Motives for Posting and Liking on Social Media:

Comparing Differences between Chinese and European Users

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Abstract

Social media have become a prominent way of communicating in the Web 2.0 age. Posting and liking are now parts of many people's daily life. Thanks to social media, today, people around the whole world are able to communicate with each other. Young people, as the main force of social media users, develop their own habits and ways of using social media. In this research, 40 participants from China and European countries were interviewed to investigate their motives for posting and liking. According to their answers, there is a wide variety of both posting and liking motives. Using the four-sides communication model by Schulz von Thun as a starting point, all the motives were classified into main categories including referential, expressive, relational, appealing, information storage, psychological and other. The number of participants who mentioned communicative motives (referential, expressive, relational, and appealing) is significantly larger than the number of participants who mentioned noncummunicative motives (information storage, psychological and other). The results also show that Chinese and European behave differently in both posting and liking. Chinese have more expressive and appealing motives in posting, and more referential motives in liking. The result means Chinese express themselves more on social media, while European use social media in a more practical way. When comparing own motives with others', there are differences in appealing and information storage motives of posting, but no significant differences were found in the motives of liking. The result shows that although people tend to interpret others' posts in a more negative way, it is less likely to misinterpret liking behaviors from others. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

1 Introduction

There has been much discussion on whether a "Dislike" button should also be included on Facebook for many years. Recently, to meet the users' requirement on expressing emotions other than just "like", Mark Zuckerberg, the co-founder and CEO of Facebook, announced that they were setting out to create a "Dislike" button (Rosenfeld, 2015). This piece of news initiated further thinking about people's motives for posting and liking on social media. On the one hand, people may argue that to like or not is too limited; on the other hand, it is unclear what kinds of meanings people attach to the act of liking.

Nowadays, social media have become an important part of many people's life. People from all over the world are able to connect to each other thanks to social media. People's activities on social media mainly belong to two functional modules: messaging and publicizing (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). By using these two modules, users can communicate with others in both pubic and private ways. In this thesis, the publicizing module will be the research focus. In the publicizing module, users can post specific content including text, pictures, videos, locations and links. Others can make reflections on the posts by commenting on them, liking, or sharing. Through posting and liking behaviors, users can not only express themselves, but also interact with others in a public or semi-public environment.

Unlike traditional ways of communication such as face-to-face conversation and making phone calls, interaction on social media (the publicizing part) has some different characteristics, and the motives of posting and liking behaviors on social media may also present a trend of diversification. Research is needed to make sense of the posting and liking behaviors of people. Therefore, the fundamental research question of this thesis is:

RQ1: What motives do people have for their posting and liking behaviors?

Based on the results, more specific questions will be checked. Firstly, as social media provide possibilities for people all over the world to communicate with each other, people with different social and cultural backgrounds are able to connect on social media. This calls for research into the effects of cultural differences. Therefore, this research will also check whether Chinese and European users have

different motives for posting and liking on social media. Secondly, where there is communication, there is the possibility of misinterpretation. Both for posting and for liking behaviors, the motives of users are normally implicit. It would be interesting to investigate whether people come up with similar motives for their own positing and liking behaviors as for the posting and liking behaviors of others. Differences in interpreting motives might refer to a source of misinterpretations. Therefore, two additional research questions of this thesis are:

RQ2: What are differences between Chinese and European users' motives on posting and liking?

RQ3: What are differences between own and others' motives on posting and liking?

2   Theoretical Framework

2.1 Use of social media

Social media have become an important part of many people's daily life. Research shows that 73% of the teens (12-17 years old), 72% of the young adults (18-29 years old), and 40% of the adults in the U.S. were social media users in 2009 (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Today, there will even be more people who have developed a habit of using social media. People see social media as a way of getting information, engaging in social activities, expressing themselves and engaging in commercial activities (Fiebert & Yip, 2015). However, why do people choose social media as a new way to communicate and socialize? Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre (2011) put forward a honeycomb model to explain the main functions of social media. In the honeycomb model, there are seven modes: presence, sharing, conversations, groups, reputation, relationships and identity. With these functions on social media, people can fulfill their different requirements. Also since different social media focus on different functional modules, users' choices on social media may relate to their preferences.
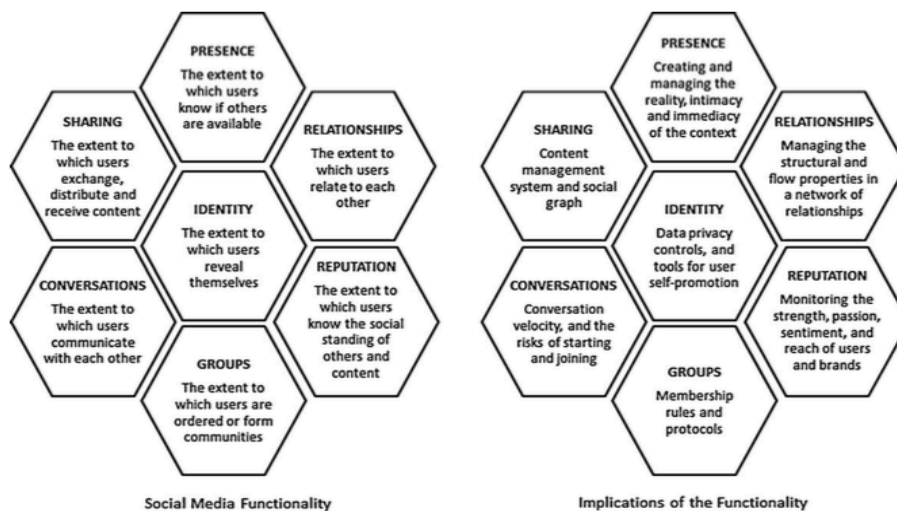
Figure 1. Honeycomb model by Kietzmann et al. (2011)

The way people use social media is related to many factors. On the one hand, personality may influence the use of social media. For example, extraversion and openness to experiences are positively related to social media use, while emotional stability has a negative correlation with social media use (Correa, Hinsley, & Zuniga, 2009). Another example is gender can also be seen as a factor that may influence social media. Comparing with males, females have more interaction with others and show more emotional support to others publicly on social media. However the gender differences disappear in private messages (Joiner et al., 2014). Therefore, whether people with different personalities have different motives for posting and liking need to be further investigated. On the other hand, the use of social media may also influence people's life. Chen and Lee (2013) found that psychological distress has a positive relation to the use of social media. But they didn't explain whether it is related to not achieving a certain motive. Also, use social media has influence on building and maintaining relationship with others. However, merely adding someone to the contact list does not mean a strong social relationship is built. Real interactions such as commenting and liking can help to strengthen social relationship (Schoendienst & Dang-Xuan, 2011). The effect of social activities on social media needs to be further checked. For more specific motives, people use social media to realize self-disclosure. The self-disclosure behavior is positively related to relationship building, enjoyment and trust in social media platform, while it is

negatively related to anonymity and perceived risk(Liu, Min, Zhai, & Smyth, 2016). Apart from expressing themselves, social media users also use this platform for health information (Lin, Zhang, Song, & Omori, 2015) and job seeking (Orirdi, Segers, Ouirdi, & Pais, 2015). Also, social media use is related to narcissism. For example, the number of selfie posts has a positive correlation with the narcissism subscale (Sorokowski et al, 2015). And there is a positive relationship between using social media to be cool and for surveillance (Sheldon & Bryant, 2015). All the behaviors on social media show that people always use social media for a certain purpose. So the relationship between the motives and the behaviors need to be investigated.

Not only individuals, but also organizations and enterprises are users of social media. According to Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011), social media have a revolutionary impact on the state of marking, advertising and promotions. Social media provide an excellent platform for companies to foster relationship with their customers (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). Following a brand's social media account can lead to positive changes in brand evaluations (Beukeboom, Kerkhof, & De Vries, 2015). Therefore, companies should take advantages of social media and create conditions for more meaningful interactions with customers.

2.2 Earlier research about posting and liking

Posting and liking are important ways for people to interact with others on social media. Oh and Syn (2015) summarized ten motives of posting on all kinds of social media: enjoyment, self-efficacy, learning, personal gain, altruism, empathy, community interest, social engagement, reputation and reciprocity. Among these motives, learning and social engagement seem to be the most influential ones. However, Oh and Syn's framework on posting motives is only based on previous studies, so it is more like a summary of posting motives without a theoretical foundation.

In other empirical studies, there are different opinions on people's motives for posting. Firstly, posting behaviors have a close relationship with social activities. The research of Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert (2009) indicates that the young adults' posting behaviors on Facebook are mainly for

interacting with friends who have a pre-established relationship offline. Cheung, Chiu and Lee (2011) also indicate motives of posting are mainly related to social functions including social identity, social presence, maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity and social enhancement. Other study may have different result: the entertainment motive is also important to social media users. According to Lin and Lu (2011), enjoyment is the most influential reason of social media use, then it comes with social circle and usefulness. It means that people mainly post and check others' posts for fun, not for social reasons.

There are also studies that focus on more specific aspects of posting. Eftekhar, Fullwood and Morris (2014) focus on photo-related activities on social media. They indicate that neuroticism and extraversion are the main reasons that evoke posting pictures. Fox and Rooney (2015) think that the motive of editing photographs before posting is related to self-objectification. About the self-disclosure motive of posting, Green, Wilhelmsen, Wilmots, Dodd and Quinn (2016) found that the characteristics of social media stimulate self-disclosure activities, which means people can express themselves more freely on social media. And although many studies show that the use of social media is related to psychological distress, people still keep using it because they commit an affective forecasting error that they believe they will feel better after using social media. But the fact is that when people posting things under this motive, they might feel even worse (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014). Additionally, there is also study about the motives of not posting certain content. The motives are related to self-protection, friend unresponsiveness and privacy (Bevan, Gomez, & Spark, 2014). To sum up, further research should be made to classify all kinds of posting motives systematically, and contain all the usages of social media.

About liking behaviors, currently, very limited studies are focusing on liking motives. According to Lee, Hansen and Lee (2016), the most important motives of liking are enjoyment and interpersonal relationship. They found that the motives of liking are related to personality: people who have higher self-esteem, more diligence, more emotional stability, and less subjective norm like others' posts more for expressing enjoyment; while people who have lower self-esteem, less diligence, less emotional stability, and higher subjective norm tend to like others' post for pleasing them. However, the concepts of "enjoyment" and "interpersonal relationship" are too general. The specific motives of liking still need to

be investigated. Most studies on liking behaviors are focusing on the quantity of likes. For example, according to Jang, Han and Lee (2015), post topics that result more likes are: nature, art/photos/design, fashion/beauty, location/places/area and holiday/vacation, which can reflect social media users' interests and preferences. Also, posts that are more vivid and interactive tend to get more feedback (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). But why do people especially want to like these kinds of posts need to be investigated. Additionally, the number of likes for a post does not have a positive correlation with the number of followers (Jang, Han, & Lee, 2015). People with less extreme friend counts tend to receive significantly more likes (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). These researches point out that liking behaviors have some relations with social relationship maintaining, however, liking behaviors with social motives and their influence in building or maintaining relationships need to be investigated.

It is noteworthy that most of the studies mentioned above only focus on people from a certain area. It is possible that people from different areas with different cultural and social backgrounds may develop different motives on posting and liking. Therefore, there should be studies that focus on comparing the differences in posting and liking behaviors of people from different areas.

2.3 Conceptual framework

The aim of this study is to explore the motives people have for posting and liking. An important contribution of the research is that it will analyze these motives from an integrated theoretical perspective. Posting and liking behaviors must be seen as communicative acts. A framework that meaningfully classifies communicative acts is the four-sides communication model by Schulz von Thun. The four-sides model, also called communication square or four-ears model, is made for explaining people's communication behavior. According to this model, every message in communication has four facets: referential, expressive, relational and appealing. However, there might be large differences in emphasis of the four facets. A significant strong point of this model is that Schulz von Thun not only describes the content of a message, but also indicates the relational aspects. So the model can be used to define the attitude in a certain message (Dieltjens, Heynderickx, Dees, & Vissers, 2013). Therefore, messages can be

classified according to which facet has the highest proportion. Social media, as a way of communication, can employ the four-sides model. However, whether the four-sides model can cover all the information that is carried on posting and liking behaviors needs to be further checked.

Figure 2. The four-sides model by Schulz von Thun.

3 Method

3.1 Research design

Interviews were conducted as the main research method to check people's motives on posting and liking. Based on the research goal, there were four groups of participants which are Chinese users, focusing on their own postings and others' liking; Chinese users, focusing on others' postings and their own likings; European users, focusing on their own postings and others' likings; and European users, focusing on others' postings and their own likings.

Of course, people may have different preferences and experiences with social media. For instance, because of the Great Firewall of China, Chinese who are living in the Mainland China cannot use some of the social media, such as Facebook and Instagram. To be able to recruit participants from both cultural

backgrounds, the specific social media platform they used was not specified, as long as it had the functions of posting and liking. Eventually, there were four social media that involved in this research: Facebook, Instagram, Wechat and Weibo. The basic and main functions of these social media are similar to each other. However, each of them has some unique characteristics. Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Europe and other parts of the world, it has the largest user group among all the social media. People who use Facebook may have friends from all over the world, they can check posts and feedbacks on the posts of their friends and groups. There are a lot of choices of settings on who can see the posts, in the interviews, many Facebook users do not actually clearly know about all the settings on Facebook. However, overall, Facebook is a platform more about people who are in a social circle or know each other in real life; On Instagram, every post must contain a picture or video. People usually use hashtags to describe or mark their posts, so that others can find the content they are interested in easily by those hashtags. And also, most posts on Instagram are public posts, which means everyone, including strangers can see, like and comment on the post; Wechat can be seen as a Chinese version Facebook (integrated with the functionality of Whatsapp). Currently, it is very popular among Chinese social media users. Compared with Facebook, Wechat is less international, and in all the interviews that involve Wechat, almost all the posters and likers are Chinese. Personal posts on Wechat can only be seen by people who are in the Contacts list. There is something special about liking and commenting of Wechat – users can only see the likes and comments of their friends on all the posts. For example, if A and B, B and C are friends on Wechat while A and C are not friends, then if C likes or comments on B's post, then A cannot see C's like or comment. Additionally, although Wechat users can follow groups, most contacts are people know each other in real life; about Weibo, it's more like a Chinese version of Twitter. Weibo users follow a lot famous people and groups for news and information on this platform. Although users can set their posts as "private" or "only friends can see", most posts here are available for everyone including strangers. Also, everyone can like and comment on public posts and see others' comments and likes.

3.2 Instrument

As described above, participants were divided into two groups to see the difference between their opinions on their own and others' posting and liking behaviors. So there were two versions of questionnaires. There are some basic questions in both the two version of questionnaires, and based on the answers to the basic questions of the participants, they may be asked further questions about posting and liking. The participants were asked to start with their own or other's most recent post, and then follow the same procedure, went on to discuss more posts one by one.

The first version mainly focused on the participants' own posts and the reactions of other people. The basic questions of this version are:

- Can you please describe the post?

- Can you tell why you decided to post it?

- Is the post available for everyone in your contacts? If not, who were excluded and why?

- How did people react to this post?

- What does liking to this post mean? Consider whether the liking may have different meanings for different people.

- Did you feel disappointed with reactions to your post? Why?

The second version mainly focused on the posts of other people, and the participants' own and others' reactions to them. The basic questions of this version are:

- Can you please describe the post?

- Can you tell why you think this person decided to post it?

- How did you react to this post? Why?

- [If liked] Did you actually see the post before you liked it?

- How did other people react to this post?

- What does liking to this post mean? Consider whether the liking may have different meanings for different people.

- Do you think this person may feel disappointed with reactions to his/her post? Why?

After about 50 minutes, all the participants were asked two general questions about posting and liking.

- Can you tell me to what extent posting and liking helps you to express your identity and emotions to other people? Can you explain how?
- Can you tell me to what extent posting and liking helps you to build and maintain relationships with other people? Can you explain how?

3.3 Participants

There were altogether 40 participants in the research. The target group of this research were young people, so the age range is between 18-35. The gender ratio of each group was 1:1, namely 5 males and 5 females in every group. The distribution of participants refer to Table 1. Most participants were students. All the participants were active social media users, and the European participants were required to be capable to communicate fluently in English. All the participants were at least undergraduate students, while most of them were graduate students. A few of them had already worked and engaged in education or technology industries. About half of the Chinese participants were international students of the University of Twente and were living in the Netherlands currently, others were living in China. All the European participants were or used to be students of the University of Twente. They were from different countries of Europe, including the Netherlands, Italia, Germany, Spain and Greece. Most participants checked their social media everyday, many of them claimed that they checked it all the time.

Table 1. Distribution of participants.

	Chinese	European
Self	10	10
Others	10	10

3.4 Procedure

The interview was designed to be one hour long to ensure enough samples could be collected. All the participants were clearly informed that the whole process would be recorded. In the first 50 minutes, all the participants were asked to talk about their own or others' posts as much as possible. Then at the last 10 minutes, all the participants were asked two general questions about posting and liking behaviors on social media. Before each interview, all the participants were asked to read an introduction of the research. From the introduction, they could know the main purpose of the research, how the interview was designed, what they needed to do and talk about during the interview, and the measures for protecting their privacy in the interview. If they agreed with all the conditions of the interview, they were firstly asked to provide their basic personal information including gender, age, nationality, student/occupation, what social media they use most often and how often do they check the certain social media. Next, the participants were asked to open their social media, when they were ready, the interview was going to start. All the processes of every interview were recorded completely by QuickTime Player. And the participants would start with the most recent post of their own or others', and then go back in time to discuss every post in their social media account. And then after 50 minutes, they were asked two general questions about posting and liking as mentioned above, and the whole interview was finished.

To avoid threat the privacy of the participants, during the interviews, the researcher would not to see the participants' social media account her self. All the data came from the oral description of the participants. And because of that, the interviews could be either face to face or in a remote way. In the 40 interviews that were finally adopted, the participants have shown great personalities and they all gave

very inspiring and interesting answers. There were failure interviews as well. For example, one Chinese participant had never experienced any interview, so he was too nervous to come up any answer, and finally gave up after 39 minutes. However, all the 40 interviews that are used in the research are complete, real and effective.

3.5 Analysis

After each interview, the sound recording was carefully re-listened, and all the useful information appeared in the cases and the general questions were written in Microsoft Word documents. The recorded information included the content of each post, the motives of the post, the reflections of the post, the motives of all the likes and other related information. Some enlightening conversations were quoted in the thesis.

After recording information in text, it's to classify all the motives of posting and liking. In this procedure, the first step was to record all the motives that were mentioned by the participants in all the interviews. The second step was to summarize all the motives into main categories based on the Schulz von Thun's four-sides model, and just the expression into Referential, Expressive, Relational and Appealing. However, these 4 main categories were not enough to cover all the motives collected from the interviews. Finally, Information Storage, Psychological and Other motives were added to the posting part, and Information Storage and Psychological motives were added to the liking part. The third step was to count the number of participants who mentioned each motive. The next step was to use SPSS to analyze the results and see the differences between Chinese and European, self and others. Firstly, the category variables were created; Secondly, the Mean Scores and SD were calculated; Thirdly, Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to test significance; at last, Crosstabs (plus chi^2 tests) were conducted to compare every specific motive of both posting and liking.

4 Results

4.1 Motives for posting

According to the data of all the 40 interviews, there are altogether 30 specific motives of posting. Most of them with a communicative characteristic can be classified into Schulz von Thun's Four Sides Model. However, there are also some noncommunicative motives that do not belong to any of the main categories. Based on their characteristics, these motives are classified into Information Storage, Psychological and Other motives as complements to Schulz von Thun's Four Sides Model.

Communicative: referential motives

The referential motives are related to describe certain content that contains useful information, and the poster wants to convey this kind of information to a certain group of people. Actually, the poster doesn't care much about the result or reflection of information accepter after they seeing the information. For example, lots of people share funny videos and beautiful songs on social media. Also, sometimes people use social media as a billboard. In a case, the participant said: "I followed a volunteer group, they post schedules of voluntary work every week to the members, so we can see what we can do in the next week." There are a lot of people who share funny videos and beautiful songs, posting behaviors like these all belong to referential motives.

Table 2. Referential motives of posting.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Share interesting content	After finding something interesting, the poster wants to share it with others. e.g. "I shared this video because I think it's funny, and I would like to show it to my friends."	40
Notification	Convey certain information to others as a kind of notification. e.g. "A group I followed post a schedule of activities we will have the next week."	12

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Communicative: expressive motives

It may be human nature to express. The expressive motives are related to effectively show feelings. The definition of expressive motives includes anything that is related to communicate thoughts or feelings. Some participants said that sometimes, they have a desire of expressing their emotions, and social media provide a platform for them. However, in most cases, participants claimed that they prefer to express positive emotions on social media. Because they thought negative emotions are more personal and they would like to communicate about those emotions in a more private way. In an interview, the participant is a 19-year-old girl, she often posted posts about her feelings like "I feel so sweet!" on her Wechat account. She said: "Maybe other people will feel confused about my post, but I still want to express my feeling at some certain time points on social media." Some participants also claimed that by expressing on social media, they wanted others to know more about themselves. For example, a participant shared an article about making fun of terrorist attack in Paris on social media. As he said in the interview: "I appreciate the attitude that people should have freedom to make fun of anything. This idea is very creative and inspiring, I totally agree with it, so I want more people to see the article. And if it can influence others, that will be great." He also said "without social media, people will have less chances to express this kind of attitude to many friends."

Table 3. Expressive motives of posting.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Express emotions	The poster expresses or vents a certain emotion in the post.	24
	A participant wrote "feeling so sweet" in her social media.	
Satisfy vanity	The poster shows off is very good or supreme, and through the	24
	feedback of others, the poster can satisfy his/her vanity.	
	e.g. Some posters posted photos of traveling aboard and expected	
	for others being jealousy or envy.	

e.g. Some posters posted selfies and expected for praise.

| Express opinions | The poster express a certain opinion or attitude to some issues. | 19 |

e.g. A poster shared a piece of news about politician to express his political attitude.

| Share life moments | The poster shares some special moments of life or updates current condition to others in the post. | 17 |

e.g. The poster posted pictures about her daily life to tell others about her life.

| Establish a personal image | The poster wants other people to know his/her personality or know more about him/her by the post. | 11 |

e.g. "I made fun of myself in the post… In real life, sometimes I feel shy so that I'm worried that other people may think I'm too serious. So I want other people to know more about me by these kinds of posts."

| Show relationship | The poster posts to show a certain relationship to others. | 8 |

e.g. A poster posted a picture with her boyfriend to show that they are in a good relationship.

| Attract mates | The poster posts something he/she thinks can make he/she more attractive, and then it will be helpful for seeking a mate or lover. | 4 |

A participant posted a picture of he was showing muscle because he thought that girls would be attractive by the picture.

| Empathy | The poster posts or shares something because he/she feels the same or can understand certain situation. | 4 |

A poster saw a summary about learning statuses, and she thought the summary described her daily life. So she copied the text and

posted it on her social media account.

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Communicative: relational motives

As the name suggests, the relational motives have a close relationship to the social function of social media. Driven by relational motives, the poster wants to build or maintain or enhance a certain kind of social relationship with others. Sometimes, social media provide convenience for people who want to engage in a certain relationship, as a participant said: "some people post 'Photoshoped' selfies on social media, and they think it will be helpful to elevate others' impression on them, and they will become more popular." However, to some people, social media can also be seen as a burden. Like a participant said: "I know advertisement is annoying. But my aunt asked me to help her promote her business, it's really hard to say no to my aunt."

Table 4. Relational motives of posting.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
For interacting	The actual purpose of this kind of posts is to start a topic and have a conversation with friends (usually at that time the poster has a desire to communicate but there is no specific person or he/she doesn't know whether other people have time or not). e.g. "She (the poster) is a middle-aged women who divorced with her ex-husband, so she may feel lonely and often post things as a way to communicate with others."	18
Keep a frequency to appear in others' vision	The poster wants to keep visible among the people in the contact list of the social media (probably for personal social relationship or for promoting something).	17

e.g. A participant claimed that she thought she wanted to post something occasionally then her friends could keep her in mind.

e.g. Some groups shared some news to keep visible among the followers.

For helping others	Unlike "under certain social pressure", the behavior of posting something under this motive is proactive. The poster wants to help others to achieve their goals by posting something.	4
	e.g. A poster shared a link related to her friends proactively. If her friend could get more votes through the link, she could get a prize.	
Attract attention	The poster posts something special to be noticed by people who are in his/her contact list.	3
	e.g. A poster wrote a post in a foreign language, and the participant thought she did that for attracting other's attention.	
Best wishes	The poster wants to express his/her kind regards or best wishes to others.	3
	e.g. The poster posted pictures about the wedding of her family member.	
Social pressure	The poster feels obliged to post something. Usually it's related to certain social pressure.	2
	e.g. A poster's sister was selling something and asked the poster to share the advertisement. So the poster posted the advertisement unwillingly.	

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Communicative: appealing motives

The appealing motives are like a request for something such as support, aid, sympathy, decision, corroboration, etc. According to the participants, the reason of using social to express requests is because that they thought it's the best way to reach as many people of their social circle as possible, and it's also cheap, easy and convenient to post on social media. One typical example of this category is posting advertisement. There are a lot of people who have a desire of selling something, some of them are professional businessmen/businesswomen, others may just be people who happen to sell something (like the second-handed goods). Social media provides such a great platform to not only individuals, but also enterprises to promote their advertisements, and others can also find information they want in a targeted way.

Table 5. Appealing motives of posting.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Advertisement	Promoting something for commercial or financial interests. e.g. Some posters sold things on social media by posting the picture and price of the product.	13
Ask for something	The poster conveys some information and wants certain feedback other than an answer, such as comfort, congratulations, caring and encouragement. e.g. A poster mentioned it was her birthday that day because she expected to get more congratulations.	9
Seek for answers	The poster posts one or more questions to find answers or solutions in the comments. e.g. An Internet writer asked others' opinion about how much was acceptable for the price of her new book.	3

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Noncommunicative: information storage motives

Storing information in a safe way is an important issue to a lot of people. In the age of Web 2.0, more and more people chose the Internet to store their information because it's safe, cheap and flexible for getting and sharing. Some people take advantages of some characteristics of social media and use it to store information. "I wrote something about my daily life just for myself, like keeping a dairy." A participant said, "In a traditional dairy, I think I have to write something longer. But on social media, I can just add a picture and short sentences to record life. And because there is no secret in these dairies, I don't care whether other people can see it or not." The quotation can be seen as an example of how people use social media as a way of information storage. Comparing with other motives, information storage is very practical. Additionally, cloud storage is increasingly accepted by people these days. As another participant said: "(The post) is like a post office. Someone store some information here, and others can get the information from the post."

Table 6. Information storage motives of posting.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Keep diaries	The poster views social media as a place to keep short dairies to record life just for himself/herself. e.g. A poster posted a picture and a short description as a way to keep a short diary.	15
Cloud storage	The poster regards posts as a kind of cloud storage, which means he/she can store information on the Internet. Furthermore, he/she can find the information easily and also can send the information to others easily. e.g. The poster uploaded a lot of pictures to send them to friends	12

who were involved in the pictures easily.

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Noncommunicative: psychological motives

Psychological motives are closely related to mental activity and psychological state. For some people, writing something down is very different from just thinking about it. After they actually writing down something, the psychological feelings are greatly strengthened. So some people may feel better after they writing down something on social media. Also, to some extent, the publicizing part of social media provides an indirect way to communicate. The reason why some people express something on social media is just because it's hard for them to express directly to someone. Like a male participant said: "I want to say 'thank you' to my leader because all the little things between us in a whole years. It's not like express thankfulness immediately after he doing me a favor. And the scene that two adult males sitting face to face, and saying 'thank you for everything' is really strange for me. But if I put it in a post on social media, it will be much more natural." According to the interviews, there is also a feeling called wanting to post. Moreover, some participants claimed that sometimes they were in a mood of posting. The feeling is similar to hungry or sleepy, so they edit something and post on social media.

Table 7. Psychological motives of posting.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Encourage oneself	The poster writes down something on social media as an encouragement for himself/herself. e.g. A poster was facing some difficulty in her life and she wrote something to cheer herself up.	6
Release pressure	Some posters think that posting behavior it self can release his/her pressure.	6

	e.g. A participant posted some text about breaking up with his girlfriend and set it as private. He claimed he could feel better after he writing the feelings down.	
Avoid embarrassment	The poster posts something because he/she thinks it will be too embarrass or too shy to express something directly to someone.	5
	e.g. A participant expressed thankfulness to his leader because he thought he would be too shy to say thank you face to face.	
Arbitrary	The poster is a mode of posting.	2
	e.g. A poster said he liked a song very much and he often listened to it, but at a specific point of time, he was in the mode and wanted to share this song on social media.	
Superstition	The poster believes by posting or sharing certain content, he/she can get good luck.	1
	e.g. A poster shared a picture of money and believed that she could get richer by posting this.	

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Noncommunicative: other motives

In this part, there are posting motives that do not belong to any of the previous categories. The motives here are usually mentioned by very limited number of participants and they are noncommunicative. Some people may *play* social media just like playing a video game, and some people may post something for getting a prize. These motives are like an extension of some functions of social media.

Table 8. Other motives of posting.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Leisure activity	The poster regards posting things as a kind of leisure activity, the motive is similar to playing a game. e.g. "One day when I was waiting for the bus, I felt very boring and wanted to find something to do, then I posted something to past the time."	5
For a certain prize	The poster posts something to meet the requirement of others for gaining a certain prize or reward. e.g. A poster posted a picture of a restaurant to get a free hamburger.	3
Mischievous	The poster posts something harmless to tease others or make fun of others. e.g. "I posted pictures of delicious food in the late night because I know people get hungry at that time, and they will suffer by seeing these pictures."	2
Pave the way for other posts	Under this circumstance, the poster may have "a bigger plan" of posting things, the content he/she posts this time to pave the way for the further posts. e.g. A participant claimed that a poster posted posts about his work to pave the way for expressing how hard for him to get together with his family in other posts.	1

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

4.2 Motives for liking

According to the data of all the 40 interviews, there are altogether 24 specific motives of liking. Similar with the posting motives, most of them with a communicative characteristic can be classified into

Schulz von Thun's Four Sides Model. Also, there are also some noncommunicative liking motives. Based on their characteristics, these liking motives are classified into Information Storage and Psychological as complements to Schulz von Thun's Four Sides Model.

Communicative: referential motives

The referential motives of liking are about noticing others about something. In the interviews, there are two motives are referential, which are: "Like the content" and "Have read". "Like the content" is about the most original meaning of the word "*like*". Also sometimes, when people post things like a notification, they want to know whether the target group has seen the post the post because there are so many posts on social media and it's very easy to miss a specific one. Under this condition, people can press the like button as the easiest way to tell the poster that they have read the post.

Table 9. Referential motives of liking.

Tile	Further explanation and examples	N
Like the content	The motive of this kind of liking behaviors just means like literally. It shows that the liker really like the content of the post, including picture, text and video, etc. e.g. The liker liked a travelling picture with local landscape because he thought the picture was really beautiful.	31
"Have read"	The liker likes a post as a way to tell the poster that he/she has seen the information. It's not about relationship. e.g. The likes under a post about notice others about a schedule, "someone liked the post just to show they had read the post."	3

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Communicative: expressive motives

A simple like can also express a variety of kinds of feelings. The feelings can be as simple as agree, while can also be as complicated as empathy and irony. In most cases, people use like to express simple feelings for pressing the like button is the simplest way. For example a click on the like button instead of writing down "I agree with you"; when it comes to complicated meaning, sometimes people want to express something, but to say it directly and clearly is strange or improper. So by liking the post, people can comply the desire of expressing as well as keep friendly and polite to others. However, it is highly possible that the poster will not get the real meaning of these kinds of likes.

Table 10. Expressive motives of liking.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Agree with the poster	The liker supports or agrees with the poster's opinion/propose/taste/behavior… e.g. The poster expressed his political attitude in a post, and the liker liked it to show that he shared the similar opinion.	21
Appreciate mood or life style	The liker appreciates the condition, mood and life style of the poster, and feels happy for the poster. e.g. The liker felt happy for the poster that she was in a good relationship with her boyfriend.	18
Empathy	Because of similar experiences, the liker can understand the poster's feeling. e.g. A mother liked a post about the pictures of the poster's child because she understood the love of a mother.	14
Common interests	The liker shares the same interest with the content in the post. e.g. A basketball fan liked a post about a basketball game.	7
Best wishes	The liker express kind regards, best wishes or congratulations to the	6

	poster by liking.	
	e.g. The poster posted a post about her birthday, and some one liked this post as a way to say "happy birthday" to her.	
Envy the poster	The liker is jealous or envious the poster's experience on the post. e.g. The liker liked a post about the poster watching football game aboard because he was jealous about the experience.	6
Irony	Actually, the liker does not like or agree with the content of the post, but he/she still likes it to indicate a sense of irony. e.g. The poster posted a post about a dish she cooked herself, and the liker liked this one because he thought the dish was not that good and he was a better cook (the poster and the liker are very close friends).	1

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Communicative: relational motives

Similar to the posting part, the relational motives of liking are about social relationship as well. Some participants agreed that liking the post of a certain or not would influence the relationship between the two people. Usually in a close social relationship (like families, lovers, close friends, etc.), people press the like button more sincerely. However, people in a comparatively allenated social relationship seem to be under a certain kind of social pressure, or do that more purposefully. For example some people may think that as a friend or a relative, they have an obligation to like the posts. Some may also think liking others' posts will benefit the relationship. In fact, according to the participants, people have different opinions on whether they will have a better impression on people who like their posts more.

Table 11. Relational motives of liking.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Express relationship	The liker is in a certain close social relationship with the poster and like the post of the poster to support the poster and sometimes even regardless of the content of post. e.g. A male participant liked every of his girlfriend's post.	20
Maintain interaction with the poster	The liker wants to have or keep interaction with the poster, but he/she has nothing to say (because of no topic or laziness). e.g. "Someone may like the post to show 'I'm still here', it's a kind of keeping oneself visible."	13
Reciprocity	The liker likes a certain person's post because he/she expects that one day the poster will like back. For the long term the purpose is to enjoy an equal benefit. e.g. "Young girls like each other and expect others will like them back."	11
Show care to the poster	This motive is usually conducted by old friends or friends that are far from each other. So the liker likes the post to show that he/she still thinks of or cares about the poster. e.g. "My old neighbor liked this post to show that he cared about me, and wanted to know my recent conditions."	8
Social pressure	Because of some reasons such as in a certain social relationship with someone, the liker feels obliged to like the post. e.g. A grandmother liked every of her granddaughter's post because in her opinion, liking granddaughter's posts is an oblige of being a good grand mother.	8

| Share good time together | The liker is involved in the activity of the post and he/she likes the post to express that they had a good time together.

e.g. The liker and the poster went to a same activity together, the poster posted a post about the activity, and the liker liked it because she was there as well and they enjoyed a happy time together. | 5 |
|---|---|---|
| Make fun of the poster | When the poster posts something about his/her negative experiences such as an unlucky thing or making a mistake (usually not really serious or bad condition), the liker liked the post to make fun of the poster.

e.g. The poster left her keys inside the room because of carelessness, her best friend liked this post to make fun of her. | 3 |
| Please other | To make leaders or superiors happy.

e.g. A liker liked his leader's post even before he actually seeing the content of the post just for making his leader happy. | 3 |
| Show interest to the poster | This motive is usually related to emotional or crush issues. To some extent, liking a person's post means liking the person.

e.g. Some boys liked a popular girl's post to show they were interested in the girl (have a desire to develop further relationship with the girl). | 1 |

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Communicative: appealing motives

Liking others' posts can also contain an appealing motive. The appealing motive is about directing others to do something. There are two kinds of appealing motives mentioned in the interviews. The first one is promotion. In a participant's social media, there was an advertisement post, and the participant

said: "There is one like under the post, and it is from the poster herself… I think it's because she wanted to express and emphasize how good the product is and strengthen the effect of the advertisement." The second one is to encourage the poster. The liker hopes that the poster can keep on going to achieve his/her goal.

Table 12. Appealing motives of liking.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Encourage the poster	The liker likes the post to cheer up or encourage the poster. e.g. The poster posted a post about going to participate a running race, and the liker liked this post to encourage the poster. "The post is about the person is going to participate a running race. Others liked the post because they wanted to encourage him, just like 'Keep going!' 'Cheer up!'."	9
Promotion	The liker likes his/her own post to promote or highlight the post. e.g. A person liked her own advertisement post.	1

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Noncommunicative: information storage motive

Liking behaviors can also be seen as a way to store information. However, since liking is such a simple action, marking a certain post is the main way that people use the "Like" button to store information. Sometimes, people may think a post is very interesting but do not want to share or save it. Some social media platforms allow users to find posts that have been reflected by themselves easily, so this is the way that users realize information storage by liking.

Table 13. Information storage motives of liking.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Mark a post	The liker wants to read a certain post again so that he/she likes to post then it will be easier to find the post. e.g. "I liked the post (a funny and strange one) to mark it and later I can show it to my friends."	1

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Noncommunicative: psychological motives

At last, there are also psychological motives of liking. Psychological motives have nothing to do with communicating with others, they are only about the feelings of one self. Usually the liking behavior is unconsciously and do not have any specific purpose. It is only related to the psychological state of the liker at that certain moment.

Table 14. Psychological motives of liking.

Title	Further explanation and examples	N
Habit	The liker gets used to like the posts in his/her social media account, and this kind of likes is more like conditioned reflex without a specific reason. e.g. Some participants claimed that some people had a habit of checking and liking others' posts on social media account every day.	11
Arbitrary	The liker claims that he/she was in the mode of liking. e.g. The liker said one day he was happy and he felt like an impulse to like other's posts.	4

Herding	The liker likes one post because he/she notices that others liked it.	2
	e.g. "Someone might like the post just because they saw others also	
	like the post."	

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

4.3 Comparing Chinese and European participants' motives

According to the classification that was mentioned in the previous part, all the motives of posting and liking were classified into several main categories. Firstly, the mean scores of the main categories were calculated by SPSS. Then the means of Chinese and European of each main category were compared to see whether there is a significant difference between the two groups. Secondly, every motive of posting and liking was compared to see which one contain a significant difference between the two groups.

Table 15. Differences in main categories of posting between Chinese and European participants.

Main category	Chinese	European	Significance
Referential	1.15 (0.37)	1.45 (0.51)	n.s.
Expressive	3.50 (1.19)	2.05 (1.36)	0.001
Relational	1.45 (1.05)	0.90 (1.02)	n.s.
Appealing	0.85 (0.75)	0.40 (0.68)	0.039
Information Storage	0.70 (0.66)	0.65 (0.67)	n.s.
Psychological	0.70 (0.80)	0.30(0.57)	n.s.
Other	0.45 (0.69)	0.10 (0.31)	n.s.

Note: Mean scores represent the number of different motives mentioned within a category.

According to the result, between Chinese and European participants, there exists significant differences in the Expressive and Appealing motives. And the difference in Expressive motives is

especially significant. While the differences between Referential, Relational, Information Storage, Psychological and Other are not significant.

Table 16. Significantly different posting motives between Chinese and European participants.

Category	Chinese	European
Notification	3	9
Express emotions	20	4
Establish a personal image	10	1
Best wishes	3	0
Ask for something	8	1
Avoid embarrassment	5	0

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive

From the data in the table, among all the 30 motives of posting, only 6 motives have significant differences between Chinese and European, which are Notification, Express emotions, Establish a personal image, Best wishes, Ask for something and Avoid embarrassment. Among these motives, European has the higher number only in Notification. In other motives, Chinese conduct them significantly more the European.

The method is completely the same as the posting part.

Table 17. Differences in main categories of liking between Chinese and European participants.

Main category	Chinese	European	Significance
Referential	0.70 (0.66)	1.10 (0.31)	0.016
Expressive	1.60 (1.19)	2.10 (0.85)	n.s.
Relational	2.00 (1.17)	1.70 (1.17)	n.s.
Appealing	0.30 (0.47)	0.20 (0.41)	n.s.
Information storage	0.00 (0.00)	0.05 (0.22)	n.s.

Psychological	0.60 (0.82)	0.30 (0.71)	n.s.

Note: Mean scores represent the number of different motives mentioned within a category.

For the main categories of liking between Chinese and European, significant difference only shows in Referential motives (0.016). The hypothesis of other kinds is denied.

Table 18. Significantly different liking motives between Chinese and European participants.

Category	Chinese	European
Like the content	12	20
Agree with the poster	6	15
Please other	3	0
Maintain interaction with the poster	10	4
Share good time together	0	5

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive

For the specific categories of liking, there are significant differences in Like the content, Agree with the poster, Please other, Maintain interaction with the poster and Share good time together. While European like other people's posts more under the reason of Like the content, Agree with the poster and Share good time together; and Chinese like others' post more for Please other and Maintain interaction with the poster.

4.4 Comparing own and others' motives

Table 19. Differences in main categories of posting motives between own and others'.

Main category	Own motives	Other motives	Significance
Referential	1.20 (0.41)	1.40 (0.50)	n.s.
Expressive	2.55 (1.54)	3.00 (1.38)	n.s.
Relational	0.85 (0.88)	1.50 (1.15)	n.s.

Appealing	0.40 (0.68)	0.85 (0.75)	0.039
Information Storage	0.95 (0.69)	0.40 (0.50)	0.010
Psychological	0.55 (0.83)	0.45 (0.60)	n.s.
Other	0.20 (0.52)	0.35 (0.59)	n.s.

Note: Mean scores represent the number of different motives mentioned within a category.

There are significant differences in Appealing (0.039) and Information storage (0.010). In the own motives part, the mean score is lower in Appealing while it is higher in Information storage. No significant differences are shown in Referential, Expressive, Relational, Psychological and Other motives.

Table 20. Significantly different posting motives between own and others'.

Category	Own	Others'
Empathy	4	0
Attract mates	0	4
Satisfy vanity	8	16
Best wishes	3	0
Attract attention	0	3
Advertisement	2	11
Keep diaries	11	4

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive

From the data of the table, there are 7 specific liking motives have significant differences between own and others' groups. There are larger number of participants who mentioned Empathy, Best wishes and Keep diaries when talking about their own posts, while smaller number of participants who mentioned Attract mates, Satisfy vanity, Attract attention and Advertisement in this group than the group of talking about others' posts.

Table 21. Differences in main categories of liking motives between own and others'.

Main category	Own	Others	Significance
Referential	1.05 (0.51)	0.75 (0.55)	n.s.
Expressive	1.95 (1.10)	1.75 (1.02)	n.s.
Relational	1.90 (1.27)	1.80 (1.11)	n.s.
Appealing	0.25 (0.44)	0.25 (0.44)	n.s.
Information storage	0.00 (0.00)	0.05 (0.22)	n.s.
Psychological	0.45 (0.76)	0.45 (0.69)	n.s.

Note: Mean scores represent the number of different motives mentioned within a category.

Surprisingly, according to the analysis, there is no significantly different in any of the liking motives between own and others'.

5 Discussion

5.1 Main findings

There are several findings from the results. Firstly, when comparing the motives of Chinese with European, for the posting part: the differences in the expressive and appealing motives are significant, especially in expressive motives. While the differences between referential, relational, information storage, psychological and other are not significant, which means the frequencies of posting behaviors of Chinese and European under these motives are similar to each other. When it comes to the specific motives of posting, Chinese and European have significant behaviors on notification, express emotions, establish a personal image, best wishes, ask for something and avoid embarrassment, while European only post more about notification. These results can indicate that European may use social media in a more practical way, while Chinese talk and express more about themselves on social media. Also, actually, the result corresponds people's general impression on Chinese and European cultural differences. Like because of the cultural difference, Chinese people are shier to express themselves face-to-face. So the characteristics of social media may provide them a platform to express themselves freer. For the liking

part: only referential as the main category has a significant difference between Chinese and European. As for the specific motives, European like other people's posts because more about like the content, agree with the poster and share good time together; while Chinese like others' post more for the reason of please other and maintain interaction with the poster. So from the result, European use the "Like" button in a more direct way, the reasons of their likes are more related the original meaning of the word like. However, the liking behaviors of Chinese are more about the relationship and they like others' posts under clearer social purposes.

Secondly, when comparing own and others' motives, for the posting part: comparing the participants' opinions on their own and others' posts, there are significant differences in appealing and information storage. When it comes to the specific posting motives, participants have different opinions on empathy, best wishes, keep diaries, attract mates, satisfy vanity, attract attention and advertisement. The result shows that in other people's opinion, they tend to view the motives of the posts in a more comparative negative ways (such as satisfy vanity and advertisement). And misinterpretation also exists in the practical way of using social media. For example, when someone posts something only for himself/herself, usually others cannot get the point. Additionally, appeal on social media also seems powerless on social media for others may not understand the poster's purpose. For the liking part: the results show that there is no significance not only in the main categories but also in every specific motive. Therefore, although there were altogether 24 liking motives mentioned in the interviews, actually, people have similar understandings in their own and others' liking behaviors. So the result means information with is carried in a like can be well interpreted in most cases, which means, there will be less misunderstanding among the likes.

Additionally, something else are worth to be mentioned here: firstly, a quote from a participant can to some extent explain why people choose the publicizing part of social media to communicate instead of the traditional ways: "Sometimes I want to communicate with others, but there is no specific person in my mind. By posting something to start a topic on social media, I don't need to worry about whether I disturb others, and others do not feel a pressure to respond me immediately as well. If someone wants to have

some interaction with me, he (/she) can comment under the post or send me messages after seeing the post. In that way, social media is a new way to communicate with each other." Another thing is in some of the interviews, participants were very cautious on talking about their own motives. Sometimes it's really hard to tell whether they were telling the truth or whether they have really reviewed themselves. However, when talking about others' motives, they participants seemed to be more relaxed. Overall, people's opinions on others' motives can be seen as mirrors that can reflect how they are. For instance, a participant said that he seldom posted because he was worried about if the feedback didn't reach his expectation, it would reduce his confidence. And when he talked about others' posts and the reflections, he always thought the motives were about confidence. Therefore to some extend, when people talking about their opinion on others' behavior, they also express themselves.

5.2 Theoretical implications

In this research, the four-sides model by Schulz von Thun is conducted as the fundamental conceptual framework to classify motives of posting and liking. However, the result of this research shows that the four main facets of communication are not enough to cover all the motives of posting and liking behaviors on social media. Apart from communicative motives, people also develop noncommunicative motives for posting and liking. For example, posting motives such as "for a certain prize" and liking motives such as "mark a post" do not belong to any of the four facets. Therefore, information storage, psychological, and other motives are added into the framework to describe posting motives, while information storage and psychological motives are added into the framework to describe liking motives as an implement for the four-sides model.

The similar condition also goes for the honeycomb model by Kietzmann et al. (2011) The seven functions: presence, sharing, conversations, groups, reputation, relationships and identity are all related to self-disclosure and social activities. However, the result of this research shows that people have developed a variety of usages on social media. So the noncummunicative functions should also be included in the honeycomb model.

Based on the conceptual framework, this research provides a new idea of classifying people's motives for posting and liking. By focusing on actual use of social media, a more practical approach is conducted to check the motives of posting and liking. People's motives for liking in this research fill the gap of previous researches on the liking behavior. And the motives of liking in this research can in some extent explain the conclusions of previous studies like why certain kinds of posts can get more likes (Jang, Han, & Lee, 2015). And the further comparison of both Chinese and European, own and others' can be seen as complements to previous studies.

5.3 Practical implications

The findings of this research can be used by mainly two kinds of people.

The first kind is the designers of social media. Like the discussion about whether there should also be a "Dislike" button that was mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, the designers should think about how to extend or upgrade the existing functions of social media. By collecting the ideas of 40 Chinese and European participants, the results show that there is a great diversity among different social media users. Currently, more and more companies view globalization as an important part of their business strategy, so the designers should have some knowledge about the difference between different areas. For the designers, it's important for them to know more about the usage of their products and the appeal of their customers. So the conclusion of this research can be seen as a reference for designers and it will be helpful for them to upgrade their product creatively.

The second kind is the uses themselves. In the interviews, nearly all the participants mentioned that although they are active social media users, they had never really think about the motives of posting and liking behaviors. During the interviews, it was the first time they really asked themselves about the deeper reasons of why do people do that. So they may never notice that there is such a great diversity among others' opinions on a same post. Therefore, the users can have a better understanding of people's motives on using social media, such as the difference and similarity between Chinese and European, the

possibility of misinterpretation, the consequences of posting and liking behaviors, and the influence of social media on their social activities, etc. Then they can make a better use of social media.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

One limitation of this research is that all the participants are well-educated people, most of them are postgraduate students. So people who may be not capable to represent all kinds of users.

For future research, there are two advices: firstly, there are some differences between genders. Based on some evidences, male and female participants may have different thinking modes in general. So further researches can focus on the differences of usage and opinions. Secondly, although the target group is young people (between 18-35 years old) from China and Europe, age can still make a difference through all the interviews. "I'm not 16 any more." "When I was younger, I did post things like…"Such statements were often mentioned by participants. For instance, some participants said that when they were younger, they often talked about things such as relationship problems and negative emotions on their social media. But as they became more mature now, they didn't post these kinds of things any more. And also, younger participants seemed to post more about tiny things and emotions in daily life, while participants who are around 30 years old post less about themselves. So the future research can segment age into smaller sections, and focus on the subtle differences of the posting and liking behaviors.

5.5 Conclusion

The conclusions of this research are: firstly, there is considerable diversity in the motives of posting and liking behaviors. The motives of both posting and liking can be divided into communicative and noncommunicative ways. However, the communicative motives are still the majority in the use of social media. Based on the Four Sides Model of Schulz von Thun and some implements, all the motives can be further classified into several main categories according to their attributes. Secondly, Chinese behave differently from European on both posting and liking behaviors in some ways. Chinese express themselves more on social media, and their interaction with others has more obvious social purpose.

While European tend to use social media in a more practical way, they don't express themselves as much as Chinese do on social media. They convey information to others more directly and have less purpose on the social relationship. Last but not least, when comparing own motives with others', people are more likely to misinterpret Appealing and Information Storage posting motives of others'. However, people hold very similar opinions on liking behaviors of their own and others, no significant difference has shown here.

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Appendix

Table 22. Significantly different posting motives between Chinese and European participants.

Category	Chinese	European
Share interesting content	20	20
Notification	3	9
Express opinions	10	9
Express emotions	20	4
Establish a personal image	10	1
Empathy	3	1
Share life moments	6	11
Show relationship	4	4
Attract mates	2	2
Satisfy vanity	15	9
Best wishes	3	0
Attract attention	1	2
Keep a frequency to appear in others' vision	10	7
For interacting	12	6
Social pressure	2	0
For helping others	1	3
Seek for answers	2	1
Advertisement	7	6
Ask for something	8	1
Keep diaries	10	5
Cloud storage	4	8
Release pressure	5	1

Avoid embarrassment	5	0
Encourage oneself	4	2
Arbitrary	0	2
Superstition	0	1
For a certain prize	2	1
Leisure activity	4	1
Mischievous	2	0
Pave the way for other posts	1	0

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Table 23. Significantly different liking motives between Chinese and European participants.

Category	Chinese	European
Like the content	12	20
"Have read"	2	2
Agree with the poster	6	15
Appreciate mood or life style	6	12
Best wishes	4	3
Common interests	4	3
Envy the poster	4	2
Empathy	7	7
Irony	1	0
Express relationship	11	9
Please other	3	0
Reciprocity	8	3
Social pressure	2	6
Maintain interaction with the poster	10	4

Share good time together	0	5
Show care to the poster	3	5
Show interest to the poster	0	1
Make fun of the poster	3	1
Promotion	1	0
Encourage the poster	5	4
Herding	2	0
Habit	7	5
Arbitrary	3	1
Mark a post	0	1

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Table 24. Significantly different posting motives between own and others'.

Category	Self	Other
Share interesting content	20	20
Notification	4	8
Express opinions	8	11
Express emotions	13	11
Establish a personal image	5	6
Empathy	4	0
Share life moments	8	9
Show relationship	5	3
Attract mates	0	4
Satisfy vanity	8	16
Best wishes	3	0
Attract attention	0	3

Keep a frequency to appear in others' vision	6	11
For interacting	6	12
Social pressure	0	2
For helping others	2	2
Seek for answers	2	1
Advertisement	2	11
Ask for something	4	5
Keep diaries	11	4
Cloud storage	8	4
Release pressure	4	2
Avoid embarrassment	3	2
Encourage oneself	2	4
Arbitrary	2	0
Superstition	0	1
For a certain prize	1	2
Leisure activity	2	3
Mischievous	1	1
Pave the way for other posts	0	1

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.

Table 25. Significantly different liking motives between own and others'.

Category	Own	Other
Like the content	18	14
"Have read"	3	1
Agree with the poster	12	9
Appreciate mood or life style	9	9

Best wishes	4	3
Common interests	5	2
Envy the poster	3	3
Empathy	6	8
Irony	0	1
Express relationship	11	9
Please other	1	2
Reciprocity	8	3
Social pressure	2	6
Maintain interaction with the poster	7	7
Share good time together	3	2
Show care to the poster	4	4
Show interest to the poster	0	1
Make fun of the poster	2	2
Promotion	0	1
Encourage the poster	5	4
Herding	0	2
Habit	6	6
Arbitrary	3	1
Mark a post	0	1

Note: Scores represent the number of participants who mentioned a motive.