

# Our Traditions and Facebook: Are we shifting off the track?

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to explore if there is any effects on our traditions as a result of using Facebook. What are the possible threats and how to avoid them? It was found that Jordanian community did use Facebook effectively not in order to lose its associations; on the contrary, it raised the connectedness with other members.

**Keywords:** Traditions, Culture, Usability, Community

## I. INTRODUCTION

With now a day's vast changing life, it is mandatory that our community and culture get involved with new social tools such as Facebook. Each community has its own characteristics and values which might be affected by such phenomena's. In this study, we will examine if these bonds will be affected or not.

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### 1. Usability:

In the last few years, mobile devices reached a very popular place within the consumer lives that it became one of the very essential gadgets. Mobile device functionality has expanded from just a device to press and dial numbers to the form of personal digital assistants (PDAs) [1].

Currently, almost all mobile devices comprise a mobile phone, a calendar or memo, an alarm clock, an appointment schedule, a digital camera, an internet platform and many games. These functionalities were exclusively operating in PDAs before they became combined with mobile phones, during which time it became increasingly important to learn how to evaluate their use and the optimum ways to design mobile devices' functionalities.

Usability, which is related directly to mobile services that run on mobile devices, must be concerned with the mobile user and outlines of what interfaces for mobile services are appreciated and expected by the user.

Most traditional usability studies focused on the user of stationary devices, who can control the situation (that is the environment) in which it is to be used. Running traditional testing for mobile devices increases the risk for unrelated results due to failing to consider mobile characteristics. Therefore, in order to produce effective end-user programming in mobile devices, it is essential to create a new usability testing method based on consideration of mobile devices' characteristics [1].

Howarth et al.[20] defined the term usability as the

effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in which users of a certain application is capable of achieving precise goals ISO [20]. For many years, usability did not require justification in most quarters due to continuously growing awareness of its value, and software production organizations' investment in "doing usability", building privileged usability laboratories. This was achieved in many ways, such as buying usability equipment, conducting usability testing and training developers in usability engineering methods.

These investments have helped to make usability engineering an important part of the overall software development lifecycle. Accordingly, organizations want to maximize the effectiveness of their usability engineering processes. The literature, however, suggests that usability practitioners experience a number of difficulties that negatively impact the effectiveness of their work, which in turn impacts the effectiveness of the usability engineering processes within which they work.

According to Nielsen [22], usability is defined as the measure of the quality the user practices when interacting with something like a traditional software application, web site, or any other device the user can operate in some way. Usability is not something that could be applied on a surface to give it extra shine at the last minute; it is deeply affected by every decision in design and development. In order to achieve additional usability and user satisfaction, researchers must not consider a single component but deem multiple components that are related to users and the product. Therefore, by focussing on the user, authentic usability can be characterized by the following Nielsen [22]:

**Learnability:** The system must be easy to master, so users can rapidly start completing work with the system.

**Efficiency:** The system must be easy to remember, so when the user has effectively learned the system, a high level of productivity will be achievable.

**Memorability:** The system must be easy to remember, so that the casual user will be able capable of returning to the system after some period of not having used it, with no need to learn everything from the start point.

**Errors:** The system must have a low error rate, so that users will be making a smaller number of errors during the use of the system. If they make errors, they can easily recover from them. In addition, terrible error possibilities must not happen.

**Satisfaction:** The system must be pleasing to use, so users are individually pleased during the time of

usage.

In the case of a product, usability is decided by many factors such as the user's ease of use, user's perception of the quality of the product; the product's intuitiveness for the user; ease of learning and relearning, and the user's appreciation of the usefulness of the product Barnum [1].

In both users' and products' cases, usability must be planned by matching the use to a user, so that increasing the user's satisfaction of the product is the ultimate goal of applying usability. Therefore, useful usability in a computer system means that the application will provide the users with well-structured computing environments. To achieve usability efficiently, a number of factors should be integrated:

Cognitive, perceptual, and motor capabilities and constraints of people in general.

Special and unique characteristics of the planned user population in particular.

Exclusive characteristics of the users' physical and social work environment.

Exclusive characteristics and requirements of the users' tasks, which will be supported by the product.

Exclusive abilities and constraints of the selected software and or hardware and platform for the product.

Usability testing is the method of doing usability evaluation on the product development Lee and Grice [26]. Generally, the goal of usability testing is to find as many usability problems as possible during the test, afterwards, altering them before the product is released. Sometimes, the procedure for building usability testing ("usability engineering") starts with identifying a user, analysing tasks, and setting usability specifications (Lee and Grice [26]).

It then passes through developing and testing prototypes and continues through repeated cycles of testing and development. Thus, the key goal of usability testing is to improve the usability of a product, and then, in the end, to increase the satisfaction of users.

## **2. People and networking:**

In the years that preceded the social networking revolution, indicators of social participation have declined in many of the OECD countries [2], [7], [24], and [28]. However, in the near future, the enchanted success of social networking sites such as Facebook has resulted in a sharp rise in number of in online social participation [5].

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (PRC) Internet & American Life Project, it was found that 72% of online adults were active on social network sites (67% use Facebook, 16% use Twitter, 15% use Pinterest and 13% use Instagram) as of May 2013. More than 80% of online young adults (aged 18–29) and 77% of middle-aged adults (30–49) use social networks [10]. Despite the sheer size of such transformations, the

impact of online interactions on the evolution of social capital has so far never been analyzed in the economics literature; this is due to the lack of suitable data. It is uncertain yet whether, in the "social networking era", Internet usage may accelerate the decline in social participation documented by empirical studies, or if it offers a way to support social relationships against the threats posed by the interference of ties and the weakening of community life.

A few innovator economic studies support the awareness that Internet use may possibly help sociability and participation. Pénard and Poussing find ambiguous results on the relationship between online investments in social capital and the development of face-to-face interactions among Luxemburgish Internet users. However, it was found that non users are less satisfied in their life than Internet users [21]. Bauernschuster et al. (2011) explained that having a home broadband Internet does not affect social capital in Germany [3].

## **3. Cultural Dimensions:**

Hofstede Analysis:

One of the most important compilations of national cultural characteristics was produced by Geert Hofstede [18]. Hofstede managed to build up an empirical-based study of cultural attributes by analysing data obtained from several surveys done between individuals in 53 countries between the years 1968-1972.

The survey questions were designed mainly to measure work-related values. He used these measures of values, which are defined as components of culture, to identify national-level cultural characteristics common between all respondents. The analysis dimensions are:

Individualism vs. Collectivism:

Individualism is known for its loose social boundaries and frameworks whereby people are expected to take care of themselves and their own interests. Conversely, collectivism is known for its well established and tight social boundaries and frameworks wherein people look out for their welfare and where personal goals comes second place to those of the group [9].

Like the uncertainty-avoidance dimension, this dimension might have important behavioural implications for the use of mobile data services; users from individualist cultures tend to select services based on personal appropriateness. Such users choose mobile data services that are more personalized. Meanwhile, people with a collectivist tendency may be likely to use services that enable them to feel more connected to other people. Also, because highly individualistic cultures emphasize personalized goals, users from such cultures may prefer a mobile data services interface they can customize [9].

### **Power Distance:**

According to the theory of power distance theory, it is known that less powerful members of a society accept the unequal distribution of power. The main two poles of this dimension are high and low power distance.

Aspects of inequality could be found in many forms, such as physical or mental abilities or characteristics, social status and prestige, power, law and wealth. A good example of a high power distance culture is Jordan. The UK is an example of a low power distance culture.

Some of the well observed consequences related to the high power distance culture are obedience of people to authority, represented in certain figures such as boss, parent, religious figures, and officials who address others in a language filled with power and authority. On the opposite side, equality is the main common characteristic of low power distance cultures; in other words, people are considered to be equal, and there is no one who is regarded as intrinsically better than others.

### **Masculinity vs. Femininity:**

Masculine societies are typically characterised by some values such as the acquisition of wealth, ambition and differentiated gender roles. In such cultures, men are seen as assertive and they learn to be competitive and visible, stressing success and being job-oriented.

In such cultures, women are seen as growing and caring agents, with the emphasis on women's fundamentally different role, which may lead to them avoiding certain types of jobs, such as taxi or bus driver.

On the other hand, in a feminine society, the dominant values for men and woman are development and caring behaviours. This society places less emphasis on assertiveness for both men and women, and the main goal or focus is on cooperation and sexual equality. According to Hofstede [18], a good example of masculine culture is Japan. Malaysia would be a good example of feminine culture.

### **Uncertainty Avoidance:**

Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity along with their eagerness to avoid such situations" [18].

People in high uncertainty avoidance cultures view uncertainty as dangerous and show a low acceptance for risk. They tend to avoid uncertain situations by believing in absolute truths and knowledge, seeking stability and rejecting new or unusual ideas and behaviours. Conversely, people in low uncertainty-avoidance cultures deal well with ambiguity and can be classified as risk takers.

Uncertainty-avoidance possibly has a significant influence on behaviour related to the use of mobile data services. Users from a culture that tends toward

uncertainty avoidance are more likely to avoid using mobile services when the quality of service is uncertain or uneven compared to that of traditional internet services [9].

### **Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation:**

According to Hofstede [18], this dimension is based on a study was conducted by Michael Bond [3] in Hong Kong, which observed that Hofstede previous four cultural dimensions did not sufficiently reflect the Asian viewpoint on culture, but rather the latter was more related to the time orientation of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck [25].

According to Hofstede, the dimensions of both time and values are related to the future; "Long Term Orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and economy". Its opposite pole is "Short Term Orientation" [18].

A good example of long-term culture is Pakistan. Short-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular "respect for tradition, preservation of 'face' and fulfilling social obligations." A good example of short-term orientation culture is the UK.

### **3.2 Trompennars Model Analyses:**

Trompennars [30] developed a cultural model which has seven dimensions:

#### **Achievement vs. Ascription:**

This dimension describes how valuable and important is the status of the individual. Basically, at the achievement oriented cultures persons are valued and judged for what kind of achievement they completed in their lives.

It is found by Trompennars that in achievement oriented cultures, titles are only used in relevance to competency brought to the job. Usually, the respect for superior in hierarchy is based on how successfully the job is performed and how sufficient their knowledge [39].

As mentioned by Trompennars, the UK is classified as an example of the achievement oriented society. In ascription oriented societies, individuals derive their status from age, birth, gender or wealth. Also, respect for superior position in hierarchy is observed as an indication of the person commitment to the organization and its mission. Trompennars cited Argentina as a typical example of ascription oriented societies [30].

#### **Universalism vs. Particularism:**

Refers to the level in which an individual is committed to the set of standards and rules. Usually in universalistic cultures, the main focus is on rules while in particularistic cultures the focus is on relationships.

Normally in universalistic cultures, there is only one truth or reality, while in particularistic cultures there are number of perspectives on reality. Universalists

treat all cases in the same way, while particularists treat cases according to their special qualities and create private understandings.

According to Trompennars, North Americans as well as 80% of the Protestant countries are Universalists, while Brazil and the rest of Latin America are considered particularistic [39].

**Individualism vs. Communitarianism:**

Refers to the level of which the individual's priorities themselves over and ahead of the group needs. Usually, in individualistic cultures, authority might be the negotiator responsibility, while in the communitarian cultures; the negotiator is only a pass-on person who reports back to the group which approves the final decision.

In individualistic cultures, the decision maker normally accepts personal responsibility, while in communitarian communities it is always a joint responsibility standard.

Normally, individualists have the feeling that their achievements are mainly the results of their own hard work and effort, while communitarians believe that they achieve more as a group. According to the analysis of Trompennars, American people are considered to live in an individualistic culture, where individual freedom is prized more highly than the need to care for other individuals in the same society [30].

Based on the findings of Trompennars, French people are recognised as a part of the collectivistic culture, where the individualistic approach is not adopted in the society, and priority is given always to the group rather than to the individual [30].

**Neutral vs. Affective:**

Refers to the level in which persons of the society show or hold back their emotions and feelings. People in affective societies lean to reveal thoughts and feelings verbally and non-verbally. According to Trompennars, emotions flow easily and strongly without inhibition and physical contact, gesturing and strong facial expression are common in affective societies while in neutral societies people tend not to reveal what they are thinking or feeling physically [30].

According to Trompennars, Egypt belongs to the affective culture, with their meaningful emotions and feelings, while Japan is an example of neutral societies, with their sharp abilities to keep their feelings and expressions quiet and controlled [30].

**Diffuse vs. Specific:**

Refers to the level at which diffuse people get involved deeply with other people's life space, while specific people believe that relationships with others need to be explicitly defined and regulated, as if dealing with a contract.

Trompennars reported that Swedish culture is considered to be a specific culture, in which people tend to strictly separate work and personal life [30].

Diffuse oriented cultures are characterized by high degree of interpersonal relationships. In other

words, people in such cultures engage with others in large areas of their private lives. Borders and barriers between personal life and work do not exist in a practical way. According to Trompennars, Nigeria is a standard example of diffuse oriented culture [30].

**Time Orientation:**

This dimension points to the time response of the culture. Moreover, it has two types: Monochronic (sequentially) and polychronic (synchronic) time.

Monochronic (sequentially) time is known and characterised by promptness, schedules and categorization or isolation of activities. Trompennars classified Sweden and many other north-west European countries as part of the sequential culture, where people perform only a single task at a time and stick to the schedule is a must [30].

According to Trompennars, in polychronic time culture, such as in India, people tend to engage with many things simultaneously, and emphasise the involvement of people. Even if there was a target or a final goal it might take several steps to accomplish it, especially when there are activities that are running in parallel [30].

**Internal vs. External Control:**

This dimension describes the attitudes of people on the subject of nature. According to Trompennars, internal control cultures instil certain beliefs that people can and must control nature by enforcing their strength on it. He described the UK as a typical example of internal control culture [30].

In external control countries such as Egypt, people believe in the external determinism of the environment, and submit to its laws, description and forces [30].

## II. QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS:

In order to test whether the hypothesis of this research are valid or not, a questionnaire of 5 likert style questions was handled to 70 participants, the analysis results were as following:

Question One: I feel that I'm always aware of what's happening within my community as I'm connected with social networks.

The majority of the sample has agreed to such statement. It was explained that with today's expansion of modern technology and the vast growth of internet plans with generous amount of data to be used. The participants also drew the attention that within the current situation that surrounds our geographical area such as the war in Syria. It was carried out that it is crucial to keep an eye on the news around us in order to assure safety and stability of our lives around us by forming some sort of a mechanism that deliver news and important feedbacks around us within the same community. This behaviour complies directly with Geert Hofstede dimension of individual Vs. Collectivism as we noticed that people here believe that it is a

must to obtain a safe environment and community which cannot be done individually.

Question Two: It is no longer necessary to participate in social events such as wedding parties and condolences congregations with the availability of social network tools

The result of this question came to assure the Jordanian community will face such technological trend effectively. The majority of the sample (82%) has disagreed to follow what the statement suggests. They explained that whatever happens in within our society it our responsibility and we must maintain a very solid community by attending such occasions. Moreover, it was highlighted that the social media tools such as Facebook could for some sort and an awareness tool to gather people in more effective way since the person as already posting any of the issues surrounding him/her.

Question Three: It is easier nowadays to fortify social boundaries with the availability of Facebook

Around %70 of the sample strongly agreed on such statement. The explanation for such massive approval came from the fact that Facebook provide the users with the possibility of posting and broadcasting their news on daily bases. Some cases post news and personal news feeds on hourly bases. The emotions which can be used by the users could describe the feed of the user with much more details. These all reasons gathered support the fact that the Jordanian community is a communitarian community as described by trompennars.

Question Four: It is not with high importance if I didn't attend any of the social occasions surrounding us such as weddings and condolences congregations.

The analysis result for this sttament came contrary to what were the assumptions of the researcher. %80 of the sam0plw strongly disagreed and refused this statement. It was highlighted by participants that even if such technology is available to support us in our life, it doesn't mean thjat we will abandon what we were raised upon, attending such occasion's is mandatory to maintain a well-structured community and if we started to abandon such heritage, then we will suffer a very weak and fragile community specially if we started to shift away by adopting new methods of socialization together. This is a mixture of both collectivism and

Question Five: Life became easier with the availability of Facebook around us.

Around %60 of the sample strongly agreed the life is easier with Facebook around us. The justification was that our communities became crowded and time became really tight with very limited space. Facebook came to as a tool which enables you of completing your daily tasks while putting an eye on

what is going around you as per to some explanations. Moreover, Facebook nowadays brought many relatives and friends together even if they were very far in distance together within the same community. It also enabled there friends and relatives of knowing their news and feeds with now need to pay huge phone bills as it used to be in the very near past.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

With today's rapid changing life style, the exposure to new technologies has its positive and negative sides. Facebook is one of today's most recent social media tools which have penetrated the Jordanian society very well. Through the study and analysis of Facebook and its possible threats towards our traditions and culture, it was obvious that we are coping very well with such tool.

It was revealed that the Jordanian community won't fall easy towards losing its grip and fall apart abandoning its traditions and heritage. It is absolute solid, rigid and concrete community when it comes to what forms a solid bonding agent; traditions.

Through the analysis, people in Jordan deals moderately with Facebook and they are using the best of it by following news and feeds from family members, friends and work colleagues. This is its turn fortify the relations among community members.

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