaction, warm personal relationships, and a friendly work environment.

Reconstructing identity on social network platforms fulfills people's need for achievement and physical attractiveness (Hu et al., 2015). It is suggested that the physical attractiveness is associated with feminine attributes, while the accomplishments and achievements are dominant images of masculinity (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976; Pleck, 1976). According to the work of Hofstede et al. (2010), on average, Chinese people espouse more masculine values than Malaysian people, while Malaysian people espouse more feminine values than Chinese people. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: In comparison to Malaysian people, Chinese people are less likely to be motivated by physical vanity during identity reconstruction on social network platforms.

H4: In comparison to Malaysian people, Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by achievement vanity during identity reconstruction on social network platforms.

3.2 Bridging social capital

Prior studies have suggested that men have more friends online than women (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010; Fogel & Nehmad, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). For example, the study of Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) found that the average number of friends reported by men was 280.02, while the average number of friends reported by women was 193.28. In another study carried out two years later by Bonds-Raacke and Raacke (2010), the average number of friends reported by men was 450, while the average number of friends reported by women was 256 (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010). Even though both men and women reported having more friends after two years, men had larger social networks on social network platforms than did women (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010). Fogel and Nehmad (2009) also suggested that men have more friends connected to their accounts on social network platforms than women. In

addition, men are more likely to check the network sizes of their friends (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012).

Men are more active in expanding their social networks and place greater emphasis on establishing new relationships (Mazman & Usluel, 2011). Muscanell and Guadagno (2012) postulated that men are more inclined to use social network platforms to build new relationships, while women are more likely to maintain their existing relationships. In addition, men are more inclined to look for new friends when viewing others' social network platform profiles (Haferkamp et al., 2011). They are also more interested in meeting new people, socializing, and networking for their career on social network platforms (Horzum, 2016; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012).

Social role theory suggests that men are more often engaged in the roles related to providing resources (Eagly et al., 2000). From the resources perspective, bridging social capital can provide people with access to new resources that are not available in their bonding relationships (Putnam, 2000). It offers people new information, different perspectives and broadened worldviews (Ellison et al., 2007). The access to information is positively associated with career success (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). The benefits of bridging social capital may provide men with opportunities to access more diverse resources and achieve greater personal success. Therefore, men may value bridging social capital more than women do.

Bridging social capital is an important motivation for online identity reconstruction (Hu et al., 2015). With a reconstructed identity that is partly or totally different from their existing identity, individuals have a greater chance of meeting new friends from different backgrounds to them. With these new friends, people can access new social networks and resources, thus increasing their bridging social capital. Considering that men are more interested in making new friends, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: In comparison to women, men are more likely to be motivated by bridging social capital when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

According to the cultural dimension framework, Srite and Karahanna (2006) postulated that people who are individualism oriented place more emphasis on personal task prevails, and they will choose to “act as an individual rather than as a member of a group” (Srite & Karahanna, 2006, p. 682). In contrast, people who are collectivism oriented pay more attention to maintaining harmony within groups and building relationships with others (Srite & Karahanna, 2006). Collectivistic people tend to be more interdependent and place more emphasis on interpersonal relationships.

Bridging social capital lies in the loose relationships between individuals with different backgrounds (Putnam, 2000). It is easy to establish this kind of relationships with strangers on social network platforms (Ellison et al., 2007). Previous research found that collectivism was positively associated with the bridging social capital online (Lin et al., 2012). According to Hofstede et al. (2010), China has a higher level of collectivism than Malaysia. In addition, a prior study suggested that *Guanxi*, which refers to the personal connections with family, acquaintances, and strangers, is very important for Chinese people (Chen & Chen, 2004). Hence it is likely that Chinese people tend to focus more on bridging social capital than Malaysian people.

In addition, bridging social capital can be beneficial for people’s personal growth and long-term success. It has been suggested that bridging social capital is positively associated with innovations (Hauser, Tappeiner, & Walde, 2007). It also helps people adjust to the new environment (Lin et al., 2012) and benefits their professional development (Fox & Wilson, 2015). Bridging social capital can provide people with new resources that are different from what they can obtain with existing close relationships, such as new information about job opportunities and novel perspectives

(Granovetter, 1973; Putnam, 2000). The access to non-redundant information and resources has positive influences on career success (Seibert et al., 2001), which is crucial for people's future development.

On the social network platforms, for people who reconstruct their online identity because of bridging social capital, they are motivated to make friends with other online users (Hu et al., 2015). Being more collectivistic and more long-term orientated (Hofstede et al., 2010), Chinese people are likely to value bridging social capital more than Malaysian people. A reconstructed online identity can facilitate the process of gaining bridging social capital (Hu et al., 2015). As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: In comparison to Malaysian people, Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by bridging social capital during identity reconstruction on social network platforms.

3.3 Disinhibition

As mentioned above, self-disclosure is a prominent example of benign disinhibition (Suler, 2004). Self-disclosure refers to “any message about the self that a person communicates to another” (Wheless & Grotz, 1976, p. 338). Gender differences have been found in the benign disinhibition effect on self-disclosure (Bond, 2009; Hollenbaugh & Everett, 2013; Lenhart & Fox, 2006). For example, women tend to disclose more information than men online, and the topics of self-disclosure are more diverse (Bond, 2009; Hollenbaugh & Everett, 2013). Additionally, prior studies have suggested that women are more prone than men to sharing their personal experiences online (Lenhart & Fox, 2006) and teenage girls are more likely to disclose a greater amount of intimate information than teenage boys (Bortree, 2005). Moreover, Bond (2009) suggested that the self-disclosure level of female users is higher than that of male

users on social network platforms. Regarding the effect of toxic disinhibition, gender differences are also salient. For example, men tend to flame more than women online, such as writing offensive comments (Aiken & Waller, 2000). In addition, men are also more inclined to flame for entertainment (Alonzo & Aiken, 2004). Moreover, males are more likely to engage in cyberbullying than females (e.g., harass and embarrass others on purpose) (Li, 2006).

The gender roles expect women to be expressive because women often perform social roles that require extensive communications (such as teachers and customer services), and men are expected to be restrained (Eagly et al., 2000). Women are more willing to share personal feelings with their friends and lovers than men (Snell, Miller, & Belk, 1988). Therefore, a person with a high disclosure level is considered more feminine (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976). Men are expected to keep their personal problems to themselves. They are considered especially feminine when they talk about personal problems frequently (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976). While self-disclosure is favored in female roles, aggression is preferred in male roles. In ancient times, men often had to compete with others for resources (Eagly, 1987). Therefore, the characteristics that make them more competitive (such as physical strength and aggression) are typical masculine characteristics for males (Eagly et al., 2000). In addition, people perceive men as becoming angry or violent more easily than women (Pleck, 1976).

Previous research has suggested that reduced nonverbal cues online (such as visual and context cues) diminish people's inhibition in computer-mediated communications (Schouten et al., 2007). The feelings of disinhibition enhance people's online self-disclosure. People disclose more emotions online when they are anonymous and invisible to others (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2015). However, anonymity, invisibility, and lack of eye contact can also lead to toxic disinhibition, such as flaming, negative

atmosphere and even threats (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012). Some people may reconstruct an online identity that is partly or even totally different from their real identity to enjoy the disinhibition effect online (Hu et al., 2015). The reconstructed identity can separate people's online behavior from their real life in the offline world, which may make them feel less vulnerable when behaving freely online (Suler, 2004). Considering that women are expected to be more expressive and men are expected to be more aggressive, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7: In comparison to men, women are more likely to be motivated by benign disinhibition when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

H8: In comparison to women, men are more likely to be motivated by toxic disinhibition when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

According to Hofstede et al. (2010), the Chinese society is more restrained than the Malaysian society in some aspects. For example, Chinese people may feel that their behavior is restrained by strict social norms (Hofstede et al., 2010). The relaxing environment online (such as on social network platforms) makes people feel less pressured and enables them to behave and express themselves freely. People who feel restrained can take advantage of the benign disinhibition effect and express their suppressed feelings (Suler, 2004). In addition, Chinese people do not accept the inequality in power distribution as much as Malaysian people do (Hofstede et al., 2010). It is likely that Chinese people have more complains about the hierarchical society. On the Internet, people perceive a lower level of surveillance and feel that their online behaviors are disconnected from their real life (Selwyn, 2008), thus individuals can take advantage of the toxic disinhibition effect and give vent to their negative emotions (Suler, 2004).

With a reconstructed identity, people tend to feel less inhibited and free to behave in the way they want (Hu et al., 2015). Being more restrained by social norms and less accepting of the inequality in power distribution, the online disinhibition effect (both benign and toxic effects) may be more appealing to Chinese people. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H9: In comparison to Malaysian people, Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by benign disinhibition during identity reconstruction on social network platforms.

H10: In comparison to Malaysian people, Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by toxic disinhibition during identity reconstruction on social network platforms.

3.4 Privacy concerns

With regards to the effect of gender on privacy concerns, it has been suggested that women are more inclined than men to provide incomplete information when registering online (Sheehan, 1999). In addition, Milne and Culnan (2004) postulated that women are more likely to read the privacy notices of websites when compared to men. On social network platforms, female users are more inclined to use privacy settings for their accounts (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), thus limiting the access to their profiles (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010). Moreover, Fogel and Nehmad (2009) suggested that women show more prominent concerns about their privacy than men on social network platforms. Women are less likely to provide their phone number and instant messenger address in the profile. In addition, females Facebook users are more concerned about the data usage of third-party companies than do male users (Hoy & Milne, 2010).

From the perspective of social roles, on the one hand, risk-taking is a valued masculine characteristic, because, as resource providers, men often needed to engage in dangerous activities in ancient times (such as hunting) (Eagly, 1987). Risk-taking can facilitate men's role performances. On the other hand, caution and risk aversion facilitate women's performances of social roles (such as caring for children) (Eagly et al., 2000).

On social network platforms, users provide personal information in their profile. They may also disclose personal information through other features, such as sharing photos or updating statuses. To protect their privacy and guard their personal information, people can reconstruct their identity on social network platforms by withholding or falsifying personal information (Hu et al., 2015). Considering that women are more concerned about privacy and are expected to be more risk-averse, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H11: In comparison to men, women are more likely to be motivated by privacy concerns when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

It has been suggested that people with a higher level of uncertainty avoidance are more anxious, less willing to take risks, and more apprehensive about the outcomes of their actions (Hofstede et al., 2010; Srite & Karahanna, 2006). Sharing private information on social network platforms could lead to uncertain outcomes. The personal information may be accessed by unauthorized third parties or be misused by malicious individuals (Gross & Acquisti, 2005). Given that people who are uncertainty-avoiding are less tolerant of ambiguous situations, Milberg et al. (1995) posited that they are likely to have greater concerns over privacy. Cao and Everard (2008) also suggested that uncertainty avoidance is positively associated with people's privacy concerns and awareness.

By reconstructing online identity, people can keep their private information safe (Hu et al., 2015), and hence reduce the uncertainty of online interactions. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), Malaysian people have a higher level of uncertainty avoidance than the Chinese. Being less tolerant of uncertain situations, it is likely that Malaysian people may feel more threatened by privacy issues than Chinese people. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H12: In comparison to Chinese people, Malaysian people are more likely to be motivated by privacy concerns during identity reconstruction on social network platforms.

3.5 Difference between ethnic groups

Malaysia is a multiracial country. People from different ethnic groups (such as the Malaysian-Malays and the Malaysian-Chinese) live together in harmony. As one of the ethnic groups in Malaysia, the Malaysian-Chinese are influenced by both Chinese and Malaysian culture. A further investigation of the differences in the motivations for identity reconstruction between the Malaysian-Malays, the Malaysian-Chinese and the Chinese from China (hereinafter referred to as “the Chinese-Chinese” when compared with the Malaysian-Chinese) could provide deeper insight into the Chinese and Malaysian culture. Considering that three different groups are involved, a research question rather than a hypothesis is proposed:

Regarding the motivations for online identity reconstruction (i.e., vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns), are there any differences between the Malays, the Malaysian-Chinese and the Chinese-Chinese?

3.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I hypothesized that men are more inclined to be motivated by achievement vanity, bridging social capital and toxic disinhibition during online identity reconstruction, while women are more likely to be motivated by physical vanity, benign disinhibition and privacy concerns. I also hypothesized that Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by achievement vanity, bridging social capital and disinhibition (both benign and toxic disinhibition) during online identity reconstruction, while Malaysian people are more likely to be motivated by physical vanity and privacy concerns. I also proposed a research question regarding the potential motivational differences between different ethnic groups.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

In this study, quantitative research methods were adopted to investigate gender and cultural differences in motivations for online identity reconstruction. Quantitative research is “an objective, formal, systematic process in which numerical data are used to quantify or measure phenomena and produce findings” (Carr, 1994, p. 716). This chapter introduces the methodology of the present study, such as data collection methods and procedures. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses are conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurements used in this study.

4.1 Data collection

4.1.1 Convenience sampling

In this study, the target population comprises the Chinese and Malaysian social network platform users. As mentioned in Section 1.1.1.2, by the end of 2017, China had more than 800 million active social network platform users, while Malaysia had more than 24 million active social network platform users (Tencent, 2018; WAS, 2018). The target population is very large and it is not possible to compile a complete list of every social network platform user; this means that probability sampling methods are not applicable to the present study.

With regards to non-probability sampling methods, convenience sampling is most commonly used (Acharya et al., 2013). The respondents are recruited on the basis of the convenience of the researcher. The participants are usually easy to access (Dornyei, 2007). For example, researchers often collect data from students at their own institution. Convenience sampling has many advantages, such as easy to conduct, low cost and time saving (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). However, similar to other non-probability sampling methods, convenience sampling does not guarantee an equal chance of the members of the target population being selected in the sample (Kitchenham & Pfleeger,

2002). Despite this limitation, the convenience sampling method is used in the present study because of time and workforce limitations.

4.1.2 Online survey

After the sampling method has been decided, the next step is to choose a suitable data collection method. Typical quantitative data collection methods include experiments, surveys, observations, and analyzing existing data sets (Muijs, 2010). Survey research can be conducted in different ways: the traditional paper survey and the online survey. In this study, online surveys are used to collect data from participants.

Previous studies have suggested several advantages and disadvantages of an online survey. One advantage of an online survey is its global reach (Evans & Mathur, 2005). With the increasing penetration of the Internet, most people in the world can access the Internet easily. Online surveys enable the investigators to reach a large group of people within a relatively short time period, even when the target population is geographically separated (Wright, 2005). In addition, online surveys are more cost-efficient than traditional paper surveys (Yun & Trumbo, 2000). Traditional paper surveys can be costly and time-consuming. Researchers need to print out the questionnaire and then either send it to potential respondents through the postal service or visit institutions in person to deliver the questionnaires and collect the responses (Lefever, Dal, & Matthíasdóttir, 2007). Online surveys reduce paper waste and save printing cost (Wright, 2005). They can also be easily delivered to participants (such as through mail lists). Moreover, researchers can work on other tasks while they are collecting data using online surveys (Ilieva, Baron, & Healey, 2002).

In comparison with traditional paper surveys, researchers have greater control over the way people answer the questions in online surveys (Lefever et al., 2007). For example, the online surveys could be designed in a way that the respondents must

answer all of the questions before submission so that no questions will be left unanswered. Long questionnaires could be split into several pages and displayed gradually so that the respondent will not be discouraged by the length of the survey. Previous research reported that the completion rate of online surveys is higher than that of traditional paper surveys, and respondents provide longer answers to the open-ended questions in online surveys (Ilieva et al., 2002). The data collected using online surveys are automatically stored in a structured way on the online server. Researchers do not need to code and record the data by themselves (Lefever et al., 2007). They can download the data as soon as the responses are submitted.

Online surveys also have some disadvantages. For example, it is often difficult to establish an accurate sampling frame and track the non-response rate in online surveys (Wright, 2005). If the online survey is sent to people who are in an existing mail list, the researchers can establish a sampling frame and calculate the non-response rate. However, the overall response rate of e-mail surveys is lower than that of traditional paper surveys (Yun & Trumbo, 2000). If a researcher wants to conduct an online survey in a large online community, but members of said community are not stable and there are many “lurkers” who only read posts and do not make their presence known to others, then it is difficult to obtain comprehensive knowledge about the community members and track the non-response rate (Andrews, Nonnecke, & Preece, 2003). Researchers could use a lottery approach to increase response rate in online surveys (Wright, 2005). In this way, participants have a chance to win a prize after submitting the survey.

Another concern with online surveys is the representativeness of the sample (Lefever et al., 2007). It has been claimed that the samples in online surveys are likely to be biased because the Internet is being used more frequently by young males who have an above-average educational background and a middle-to-upper social-economic status

(Yun & Trumbo, 2000). However, Scholl et al. (2002) proposed that the lack of representativeness of online survey samples is likely to disappear because an increasing number of people have access to the Internet and the differences between online and offline populations are diminishing. Additionally, the accuracy of information is not guaranteed if the survey is self-reported (Wright, 2005).

Despite the drawbacks, the online survey was adopted as the method for data collection in this study, because a) online surveys have many advantages over traditional paper surveys (such as cost-efficiency); b) this study used the non-probability sampling method, and thereby the sampling frame issues were not a big concern in this study; c) the problem with the accuracy of self-reported data is also inherent in traditional paper survey research (Wright, 2005).

4.2 Participants and procedure

An online survey was conducted in China and Malaysia to collect data. The survey was announced through public channels (e.g., on social network platforms, as shown in Appendix D). In order to improve the representativeness of the sample, the online survey was posted as a public message on social network platforms so that it could reach as many users as possible. According to social media reports, the most popular social network platforms in China include WeChat, QQ, and Sina Weibo, while the most popular social network platforms in Malaysia are Facebook and Instagram (CNNIC, 2018; WAS, 2018). Given that Chinese people and Malaysian people use different social network platforms, the survey questionnaire only measured people's perceptions of motivations for identity reconstruction in general. Participants were asked to respond to the questions based on their overall experience of social network platform use, not limited to a specific one. The survey was anonymous. Respondents

were only required to provide some very basic demographic information (such as gender and age range).

Regarding the required sample size, previous research suggested that a sample with 384 respondents is sufficient for a target population with 1 million people at the confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). As the population size increases, the required sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains relatively constant at slightly more than 380 cases (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Therefore, the sample size of this study in both China and Malaysia should be larger than 384, respectively, to produce accurate results.

The data collection process lasted for about one month in each country. Due to the time schedule of my Ph.D. study, the data collection in China and Malaysia was not carried out simultaneously. In China, the post of survey invitations started on April 6th, 2016 and the last response was returned on May 9th, 2016. In Malaysia, the post of survey invitations started on September 27th, 2016 and the last response was returned on October 25th, 2016. A total of 815 respondents (418 Chinese and 397 Malaysians) were involved in this study.

Table 4.2.1 shows the detailed demographic information of the respondents. The Chinese sample consisted of 217 (51.9%) male respondents and 201 (48.1%) female respondents, whereas the Malaysian sample consisted of 187 (47.1%) males and 210 (52.9%) females. While the Chinese respondents were ethnically homogeneous, the Malaysian respondents were from different ethnic groups. Specifically, 257 (52.9%) of the Malaysian respondents were Malaysian-Malay, 105 (26.4%) were Malaysian-Chinese, 25 (6.3%) were Malaysian-Indian, and 10 (2.5%) were Malaysian-Others (such as Malaysian-Iban and Malaysian-Kadazan). The respondents' ages ranged from under

20 years old to over 45 years old, and the majority of them were educated at the bachelor's level.

Table 4.2.1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	China (n=418)		Malaysia (n=397)	
Gender				
Male	217	51.9%	187	47.1%
Female	201	48.1%	210	52.9%
Age				
< 20	13	3.1%	99	24.9%
20-24	65	15.6%	226	56.9%
25-29	149	35.6%	49	12.3%
30-34	130	31.1%	15	3.8%
35-39	43	10.3%	5	1.3%
40-44	13	3.1%	2	0.5%
>= 45	5	1.2%	1	0.3%
Educational Background				
High school or lower	10	2.4%	33	8.3%
Technical training	50	12%	9	2.3%
Bachelor's degree	315	75.4%	290	73%
Master's degree	42	10%	55	13.9%
Doctorate degree	1	0.2%	10	2.5%
Online status				
Visible	269	64.3%	210	52.9%
Busy	13	3.1%	63	4.3%
Away	9	2.2%	17	15.9%
Invisible	127	30.4%	107	27%
Ethnic group				
Chinese-Chinese	418	100%	/	/
Malaysian-Malay	/	/	257	64.7%
Malaysian-Chinese	/	/	105	26.4%
Malaysian-Indian	/	/	25	6.3%
Malaysian-Others	/	/	10	2.5%

Note: "/" = Not applicable

4.3 Measurements

The vanity scale (Netemeyer et al., 1995) contained eight items, four measuring physical vanity and the other four measuring achievement vanity. For example, one of the items for physical vanity was “The way I look is extremely important to me”, while one of the items for achievement vanity was “I want my achievements to be recognized by others”. The bridging social capital scale contained three items adapted from Williams (2006), such as “Participation in this social network platform gives me a lot of opportunities to create valuable social ties outside of the physical world around me”.

The disinhibition scale (Denollet, 2005; Stunkard & Messick, 1985) contained four items - two measuring benign disinhibition (e.g., “It feels so good to talk with any restraint. I just can't seem to stop”) and two measuring toxic disinhibition (e.g., “I can talk about anything I want, including something sensitive”). Privacy concerns were measured by three items adapted from Son and Kim (2008). For example, one of the items for privacy concern was “I am very concerned about providing personal information to the social network platform because it could be used in a way I did not foresee.” The complete survey items for all the variables are listed in Appendix E.

A seven-point Likert-style scale was used to measure respondents' agreement with the survey items, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The questionnaire was originally created in English. It was translated into Chinese by one researcher and then back-translated into English by two Chinese bilingual individuals to assure consistency between the two versions of the questionnaire.

During the data collection phase, the Chinese questionnaire (as shown in Appendix F) was used in China and the English questionnaire (as shown in Appendix G) was used in Malaysia. As a multiracial country, English is widely used in Malaysia as a second language. Therefore, the English questionnaire was used to collect data from Malaysia.

Before the formal data collection, pilot studies were conducted to improve the reliability and validity of the survey items. Both Chinese and Malaysian participants were involved in the pilot studies. The survey items were revised based on the results and feedback from the pilot studies.

4.3.1 Reliability

Internal reliability and construct validity were examined to assess the quality of the survey items used in this study. Internal reliability measures how well the items for a certain construct can produce similar results (Gajdosik & Bohannon, 1987). The commonly used indicator of internal reliability is Cronbach's alpha (CA) (Frost et al., 2007). The generally accepted threshold value of CA is 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). Higher values indicate better reliability. As shown in Table 4.3.1, the value of CA ranged from 0.73 (for toxic disinhibition) to 0.93 (for privacy concerns). The values of CA for all the constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, thus indicating that the internal reliability of the survey items used in this study is sufficient.

Table 4.3.1: Cronbach's alpha of measurements

Variables	China (n = 418)	Malaysia (n = 397)
Vanity		
Physical vanity	0.92	0.90
Achievement vanity	0.92	0.90
Bridging social capital	0.85	0.84
Disinhibition		
Benign disinhibition	0.83	0.86
Toxic disinhibition	0.73	0.85
Privacy concerns	0.93	0.88

4.3.2 Construct validity

Construct validity is usually evaluated from two aspects: convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity evaluates the extent to which the items that

are supposed to measure the same constructs are related to each other (Nunnally, 1978). Discriminant validity evaluates the extent to which the items that are supposed to measure different constructs are not related (Frost et al., 2007). In other words, the items should only measure the construct they are supposed to measure. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted to evaluate the construct validity of the survey items used in this study.

4.3.2.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis is data driven; there are no expectations regarding the number of variables or the pattern of relationships between variables (Brown, 2015). Before conducting exploratory factor analysis, the data should be examined using tests such as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, so as to establish the eligibility of exploratory factor analysis (Williams, Onsman, & Brown, 2010). It is suggested that the KMO value should be over 0.50 and Bartlett's test should be significant (Yong & Pearce, 2013).

Table 4.3.2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Dataset	KMO	Bartlett's Test		
		X ²	df	Sig.
The Chinese sample	0.881	5296.40	153	0.000
The Malaysian sample	0.797	4228.73	153	0.000

As shown in Table 4.3.2, the KMO values for the Chinese and the Malaysian sample were greater than the threshold, while Bartlett's tests were significant. Therefore, the data in this study are suitable for exploratory factor analysis. Table 4.3.3 and Table 4.3.4 present the results of exploratory factor analysis using SPSS. The extraction method is principal component analysis with varimax rotation.

Table 4.3.3: Exploratory factor analysis results – the Chinese sample

Items	Factors					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
AVan1	0.855	0.182	0.035	0.181	0.097	0.109
AVan2	0.885	0.193	-0.021	0.124	0.132	0.086
AVan3	0.786	0.162	0.010	0.209	0.210	0.202
AVan4	0.851	0.153	-0.013	0.097	0.161	0.148
PVan1	0.236	0.808	-0.034	0.130	0.162	0.155
PVan2	0.249	0.809	-0.086	0.128	0.106	0.191
PVan3	0.113	0.880	-0.112	0.122	0.137	0.120
PVan4	0.125	0.843	-0.067	0.252	0.156	0.126
PC1	0.028	-0.052	0.927	0.016	-0.003	-0.058
PC2	0.004	-0.080	0.942	0.023	-0.041	-0.004
PC3	-0.026	-0.094	0.930	0.046	-0.039	-0.010
BSC1	0.225	0.253	0.020	0.778	0.229	0.084
BSC2	0.216	0.258	-0.024	0.755	0.285	0.099
BSC3	0.124	0.089	0.090	0.884	0.015	0.052
BDis1	0.257	0.248	-0.041	0.258	0.800	0.135
BDis2	0.277	0.240	-0.056	0.187	0.807	0.133
TDis1	0.203	0.222	-0.019	0.052	0.174	0.816
TDis2	0.197	0.216	-0.052	0.128	0.055	0.832
% variance explained	39.12	15.36	9.56	7.88	5.59	4.71
Total Variance	39.12	54.48	64.04	71.92	77.51	82.22

Table 4.3.4: Exploratory factor analysis results – the Malaysian sample

Items	Factors					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
AVan1	0.813	0.264	0.032	0.134	-0.027	0.014
AVan2	0.902	0.176	0.066	0.031	0.003	0.053
AVan3	0.853	0.157	0.023	0.028	0.096	0.086
AVan4	0.815	0.221	-0.092	-0.008	0.106	0.051
PVan1	0.177	0.873	0.062	0.087	0.010	0.021
PVan2	0.142	0.868	0.098	0.147	0.003	0.093
PVan3	0.331	0.813	0.031	0.085	0.089	-0.018
PVan4	0.212	0.828	0.012	0.106	0.009	0.040
PC1	0.012	0.027	0.867	0.084	-0.020	0.078
PC2	0.026	0.059	0.907	0.050	-0.022	0.034
PC3	-0.014	0.078	0.909	-0.018	0.032	-0.049

Table 4.3.4, continued

Items	Factors					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
BSC1	0.083	0.123	0.058	0.847	0.070	-0.017
BSC2	0.055	0.100	-0.035	0.890	0.070	0.045
BSC3	0.008	0.120	0.094	0.831	-0.001	0.096
TDis1	0.104	0.067	-0.003	0.076	0.873	0.275
TDis2	0.040	0.008	-0.009	0.059	0.909	0.211
BDis1	0.043	0.066	0.042	0.033	0.204	0.915
BDis2	0.132	0.043	0.024	0.094	0.304	0.865
% variance explained	28.19	13.94	13.84	11.25	8.41	4.77
Total Variance	28.19	42.13	55.97	67.22	75.63	80.40

As shown in the tables, the six extracted factors explained over 80% of the total variance. The items for each construct loaded highly on the construct they were intended to measure. All the factor loadings surpassed the generally accepted level of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2009), thus suggesting good convergent validity. In addition, the items loaded on distinct factors. The cross-loadings were lower than the factor loading, thus indicating good discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2009).

4.3.2.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis was theory based. First, measurement models were tested to examine how well the proposed model fits the data obtained from the samples of the present study. Following this, the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs were evaluated. The tests were carried out using AMOS 22.0.

Both absolute and incremental fit indices could be used to demonstrate the goodness of model fit. While the incremental fit indices assess how well the model fits the data based on the comparisons with a baseline model, the absolute goodness-of-fit indices

measure the fundamental model fits, without relying on a baseline model (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993).

The absolute fit indices calculated in the present study were: (1) the relative/normed Chi-Square (χ^2/df); (2) the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); (3) the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and (4) the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI). χ^2/df was used because it is less sensitive to the sample size than the χ^2 test. While some researchers have suggested a threshold of 5 for χ^2/df (Wheaton et al., 1977), some other scholars have recommended a value of 3 or less for χ^2/df to ensure good model fit (Kline, 2015). For RMSEA, a value of less than 0.08 indicates an acceptable fit and an RMSEA below 0.06 is considered an indication of good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The generally accepted threshold for GFI and AGFI is 0.90 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993), and a value above 0.95 shows good model fit (Byrne, 2016). Table 4.3.5 provides a summary of the recommended values for absolute and incremental fit indices.

Table 4.3.5: Recommended values for model fit indices

Fit indices	Acceptable fit		Good fit	
χ^2/df	< 5	Wheaton et al. (1977)	< 3	Kline (2015)
RMSEA	< 0.08	MacCallum et al. (1996)	< 0.06	Hu and Bentler (1999)
GFI	> 0.90	Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993)	> 0.95	Byrne (2016)
AGFI	> 0.90	Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993)	> 0.95	Byrne (2016)
NFI	> 0.90	Bentler and Bonnet (1980)	> 0.95	Hu and Bentler (1999)
TLI	> 0.90	Garver and Mentzer (1999)	> 0.95	Hu and Bentler (1999)
CFI	> 0.90	Garver and Mentzer (1999)	> 0.95	Hu and Bentler (1999)

The incremental goodness-of-fit indices used in the present study were: (1) Normed Fit Index (NFI); (2) Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) (also known as Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)); and (3) Comparative Fit Index (CFI). For all the three indices, values greater

than 0.90 are acceptable and values greater than 0.95 indicate good model fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Garver & Mentzer, 1999; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

To evaluate the goodness of model fit, four measurement models (as shown in Figure 4.3.1 to 4.3.4) were tested using AMOS software. Measurement model 1 (as shown in Figure 4.3.1) included four factors: vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition and privacy concerns.

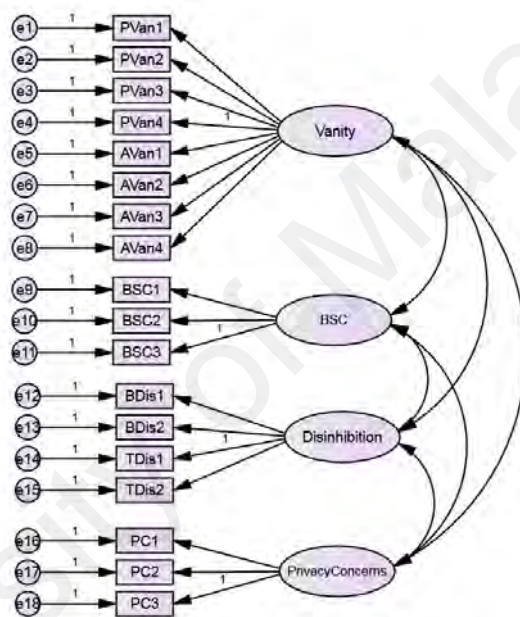


Figure 4.3.1: Measurement model 1

Measurement model 2 (as shown in Figure 4.3.2) included five factors: physical vanity, achievement vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition and privacy concerns. In model 2, the motivation “vanity” was measured by two factors (i.e., physical vanity and achievement vanity).

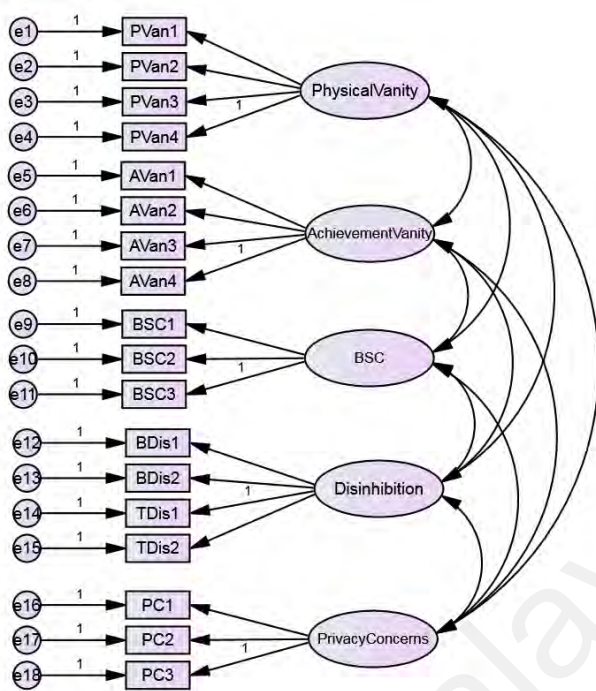


Figure 4.3.2: Measurement model 2

Measurement model 3 (as shown in Figure 4.3.3) also included five factors: vanity, bridging social capital, benign disinhibition, toxic disinhibition, and privacy concerns. In model 3, the motivation “disinhibition” was measured by two factors (i.e., benign disinhibition and toxic disinhibition).

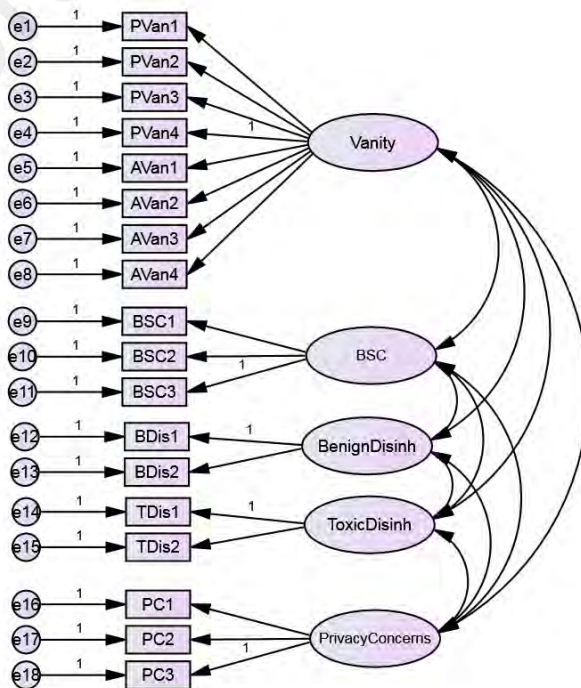


Figure 4.3.3: Measurement model 3

Measurement model 4 (as shown in Figure 4.3.4) included six factors: physical vanity, achievement vanity, bridging social capital, benign disinhibition, toxic disinhibition, and privacy concerns. In model 4, the motivations “vanity” and “disinhibition” were both measured by two factors.

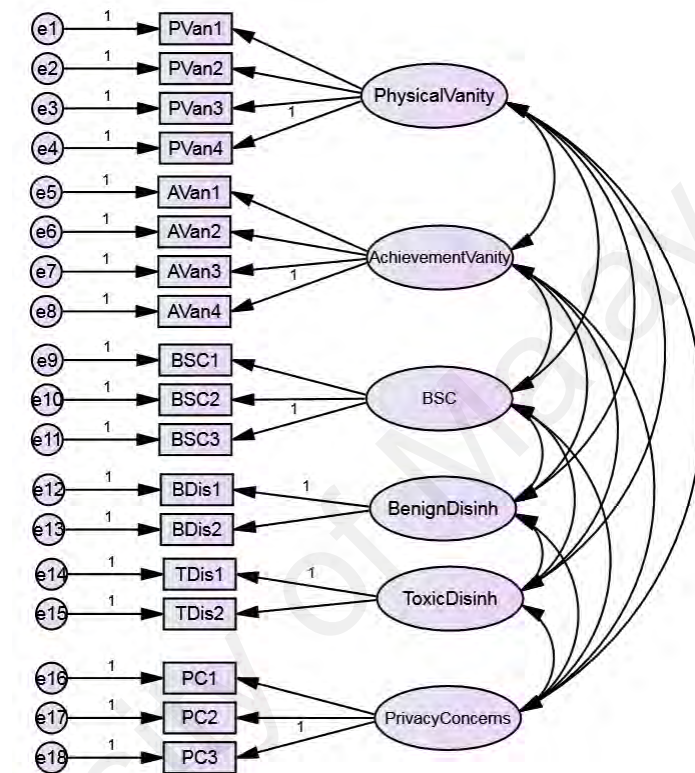


Figure 4.3.4: Measurement model 4

Table 4.3.6 and Table 4.3.7 present the model fit indices of the four measurement models for the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample. As shown in Table 4.3.6, for the Chinese sample, model 1 and model 3 fit the data poorly. None of the fit indices met the criteria (as shown in Table 4.3.5). Thus, model 1 and model 3 were rejected. Comparing model 2 with model 4, model 4 fit the data better. When the motivations “vanity” and “disinhibition” were both measured by two factors (i.e., physical vanity, achievement vanity, benign disinhibition, and toxic disinhibition), the indices indicated good fit of the model.

Table 4.3.6: Model fit indices for the Chinese sample

Fit indices	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
χ^2/df	10.911	3.445	10.143	2.367
RMSEA	0.154	0.077	0.148	0.057
GFI	0.662	0.895	0.674	0.928
AGFI	0.552	0.856	0.554	0.898
NFI	0.739	0.920	0.765	0.947
TLI	0.710	0.928	0.733	0.960
CFI	0.756	0.942	0.782	0.969

For the Malaysian sample, the results were similar to the results of the Chinese sample. As shown in Table 4.3.7, model 1 and model 3 exhibited poor goodness-of-fit. Model 2 had nearly acceptable model fit, while model 4 fit the data the best. Therefore, for both the Chinese and the Malaysian samples, measurement model 4 had the best goodness-of-fit, thus suggesting that the motivations for online identity reconstruction should be measured as six factors. This result is consistent with the result of exploratory factor analysis, which extracted six factors from the data.

Table 4.3.7: Model fit indices for the Malaysian sample

Fit indices	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
χ^2/df	8.972	3.760	7.570	2.140
RMSEA	0.142	0.083	0.129	0.054
GFI	0.710	0.882	0.741	0.932
AGFI	0.615	0.838	0.645	0.903
NFI	0.731	0.891	0.780	0.940
TLI	0.706	0.898	0.758	0.958
CFI	0.752	0.917	0.802	0.967

With good model fit, the six-factor measurement model 4 was used for both the Chinese and the Malaysian samples to evaluate the validity of constructs. Convergent validity could be evaluated by factor loadings, composite reliability (CR) and average

variance extracted (AVE). In AMOS, the factor loadings were estimated by standardized regression weights (Jayasinghe-Mudalige, Udugama, & Ikram, 2012). It has been suggested that the standardized regression weights should be greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2009). Based on the output of AMOS, composite reliability can be estimated using Equation (1) and average variance extracted can be estimated using Equation (2), as follows:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i)^2 + \sum_{i=1}^n \varepsilon_i} \quad (1)$$

$$AVE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^2}{n} \quad (2)$$

where λ_i denotes the standardized factor loading for item i , ε_i denotes the indicator error variance for item i , and n is the number of items used for the construct. In other words, $CR = (\text{sum (factor loadings)})^2 / [(\text{sum (factor loadings)})^2 + \text{sum(error variance)}]$; $AVE = \text{sum (factor loadings)}^2 / \text{number of items}$. The generally-accepted threshold for CR is 0.70 or higher, and the value of AVE should be over 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 4.3.8 presents the factor loadings, CR, and AVE for both the Chinese and the Malaysian samples.

As shown in Table 4.3.8, the factor loadings of all the items were greater than the suggested threshold (0.70) and the AVE values for all the constructs were greater than 0.50. In addition, the CR values for most constructs were over 0.70; only one construct (toxic disinhibition) had a CR less than 0.70. However, this is not likely to cause a big problem because both CR and CA assess the reliability of the items. As mentioned in Section 4.3.1, the CA value for toxic disinhibition was greater than the recommended level (i.e., 0.73 for the Chinese sample and 0.85 for the Malaysian sample), thus suggesting the reliability of the measurement items is acceptable. Therefore, the results indicated that the convergent validity of the constructs is adequate.

Table 4.3.8: Factor loadings, CR and AVE

Construct	Items	factor loadings		CR		AVE	
		CN	MY	CN	MY	CN	MY
Physical vanity	PVan1	0.823	0.863	0.85	0.84	0.74	0.70
	PVan2	0.832	0.859				
	PVan3	0.888	0.835				
	PVan4	0.890	0.798				
Achievement vanity	AVan1	0.868	0.816	0.84	0.80	0.75	0.69
	AVan2	0.899	0.913				
	AVan3	0.835	0.819				
	AVan4	0.853	0.774				
Bridging social capital	BSC1	0.846	0.775	0.81	0.74	0.65	0.64
	BSC2	0.848	0.878				
	BSC3	0.711	0.741				
Benign disinhibition	BDis1	0.863	0.789	0.78	0.73	0.71	0.77
	BDis2	0.822	0.954				
Toxic disinhibition	TDis1	0.782	0.913	0.53	0.67	0.58	0.74
	TDis2	0.744	0.808				
Privacy concerns	PC1	0.880	0.772	0.83	0.84	0.82	0.71
	PC2	0.929	0.895				
	PC3	0.905	0.863				

*Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted
CN = the Chinese sample; MY = the Malaysian sample*

Discriminant validity can be evaluated by comparing AVE with the squared construct correlations. The AVE value of a certain construct should be greater than the square of the correlations between this construct and the others (Hair et al., 2009). Table 4.3.9 and Table 4.3.10 present the correlations and the square root of AVE for the Chinese and Malaysian samples.

Table 4.3.9: Correlations and the square root of AVE – the Chinese sample

Constructs	PVan	AVan	BSC	BDis	TDis	PC
Physical vanity	0.86					
Achievement vanity	0.47	0.86				
Bridging social capital	0.55	0.52	0.80			
Benign disinhibition	0.58	0.60	0.66	0.84		
Toxic disinhibition	0.56	0.52	0.40	0.52	0.76	
Privacy concerns	-0.18	-0.02	0.02	-0.11	-0.10	0.90

Note: the bold values are the square root of AVE while the other values are the construct correlations

Table 4.3.10: Correlations and the square root of AVE – the Malaysian sample

Constructs	PVan	AVan	BSC	BDis	TDis	PC
Physical vanity	0.84					
Achievement vanity	0.50	0.83				
Bridging social capital	0.29	0.16	0.80			
Benign disinhibition	0.15	0.21	0.18	0.88		
Toxic disinhibition	0.13	0.17	0.18	0.60	0.86	
Privacy concerns	0.14	0.06	0.08	0.06	0.00	0.84

Note: the bold values are the square root of AVE while the other values are the construct correlations

As shown in the tables, for the Chinese and the Malaysian samples, the square roots of AVE value for the constructs were greater than all the correlations between constructs, thus indicating adequate discriminant validity.

4.4 Assessment of bias

Given that this study used convenience sampling and online survey when recruiting participants and conducting data collection, the drawbacks of convenience sampling and online surveys are likely to induce biases. If there are substantial biases, the generalizability of findings derived from the surveys will be limited. Therefore, there is a need to assess possible biases in this study.

4.4.1 Non-response bias

Non-response bias refers to the difference between respondents and non-respondents (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). However, it is difficult to obtain detailed information about non-respondents. Even though limited demographic information might be available in some cases, the non-respondents' attitudes toward the key constructs of interest are not clear (their responses to the survey items are unknown) (Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003). In this case, some researchers evaluate non-response bias by comparing early and late respondents, because the late respondents (those who answer the survey later in the administration period) are likely to be non-respondents (Armstrong & Overton, 1977).

Following the suggestions of previous research, the first quarter of respondents were regarded as early respondents, while the last quarter of respondents were regarded as late respondents. The non-response bias was evaluated in the Chinese and Malaysian samples separately. T-tests were used to examine the differences between these early and late respondents. With regards to the demographic data (i.e., age, gender, education, and online status), some differences were significant. For instance, in the Malaysian sample, the average age of the early respondents was higher than that of the late respondents. For the key constructs (i.e., physical vanity, achievement vanity, bridging social capital, benign disinhibition, toxic disinhibition, and privacy concerns), there were also some differences. For example, the early respondents in the Chinese sample had higher mean scores on bridging social capital than the late respondents. However, given that the online survey was posted on different platforms, the differences in response might have been caused by the differences in the time that respondents saw the online survey.

4.4.2 Common method bias

Researchers who use same-source data (such as self-reported data) may face the problem of common method variance, which may cause bias in data analysis (Richardson, Simmering, & Sturman, 2009). Common method bias can be produced by the characteristics of respondents (e.g., tendency to provide socially desirable responses), the characteristics of items (e.g., Likert scale format), the context of items (e.g., the positions of variables on the questionnaire), and the context of measurement (e.g., time, location, and medium of data collection) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Several techniques can be used to detect and control the common method variance, such as measured marker variable (correlation-based, regression-based, and CFA-based) and unmeasured latent method factor (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

The measured marker variable technique requires the measurement of a variable that is unrelated to the focal variables in data collection phase (Williams, Hartman, & Cavazotte, 2010), which is not applicable to this study. Thus, the unmeasured latent method factor technique was adopted to evaluate common method variance in this study.

One of the frequently used unmeasured latent method factor techniques is the Harman's single-factor test. It uses exploratory factor analysis which loads all the variables to a single factor with no rotation. If this single factor explains a significant amount of the variance (more than 50%), the data may be common method biased (Harman, 1960). After conducting the Harman's single-factor test, the single factor did not explain the majority of the variance for both the Chinese and Malaysian samples (as shown in Table 4.4.1 and Table 4.4.2).

Table 4.4.1: Harman's single factor test – the Chinese sample

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.041	39.117	39.117	7.041	39.117	39.117
2	2.765	15.361	54.478			
3	1.721	9.560	64.038			
4	1.419	7.885	71.923			
5	1.006	5.589	77.512			
6	0.847	4.706	82.218			
7	0.462	2.568	84.786			
8	0.388	2.156	86.942			
9	0.344	1.908	88.850			
10	0.325	1.803	90.653			
11	0.279	1.551	92.205			
12	0.268	1.488	93.693			
13	0.250	1.387	95.080			
14	0.225	1.252	96.332			
15	0.197	1.097	97.428			
16	0.161	0.895	98.323			
17	0.156	0.867	99.190			
18	0.146	0.810	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Table 4.4.2: Harman's single factor test – the Malaysian sample

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.074	28.188	28.188	5.074	28.188	28.188
2	2.510	13.944	42.132			
3	2.492	13.842	55.974			
4	2.025	11.249	67.222			
5	1.514	8.409	75.631			
6	0.859	4.773	80.404			
7	0.477	2.649	83.053			
8	0.407	2.260	85.313			
9	0.370	2.057	87.371			
10	0.353	1.964	89.335			
11	0.343	1.908	91.242			
12	0.281	1.563	92.805			
13	0.264	1.469	94.274			
14	0.249	1.384	95.659			
15	0.230	1.275	96.934			
16	0.206	1.145	98.079			
17	0.175	0.973	99.052			
18	0.171	0.948	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

In addition to the Harman's single-factor test, the common latent factor method was also used to evaluate potential common method bias in this study. The common latent factor method aims to assess the overall variance explained by common methods among all observed indicators (Podsakoff et al., 2012). The test was conducted with AMOS. A common latent factor was added to the measurement model. The indicators of the common latent factor were the indicators of focal variables that share a common method (i.e., all the indicators in this study). First, the loadings of all the indicators for the common latent factor were constrained to be equal. The square of the unstandardized loadings represents the common method variance, which should be less than 50% (Lowry et al., 2012). The results suggested that for the Chinese sample, 17.6% of the variance was due to the common method bias. For the Malaysian sample, the common method explained 24% of the variance.

On the basis of the results of the Harman's single-factor test and the common latent factor analysis, it can be concluded that common method bias is not a big concern in this study.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the research methodology of the present study. The target population of this study comprises the Chinese and Malaysian social network platform users. The sample was drawn using convenience sampling and the data were collected through an online survey. The measurements used in the online survey were adapted from existing literature. Reliability and validity tests suggested that the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measurements were satisfactory.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

The detailed data analysis processes are presented in this chapter. First of all, I explain how I choose suitable data analysis methods for this study. Subsequently, the normality and the homogeneity of variances of the data are tested. After that, I then compare group differences in relation to the motivations for online identity reconstruction to test the proposed hypotheses and answer the research questions. I also conduct some further tests to examine the effects of other factors (such as age, education, and online status).

5.1 Approaches for testing group differences

5.1.1 Parametric and non-parametric tests

To test the hypotheses and answer the research question proposed in this study, I need to examine whether there are significant differences between different sample groups. Various statistical analyses are available for testing group differences, such as t-test, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the Mann-Whitney test, and so on. These tests can be distinguished into two types: parametric tests and non-parametric tests.

To understand the term “parametric” and “non-parametric,” it is necessary to know what a parameter is. The numerical characteristics of a population are defined as “parameters,” such as mean and standard deviation, while the numerical characteristics of a sample are defined as “statistics” (Johnson & Bhattacharyya, 2010). Given that it is difficult to collect data from the whole population, the true values of the population parameters are usually unknown. The statistics obtained from samples are used to make an inference about the population parameters.

Parametric tests rely on several assumptions. Before adopting parametric statistical procedures to test group differences, the following conditions should be checked

(Sheskin, 2003): 1) *Independence*. The samples under consideration are not related (Kothari, 2004). When one observation occurs, it does not modify the probability of other observations. 2) *Normality*. The data follows a normal distribution. The normality of data could be examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and Shapiro–Wilk test (Weiss, 2010). The descriptive statistics (such as skewness and kurtosis) can also help to explain normality. 3) *Homogeneity of variances*. The variances of the populations from which different samples are drawn are equal. When the observed data are normally distributed, Bartlett’s test can be conducted to check the equality of variances of a variable. Levene’s test can be conducted as an alternative test for homogeneity of variances when the normality condition is violated (Johnson & Bhattacharyya, 2010; Nachar, 2008).

While parametric tests rely on various assumptions, non-parametric tests rely on few or no assumptions about the distribution and variances (Sheskin, 2003). The term non-parametric does not mean the complete lack of parameters but implies the flexibility in the nature of the parameters (Nachar, 2008).

5.1.2 Distinctions between different kinds of tests

T-test and ANOVA are parametric tests. The Mann-Whitney test and the Kruskal-Wallis test are non-parametric tests. There are different types of t-test. The one sample t-test can be used to examine whether the mean score of a sample differs from a constant (Field, 2013). For example, the one sample t-test can be applied to test whether the time people spent online is 5 hours per day. The paired-sample t-test (or dependent t-test) can be conducted to examine whether the means of two variables differ in a single sample (Field, 2013). For example, the paired-sample t-test can be used to test whether the time people spent online differs on working days and holidays. When the conditions of normality and homogeneity are fulfilled, the independent t-test can be

applied to examine whether two independent samples differ on a single variable (Johnson & Bhattacharyya, 2010). For example, the independent t-test can be used to examine whether the time spent online differs based on gender (i.e., the independent variable is “gender,” which has two independent groups: “male” and “female”).

Under the conditions of normality and homogeneity, the one-way ANOVA could be applied to examine whether two or more independent samples differ on a single variable (Field, 2013). For example, the one-way ANOVA could be used to examine whether the time spent online differs based on self-esteem, which has three levels: low, medium, and high. However, the one-way ANOVA only tells whether there are significant differences between at least two groups, but cannot specify which groups are different from each other. Post hoc tests need to be conducted to identify which specific groups are different (Kothari, 2004).

It is common for the collected data to not be normally distributed. When the assumption of normality is violated, non-parametric tests could be used alternatively (Sahu, 2013). The Wilcoxon signed rank test is the non-parametric test equivalent to the paired-sample t-test. The Mann-Whitney test (also called the Wilcoxon rank sum test) is the non-parametric alternative to the independent t-test (Hart, 2001). The Kruskal-Wallis test is the non-parametric test equivalent to the one-way ANOVA (Sahu, 2013). Although the Mann-Whitney test and the Kruskal-Wallis test do not require the dependent variable to have a normal distribution, they assume that the dependent variable for the groups under consideration has a similar distribution, which means that the variance is approximately equal across groups (Sahu, 2013).

5.1.3 Data types

Stevens (1946) proposed that there are four kinds of measurement scales (or types of data): nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. Nominal scales are used to distinguish

different categories. These categories may be related, but not ordered. For example, in this study, gender is nominal data, with two categories: male and female. For ordinal scales, the order of the values is important, but the intervals between each ordinal scale may not be equal (Stevens, 1946). In the case of this study, the motivations for online identity reconstruction were measured using Likert scales, which are typical ordinal scales. Respondents rate their agreement with the survey items using the ordered numbers. 1 implies strongly disagree and 7 implies strongly agree. A score of 6 means greater agreement than a score of 4, and a score of 4 means greater agreement than a score of 2. However, the difference between 6 and 4 may not be the same as the difference between 4 and 2.

For interval scales, both the order and the interval between two values are clear, but there is no absolute zero in interval scales (Stevens, 1946). An example of interval data is temperature. A value of "0" does not mean there is no temperature. For ratio scales, the order and interval between two values are clear and there is an absolute zero (Stevens, 1946). For example, when measuring weight, a value of "0" means there is no weight.

5.1.4 Robustness of parametric tests

Existing studies have compared the performance (Type I and Type II error rates) of the t-test and the Mann-Whitney test in identifying group differences with ordinal scales. Type I error occurs when a true null hypothesis is rejected (Weiss, 2010). It is also known as a "false positive" finding, inferring the presence of something that does not exist. For example, if two groups are actually the same, but the results of a test suggest that there are significant differences, then there is a Type I error. Type II error occurs when a false null hypothesis is not rejected (Weiss, 2010). It is also known as a "false negative" finding, failing to infer the presence of something that is actually there. For

example, if two groups are actually different, but the results of a test suggest that there is no significant difference, then there is a Type II error. With Likert scale data, some researchers found no significance between the t-test and its nonparametric counterparts (the Mann-Whitney test) regarding Type I and Type II error rates (Gregoire & Driver, 1987). Some researchers suggested that, for relative normally distributed ordinal data, parametric tests have a lower Type II error rate (i.e., more powerful) (Rasmussen, 1989), but the Type I error rates are similar and acceptable for both the t-test and the Mann-Whitney test (de Winter & Dodou, 2010). Other scholars indicated that the Mann-Whitney test performs better than the t-test with skewed ordinal data (de Winter & Dodou, 2010; Nanna & Sawilowsky, 1998).

Even though the t-test and the Mann-Whitney test may be superior in different situations, it is well documented that the t-test and other parametric tests (such as ANOVA and the Pearson correlation test) are robust to violations of test assumptions (e.g., Norman, 2010; Sawilowsky & Hillman, 1992). It has been suggested that, with a large enough sample size (more than 30 or 40 subjects), there would not be major problems in parametric tests when the assumption of normal distribution is violated (Pallant, 2007). Parametric tests could be used with non-normally distributed data (Elliott & Woodward, 2007; Norman, 2010).

5.2 Data in the present study

Different tests are available for testing group differences. Before making decisions on which test to use, it is necessary to have a look at the data and the purpose of the current study. As mentioned in Section 5.1.3, the data in this study are ordinal data collected using Likert scales. For the purpose of the present study, there is a need to compare two independent groups for a single dependent variable. For example, one of the objectives of this study is to investigate whether men and women are motivated

differently by bridging social capital. For further analysis, there is also a need to compare three or more independent groups for a single dependent variable and compare two dependent variables obtained from one group. For example, this study aims to investigate whether people from different ethnic groups (i.e., the Chinese-Chinese, the Malaysian-Chinese, and the Malaysian-Malay) are motivated differently by physical vanity. Further statistical analysis can also be conducted to examine which motivation is more important for men, physical vanity or achievement vanity.

5.2.1 Test for normality

Although parametric tests are robust to the violation of normality assumption (Elliott & Woodward, 2007; Norman, 2010), it is still necessary to test for normality in order to have a better understanding of the distributions of the data in the present study. A variable is normally distributed if its distribution follows a normal curve. Figure 5.2.1 shows the normal curve and skewed distributions. A normal distribution is symmetric around the mean of the variable, being denser in the center and less dense in the tails (Weiss, 2010).

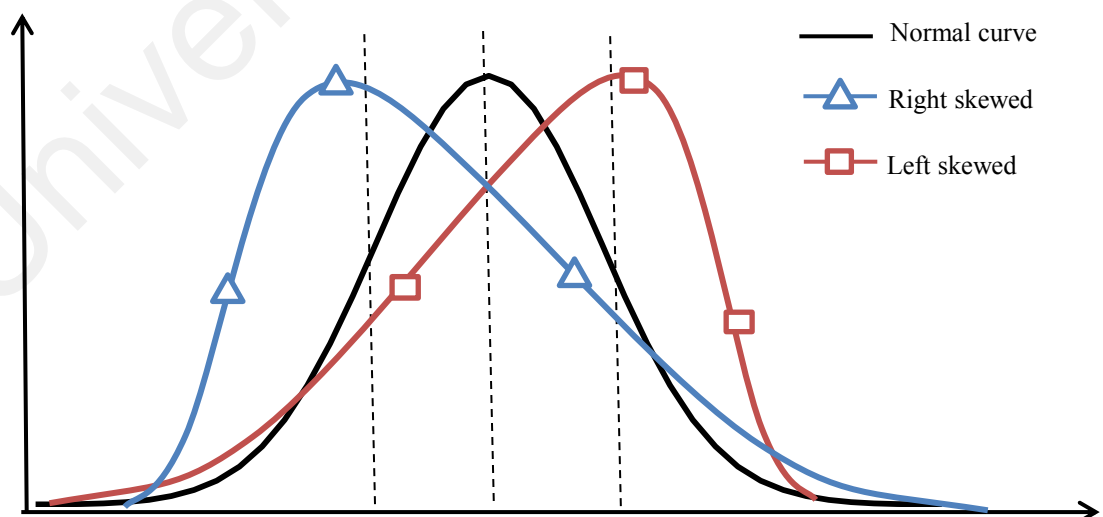


Figure 5.2.1: Normal curve and skewed distributions

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) test are two widely-used tests for normality. A significant result indicates that the distribution of the data under investigation is non-normal. However, for large samples, a minor deviation from normality may lead to significant results in normality tests (Öztuna, Elhan, & Tüccar, 2006). Therefore, it is better to assess the distribution of data with not only normality tests but also using graphic results (such as Histogram, P-P plot, Q-Q plot, and boxplot) (Field, 2013; Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012).

The current study aims to examine whether there are significant differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction between different groups. To avoid Type I error and Type II error, the differences in the individual items for the constructs were examined. The mean values of the constructs were compared in tests where only one dependent variable is allowed (e.g., ANOVA tests).

In the present study, the K-S test and S-W test were conducted to examine the normality of variables for male and female groups in the Chinese and the Malaysian samples, as well as for the groups in the whole sample (the Chinese group vs. the Malaysian group). The results of the K-S test and S-W test were significant for the male and female groups in the Chinese and Malaysian samples. The normality tests were also significant for other groups in the whole sample. This means that the distributions of the variables are different from the normal distribution. However, the sample size of the present study is large. There are approximately 200 subjects in each sub-group (e.g., 217 Chinese males, 187 Malaysian males). It is likely that the distributions of data only deviated slightly from the normal distribution, but were flagged as significant by the normality tests. Therefore, the statistical graphics were used to evaluate the data distribution.

After comparing different graphs (Histogram, P-P plot, Q-Q plot, and boxplot), it was found that most variables were approximately normally distributed, but some variables were skewed. Figures 5.2.2 to 5.2.5 show an example of the approximate normal distribution of one of the variables for the Chinese female group. The figures present the graphic results for the fourth item of achievement vanity (AVan4).

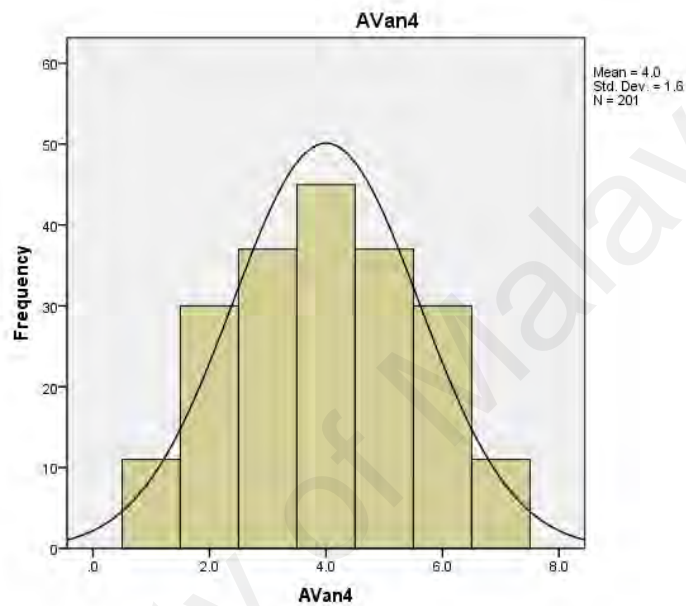


Figure 5.2.2: Histogram - Chinese female, AVan4

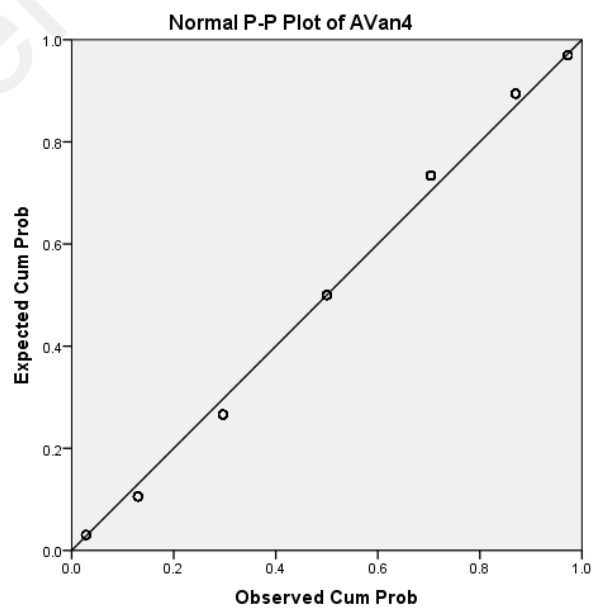


Figure 5.2.3: P-P plot - Chinese female, AVan4

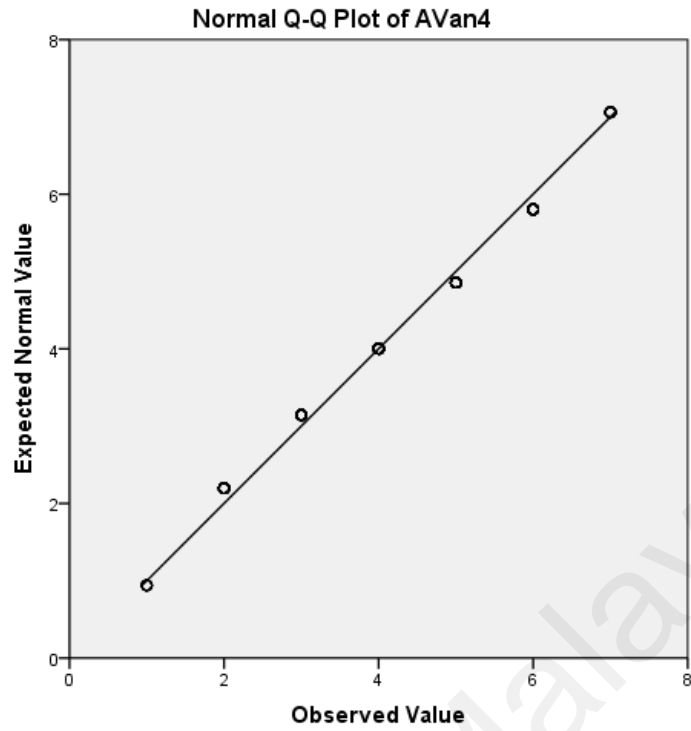


Figure 5.2.4: Q-Q plot - Chinese female, AVan4

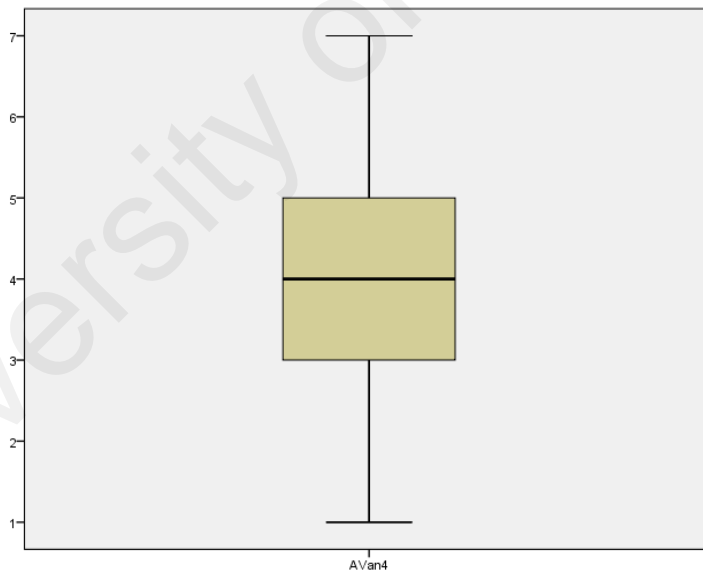


Figure 5.2.5: Boxplot - Chinese female, AVan4

As shown in the Histogram graph, the distribution of data approximately followed the normal curve. The P-P plot, Q-Q plot and boxplot also showed that the data were distributed along the normal line. Figure 5.2.6 to Figure 5.2.9 show an example of the skewed distribution of one of the variables for the Chinese female group. The figures show the graphic results for the first item of achievement vanity (AVan1).

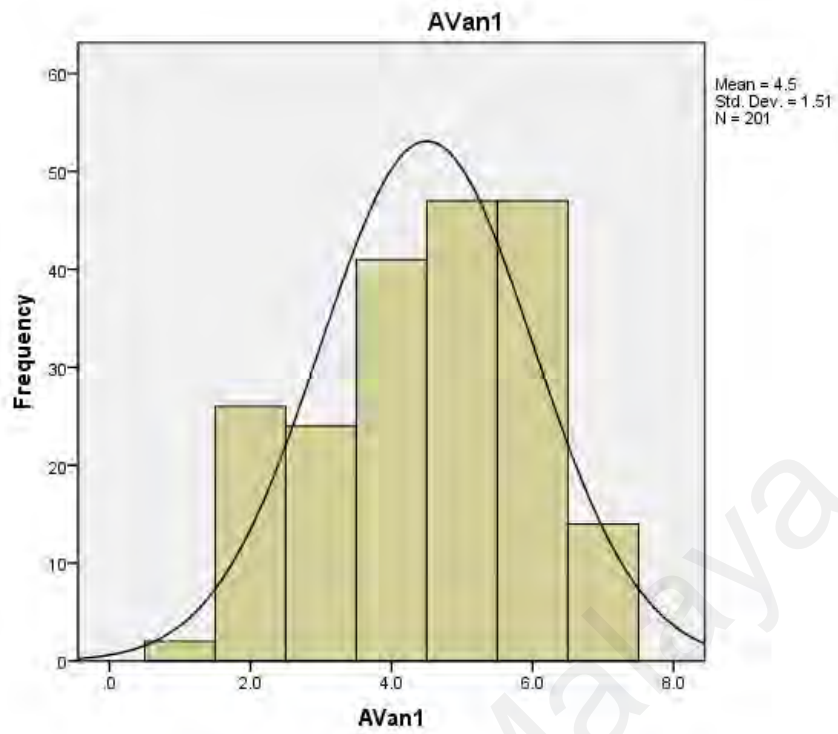


Figure 5.2.6: Histogram - Chinese female, AVan1

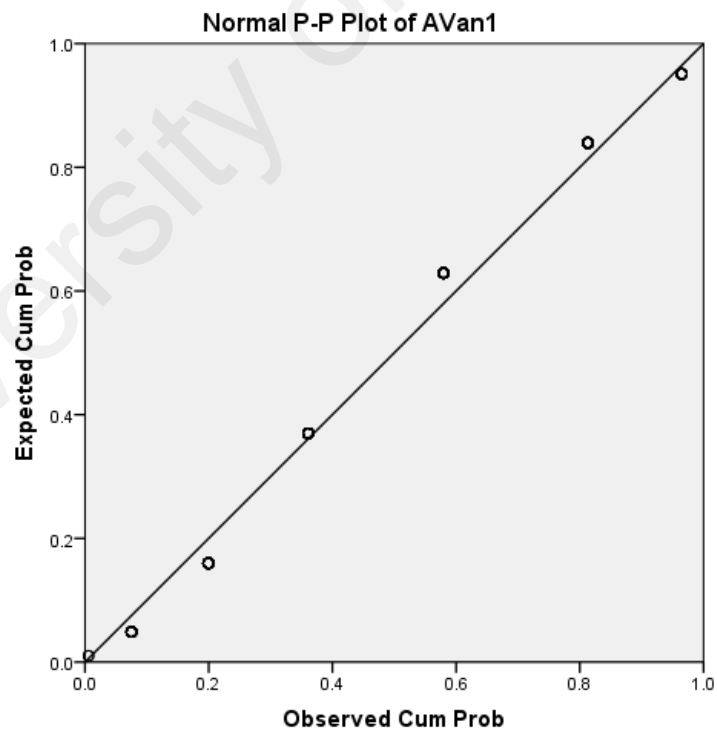


Figure 5.2.7: P-P plot - Chinese female, AVan1

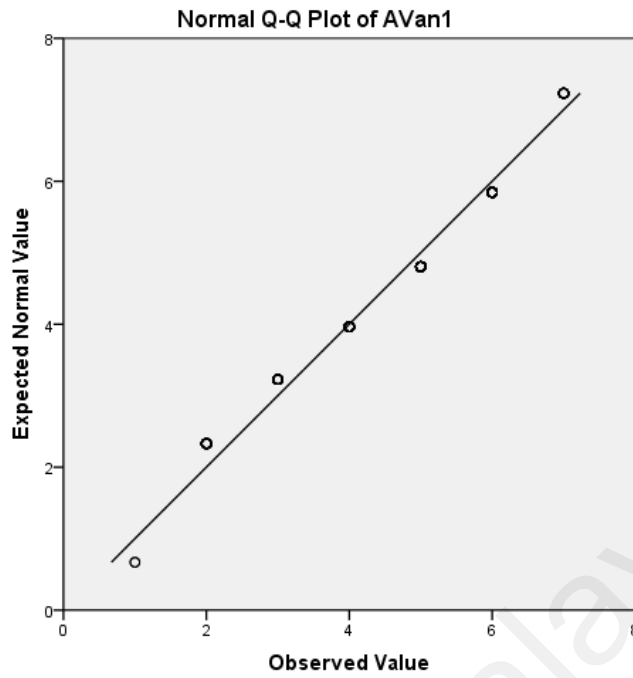


Figure 5.2.8: Q-Q plot - Chinese female, AVan1

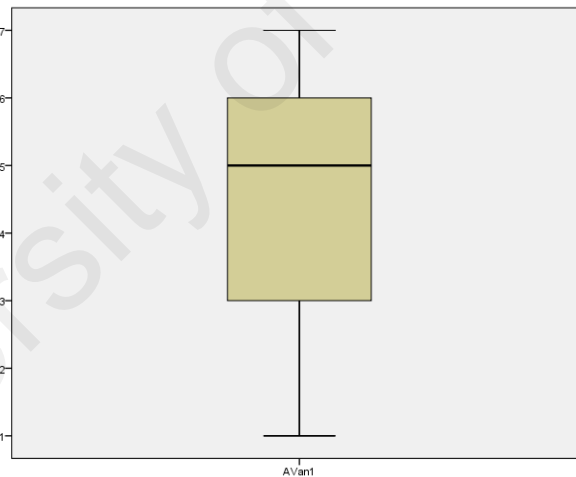


Figure 5.2.9: Boxplot - Chinese female, AVan1

As shown in the Histogram and the boxplot, the distribution of AVan1 for the Chinese female group was left-skewed. The P-P plot and Q-Q plot also showed some deviation from the normal line.

In summary, after evaluating the normality tests and the graphic results, it was found that most variables in the present study were relatively normally distributed, but the distributions of a few variables were skewed.

5.2.2 Test for homogeneity of variances

Homogeneity of variances is another important assumption for parametric tests. Given that Bartlett's test for equality of variances is sensitive to the normality of data and the data in this study are approximately normally distributed, not strictly normally distributed, Levene's test is used to examine the homogeneity of variances. To avoid redundancies, only the results for gender groups in the Chinese and Malaysian samples are presented in this section (as shown in Table 5.2.1 and Table 5.2.2).

Table 5.2.1: Test of homogeneity of variances – the Chinese sample (male vs female)

Variables	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PVan1	3.344	1	416	0.068
PVan2	2.081	1	416	0.150
PVan3	0.714	1	416	0.398
PVan4	4.695	1	416	0.031
AVan1	3.960	1	416	0.047
AVan2	0.006	1	416	0.936
AVan3	0.018	1	416	0.894
AVan4	0.499	1	416	0.480
BSC1	0.079	1	416	0.779
BSC2	0.056	1	416	0.813
BSC3	0.231	1	416	0.631
BDis1	0.089	1	416	0.765
BDis2	0.267	1	416	0.606
TDis1	1.017	1	416	0.314
TDis2	0.082	1	416	0.774
PC1	6.051	1	416	0.014
PC2	3.682	1	416	0.056
PC3	0.628	1	416	0.429

Table 5.2.2: Test of homogeneity of variances – the Malaysian sample (male vs female)

Variables	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PVan1	1.778	1	395	0.183
PVan2	0.004	1	395	0.948
PVan3	1.282	1	395	0.258
PVan4	5.611	1	395	0.018
AVan1	2.729	1	395	0.099
AVan2	5.231	1	395	0.023
AVan3	0.958	1	395	0.328
AVan4	3.565	1	395	0.060
BSC1	0.726	1	395	0.395
BSC2	3.933	1	395	0.048
BSC3	1.575	1	395	0.210
BDis1	0.775	1	395	0.379
BDis2	0.556	1	395	0.456
TDis1	0.444	1	395	0.505
TDis2	0.098	1	395	0.754
PC1	0.374	1	395	0.541
PC2	0.075	1	395	0.784
PC3	0.932	1	395	0.335

The null hypothesis for Levene's test is that the groups being compared all have similar population variances. With $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the groups being compared have different population variances (heteroscedasticity). With $p > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that the groups being compared have similar population variances (homoscedasticity) (Field, 2013). As shown in the tables, most groups had equal variances. The test for homogeneity of variances was also conducted for other groups, such as different age groups, different educational background groups, and different online status groups. The results also indicated that most groups have similar population variances.

5.3 Hypotheses testing

Parametric methods are robust to non-normal data with equal variances. Therefore, t-tests were conducted to examine whether people of different genders and from different countries are motivated differently by the factors of vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition and privacy concerns. ANOVA was used to examine the effect of other factors (such as age, educational background, and online status).

To identify gender differences in the motivations for identity reconstruction, first, the data collected in China and Malaysia were analyzed respectively, so as to investigate the effect of gender in each country. Following this, the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample were put together as a whole and the overall effect of gender was investigated.

To capture the big picture of the cultural differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction, the data were first analyzed as two independent groups: the Chinese group and the Malaysian group. The Malaysian group was then divided into three sub-groups: the Malaysian-Malays, the Malaysian-Chinese, and Others (i.e., the Malaysian-Indians and the Malaysian-Others). Once this had been accomplished, the data collected from the Chinese participants, the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays were compared in order to explore the motivational differences between different ethnic groups. Given that the main focus of this study is the Chinese and Malaysian culture, the Malaysian-Indians and the Malaysian-Others were excluded from the second analysis.

By testing the hypotheses, the following research questions will be answered. **RQ1:** Are men and women motivated differently by the factors of vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms? **RQ2:** Are Chinese and Malaysian users motivated differently

by the factors of vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms?

5.3.1 Vanity

H1 proposed that women are more likely to be motivated by physical vanity during online identity reconstruction when compared with men, while H2 proposed that men are more likely than women to be motivated by achievement vanity during online identity reconstruction. The results in Table 5.3.1 indicated that, in the Chinese sample, women had significantly higher mean scores than men on all the physical vanity items, thus meaning that Chinese women focused more on physical attractiveness and appearance than Chinese men when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. Chinese men had significantly higher mean scores than Chinese women on all the items of achievement vanity, thus suggesting that Chinese men place more emphasis on achievements (such as accomplishments and success) during online identity reconstruction. Therefore, H1 and H2 were supported in the Chinese sample.

Table 5.3.1: Vanity results – the Chinese sample

Variables	CN-Men		CN-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Physical vanity						
PVan1	4.54	1.14	4.83	1.29	-2.452	0.015
PVan2	4.13	1.57	4.49	1.62	-2.334	0.020
PVan3	4.22	1.30	4.78	1.40	-4.232	0.000
PVan4	4.44	1.34	4.79	1.52	-2.442	0.015
Achievement vanity						
AVan1	4.89	1.42	4.50	1.51	2.663	0.008
AVan2	4.74	1.46	4.17	1.50	3.934	0.000
AVan3	4.92	1.45	4.47	1.40	3.182	0.002
AVan4	4.64	1.63	4.00	1.60	4.054	0.000

Note: CN = Chinese, SD = Standard deviation

As shown in Table 5.3.2, no significant gender differences on vanity were found in the Malaysian sample, except that Malaysian women had a higher mean score on the second item of physical vanity. Therefore, H1 and H2 were not supported in the Malaysian sample. In summary, H1 and H2 were supported in the Chinese sample, but not supported in the Malaysian sample.

Table 5.3.2: Vanity results – the Malaysian sample

Variables	MY-Men		MY-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Physical vanity						
PVan1	4.88	1.33	5.02	1.38	-1.039	0.299
PVan2	4.77	1.30	5.11	1.28	-2.621	0.009
PVan3	4.87	1.33	4.85	1.42	0.173	0.863
PVan4	4.90	1.31	4.90	1.46	0.061	0.951
Achievement vanity						
AVan1	4.84	1.60	4.90	1.41	-0.365	0.715
AVan2	4.59	1.60	4.61	1.34	-0.175	0.862
AVan3	4.80	1.55	4.57	1.42	1.548	0.123
AVan4	4.12	1.58	3.98	1.47	0.923	0.357

Note: MY = Malaysian, SD = Standard deviation

H3 proposed that Malaysian people are more likely to be motivated by physical vanity during online identity reconstruction in comparison to Chinese people, while H4 proposed that Chinese people are more likely than Malaysian people to be motivated by achievement vanity during online identity reconstruction. When comparing the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample (as shown in Table 5.3.3), the results showed that Malaysian participants had significantly higher mean scores on all the items of physical vanity when compared to Chinese participants. This suggests that, in comparison to Chinese social network platform users, Malaysian users are more likely to reconstruct their identity on social network platforms to increase their physical attractiveness.

Therefore, H3 was supported. However, there was no significant difference in achievement vanity, except that Chinese people showed greater concern over comparing their own success with that of others. Thus, H4 was not supported.

Table 5.3.3: Vanity results – China vs. Malaysia

Variables	China		Malaysia		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Physical vanity						
PVan1	4.68	1.22	4.96	1.35	-3.131	0.002
PVan2	4.31	1.60	4.95	1.30	-6.293	0.000
PVan3	4.49	1.38	4.86	1.38	-3.815	0.000
PVan4	4.61	1.44	4.90	1.39	-2.937	0.003
Achievement vanity						
AVan1	4.70	1.47	4.87	1.50	-1.662	0.097
AVan2	4.47	1.50	4.60	1.47	-1.280	0.201
AVan3	4.70	1.44	4.68	1.48	-0.276	0.782
AVan4	4.33	1.64	4.05	1.52	2.565	0.010

Note: SD = Standard deviation

5.3.2 Bridging social capital

H5 proposed that men are more likely than women to be motivated by bridging social capital when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms. Table 5.3.4 and Table 5.3.5 show the results of gender difference in bridging social capital for the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample respectively.

As shown in Table 5.3.4, in the Chinese sample, the men had significantly greater mean scores than the women on two of the three bridging social capital items. In online identity reconstruction, Chinese men were more likely to be motivated by the purpose of encountering new friends from different backgrounds on social network platforms. As shown in Table 5.3.5, no significant gender differences in bridging social capital were

found in the Malaysian sample. Therefore, H5 was partly supported in the Chinese sample, but not supported in the Malaysian sample.

Table 5.3.4: Bridging social capital results – the Chinese sample

Variables	CN-Men		CN-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Bridging social capital						
BSC1	5.35	1.12	5.30	1.15	0.425	0.671
BSC2	5.57	1.20	5.32	1.26	2.099	0.036
BSC3	5.51	1.01	5.30	1.08	2.033	0.043

Note: CN = Chinese, SD = Standard deviation

Table 5.3.5: Bridging social capital results – the Malaysian sample

Variables	MY-Men		MY-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Bridging social capital						
BSC1	4.96	1.36	5.21	1.25	-1.923	0.055
BSC2	4.87	1.51	5.14	1.32	-1.859	0.064
BSC3	5.14	1.45	5.20	1.31	-0.401	0.688

Note: MY = Malaysian, SD = Standard deviation

H6 proposed that Chinese people are more likely than Malaysian people to be motivated by bridging social capital during online identity reconstruction. When comparing the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample (as shown Table 5.3.6), the results showed that Chinese participants scored significantly higher on all the bridging social capital items than Malaysian participants, thus indicating that Chinese participants are more inclined to be motivated by bridging social capital when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms, aiming to meet new friends, and building various new social connections. Therefore, H6 was supported.

Table 5.3.6: Bridging social capital results – China vs. Malaysia

Variables	China		Malaysia		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Bridging social capital						
BSC1	5.32	1.13	5.09	1.31	2.704	0.007
BSC2	5.45	1.24	5.01	1.42	4.696	0.000
BSC3	5.41	1.05	5.17	1.38	2.761	0.006

Note: SD = Standard deviation

5.3.3 Disinhibition

H7 proposed that women are more likely to be motivated by benign disinhibition and H8 proposed that men are more likely to be motivated by toxic disinhibition in online identity reconstruction. As shown in Table 5.3.7 and Table 5.3.8, for benign disinhibition, men had a significantly higher mean score than women on one of the benign disinhibition items in the Chinese sample (which contradicted H7), but no significant gender differences were found in the Malaysian sample. For toxic disinhibition, men scored significantly higher on one item in all the samples. Therefore, in all the samples, H7 was not supported and H8 was partly supported.

Table 5.3.7: Disinhibition results – the Chinese sample

Variables	CN-Men		CN-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Benign disinhibition						
BDis1	4.44	1.11	4.23	1.13	1.953	0.052
BDis2	4.50	1.17	4.21	1.26	2.429	0.016
Toxic disinhibition						
TDis1	4.91	1.54	4.80	1.47	0.789	0.431
TDis2	4.75	1.66	4.43	1.65	1.968	0.050

Note: CN = Chinese, SD = Standard deviation

Table 5.3.8: Disinhibition results – the Malaysian sample

Variables	MY-Men		MY-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Benign disinhibition						
BDis1	4.05	1.52	4.10	1.64	-0.292	0.770
BDis2	3.79	1.42	3.90	1.56	-0.789	0.431
Toxic disinhibition						
TDis1	3.64	1.61	3.45	1.69	1.137	0.256
TDis2	3.43	1.67	3.08	1.73	2.060	0.040

Note: MY = Malaysian, SD = Standard deviation

H9 proposed that Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by benign disinhibition during online identity reconstruction when compared with Malaysian people, while H10 proposed that Chinese people are more likely than Malaysian people to be motivated by toxic disinhibition during online identity reconstruction. When comparing the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample (as shown in Table 5.3.9), the results showed that Chinese participants had significantly higher mean scores on all the items of disinhibition than the Malaysian participants, especially on toxic disinhibition. This suggests that Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by the disinhibition effect (both benign and toxic disinhibition) when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms. Therefore, H9 and H10 were supported.

Table 5.3.9: Disinhibition results – China vs. Malaysia

Variables	China		Malaysia		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Benign disinhibition						
BDis1	4.34	1.12	4.08	1.58	2.710	0.007
BDis2	4.36	1.22	3.85	1.50	5.370	0.000
Toxic disinhibition						
TDis1	4.86	1.51	3.54	1.65	11.897	0.000
TDis2	4.59	1.66	3.24	1.71	11.467	0.000

Note: SD = Standard deviation

5.3.4 Privacy concerns

H11 proposed that women are more likely than men to be motivated by privacy concerns during online identity reconstruction. As shown in Table 5.3.10, in the Chinese sample, men had a significantly greater mean score than women on one of the privacy concern items, while no gender differences were found in the other two items. Additionally, no significant gender differences in privacy concerns were found in the Malaysian sample (as shown in Table 5.3.11). Therefore, H11 was not supported.

Table 5.3.10: Privacy concern results – the Chinese sample

Variables	CN-Men		CN-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Privacy concern						
PC1	4.63	1.58	4.23	1.72	2.453	0.015
PC2	4.73	1.64	4.54	1.78	1.138	0.265
PC3	4.77	1.63	4.57	1.63	1.269	0.205

Note: CN = Chinese, SD = Standard deviation

Table 5.3.11: Privacy concern results – the Malaysian sample

Variables	MY-Men		MY-Women		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Privacy concern						
PC1	5.60	1.18	5.66	1.20	-0.486	0.627
PC2	5.67	1.22	5.73	1.31	-0.508	0.612
PC3	5.75	1.16	5.73	1.25	0.165	0.869

Note: MY = Malaysian, SD = Standard deviation

H12 proposed that Malaysian people are more likely to be motivated by privacy concerns than Chinese people during online identity reconstruction. As shown in Table 5.3.12, when compared with Chinese participants, Malaysian participants had significantly higher mean scores on privacy concern items, indicating that Malaysian

people are more likely to reconstruct their identity in order to protect their privacy on social network platforms. Therefore, H12 was supported.

Table 5.3.12: Privacy concern results – China vs. Malaysia

Variables	China		Malaysia		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Privacy concern						
PC1	4.44	1.66	5.63	1.90	-11.803	0.000
PC2	4.64	1.71	5.70	1.27	-10.093	0.000
PC3	4.68	1.63	5.74	1.21	-10.605	0.000

Note: SD = Standard deviation

In summary, most hypotheses were supported by the results. There were significant gender and cultural differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction. The Chinese and Malaysian users were motivated differently by physical vanity, bridging social capital, benign disinhibition, toxic disinhibition, and privacy concerns. The gender differences in these motivations were more salient in the Chinese sample than in the Malaysian sample. Therefore, RQ1 and RQ2 were answered.

5.4 Ethnic groups

RQ3: regarding the motivations for online identity reconstruction (i.e., vanity, bridging social capital, disinhibition, and privacy concerns), are there any differences between the Malays, the Malaysian-Chinese and the Chinese-Chinese? To answer RQ3, the motivational differences between different ethnic groups were investigated.

The results (as shown in Table 5.4.1) indicated that, in comparison with the Malaysian-Chinese participants, the Chinese-Chinese participants scored significantly higher on all the items of bridging social capital, and toxic disinhibition, as well as one benign disinhibition item (the difference on the other item was approaching significant); they also scored significantly lower on all the privacy concern items. However, no

significant differences were found on physical vanity and achievement vanity between the Malaysian-Chinese and the Chinese-Chinese. In other words, the Chinese-Chinese focused more on bridging social capital, benign disinhibition, and toxic disinhibition when reconstructing their online identities, while the Malaysian-Chinese focused more on privacy concerns.

Table 5.4.1: The comparative results between different ethnic groups

Variables	CN (n = 418)	MY (n = 397)	MY-CN (n = 105)	MY-MY (n = 257)	CN vs MY	CN vs MY-CN	MY-CN vs MY-MY
	Mean1	Mean2	Mean3	Mean4	P	P1	P2
Vanity							
-Physical vanity							
PVan1	4.68	4.96	4.62	5.06	0.002	0.681	0.005
PVan2	4.31	4.95	4.51	5.13	0.000	0.150	0.000
PVan3	4.49	4.86	4.64	4.97	0.000	0.319	0.036
PVan4	4.61	4.90	4.68	5.00	0.003	0.623	0.031
-Achievement vanity							
AVan1	4.70	4.87	4.87	4.97	0.097	0.301	0.552
AVan2	4.47	4.60	4.69	4.69	0.201	0.180	0.996
AVan3	4.70	4.68	4.78	4.69	0.782	0.623	0.597
AVan4	4.33	4.05	4.23	4.04	0.010	0.529	0.278
Bridging social capital							
BSC1	5.32	5.09	4.79	5.24	0.007	0.000	0.003
BSC2	5.45	5.01	4.55	5.21	0.000	0.000	0.000
BSC3	5.41	5.17	4.76	5.33	0.006	0.000	0.000
Disinhibition							
-Benign disinhibition							
BDis1	4.34	4.08	4.04	4.08	0.007	0.055	0.830
BDis2	4.36	3.85	3.69	3.93	0.000	0.000	0.123
-Toxic disinhibition							
TDis1	4.86	3.54	3.31	3.65	0.000	0.000	0.077
TDis2	4.59	3.24	3.10	3.29	0.000	0.000	0.326
Privacy concerns							
PC1	4.44	5.63	5.49	5.70	0.000	0.000	0.120
PC2	4.64	5.70	5.47	5.79	0.000	0.000	0.028
PC3	4.68	5.74	5.56	5.80	0.000	0.000	0.085

Note: CN = Chinese, MY = Malaysian, MY-CN = Malaysian-Chinese, MY-MY = Malaysian-Malays

Additionally, the Malaysian-Malays had significantly higher scores on physical vanity and bridging social capital than the Malaysian-Chinese, which means that when compared with the Malaysian-Chinese, the Malaysian-Malays were more likely to be motivated by physical vanity and bridging social capital when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. The Malaysian-Chinese had similar mean scores with the Malaysian-Malays on the remaining motivations for identity reconstruction (achievement vanity, benign and toxic disinhibition, and privacy concerns).

In summary, people from different ethnic groups (the Chinese-Chinese, the Malaysian-Chinese, and the Malaysian-Malays) were motivated differently during online identity reconstruction. The differences between the Chinese-Chinese and the Malaysian-Chinese were more salient than those between the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays. Thus, RQ3 was answered.

5.5 Further tests

Some further tests were conducted to provide a deeper understanding of the data in the present study. First, the Independent one-way ANOVA was used to examine the differences between different groups regarding other factors (i.e., age, educational background, and online status). Following this, the two-way ANOVA was used to examine the interactions between gender and other factors. Third, the repeated measure one-way ANOVA was used to examine within-group differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction.

5.5.1 The effect of age, education and online status

In addition to examining the motivational differences between people of different genders and people from different countries, the effects of age, educational background and online status on the motivations of online identity reconstruction were also investigated. As tested in Section 5.2.1 and Section 5.2.2, the data of the different

groups are approximately normally distributed and there was the homogeneity of variance between different groups. Therefore, the assumptions of ANOVA are fulfilled.¹

For the Chinese sample, the results of the one-way ANOVA are summarized in Table 5.5.1. It was found that age had a significant influence on the motivations of physical vanity ($F(6,411) = 2.688, p = 0.014, \eta^2 = 0.038$) and benign disinhibition ($F(6,411) = 3.612, p = 0.002, \eta^2 = 0.050$). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey test indicated that participants aged 20 - 24 had significantly lower mean scores on physical vanity than those aged 25 - 29 ($M_{20-24} = 4.16, SD_{20-24} = 1.35, M_{25-29} = 4.77, SD_{25-29} = 1.23, p = 0.018$). The participants aged 20 - 24 also had significantly lower mean scores on benign disinhibition than those aged 25 - 29 ($M_{20-24} = 4.01, SD_{20-24} = 1.18, M_{25-29} = 4.56, SD_{25-29} = 1.00, p = 0.010$).

Educational background had a significant influence on the motivations of physical vanity ($F(3,414) = 5.337, p = 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.038$), bridging social capital ($F(3,414) = 3.230, p = 0.022, \eta^2 = 0.023$), benign disinhibition ($F(3,414) = 2.898, p = 0.035, \eta^2 = 0.021$), and toxic disinhibition ($F(3,414) = 2.933, p = 0.033, \eta^2 = 0.021$). The post hoc analysis indicated that on physical vanity, participants with a master's educational background had significantly higher mean scores than those who with an educational background of high school or lower. Participants with a bachelor's background had significantly higher mean scores on physical vanity, bridging social capital and toxic disinhibition than those who had not been educated at bachelor's level (i.e., whose educational background was technical training and high school or lower). On benign disinhibition, participants with a bachelor's background had significantly higher mean

¹ In order to perform the post hoc analysis of ANOVA, groups with only one case were merged with the nearest group. For example, only one Chinese participant held a doctorate degree. This specific participant was merged into the master's degree group when the post hoc analysis was conducted.

scores than those who with an educational background of technical training. However, there was no significant difference in physical vanity, bridging social capital, benign disinhibition and toxic disinhibition between participants with a bachelor's and master's educational background.

Online status had significant influences on all the motivations for online identity reconstruction. The post hoc tests suggested that participants whose online status was "visible" had significantly higher mean scores on physical vanity, achievement vanity, bridging social capital, benign disinhibition, and toxic disinhibition than those who set their online status as "invisible." On privacy concerns, "visible" users had significantly lower mean scores than "invisible" users, indicating that "invisible" users were more likely to reconstruct their identity due to privacy concerns.

Table 5.5.1: One-way ANOVA results for the Chinese sample

Motivations	Age	Education	Online status
Physical vanity	20-24 < 25-29	Master > High school Bachelor > Technic Bachelor > High school	Visible > Invisible
Achievement vanity	/	/	Visible > Invisible
Bridging social capital	/	Bachelor > Technic Bachelor > High school	Visible > Invisible
Benign disinhibition	20-24 < 25-29	Bachelor > Technic	Visible > Invisible
Toxic disinhibition	/	Bachelor > Technic Bachelor > High school	Visible > Invisible
Privacy concerns	/	/	Visible < Invisible

Note: "/" = no significant differences

For the Malaysian sample, the results of the one-way ANOVA are summarized in Table 5.5.2. It was found that neither age nor educational background had a significant effect on the motivations for online identity reconstruction. Online status had a

significant influence on physical vanity ($F(3,393) = 2.711, p = 0.045, \eta^2 = 0.020$), achievement vanity ($F(3,393) = 2.991, p = 0.031, \eta^2 = 0.022$) and privacy concerns ($F(3,393) = 3.149, p = 0.025, \eta^2 = 0.023$). The post hoc analysis indicated that participants who set their online status as “visible” had similar mean scores on physical vanity and achievement vanity to those of participants who set their online status as “invisible,” but they had significantly different mean scores when compared with those who set their online status as “busy” or “away.” In addition, “invisible” users had higher mean scores on privacy concerns than “visible” users, and this difference was approaching significant ($p = 0.056$).

Table 5.5.2: One-way ANOVA results for the Malaysian sample

Motivations	Age	Education	Online status
Physical vanity	/	/	Visible < Away Visible < Busy
Achievement vanity	/	/	Away > Visible Away > Invisible Busy > Invisible
Bridging social capital	/	/	/
Benign disinhibition	/	/	/
Toxic disinhibition	/	/	/
Privacy concerns	/	/	Visible < Invisible Busy < Invisible

Note: “/” = no significant differences

5.5.2 The interactions between factors

Two-way ANOVAs were conducted to investigate whether gender interacts with age, educational background, and online status. Table 5.5.3 shows the overall interactions between gender and other factors in different samples. Significant interactions were found only between gender and age.

Table 5.5.3: The interactions between gender and other factors

Interactions	Chinese sample	Malaysian sample
Gender*Age	Bridging social capital	Physical vanity Benign disinhibition
Gender*Edu	/	/
Gender*Online status	/	/

Note: "/" = no significant differences

The results revealed that, in the Chinese sample, gender did not interact with education and online status on the motivations for online identity reconstruction. However, there was a significant interaction between gender and age on the motivation of bridging social capital ($F(6,404) = 3.403, p = 0.003, \eta^2 = 0.048$).

Simple effect tests were conducted to find out which gender and age groups differed from each other. First, the Chinese data were split by gender. The one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether participants of the same gender but different age differed in the motivation of bridging social capital. Subsequently, the Chinese data were split by age range, and independent t-tests were used to examine whether participants with the same age range but different gender differed in the motivation of bridging social capital. Table 5.5.4 shows the detailed results of the effect of gender-age interaction.

The results suggested that when the Chinese data were split by gender, age range did not influence the motivation of bridging social capital for males ($F(6,210) = 0.912, p = 0.487, \eta^2 = 0.025$). That is, with regards to the Chinese males in the different age ranges, they had similar scores on the motivation of bridging social capital. In contrast, for females, age range was significantly associated with the motivation of bridging social capital ($F(5,195) = 3.224, p = 0.008, \eta^2 = 0.076$). Specifically, the Chinese females aged 25-29 had significantly higher mean scores on bridging social capital ($M = 5.51, SD = 0.95$) than the Chinese females aged 35-39 ($M = 4.77, SD = 1.32, p = 0.007$).

When the Chinese data were split by age, for those aged 35-39, male participants had significantly higher mean scores on bridging social capital ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 0.69$) than female participants ($M = 4.77$, $M = 1.32$, $p = 0.008$). No gender differences were found in other age ranges.

Table 5.5.4: The gender*age interaction effect on motivations

Split groups	Samples	Chinese sample	Malaysian sample	
		Bridging social capital	Physical vanity	Benign disinhibition
Split file by gender	Male	/	/	/
	Female	25-29 > 35-39	Under 20 > 40+ 20-24 > 40+ 25-29 > 40+	Under 20 > 20-24 20-24 < 25-29 20-24 < 35-39 25-29 > 40+
Split file by age	< 20	/	No gender differences for different age ranges	
	20-24	/		
	25-29	/		
	30-34	/		
	35-39	Male > Female		
	40-44	/		
	>= 45	/		

Note: "/" = no significant differences

In the Malaysian sample, there was a significant interaction between gender and age on the motivations of physical vanity ($F(5,384) = 2.345$, $p = 0.041$, $\eta^2 = 0.030$) and benign disinhibition ($F(5,384) = 2.823$, $p = 0.016$, $\eta^2 = 0.035$). When the Malaysian data were split by gender, age range had a significant influence on physical vanity and benign disinhibition for the female group, but not for the male group. The detailed results are summarized in Table 5.5.4. Specifically, for physical vanity, the post hoc analysis suggested that Malaysian females aged under 20, 20-24, and 25-29 had significantly higher mean scores on physical vanity than Malaysian females aged over 40 years old.

For benign disinhibition, significant differences were found between various age ranges for the female group. For example, Malaysian females aged under 20 had a significantly higher mean score on benign disinhibition ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.66$) than the

females aged 20-24 ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.41$, $p = 0.037$). Malaysian females aged 20-24 had a significantly lower mean score on benign disinhibition ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.41$) than the females aged 25-29 ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.40$, $p = 0.037$). When the Malaysian data were split by age, no significant differences were found between male and female participants with the same age range.

5.5.3 Within-group differences in motivations

When reconstructing their identity on social network platforms, people are likely to be driven by different motivations at the same time. For example, they may reconstruct an online identity to show off their achievements (achievement vanity) and meet new friends (bridging social capital). The repeated measure one-way ANOVA could examine whether people weight these motivations differently and which motivation is more important for them. The repeated measure one-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data of the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample respectively.

In the Chinese sample, there was a significant difference on the weight people put on the motivations for online identity reconstruction ($F(3.278, 1366.877) = 44.259$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.096$). Specifically, Chinese participants had significantly higher mean scores on bridging social capital than on other motivations, thus indicating that bridging social capital was more important for them when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. In addition, the mean score of toxic disinhibition was significantly higher than that of benign disinhibition, but there was no significant difference between the mean scores of physical vanity and achievement vanity, which suggested that Chinese participants valued physical vanity and achievement vanity equally but were more likely to be motivated by toxic disinhibition than by benign disinhibition when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms. Figure

5.5.1 provides visualized results of the within-subject differences in identity reconstruction motivation for the Chinese sample.

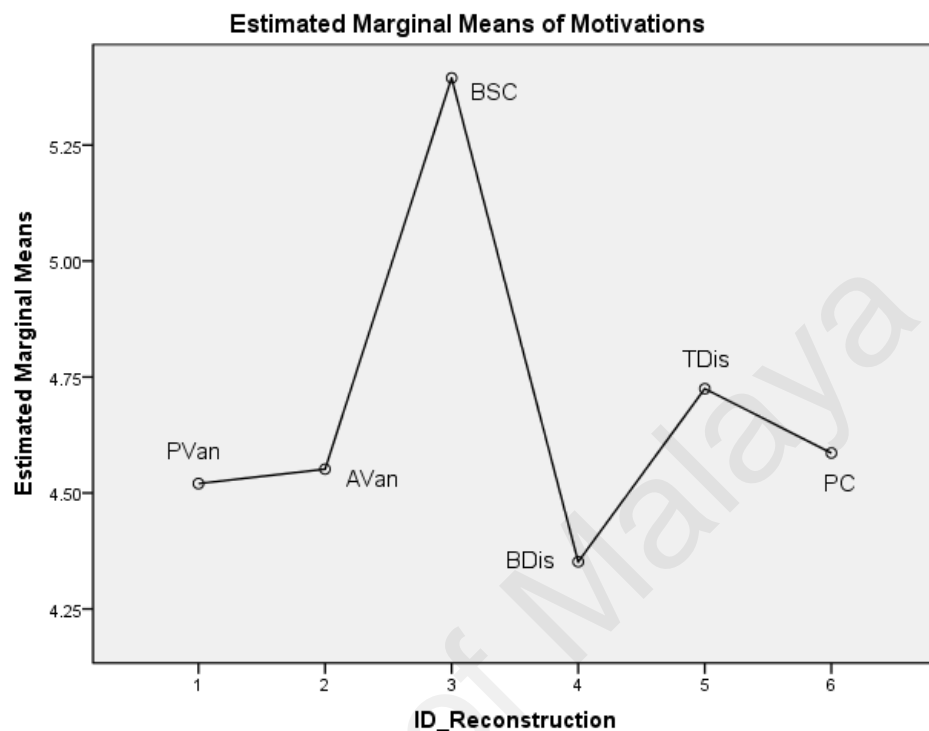


Figure 5.5.1: Within-subject differences – the Chinese sample

For the within-group differences in the Chinese sample, gender played an important role in the motivation of vanity. Overall, the Chinese participants valued physical vanity and achievement vanity equally. However, when narrowing it down to gender groups, the results were different. Specifically, the Chinese males focused more on achievement vanity ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.33$) than physical vanity ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.19$, $p < 0.001$), while the Chinese females placed a higher priority on physical vanity ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.31$) than achievement vanity ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.35$, $p < 0.001$) when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

In the Malaysian sample, there was also a significant difference in the weight people assigned to the motivations for online identity reconstruction ($F(4.221, 1671.506) = 191.409$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.326$). Specifically, all the differences between different

motivations were significant. As shown in Figure 5.5.2, privacy concern was the most important online identity reconstruction motivation for the Malaysian participants. In addition, they were more likely to be motivated by physical vanity than achievement vanity. Moreover, Malaysian participants assigned more weight to benign disinhibition than to toxic disinhibition when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms.

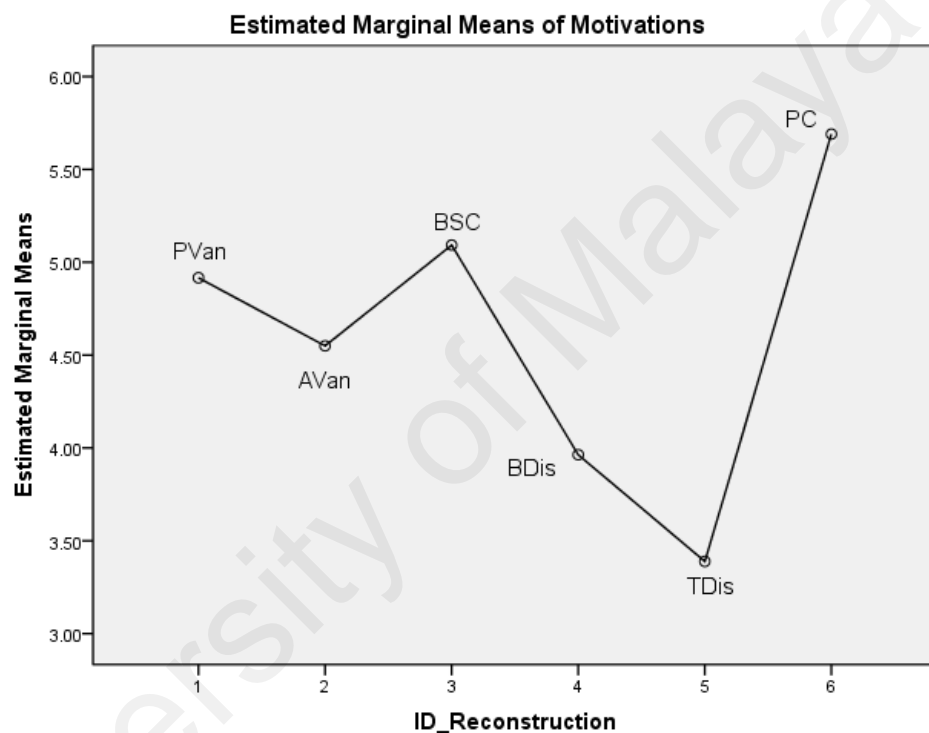


Figure 5.5.2: Within-subject differences – the Malaysian sample

For the within-group differences in the Malaysian sample, gender played an important role in the motivation of physical vanity and bridging social capital. When reconstructing identity on social network platforms, the Malaysian males were equally likely to be motivated by physical vanity ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.17$) and bridging social capital ($M = 4.99$, $SD = 1.28$, $p = 0.219$), while the Malaysian females were more likely to be motivated by bridging social capital ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.10$) than physical vanity ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.22$, $p = 0.030$).

5.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the detailed results of the data analysis were presented. The normality tests suggested that the data in this study were approximately normal, and the tests of homogeneity suggested that the data of most groups had similar variances. The majority of the proposed hypotheses were supported. Significant differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction were found between the Chinese and Malaysian participants, as well as between the males and the females in the Chinese sample. In addition to gender and national culture, other factors (i.e., age, education, and online status) also had significant influences on the motivations. Moreover, there were significant interactions between gender and age on the motivations for online identity reconstruction. Furthermore, among all the motivations, bridging social capital was the most important motivation for the Chinese participants, while privacy concern was the most important motivation for the Malaysian participants.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated gender and cultural differences in the motivations for online identity reconstruction (i.e., physical vanity, achievement vanity, bridging social capital, benign disinhibition, toxic disinhibition, and privacy concerns) based on social role theory and the cultural dimension framework. In this chapter, the key findings of the present study are first discussed. The theoretical and practical contributions of these findings are then illustrated, followed by the limitations of this study and the directions for future research.

6.1 Key findings

6.1.1 Gender differences

The findings indicate that gender differences are salient in the Chinese sample, but not salient in the Malaysian sample. A plausible explanation for the similarities between the Malaysian males and females on the motivations for online identity reconstruction could be that the Malaysian people have no obvious preference when it comes to masculine or feminine values (Hofstede et al., 2010).

In the Chinese sample, as hypothesized, women were more likely to be motivated by physical vanity than men, while men were more likely than women to be motivated by achievement vanity when reconstructing identity on social network platforms. The finding suggested that Chinese women pay more attention to display their physical attractiveness through a reconstructed online identity, while Chinese men play more emphasis on showing off their personal achievements with the online identity. Similar patterns have been found in research concerning gender differences in Second Life (an online virtual world where users can customize avatars and socialize with others) (Guadagno et al., 2011). It has been suggested that women tend to make changes to the appearance of their avatars more than men in Second Life, while men are more inclined

to work on their virtual property (which displays their wealth and social status) (Guadagno et al., 2011). The findings concerning vanity are also in line with prior studies which found that women focused more on physical appearance, while men focused more on displaying their success and social status (Haferkamp et al., 2011; Manago et al., 2008; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012; Tifferet & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2014).

Additionally, the results revealed that men placed more emphasis on the purpose of gaining bridging social capital than women when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. It suggested that Chinese men focus more on expanding their social network than Chinese women. This finding is consistent with prior studies which postulated that men have more friends on social network platforms than women (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010; Fogel & Nehmad, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), and the males are more likely than the females to make new friends on social network platforms (Haferkamp et al., 2011; Mazman & Usluel, 2011; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). The finding is also in line with the ideas in social role theory that men behave in agentic provider ways (Eagly, 1987), because bridging social capital is associated with benefits such as increased information and opportunities (Ellison et al., 2007), which may help men to better meet the expectations of male roles.

Regarding benign disinhibition, some previous studies suggested that women disclose more information than men in the online world (Bond, 2009; Bortree, 2005; Hollenbaugh & Everett, 2013; Lenhart & Fox, 2006). However, the results of this study revealed that the hypothesis of gender difference in benign disinhibition was partly supported in the opposite way in the Chinese sample, which means that Chinese men were more inclined to reconstruct their identity in order to enjoy benign disinhibition online. They enjoy the freedom to talk. One possible reason why the finding is contrary to the hypothesis may be that men feel more restrained than women when it comes to

self-disclosure, due to gender stereotypes in the real world (Eagly, 1987). Therefore, men may have a greater need for self-disclosure than women, making them more likely to be motivated by disinhibited self-disclosure when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms. This finding is consistent with the study by Bonds-Raacke and Raacke (2010), which suggested that men share more information about themselves on social network platforms than women. Additionally, the hypothesis that men are more likely to be motivated by toxic disinhibition was partly supported in the Chinese sample, suggesting that Chinese men are more inclined to take advantage of the toxic online disinhibition effect. This finding is in line with previous research which suggested that men are more likely to engage in flaming and cyberbullying online than women (Aiken & Waller, 2000; Alonzo & Aiken, 2004; Li, 2006).

Moreover, the results indicated that Chinese men reconstructed their identity on social network platforms because they were more concerned about the misuse of personal information than women, which is contradictory to the hypothesis. The dynamic gender stereotypes might be a possible explanation of women's lower scores on the concerns for the misuse of personal information in this study (Lopez-Zafra & Garcia-Retamero, 2012). It was found that the perceived masculine characteristics among women increased over time (such as adventurousness), but the characteristics of men were perceived to be relatively stable (Lopez-Zafra & Garcia-Retamero, 2012).

Interestingly, the results suggested that men were more motivated by disinhibited self-disclosure and bridging social capital while being more concerned about the misuse of personal information. The findings seem paradoxical, given that some researchers found that privacy concerns had negative influences on people's willingness to disclose information (Krasnova et al., 2009; Zlatolas et al., 2015). However, other studies suggested that privacy concerns are not directly associated with individuals' overall

self-disclosure (Taddicken, 2014). People who are concerned about their privacy may use different strategies to protect their privacy, such as change privacy settings and avoid disclosing sensitive personal information (Young & Quan-Haase, 2009). Although being concerned about privacy, people may disclose personal information that is less sensitive (e.g., personal photos, hobbies, personal experiences or feelings) because they can obtain some benefits from self-disclosure, such as the establishment and maintenance of relationships (Beldad & Hegner, 2017; Krasnova et al., 2010). A prior study also found that people who wanted to develop new friendships often disclosed more information than those who did not (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006). The findings of this study provide support to prior studies (Beldad & Hegner, 2017; Krasnova et al., 2010; Taddicken, 2014; Young & Quan-Haase, 2009).

6.1.1.1 An alternative explanation for gender differences

Even though the present study investigated gender differences from the social role perspective, the findings regarding gender differences were also consistent with the evolutionary theory. The evolutionary theory proposes that the behavioral differences between the two genders that appear in modern societies may be the results of evolutionary selection challenges that men and women had to cope with in the ancient past (Buss & Kenrick, 1998). For instance, women focus on physical attractiveness and men show off their success and achievements because such characteristics can lead to increased attractiveness during mate selections and hence increase the chances of them being able to pass their gene to the next generation (Buss, 1989; Buss & Schmitt, 1993).

The social role theory and the evolutionary theory are not mutually exclusive (Schmitt et al., 2008). They may jointly cause gender differences, and it is difficult to determine whether the observed differences originate from social factors or evolutionary ones. Therefore, the fact that women are more likely to be motivated by physical vanity

and men are more likely to be motivated by achievement vanity in online identity reconstruction can result from either or both the norms for social roles and the innate drive to draw attention.

6.1.2 Cultural differences

In addition to examining gender differences in the motivations, this study also investigated whether Chinese and Malaysian social network users are motivated differently during online identity reconstruction. As expected, significant differences were found between the Chinese and Malaysian participants.

The results revealed that, in comparison with Chinese people, Malaysian people were more likely to be motivated by physical vanity when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms. However, there was no significant difference in the motivation of achievement vanity. The findings suggested that physical vanity is more important for the Malaysian people than for the Chinese people, while achievement vanity is of equal importance to them. Regarding physical vanity, previous research suggested that Malaysian women are less satisfied with their body image than Chinese women (Swami, Tovée, & Harris, 2013). This dissatisfaction may drive Malaysian people to pay more attention to beautifying their physical appearance during online identity reconstruction. A possible explanation for the similarity on achievement vanity may be that achievement vanity is becoming increasingly prominent in both China and Malaysia. Previous research postulated that Chinese people are strongly motivated by achievement vanity (such as reputation and success) when they buy luxury goods (Zhou & Belk, 2004). Similarly, Malaysian people also prefer products that demonstrate social status (Chui et al., 2011).

As hypothesized, Chinese people were more likely to be motivated by bridging social capital than Malaysian people when reconstructing an identity on a social network

platform. It suggested that Chinese people focus more on expanding their social network than their Malaysian contemporary. The finding is consistent with prior studies (Chen, Chen, & Huang, 2013; Chen & Chen, 2004). In the Chinese culture, people value personal relationships (Chen & Chen, 2004). It is believed that personal relationships can bring benefits, such as business opportunities (Chen et al., 2013). This finding adds to the body of knowledge by identifying the differences in the motivation of bridging social capital between Chinese and Malaysian people (Almadhoun et al., 2012; Helou, 2014; Mo & Leung, 2015). In addition, Chinese people are more likely to be motivated by disinhibition (especially toxic disinhibition) than Malaysian people during identity reconstruction. This is consistent with the results of a survey conducted in 25 countries which indicated that the cyberbullying rate among youth was much higher in China than in Malaysia (Microsoft, 2012).

Moreover, there was a significant difference in the motivation of privacy concerns. Malaysian people were more likely to be motivated by privacy concerns than Chinese people when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms. It was claimed that a higher level of uncertainty avoidance is associated with greater preference for stability, predictability, and greater risk avoidance and discomfort with unknown futures (Hofstede, 1980). This finding is also in line with previous studies which suggested that individuals from higher uncertainty avoiding cultures (e.g., Malaysian people) are more sensitive to potential losses (Bontempo, Bottom, & Weber, 1997) and perceive a higher level of risks (Al Kailani & Kumar, 2011). A study conducted in Malaysia also found that, if individuals thought that the consequences of privacy loss were serious, they would be more concerned about privacy (Mohamed & Ahmad, 2012).

In addition to comparing participants from different countries (i.e., China and Malaysia), this study also investigated whether participants from the same country

weight the motivations for online identity reconstruction differently. It was found that, for the Chinese participants, they placed more emphasis on bridging social capital than on other motivations. This is consistent with previous research which found that Chinese people paid much attention to personal connections (Chen & Chen, 2004). For the Malaysian participants, among all the aforementioned motivations, they focused more on privacy concerns. It is in line with Mohamed and Ahmad's (2012) finding that privacy is one of the most essential issues that Malaysian people care about online.

6.1.2.1 Ethnic groups

The cultural differences were further investigated by examining the differences between ethnic groups (i.e., the Chinese-Chinese, the Malaysian-Chinese, and the Malaysian-Malays). It was found that people from different ethnic groups were also motivated differently. Specifically, when compared with the Malaysian-Chinese, the Chinese-Chinese were more likely to be motivated by bridging social capital and disinhibition (both benign and toxic disinhibition), but less likely to be motivated by privacy concerns in online identity reconstruction. Moreover, the Malaysian-Malays were more inclined to reconstruct their online identity due to physical vanity and bridging social capital than the Malaysian-Chinese.

An interesting finding was that the Malaysian-Chinese were less motivated by bridging social capital than the Chinese-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays. The language might well be a barrier that makes the Malaysian-Chinese less passionate in seeking bridging social capital. In Malaysia, people from different ethnic groups prefer their mother tongues. For example, the Malaysian-Malays speak Bahasa Melayu (the Malaysian language), while the Malaysian-Chinese prefer Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hakka (Wan Jafar, 2014). Even though English is used as a second language, people face difficulties in communicating with people from other ethnic groups, because not

everyone speaks English fluently (Tan, 2005). The Malaysian-Chinese may be more likely to encounter linguistic difficulties than the Malaysian-Malays and the Chinese-Chinese because the dominant group in Malaysia is the Malaysian-Malays and the national language is *Bahasa Melayu* (Wan Jafar, 2014), while in China, most people speak Mandarin (Li & Thompson, 1989). The linguistic advantages are likely to facilitate the process of gaining bridging social capital for the Chinese-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays, making them more motivated by bridging social capital in online identity reconstruction, although this needs to be verified in future research.

The motivational differences between the Chinese-Chinese and the Malaysian-Chinese were nearly consistent with those between the Chinese and the Malaysians (as a whole). However, the differences in motivations for identity reconstruction between the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays were not consistent with and not as salient as those between the Chinese and the Malaysians (as a whole). These findings suggested that, as an ethnic group in Malaysia, the Malaysian-Chinese share more similar values regarding online identity reconstruction with Malaysian people, although their perceptions are still different from the Malaysian-Malays to some extent.

The similarities between the Malaysian-Chinese and the whole Malaysian sample could be explained by the efforts that the Malaysian government has made to improve the harmony and unity of all ethnic groups, such as balancing economic disparity and political rights (Tamam, 2009). In the multiethnic environment of schools, students are able to understand and learn from the cultures of other ethnic groups (Tamam, 2009). In a study concerning national identity, nearly 40% of the Malaysian-Chinese participants weighted their national identity (a Malaysian) over racial identity (a Malaysian-Chinese) (Tamam, 2011).

Although the Malaysian government endeavors to promote the unity of different ethnic groups, some fundamental differences between the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays are difficult to integrate, such as language and religion (Noor & Leong, 2013). While most Malaysian-Malays practice Islam, the Malaysian-Chinese follow different religions (such as Buddhism, Taoism or other traditional Chinese folk religions) (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). The differences in language and religious beliefs may have some influences on the overall values people hold, which in turn, affect their motivations for online identity reconstruction.

6.1.2.2 Age, educational background and online status

Further analysis revealed that other demographic factors (i.e., age, educational background, and online status) also had significant influences on the motivations for online identity reconstruction. The effects of other demographic factors also differed in the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample. Specifically, age, educational background, and online status had a significant effect on the motivations for the Chinese participants, while only one demographic factor (i.e., online status) was associated with some of the motivations for the Malaysian participants. Furthermore, there was a significant interaction between gender and age on the motivation of bridging social capital in the Chinese sample, while gender interacted with age on the motivations of physical vanity and benign disinhibition in the Malaysian sample. The findings are consistent with prior studies which found age and levels of education were significant predictors of social network site use (Barker, 2012; Kožuh et al., 2015; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012).

6.1.3 Summary of key findings

Gender differences in the Chinese sample were more salient than in the Malaysian sample. In the Chinese sample, gender differences were found in all the motivations for

online identity reconstruction between men and women. For example, Chinese men were more likely to be motivated by achievement vanity, while Chinese women were more likely to be motivated by physical vanity. However, few gender differences were found between the Malaysian men and women.

Cultural differences were examined between the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample. In comparison with Malaysian people, Chinese people were more likely to be motivated by bridging social capital and disinhibition when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms, but less likely to be motivated by physical vanity and privacy concerns. When evaluating the motivations in the Chinese sample and the Malaysian sample respectively, it was found that bridging social capital was the most important motivation for the Chinese participants, while privacy concern was the most important motivation for the Malaysian participants.

People from different ethnic groups (i.e., the Chinese-Chinese, the Malaysian-Chinese, and the Malaysian-Malays) were also motivated differently. The Malaysian-Chinese were less motivated by bridging social capital than the Chinese-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays. The Malaysian-Chinese shared more similar values about online identity reconstruction with Malaysian people, but their perceptions were still different from the Malaysian-Malays to some extent.

In addition to gender and national culture, other factors (i.e., age, education, and online status) also had significant influences on the motivations. Moreover, there were significant interactions between gender and age on the motivations for online identity reconstruction.

6.2 Theoretical and practical contributions

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in several ways. First, the present study provides a deeper insight into the motivations for online identity reconstruction by taking into account gender and national culture. Existing research concerning online identity reconstruction was limited to a single culture and did not examine the effects of gender (Hu et al., 2015). The present study investigated the motivations for online identity reconstruction in China and Malaysia, and compared gender differences in these two countries respectively. The findings suggested that gender and national culture have significant influences on the motivations for online identity reconstruction. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study that examines the effects of gender and culture on the motivations for online identity reconstruction. And it is the first time that the motivations of vanity and disinhibition have been investigated in a cross-cultural context.

In addition, the present study contributes to the research on gender. The findings indicated that gender stereotypes had an impact on people's identity reconstruction behavior in China. Chinese men and women focused on different motivations when reconstructing their identity on social network platforms. However, gender didn't play an important role in the motivations for Malaysian people. The findings suggested that gender has different effects on the motivations for online identity reconstruction among the Chinese and Malaysian users of social network platforms.

Moreover, this study contributes to the literature of cross-cultural research concerning social network platforms by taking into account multiple dimensions of national culture. Most existing cross-cultural research concerning social network platforms compared the cultural differences from the perspective of individualism vs. collectivism (e.g., Kim & Papacharissi, 2003; Rui & Stefanone, 2013; Zhao & Jiang,

2011). The use of multiple dimensions provides a better understanding of the cultural dimension framework.

Furthermore, the current study sheds light on the specific cultures of China and Malaysia. This study not only compared the Chinese participants with the Malaysian participants but also compared participants from different ethnic groups (e.g., the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malays). It provides a deeper insight into the Chinese and Malaysian culture.

This study also adds to the body of knowledge of the research concerning social network platforms. Many existing studies regarding gender differences in the context of social network platform use have been conducted in America, using American student samples (e.g., Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010; Fogel & Nehmad, 2009; Manago et al., 2008; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). The present study employed a more general Chinese and Malaysian sample, extending the research to the cross-cultural context. The present study also validates the social role theory and the cultural dimension framework in the context of social network platforms.

Practically speaking, the results of the study may be useful to the service providers of social network platforms in specifically identifying the needs of different users, thereby improving their services accordingly. The findings of this study would be especially beneficial for the companies that provide social networking services in both China and Malaysia (such as WeChat). Based on the results (i.e. Chinese and Malaysian users were motivated differently during online identity reconstruction), practitioners could deploy specific strategies to better serve social network platform users from different countries. They could also place emphasis on different aspects when providing services to Chinese and Malaysian users. For example, the results suggested that the Chinese users focus more on bridging social capital and disinhibition than the Malaysian users, while the

Malaysian users pay more attention to physical vanity and privacy than the Chinese users during online identity reconstruction. Therefore, it might be a good choice for practitioners to enhance the features that facilitate the formation of bridging social capital and free self-disclosure in the Chinese market. For example, service providers can recommend new friends or interest-based groups to Chinese users. They can also enable users to post anonymous messages to facilitate disinhibited self-disclosure. At the same time, in the Malaysian market, said practitioners could highlight the features related to the presentation of physical attractiveness (such as photo editing service) and privacy protection (such as privacy setting).

For the social network platform companies which mainly serve the Chinese users (such as QQ, Sina Weibo), more attention should be paid to help users gain bridging social capital because bridging social capital is the most important motivator of online identity reconstruction for the Chinese users. In addition, considering that Chinese men and women are motivated differently when they reconstruct their identity on social network platforms, service providers could improve the service quality by employing gender-specific strategies in China. For example, they could develop features that enable female users to better display their beauty and enable male users to show off their achievements (such as leaderboards). For the social network platform companies whose service is available in Malaysia (such as Facebook), it is important to make users feel that their privacy is being protected because the Malaysian users are more concerned about their privacy during online identity reconstruction.

Furthermore, the findings of this study could be useful for practitioners in other domains. In addition to social network platforms, the providers of other services may also find this study valuable. For example, when a company wants to extend its services to the Malaysian market (such as mobile pay services), it should pay more attention to

protecting users' privacy. Because the findings in this study suggested that Malaysian people are more concerned about privacy on social network platforms, it is likely that they will also be concerned about their privacy when they use other online services. In addition, the results revealed that Chinese people focus more on bridging social capital. Therefore, the integration of social networking features into other services (such as online shopping applications) may make the services more attractive to the Chinese users. Moreover, marketers can deliver customized advertisements to different users based on their gender and cultural background, thereby making the advertisements more effective.

6.3 Limitations and future research

While contributing to the literature about online identity reconstruction and cross-cultural research, the current study also has some limitations. Although English is widely used as a second language in Malaysia, people from different ethnic groups prefer their mother tongue (Wan Jafar, 2014). Given that I cannot speak the *Bahasa Melayu* (the Malaysian language), so I cannot ensure the quality of the questionnaire if it is translated into the Malaysian language. However, a questionnaire in the native language may help the participants better understand the research. It should also be acknowledged that this study used ANOVA tests in the data analysis to gain a deeper insight into the data, but the assumptions of ANOVA analysis were slightly violated. Even though prior studies suggested that parametric tests (such as the t-test and ANOVAs) are robust to violations of test assumptions (e.g., Norman, 2010; Sawilowsky & Hillman, 1992), it is suggested that future studies use other data analysis techniques to validate this study.

In addition, prior research proposed seven motivations for online identity reconstruction (i.e., vanity, disinhibition, privacy concerns, access to new social

networks, escape from old social networks, enjoyment, and avoid disturbance). The current study adopted the social role theory and the cultural dimension framework as the theoretical foundations. Thus, the first four motivations that are strongly connected with the theories were investigated in this study. Future research could examine the effect of gender and national culture on the other motivations. Considering the drawbacks of the convenience sampling method, the generalizability of the findings of this study may be affected. Probability sampling methods are suggested for future research.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, this study provides some potential directions for future research. For instance, the findings of this study indicated that people's online status is significantly associated with their motivations for online identity reconstruction. Future studies could examine how and why online status is related to motivations for online identity reconstruction. In addition, future researchers could also design a longitudinal study to measure the outcomes of online identity reconstruction by comparing participants' status before and after online identity reconstruction. Such a study would reveal whether people obtain what they want (e.g., more bridging social capital) after reconstructing their online identity. In addition, future investigations could be conducted to examine the effect of other cultures or the impact of religions on online identity reconstruction.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS PRESENTED

Journal papers based on Ph.D. thesis

Huang, J., Kumar, S., & Hu, C. (2018). Gender differences in motivations for identity reconstruction on social network platforms. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*. 34(7), 591-602. (ISI-Indexed)

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