The impact of Arab cultural values on online social networking: The case of Facebook

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of cultural values on motivations and attitudes toward Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in the Arab world, and the factors affecting the continuity of membership value. Online questionnaire was used to collect data from the Arab Facebook members. Structural Equation Modeling, using EQS was conducted to analyze the data. The results indicated to a disparity in cultural impact on motivations and attitudes. At the time that Arab youth seek to liberate from all the kinds of restrictions to satisfy their human needs through joining SNSs, their attitudes are still influenced by the cultural values of Arab nation. The results also revealed a significant effect of members' motivations, attitudes, and usage on the continuity of Facebook membership value. The present study contributes to the continuing discussion about why and how people engage in SNSs from different nations' cultures, especially after the critical roles of SNSs in so-called Arab Spring.

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1. Introduction

No other technological platform has assimilated cultures, beliefs, communications patterns, and human activities than Internet. The social Internet has been expanding rapidly. Recent years have seen an explosion of SNSs as virtual social meeting places. A growing body of literature indicates that SNSs are playing bigger and wider roles in various aspects of people's life.

There has been a considerable body of literature in the field of SNSs from different perspectives. A number of important issues in different areas are still sparse. Although the literature points that understanding the national culture is paramount to realize the diffusion and usage of SNSs, far less attention has been paid to study its impact on users' motivations and attitudes. To the authors' knowledge, as yet, there has been no systematic investigation of cultural values impact, motivations, attitudes, usage, and the factors affecting the continuity of SNSs membership value, integrated into one comprehensive model. Furthermore, beside of the cultural values, there are notable differences between the West and the Arab world regarding the gender and age groups of Facebook users. Most of prior research studied the cultural impact on SNSs in Western societies. There is paucity in the literature regard-

ing the impact of Arab cultural values on why and how Arab people engage in SNSs.

Therefore, given the after mentioned gap, the present study aims to develop and validate a comprehensive model to discuss the relationships between cultural values, motivations, attitudes, usage patterns, and the continuity of SNSs membership value. The results of the present study contribute to the continuing discussion about why and how people engage in SNSs from different nation's cultures, and to what extent will continue its success and sustainable growth in the light of variation of cultures.

2. Facebook in the Arab world

In the past few years, Facebook has risen to become the top SNS with over 40 languages (www.allfacebook.com). Facebook occupied the second most popular site in the world, after Google, and the first SNS (www.alexa.com). With the availability of the Arabic version in 2009, Facebook has become the most popular SNS. According to "social baker's site", the heart of Facebook statistics, 20 of the 22 Arab countries are currently involved in the Facebook society (www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics). In particular, by the beginning of 2011, Facebook has attracted more than 21.31 million users across the Arabic countries. By October, 2011, Facebook has spread to more than 33.07 million Arab users.

A notable difference between the West and Arab world is that, while more than 50% of the Western Facebook users (e.g. USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Spain, and Ireland) are female, on the average, only about 36% of Arabic

Facebook members are female. There is another significant demographic difference between the Arab world and the West regarding the age groups of Facebook users. The majority of Facebook users in the Arab world (55%) is in the range between 13 to 24 years old, and mostly are students. Facebook users in the West for the same age group represents only about 36%, and the majority of them lies in range between 25 to 60 years old and older, and mostly are outside of college (www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics).

3. Literature review

Research (e.g. Loch, Straub, & Kamel, 2003; Park, Yang, & Lehto, 2007; Srite & Karahanna, 2006; Straub, Loch, & Hill, 2001) frequently refers to national culture as a profound influential determinant that greatly affects the adoption of IT. Loch et al. (2003) concluded that if cultural beliefs and attitudes toward Internet were better understood, then the Internet itself might be better adapted to the behavioral patterns of the adopting nation. IT researchers have frequently referenced the cultural dimensions developed by Geert Hofstede, the most influential researcher on cultural values (Erumban & de Jong, 2006; Loch et al., 2003; Straub et al., 2001). Sherry, Lucas, Greenberg, and Lachlan (2006) confirmed that, one of the lessons of the previous research is that there are no universal sets of motivations for using media, where motivations vary across media, genres, and cultures. For this reason, empirical work is required at the introduction of each new medium to specify the key traits in understanding the use of that medium.

Most of the previous research has referenced the cultural dimensions of Hofstede to discuss the impact of national culture on different issues of SNSs. The cultural dimensions of Hofstede are usable in a non-organizational context (Hofstede, 1991). As a consequence, it seems to be the most useful one in the case of studying the cultural impact on engagement in SNSs. Hofstede (1980) revealed a couple of four dimensions to measure culture in the areas of uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism, and masculinity. In a later work, he introduced a fifth dimension namely, long-term orientation (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Recently, Hofstede and others added the sixth cultural dimension, called indulgence versus restraint, focusing on happiness and life control (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov, & Vinken, 2008), based on the work of Minkov (2007).

Hofstede's framework is a universal and common to all cultures across all countries and nations. It has been developed based on over 116,000 survey responses in IBM units in approximately 60 countries from the east and west, including 5 Arab countries. According to Hofstede's (1980) typology, the Arab countries were classified as having high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, low individualism, and high masculinity. Such a society may not be ideal for ICT adoption and usage (Akour, Alshare, Miller, & Dwairi, 2006; Erumban & de Jong, 2006; Loch et al., 2003; Straub, Keil, & Brenner, 1997; Straub et al., 2001). Straub et al. (2001) revealed that Arab cultural beliefs are a very strong predictor of resistance to IT transfer. Loch et al. (2003) investigated the diffusion of the Internet in the Arab world focusing on the impact of social norms and cultural values. A strong majority of respondents indicated that Internet acceptance was not without significant reservation. Fifty-eight percent disagreed that computers were well-accepted in Arab society and 40% disagreed that that the Internet would have a positive impact on the Arab family and community ties. Akour et al. (2006) agreed that the Jordanians had negative attitudes about the social impacts of the Internet and did not want it to replace their traditions, values, and customs of interactions and caring.

Recently, many studies (e.g. Cardon et al., 2009; Dotan & Zaphiris, 2010; Marcus & Krishnamurthi, 2009; Marshall, Cardon, Norris, Goreva, & D'Souza, 2008; Veltri & Elgarah, 2009) agreed that

national cultural differences are critical in determine why and how people engage in SNSs. Except for two studies (Cardon et al., 2009; Veltri & Elgarah, 2009), most researches were limited to study the relationship between cultural values and SNSs in Western societies, especially USA, and some societies in the East, excluding the impact of Arabic culture in this area. Veltri and Elgarah (2009) examined how national cultural differences impact the adoption of SNSs in comparison between Morocco and United State. Cardon et al. (2009) discussed the differences in usage of SNSs among 10 countries, including Egypt.

Moreover, the sixth cultural dimension, called indulgence versus restraint did not yet validate empirically in the field of IT adoption and usage in general, and SNSs in particular. Table 1 summarizes previous research, which investigated the impact of cultural values on SNSs.

4. The proposed model and hypotheses

The research model (Fig. 1) proposes that the cultural values have a direct impact on motivations, including self-presentation, social interaction, curiosity, and freedom of speech and expression. At the same time this study proposes a direct impact of cultural values on members' attitudes toward SNSs, consisting of trust, credibility, and strength of ties. Furthermore, the study proposes that the three mentioned attitudes are interrelated, complemented, and prerequisites to each other. Credibility can be seen in many ways as the mirror of trust, and strength of ties can be seen as the mirror of both. Therefore, the model of study included these three attitudes in one construct. The model also posits a direct impact of motivations, attitudes, and Facebook usage on continuity of membership value.

Below each dimension of motivations, attitudes, cultural values, continuity of membership value, and patterns of Facebook usage are discussed in more details, followed by the related hypotheses.

4.1. Motivations

Sherry et al. (2006) demonstrated that a complex account of media effects cannot be understood in isolation from the reasons that individuals use media. Joining SNSs is mostly selective and motivated by self-awareness of the individual's own needs and an expectation of satisfying it by particular types of media that give a certain advantage above other already known alternatives. Healy (1996) declared that, the Internet provides a kind of middle landscape for users because individuals can satisfy their needs for both separation and connectedness. According to Przybylski, Rigby, and Ryan (2010), The cognitive evaluation theory research demonstrates that virtual activities foster greater intrinsic motivation to the extent to which they satisfy three fundamental human needs; the need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (social connectedness). A number of previous studies (e.g. Ali & Lee, 2010; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Dwyer, Hiltz, & Passerini, 2007; Stefanone & Jang, 2007) suggested that the main motivations to use online SNSs are interpersonal and social in nature.

Sherry et al. (2006) confirmed that, one of the lessons of the previous research is that there are no universal sets of motivations for using media, where motivations vary across media, genres, and cultures. Research has also shown that these forms of motivation have very different influences on individuals engaging in the same online interactions and communities. (Przybylski et al., 2010). For this reason, empirical work is required at the introduction of each new medium to specify the key traits in understanding the use of that medium. The literatures provided different fundamental explanations for the categories of motivations to join SNSs. These social sites allow its users to generate, share and combine informa-

Table 1
The previous research of cultural impacts on online social networks.

Focus	Cultural dimensions	Nation/s	Authors
Attitudes toward and usage of SNWs	Individualism/collectivism	Indian and American	Marshall et al. (2008)
How cultural values affect deceptive behavior	Power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity	Korean and Americans	Lewis and George (2008)
Online and offline social ties of social networks	Individualism/collectivism	Chinese, Macao, Israeli, Indian, Turkey, Korean, Swedish, French Thais, Egyptian, and American	Cardon et al. (2009)
User-interface design	Power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation, masculinity	South Koreans, Japanese, and American	Marcus and Krishnamurthi (2009)
Design and personalization of virtual spaces and communication style	Individualism/collectivism	British and Chinese	Angeli (2009)
Adoption and use of SNSs	Power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity	Moroccan and American	Veltri and Elgarah (2009)
Online community self-disclosure	Individualism/collectivism	French and British	Posey et al. (2010)
Behavior and satisfaction	Individualism/collectivism	Asian, African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic	Rosen et al. (2010)
The user content and preferences.	Power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity	American Peru, Iranian, Israeli, Taiwanese, and United Kingdom	Dotan and Zaphiris (2010)
Design preferences of personal blogs	Power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity	Malaysian	Ali and Lee (2010)
Diversity of usage and acceptance of 2.0 applications including SNSs	Power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance	American and Korean	Yoo and Huang (2011)
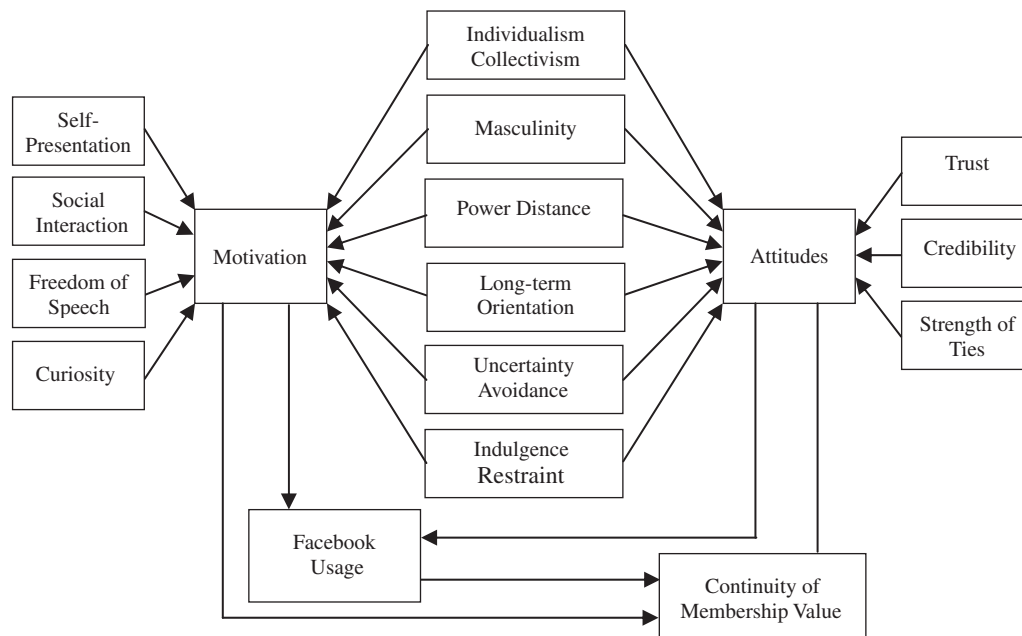
Fig. 1. The research model of cultural impacts on online social networking.

tion and thus, virtually address human needs (Hart, Ridley, Taher, Sas, & Dix, 2008; Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2007; Sas, Dix, Hart, & Su, 2009; Tan & Teo, 2009; Tufekci, 2008). However, this study identified four motivations for engaging in electronic societies, including self-presentation, social interaction, freedom of speech and expression, and curiosity.

4.1.1. Self-presentation

Online self-presentation and promotion management has been the object of attention for several researchers. Self-presentation refers to adolescents' control of how they are perceived by others by selectively presenting aspects of their selves (Leary, 1996). According to (Ali & Lee, 2010; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Sas et al., 2009), users engage in social networking platforms to satisfy their psychological needs for self-esteem and life satisfaction through self-presentation. In this view, Przybylski et al. (2010) showed that autonomy and competence can be understood in terms of psycho-

logical needs satisfaction inspiring self-esteem. An increasing amount of attention is being paid to link between narcissism and self-presentation on SNSs (e.g. Angeli, 2009; Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Rosen, 2007). These efforts can be adopted for the purpose of distinction between the overlapped self-presentation and social interaction motivations. Narcissism refers to a personality trait reflecting a grandiose and inflated self-concept, which according to Twenge and Campbell (2008) leads to a very positive and inflated view of self. Narcissism focuses on social-personality psychology and the using of social relationships as an opportunity or forum for self enhancement through regulating self-esteem or narcissistic esteem (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008).

4.1.2. Social interaction

The Internet-based technologies have provided an unprecedented opportunity for social relatedness and connectedness. Game developers, for example, have increasingly brought on line

networking games to support longer term relationships between players, including Web forums, guild chat channels, and voiceover Internet protocol communication (Przybylski et al., 2010). The structures of virtual spaces much like the structures of physical spaces (Papacharissi, 2009). SNSs emphasize the social dimension of online environments by promoting interaction among people that is primarily founded upon norms of everyday interaction adapted to the online setting (Angeli, 2009; Papacharissi, 2009). The previous studies (e.g. Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Marshall, Cardon, Norris, Goreva, & D'Souza, 2008; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008; Tufekci, 2008) showed that people are increasingly using the online social networks as a means of social interaction and social integration in ways that complement or further their offline sociality. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily looking to meet new people, but they are primarily reconstructing the established social networks or communicating with people who are already a part of their extended offline social network (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Dwyer et al., 2007; Zhao, 2006). Literature also revealed that SNSs might result in the elimination of real interaction and leads to friend inflation, where online interaction can serve as an alternative to face-to-face interaction (Ali & Lee, 2010; Rosen, 2007; Subrahmanyam et al., 2008).

4.1.3. Freedom of speech and expression

SNSs are a very powerful tool which allows an unlimited sense of freedom (Angeli, 2009; Marshall, Cardon, Norris, Goreva, & D'Souza, 2008; Yoo & Huang, 2011). In the Arab world, societies face a lot of social, cultural, religious, moral, and political restrictions, which preclude exercising the right to freedom of speech and expression. The rapid advances in the social and expressive internet applications are not consistent with the growing level of Arab democracy. In such environment, SNSs represent a fertile ground for the practice of virtual democracy that cannot be exercised freely in real life. SNSs facilitated the creation of new communities seeing beyond the self, by coordinating individuals into groups, reviving the hopes of exercising the right to freedom of speech and expression even if it was behind fake names. Nowadays, for many Arab people, SNSs, especially Facebook, represents a free platform for openly discussing the sensitive topics, forming and coordinating public opinions. Through SNSs, Arab people are expressing the protestation, exposing corruption cases, and activating the street for political demonstrations.

4.1.4. Curiosity

While human beings have always been curious and keen to know more about their social surroundings, SNSs functions have leveraged on this need and provided an online space where such motivation can continue to exist (Cachia, 2009; De Souza & Dick, 2007; Hart et al., 2008). Curiosity about people and events, including interest in browsing and monitoring social information and lives of friends and acquaintances and even strangers were considered as a major motivation to engage in SNSs (De Souza & Dick, 2007; Java et al., 2007; Sas et al., 2009; Tufekci, 2008). On SNSs, curiosity is satisfied through a range of different information seeking behavior that varied depending on the scope of the topic of curiosity (De Souza & Dick, 2007; Hart et al., 2008; Tufekci, 2008). Java et al. (2007) demonstrated that an information seeker is an individual who follows postings by other users regularly but does not post personal information in frequent time intervals. Nardi, Whittaker, and Bradner (2000) revealed that monitoring this information is creating and maintaining a sense of social connection to others, and ensuring that the level of social knowledge is complete and consistent.

4.2. Attitudes toward Facebook

Although there are different dimensions of people attitudes toward IT adoption and usage, most of research in the context of SNSs has focused on revealing the interaction and effects of privacy and trust attitudes (e.g. Iachello & Hong, 2007; Marshall, Cardon, Norris, Goreva, & D'Souza, 2008; Stutzman, Capra, & Thompson, 2010). This study proposed that the attitudes of trust, credibility, and strength of ties are the roots of all aspects of SNSs, such as privacy, self-disclosure, self-presentation, social interaction, and information sharing. Below a summarized discussion for each dimension.

4.2.1. Trust

Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Trust in the SNSs and other members is a psychological perception, influence their online behavior (Dwyer et al., 2007; Souter, 2007). The nature of SNSs poses two dimensions of members' trust, that determine the engagement, continuity, the amount and depth of self-disclosure, and information sharing, including trust in other members and trust in the SNS. Many previous research (e.g. Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn, & Hughes, 2009; Ibrahim, 2008; Posey, Lowry, Roberts, & Ellis, 2010) characterized SNSs as surveillance mechanisms and complicit risk societies, where personal information becomes social capital which is traded and exchanged for different purposes. Furthermore, the previous research (e.g. Ibrahim, 2008; Posey et al., 2010; Souter, 2007) found trust to be strongly related to information disclosure because it reduces perceived risks involved in revealing private information and building new relationships.

4.2.2. Credibility

Communicating on the SNSs with individuals whom one has never met before in person may be a venue for freely expressing the real-world self (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Posey et al., 2010; Sas et al., 2009). Since anyone can post anything about himself or herself, it has been questioned whether real-world identity and accurate personal representation honestly is the current behavior on the SNSs (Dwyer et al., 2007; Posey et al., 2010). Individuals may present themselves in a selective fashion, giving deceitful information, before their audience to protect their privacy (Dwyer et al., 2007; Lewis & George, 2008; Posey et al., 2010). Furthermore, SNSs bring endless opportunities in various ways to anyone to satisfy their psychological needs for others' attention, appreciation, and respect (Cachia, 2009; Papacharissi, 2009). Previous research (e.g. Cachia, 2009; Jin, 2009; Talamo & Ligorio, 2001) demonstrated how people create their own avatars (fictional character), not to describe their identity, but to construct it priming with physical attributes of the ideal self they wish to attain.

4.2.3. Strength of ties

The most frequently measured aspect of the interaction and relationships is ties strength between networks members (Ellison et al., 2007; Papacharissi, 2009; Stefanone & Jang, 2007; Zhao, 2006). Tie strength can be defined as a multidimensional construct that represents the strength of the dyadic interpersonal relationships in the context of social networks (Money, Gilly, & Graham, 1998). There are two streams of interaction behavior on SNSs, including making new online connections, or supporting already existing offline connections. According to the previous research (e.g. Dotan & Zaphiris, 2010; Marshall, Cardon, Norris, Goreva, & D'Souza, 2008; Papacharissi, 2009; Stefanone & Jang, 2007; Zhao, 2006), often, larger strong tie constitutes the behavior that support existing relationships and reconstructing the established social

networks, in ways that complement or further their offline sociality. In contrast, weak ties represent the behavior with strangers whom one has never met before in person, and characterized by infrequent communication, low reciprocity, and a lack of emotional closeness.

4.3. Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Based on Hofstede's framework, the cultural dimensions consist of individualism/collectivism, masculinity, power distance, long-time orientation, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence/restraint.

4.3.1. Individualism versus collectivism

Individualism dimension refers to the strength of the ties people have to others within the society. In the collectivism culture, people are integrated into strong, cohesive in groups, often extended families. The members of collectivism cultures are more likely to maintain closed and narrow in-group relationships than members of individualistic cultures (Triandis, 1989). While the individuals of collectivism cultures are characterized by high levels of trust and extensive social interaction with each other, they tend to be more ambiguous, less trusting, open, direct, and inclined to talk to strangers. In contrast, individualist cultures tend to be more trusting, direct, open, self-promoters, likely to directly address confrontations even with strangers (Dotan & Zaphiris, 2010; Marcus & Krishnamurthi, 2009; Veltri & Elgarah, 2009; Yoo & Huang, 2011).

Whereas the collectivists tend to interact with fewer friends for longer periods of time, individualists tend to have larger networks of friends on SNSs (Angeli, 2009; Dotan & Zaphiris, 2010; Marcus & Krishnamurthi, 2009; Rosen, Stefanone, & Lackaff, 2010). In contrast with traditional understanding of collectivist and individualist communication patterns, Marshall et al. (2008) and Posey et al. (2010) found that the members of collectivism cultures are far more cautious than individualism cultures about online privacy and self-disclosure. Furthermore, Marshall et al. (2008) and Dotan and Zaphiris (2010) found that the members of collectivism and individualism cultures are quite similar in terms of SNSs usage and communication patterns. This is not in line with findings of Angeli (2009), Yoo and Huang (2011); and Marcus and Krishnamurthi (2009). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1-1. There is a significant relationship between collectivism (low individualism) and the motivations of engagement in Facebook.

H1-2. There is a significant relationship between collectivism (low individualism) and attitudes toward Facebook.

4.3.2. Masculinity (MAS)

Masculinity refers to the distribution of roles between the genders, and to how much a society values the traditional man and woman roles. High masculinity scores are found in societies that identify tough values like assertiveness, heroism, and competition with the male role (Hofstede, 1991). Individuals who perceive economic benefits as a sign of personal success or achievement tend to be more masculine. In contrast, Femininity culture stands for a society in which emotional gender roles overlap. Feminine cultures are more attracted to harmonious relationships with other individuals. Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, concern with the quality of life, show more empathy for others, spend time on relationships and personal ties, and maintain warm relationships.

Masculine cultures support self-concept, personal achievement, and self-prompting (Ali & Lee, 2010; Dotan & Zaphiris, 2010; Rosen

et al., 2010). Yoo and Huang (2011) concluded that individuals of high masculinity countries tend to disclose more information and contribute to SNSs through lots of activities. Lewis and George (2008) and Furner and George (2009) mentioned that individuals with more espoused masculine values have a tendency to be more deceptive on SNSs than individuals with more espoused feminine values. The above discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

H1-3. There is a significant relationship between Masculinity (low Femininity) and the motivations of engagement in Facebook.

H1-4. There is a significant relationship between Masculinity (low Femininity) and attitudes toward Facebook.

4.3.3. Power Distance (PD)

Power distance dimension measures the extent to which an unequal distribution of power, wealth, and political authority is accepted, and to which the less powerful members expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Power and inequality is regarded as one of the fundamental dimensions of interpersonal relationships that create intended effects to direct the behavior of others. However, the issue of deception may be relevant in the discussion of modesty, because it is part of a dilemma that affects how people self-present (Angeli, 2009; Leary, 1996), especially with the limited opportunities to check the online information with reality.

Marcus and Krishnamurthi (2009) and Yoo and Huang (2011) concluded that low power distance countries prefer open access, multiple channels of communication, and sharable paths. In contrast, high power distance societies have a higher use of authentication and passwords, and restricted choices of communications, where no member information is accessible by non-members. Dotan and Zaphiris (2010) and Veltri and Elgarah (2009) concluded that users from a culture where power is distributed unequally in society may have stronger motivation to enhance image and show themselves and stand out. Angeli (2009) asserted that SNSs have provided the power of liberating individuals from social boundaries and influences, reducing cultural and power differences. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1-5. There is a significant relationship between *power distance* and the motivations of engagement in Facebook.

H1-6. There is a significant relationship between *power distance* and attitudes toward Facebook.

4.3.4. Long-Term Orientation (LTO)

The fifth dimension is found in the teachings of Confucius, to distinguish the difference in thinking between the East and West (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Long-term orientation refers to what extent society adheres to their traditions and values. According to (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), the values of long-term orientation society emphasize thrift, perseverance for building relationship, ordering relationships by status and observing this order, and oriented towards future rewards. In contrast, short-term orientation stands for societies fostering virtues of personal steadiness and stability, protecting face, respect for tradition, and fulfilling social obligations.

Hofstede's framework seems to imply that long-term orientation societies are more actively pursue the long-term standpoint (Marcus & Krishnamurthi, 2009). In a long-term orientation people are more concerned with the long-term effects of their decision. In contrast, short-term involves the tendency toward consumption and maintaining materialistic status (Omran E. -S. E., A., & J., 2006). Marcus and Krishnamurthi (2009) assumed that SNSs from

long-term orientated societies would support more long-term relationship building. Thus, in the high short-term orientation societies, building the trust and strength of ties is very difficult and may take longer time to develop. Therefore, the study hypothesizes the following:

H1-7. There is a significant relationship between *long-term orientation* and the motivations of engagement in Facebook.

H1-8. There is a significant relationship between *short-term orientation* and attitudes toward Facebook.

4.3.5. Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance indicates to the degree to which the members of society feel threatened by uncertain, ambiguous, or unknown situations. Societies with high uncertainty avoidance tend to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and the philosophical and religious beliefs in absolute truth. Due to the nature of SNSs as a new social and individual worldwide device for exchange formal and informal relations and personal sensitive information, the members will always experience some level of risk (Debatin et al., 2009; Ibrahim, 2008; Posey et al., 2010). In essence, by engaging in SNSs, they decide to deal with various degrees of uncertainty of the future and the free actions of others.

People from high uncertainty avoidance cultures shun ambiguous situations and look for a structure in their relationships and more discreet in the expression of individuality (Hofstede, 1991; Marcus & Krishnamurthi, 2009). Marcus and Krishnamurthi (2009) noticed that while the user's profile pictures on Cyworld USA (low uncertainty avoidance) are of the individuals themselves, the user's profile of Cyworld Japan (high uncertainty avoidance) consists of animals, toys, children, or even celebrities in place of her/his photo. A number of researchers (e.g. Duronto, Nishida, & Nakayama, 2005; Posey et al., 2010; Veltri & Elgarah, 2009) described how individuals and groups manage the inevitable anxiety and uncertainty involved in meeting and interacting with strangers. Posey et al. (2010), Yoo and Huang (2011); and Veltri and Elgarah (2009) concluded that high level of anxiety and uncertainty lead to avoidance of intercultural communications and self-disclosure. Hence, we hypothesize:

H1-9. There is a significant relationship between *uncertainty avoidance* and the motivations of engagement in Facebook.

H1-10. There is a significant relationship between *uncertainty avoidance* and attitudes toward Facebook.

4.3.6. Indulgence versus restraint

The sixth cultural dimension, called indulgence versus restraint, focuses on happiness and life control (Hofstede et al., 2008), based on the work of Minkov (2007), who studied the World values across 93 countries. This dimension measures a person's happiness, sense of freedom, and availability of leisure time. Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun, specially leisure, spending, consumption, and merry-making with friends. Furthermore, indulgence culture maintains a more relaxed atmosphere and deviance is more easily tolerated. In contrast, restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms, and where people are less able to enjoy their lives. The restraint societies maintain rigid codes of beliefs and behaviors, promising certainty and protecting conformity.

However, a number of studies (e.g. Akour et al., 2006; Loch et al., 2003; Straub et al., 2001) concluded that, the Arab societies have a strong restraint culture, especially regarding the adoption and uses of Internet applications. Therefore, the above discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

H1-11. There is a significant relationship between indulgence/restraint and the motivations of engagement in Facebook.

H1-12. There is a significant relationship between indulgence/restraint and attitudes toward Facebook.

4.4. Facebook usage

While the common purpose of SNSs is to provide members with online platform for self-presentation, social connection, interaction and communication, the patterns of usage among various members are vary significantly across different services. Numerous studies have tended to classify the usage of SNSs by specific services to see whether it is possible to predict use of one service over another based on different dimensions (e.g. Marshall et al., 2008; Subrahmanyam et al., 2008; Tufekci, 2008). A considerable line of research has looked for explaining, categorizing and predicting the patterns of usage based on users' beliefs and behaviors. For example, many previous researches discussed the relationship between motivations and usage of SNSs in the context of U&G theory (e.g. Stefanone & Jang, 2007; Park et al., 2007; Barker, 2009). Another stream of research focused on members' attitudes toward and usage of SNSs (e.g. Dwyer et al., 2007; Marshall et al., 2008; Tufekci, 2008). Given that, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2-1. There is a significant relationship between the motivations and usage of Facebook.

H2-2. There is a significant relationship between the attitudes toward and usage of Facebook.

4.5. The continuity of membership value

After joining a SNS, members are constantly evaluating the value of their membership and building their own perceptions towards the benefit and cost of being members in this network. The consequences may affect their inner thoughts concerning the value of their membership. Several authors (e.g. Ibrahim, 2008; Tufekci, 2008; Tyma, 2007) confirmed that members continually negotiate and direct the tension between perceived risks, such as identity theft, fraud, harassment, hackers, leaking private information and blackmail and expected benefits of using SNSs. A number of researchers (e.g. Debatin et al., 2009; Dwyer et al., 2007; Stutzman et al., 2010), agreed that because of the perceived risks of SNSs use, users may change their evaluation of membership over time.

Several studies (e.g. Cachia, 2009; Richter & Koch, 2008) have argued that SNSs are just a fashion, and young people use it because they feel they are doing something new. Therefore, usage will decline once the novelty wears off. The level of membership value is affect the user's behavior overtime in terms of frequency of visits, regularity of usage, frequency of changing and updating the information, frequency of contact; strength of ties, types of exchanges, and time on the site (Cachia, 2009; Debatin et al., 2009; Dwyer et al., 2007; Papacharissi, 2009; Tufekci, 2008). The above discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

H3-1. There is a significant relationship between the motivations of engagement in Facebook and continuity of membership value.

H3-2. There is a significant relationship between the continuity of membership value and attitudes toward Facebook.

H3-3. There is a significant relationship between the continuity of membership value and usage of Facebook.

5. Research methodology

5.1. The measurement

Many measurement instruments of the model constructs have long been used in previous research and shown high reliability and validity, therefore, it was reasonable to employ these instruments in this study. A number of constructs and measures were derived from the related literature for the purpose of this study. Furthermore, consistent with research literature, the measurements of the cultural values constructs were derived from (Dorfman & Howell, 1988; Hofstede, 1991; Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Hofstede et al., 2008; Srite & Karahanna, 2006). Each construct is described in Table 2.

5.2. Instrument development

The empirical data of this research was gathered with an online survey. Web-based questionnaire was natural choice because of research subject. The questionnaire included a total of 64 questions items representing the constructs identified in Table 2. All questions used a five point Likert-scale. The questionnaire also included three questions about sample characteristics, including, nationality, respondents' ages, and gender.

5.3. Sampling and questionnaire distribution

Although the majority of Facebook users in the Arab world is in a range between 13 to 24 years old and mostly is students, there is a considerable presentation of members from different backgrounds, expertise, occupations, ages, and aspirations. Therefore, the target population for this study covers all the active Arab Facebook members. Invitation receivers had the possibility to invite more users to answer the questionnaire using the snowball approach. The questionnaire was available online (http://www.kmquestionnaire.com) for 2 months. A total of 749 Arab Facebook members responded to the survey. Eighty-six reopens were excluded due to the incompleteness, thus, the researchers had "663" usable responses. Sample characteristics are shown in Table 3.

6. Data analysis and results

The Statistical Package (SPSS) version 18.0 was utilized for the purposes of descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), using EQS technique, V6.1, was used to evaluate the fitness of the model and testing research hypotheses.

6.1. Assessing the measurement model

The measurement model was examined for internal consistency, convergent, and discriminant validity. Cronbach's alpha (Table 4) was employed to evaluate the reliability of model constructs by examining their internal consistency. Estimate greater than 0.70 are generally considered to meet the criteria for reliability. Cron-

bach's alpha was high above the acceptable threshold. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that the instrument of research has high internal consistency, and is therefore reliable.

Factor analysis was conducted to assess the construct validity of the measurement scales and to determine what items should be included in the next step of analysis. High correlations considered to indicate construct validity based on Eigenvalues, factor loading, and cross loading. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) was used to assess the homogeneity of variables. Table 5 summarizes the results of factor analysis.

Kaiser (1974) recommended accepting values greater than 0.5 as barely acceptable. The Eigenvalue demonstrate the overall strength of relationship between a construct and the variables. Only factors with an Eigenvalue <1 should be extracted. The items that had factor loadings <0.5, which is the cut-off limit for loading items, should be considered low and any low items should be eliminated from the analysis for the underlying factors that explain joint variation in the items measured. The result is typically acceptable when 50–75% of the variance explained (Child, 1990).

According to the results of factor analysis (Table 5), KMO and initial Eigenvalue results indicated that the data was suitable for factor analysis, being that KMO values for all constructs are <0.5 and the initial Eigenvalue for all constructs are <1, with the proportion of the variance explained greater than 50%. According to the accepted guidelines as the cut-off point for identifying significant factor loadings (>0.5), most of items across research constructs were included. A limited number of items did not meet the above accepted criteria of factor loading, and had to be excluded from the analysis.

6.2. Assessing the structural model

Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) is a combination of factor analysis and regression or path analysis (Hox & Bechget, 1998). The purpose of using SEM is to assess the fitness of the model, and whether the model provides a good fit to the data, and testing the hypotheses of research. This technique is chosen for its ability to examine a series of dependence relationships simultaneously, especially where there are direct and indirect effects among the constructs within the model (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Evaluation of the proposed research model was made using EQS technique, V6.1. The research model was tested for goodness-of-fit using the popular model fit indices. Table 6 presents the model fit for the overall model.

From the results, it can be concluded that the overall model fit is acceptable and the path estimates can be used for hypotheses testing. Table 6 shows that all the indicators point to a good fit, and above the recommended value as follows: ratio of Chi-square to Degrees of Freedom ($\chi2/df = 2.37$), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.091), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR = 0.042), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI = 0.977), Non-normed Fit Index (NFI = 0.964), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.980). A comparison of these values against those recommended in the literature suggests that the model is a good fit. All paths are significant at the 0.05 level.

6.3. Testing research hypotheses

The hypothesized structural causal model was tested by SEM, which included the test of overall model, as well as the individual tests of relationships among the constructs. Path analyses were conducted to provide a picture of the links between the various groups of factors. The results of the structural modeling analysis are illustrated in (Fig. 2).

The path coefficient analysis and the results of t value test serves as the basis of evaluation of the hypotheses. The strength

Table 2
Constructs and measurements of research model.

Construct	Code	Measures
Motivations	MOT	
Self-presentation	S-P1	Self-expression
	S-P2	Revealing personal intelligence, power, and physical attractiveness
	S-P3	Employing social relationships for self enhancement
	S-P4	The extent of time spent on Facebook in editing profile and status update
Social interaction	SI1	Communication with others
	SI2	Enabling attractive environment for social interaction with others
	SI3	Keep and strengthen the existing relationships and reconstructing the established social networks in ways that complement the offline sociality
	SI4	The extent of time spent on Facebook in communicating and connecting with friends, acquaintances, and even strangers
Freedom of speech and expression	FSE1	Allowing an unlimited sense of freedom
	FSE2	Providing a virtual meeting place and interactive environment to shape and express opinions, and discuss different social and political issues
	FSE3	Breaking the restrictions which preclude exercising the right to freedom of speech and expression
	FSE4	The extent of time spent on Facebook in expressing opinions, discussing the hot issues and sensitive topics, and joining the protestations
Curiosity	CU1	Checking out profiles of those people who the user met socially on a regular basis
	CU2	Getting information about people that live in dorm, fraternity or sorority on a regular basis
	CU3	Satisfying curiosity about what the people looks like
	CU4	The extent of time spent on Facebook in monitoring social information and lives of friends and acquaintances and even strangers
Attitudes	ATT	
Trust	T1	Worrying about using members' personal information and participations for other purposes
	T2	Worrying about identity theft, harassments, cyber stalking, hackers, leaking private information and blackmail
	T3	Worrying from publishing private or wrong information, others post, on Facebook
	T4	The extent of believing that most of the profiles on Facebook are exaggerated to make their owners look more appealing
Credibility	CR1	Completeness and accuracy reflection of identity and self-disclosures
	CR2	Openness and honesty of disclosing personal identity, emotions, and opinions.
	CR3	The extent of believing that other people on Facebook are expressing their feelings and opinions honestly and transparently.
Strength of ties	ST1	The extent of relationships reciprocity and frequency of communication especially with strangers who the member did not met face-to-face
	ST2	The extent of emotional closeness and relationships warmth on Facebook
	ST3	The extent of believing that the use of Facebook to meet new friends with the intention of moving that relationship offline is impractical target
Cultural values		
Individualism	IDV1	Taking other people's needs and feelings into account when making a decisions
	IDV2	Belonging to extended families or clans who protect their members in shared necessity for loyalty.
	IDV3	Accepting the group's decision even when personally he or she has a different opinion
	IDV4	Believing that when one is born, the success or failure one is going to have is already in one's destiny
Masculinity	MAS1	Preferring to have a man in high level position rather than a woman
	MAS2	Believing that in some jobs, a man can always do better than a woman
	MAS3	Believing that while men solve problems with logical analysis, women solve problems with intuition
	MAS4	The importance of having a job, which get an opportunity for high earnings
Power distance	PD1	Believing that inequalities among people are both expected and desired
	PD2	Respecting people having authority because of their position
	PD3	Believing that people are better off not questioning the decisions of those in authority
	PD4	Believing that people in authority should take care of their subordinates as they would take care of their children
Long-term orientation	LTO1	Respecting and committing to familiar and social norms
	LTO2	Respecting social obligations regardless of cost
	LTO3	Believing in absolutes about good and evil
	LTO4	Believing that the wise person lives for today and lets tomorrow take care of itself
Uncertainty avoidance	UA1	Believing that people should avoid making changes because things could get worse
	UA2	Believing that it is better to have known bad situation, than to have an uncertain situation which might be better
	UA3	Preferring work that has detailed standard operating procedures spelled out
	UA4	Believing that fear of ambiguous and unfamiliar situations is normal
Indulgence/restraint	IND1	Believing that emotions should not be shown.
	IND2	Waiting for the right time to do something.
	IND3	Society enabling its members to enjoying their lives, having fun, and leisure time
	IND4	Maintaining rigid codes of beliefs and behaviors, promising certainty and protecting conformity
Facebook Usage (US)	US1	Keeping in touch with family and friends
	US2	Reconnecting with old friends
	US3	Looking for new friends
	US4	Creating and joining in groups to discuss specific topics
	US5	Browsing friends' profiles/walls/pages, following what is happening in the lives of others
	US6	Reading blogs and post comments to others
	US7	Viewing, tagging, posting, and sharing, and archiving pictures and video
	US8	Finding out about a parties or events

Table 2 (continued)

Construct	Code	Measures
	US9	Genuine self-expressions
	US10	Using profile as a kind of self-promotion.
The continuity of membership value (CMV)	CMV1	Believing that Facebook is just a fad
	CMV2	Declining the amount of efforts and time spent on Facebook over time
	CMV3	The regulatory access to Facebook comparing to the early days of membership
	CMV4	Feeling bored with Facebook over time

Table 3
Sample characteristics.

Sample characteristics		No. of respondents	%
Gender	Female	240	36.2
	Male	423	63.8
Age	Under 18	47	07.1
	18–24	262	39.5
	25–34	157	23.7
	35–44	139	21.0
	+45	58	08.7
Nationality	Algeria	23	03.5
	Bahrain	21	03.2
	Egypt	74	11.1
	Iraq	56	08.4
	Jordan	140	21.1
	Kuwait	21	03.2
	Lebanon	34	05.1
	Libya	47	07.1
	Morocco	15	02.3
	Palestine	36	05.4
	Qatar	13	02.0
	Saudi Arabia	59	08.9
	Tunisia	42	06.3
	United Arab Emirates	9	01.4
	Others	73	11.0

Table 4
The reliability of constructs measures.

Constructs	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Self-presentation	4	.855
Social interaction	4	.857
Curiosity	4	.856
Freedom of speech and expression	4	.855
Trust	4	.857
Credibility	3	.859
Strength of ties	3	.858
Individualism	4	.850
Masculinity	4	.857
Power distance	4	.849
Long-term orientation	4	.852
Uncertainty avoidance	4	.851
Indulgence/restraint	5	.853
Facebook usage	10	.831
The continuity of membership value	4	.871

of hypothesized paths and whether the path is significant or not is evaluated by standardized path coefficient. It is recommended that the t value be >2.0. Standardized coefficients or β coefficients are the estimates resulting from an analysis performed on variables that have been standardized so that their variances are 1. Table 7 presents the results of testing hypotheses.

The result of EQS analysis supports a direct effect of masculinity and long-term orientation dimensions on motivations for engaging in electronic societies via Facebook. The path coefficients of relationships are 0.389, 0.349, respectively, with t values >4 for both relationships. Inconsistent with the proposed relationships in research model, the results indicated that individualism, masculinity,

power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence dimensions did not have a significant effect on Facebook members' motivations. Testing the relationship between cultural values and attitudes, the results indicated that individualism, masculinity, long-term orientation, and indulgence/restraint dimensions have a significant effect on the attitudes of Facebook members. The path coefficients of relationships are, 0.277, 0.436, 0.476, 0.344, 0.297 respectively, with t values >5 for all relationships.

The results indicated that there is no significant effect of power distance on attitudes of Facebook members. Table 7 also showed that motivations and attitudes have a significant relationship with members' usage of Facebook. The path coefficients of relationships are 0.587, 0.373, with t values >12, 3 respectively for both relationships. Finally, the results revealed a significant effect of Facebook members' motivations, attitudes, and usage on the continuity of Facebook membership value. The path coefficient of relationship is 0.629, 0.455, 0.351, with t values >5 for all relationships.

7. Discussion, conclusions, and implications

The social Internet has been expanding rapidly. Recent years have seen an explosion of SNSs as virtual social meeting places. A growing body of literature indicates that SNSs are playing bigger and wider roles in various aspects of people and societies life. These aspects include facilitating and enhancing different forms of self-presentation, social relationships and interactions, satisfying curiosity. Increasingly it is providing Arab ungues with a platform of freedom speech and expression, shaping and changing the fate and the face of societies, especially in the Arab World.

As yet, there has been no systematic investigation of motivations, attitudes, cultural values impact, usage patterns, and determinants of continuity of SNSs membership value, integrated into one comprehensive model. Most of prior research has studied cultural impact on SNSs in western societies. There is paucity in the literature regarding the impact of Arab cultural values on why and how Arab people engage in SNSs. Therefore, the present study aimed to develop and validate a comprehensive model to discuss the relationships among Arab cultural values, motivations, attitudes, usage patterns, and the continuity of SNSs membership value.

The results revealed a significant effect of masculinity and long-term orientation cultural dimensions on motivations of Facebook membership. In contrast with the traditional assumptions of cultural impact on IT adoption and usage, the results indicated that individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence cultural dimensions did not have a significant effect on Facebook members' motivations. A considerable stream of research (e.g. Ali & Lee, 2010; Dotan & Zaphiris, 2010; Marshall et al., 2008) claimed that cultural differences are mitigated in virtual spaces, especially with SNSs. However, Many previous researchers (e.g. Angeli, 2009; Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Rosen, 2007) considered that SNSs emphasizes the individual identity, stressing people's unique personality and decreasing the importance of other social factors, such as culture. Marshall et al. (2008) concluded that

Table 5
The results of factor analysis for all constructs and variables.

Constructs and variables	KMO	Eigenvalue	Cumulative variance %	Factor loading	Notes
S-P	.760	3.149	59.990		
S-P1				.816	
S-P2				.793	
S-P3				.788	
S-P4				.695	
SI	.784	2.512	62.793		
SI1				.864	
SI2				.813	
SI3				.747	
SI4				.740	
CU	.727	2.953	56.335		
CU1				.855	
CU2				.769	
CU3				.691	
CU4				.673	
FSE	.690	2.907	51.818		
FSE1				.802	
FSE2				.760	
FSE3				.678	
FSE4				.583	
T	.576	2.176	52.952		
T1				.928	
T2				.879	
T3				.881	
T4				.271	Excluded
CR	.567	1.719	52.895		
CR1				.830	
CR2				.705	
CR3				.629	
ST	.569	2.063	50.446		
ST1				.752	
ST2				.734	
ST3				.650	
IDV	.627	2.334	50.990		
IDV1				.826	
IDV2				.758	
IDV3				.489	Excluded
IDV4				.473	Excluded
MAS	.719	3.488	60.042		
MAS1				.899	
MAS2				.800	
MAS3				.790	
MAS4				.358	
PD	.578	2.602	51.565		
PD1				.787	
PD2				.781	
PD3				.495	Excluded
PD4				.381	Excluded
LTO	.643	3.134	52.119		
LTO1				.811	
LTO2				.734	
LTO3				.661	
LTO4				.550	
UA	.658	2.041	66.001		
UA1				.868	
UA2				.474	Excluded
UA3				.487	Excluded
UA4				.711	
IND	.609	1.681	56.449		
IND1				.866	
IND2				.442	Excluded
IND3				.672	
IND4				.666	
IND5				.177	Excluded
US	.877	7.794	55.775		
US1				.372	Excluded
US2				.551	
US3				.565	
US4				.779	

Table 5 (continued)

Constructs and variables	KMO	Eigenvalue	Cumulative variance %	Factor loading	Notes
US5				.606	
US6				.600	
US7				.547	
US8				.501	
US9				.573	
US10				.443	Excluded
CMV	.768	3.919	64.625		
CMV1				.870	
CMV2				.822	
CMV3				.774	
CMV4				.744	

Table 6
The results of testing the overall model fit.

Notation	Recommended value	Model value
$\chi2/df$	⩽3.0	2.37
RMSEA	⩽0.10	0.091
RMR	⩽0.05	0.042
GFI	⩾0.90	0.977
NFI	⩾0.90	0.964
CFI	⩾0.90	0.980

Recommended values adapted from (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000; Segars & Grover, 1993).

Indian students (collectivists) communication behaviors on SNSs considered significantly more individualist than the American students (individualists).

In the youthful Arab societies, young people face a lot of cultural, social, religious, moral, and political restrictions, which preclude exercising the right to freedom of speech, self-expression, free social interaction, and self-discloser. In such environment, SNSs represent a fertile ground for breaking down such restrictions even if it was behind fake names, driven by their human needs of self-presentation, social interaction, freedom of speech and expression, and curiosity. The absence of barriers to entrance and the lack of any direct kind of coercion or preaching with utility of using fake names lead to provide SNSs with the power of liberating individuals from cultural and power differences.

The results also revealed that individualism, masculinity, long-term orientation, and indulgence cultural dimensions have a significant effect on the attitudes of Facebook members. These findings are consistent with the traditional assumptions regarding the effect of cultural values on IT in general and SNSs in particular. The disparity of cultural effect on motivations and attitudes can be discussed in the context of individualism aspirations and collectivism practices of Arab youth on SNSs. At the time that Arab youth seek to liberate from all the kinds of restrictions to satisfy their human needs through joining the societies of SNSs, their online behavior is still influenced by the cultural values that characterize the Arab nation.

This shows that SNSs have been able to neutralize the effect of some traditional cultural values, especially those governed by self-disclosure, power distance, and feelings of shame restricting the free social interaction, freedom of speech and expression, and satisfying the curiosity. According to Sherry et al. (2006), humans are believed to be self-regulating; that is, the individual responds to felt needs and contextual factors. Przybylski et al. (2010) revealed that studies conducted in a wide range of cultures have shown that basic need support is linked to intrinsic motivation. According to Przybylski et al. (2010), competence, autonomy, and relatedness are irreducible, universal human needs. This perspective confirms
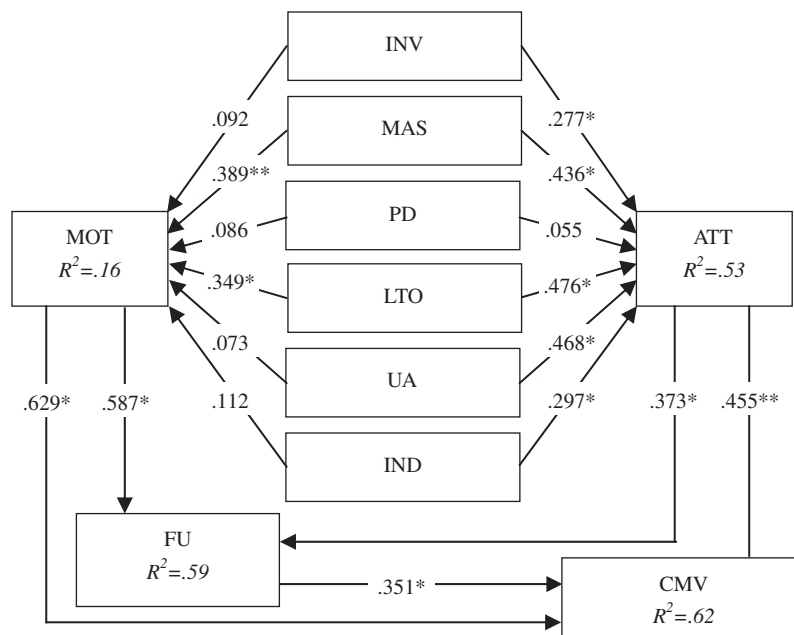

Fig. 2. The path coefficient analysis.

Table 7
The results of hypotheses testing.

H	Path			Standardized coefficient	*t* Value	The result
H1-1	IDV	–	MOT	.092	1.743	Rejected
H1-2	IDV	–	ATT	.277*	5.857	Accepted
H1-3	MAS	–	MOT	.389**	4.691	Accepted
H1-4	MAS	–	ATT	.436*	5.932	Accepted
H1-5	PD	–	MOT	.086	0.196	Rejected
H1-6	PD	–	ATT	.055	0.679	Rejected
H1-7	LTO	–	MOT	.349*	4.323	Accepted
H1-8	LTO	–	ATT	.476*	6.213	Accepted
H1-9	UA	–	MOT	.073	2.534	Rejected
H1-10	UA	–	ATT	.468*	6.153	Accepted
H1-11	IND	–	MOT	.112	1.937	Rejected
H1-12	IND	–	ATT	.297*	6.190	Accepted
H2-1	MOT	–	FUS	.587*	12.516	Accepted
H2-2	ATT	–	FUS	.373*	3.312	Accepted
H3-1	MOT	–	CMV	.629*	5.567	Accepted
H3-2	ATT	–	CMV	.455**	6.390	Accepted
H3-3	CMV	–	FUS	.351*	7.258	Accepted

* $p < .05$.
** $p < .001$.

that an individual's media use and the effects of that media use are largely a function of the individual's purpose for using the media. In this view, it is believed that the lack of direct social cues regulating self-presentation, as Angeli (2009) called, on line has led to a conceptualization of the SNSs as a medium with the power of liberating individuals from cultural restrictions and influences. In the Arab world, this includes getting rid of sex discrimination, allowing more equality against power distance, liberating from individuals obligations and belonging to extended families and its collective values, rules, and absolute truth.

Finally, the results revealed a significant effect of Facebook members' motivations, attitudes, and usage on the continuity of Facebook membership value. This result is consistent with the findings of early studies (e.g. Ibrahim, 2008; Stutzman et al., 2010; Tufekci, 2008; Tyma, 2007). Facebook members are constantly evaluating the value of their membership and building their own perceptions towards the fulfillment individual and social needs from such membership and cost of being members in this network. They negotiate and direct the tension between addressing human needs of self-presentation, social interaction, curiosity, and freedom of speech and expression against the amount of efforts, time spent, and perceived risks, such as identity theft, fraud, harassment, cyber stalking, hackers, leaking private information and blackmail.

The results of the present study contribute to the continuing discussion about why and how people engage in SNSs from different nations' cultures, and to what extent will continue its success and sustainable growth in the light of variation of cultures. Furthermore, the study will help to understand the broader issues of Arab joining the SNSs, especially after the so-called Arab Spring and the critical roles of the electronic societies in the organizing, coordinating, and publicizing the protests. Therefore, the results of this study will contribute to the efforts of fostering a better mutual understanding, trust, and respect of the civilizations and cultures diversity online and offline.

Despite its contributions, the study has some important limitations which, at the same time, can serve as directions for future research. The target population for this study covers all the active Arab Facebook users, ignoring the demographic characteristics of respondents who have different backgrounds, expertise, occupations, aspirations, and belong to different age groups. Future research need to take into consideration the differences between the young generations who flowered on SNSs looking forward to freedom and the older generations who the cultural values and tra-

ditional methods of communication have implanted. Cross-cultural research about the motivations and behavior of SNSs members is required. In addition, the avoidance of model complexity and space limitations impeded the researchers to include more detailed relationships, especially between the continuity of Facebook membership value and cultural values. The future research should address the question of the extent of continuing SNSs success, sustainable growth, and membership value in the light of variation of personal, national, and cultural characteristics. Finally, it need also to address the effect of many other factors on why and how people join SNSs, such as the degree of individual liberties protection, progress of democracy, economic conditions.

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