Facebook Usage among Somali Youth: A Test of Uses and Gratificaitons Approach

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the uses and gratifications obtained by Somali youth from using Facebook based on the uses and gratifications theory. The study employed online survey to collect the data. A total of 311 respondents participated in the study. The results suggest that Somali youth are motivated by virtual companionship escape, interpersonal habitual entertainment, self-description of own country, self-expression, information seeking, and passing time gratifications. When regressed these factors against the time spent on the site, virtual companionship escape (β = .281 t = 3.226, p< .05), interpersonal habitual entertainment (β = .145, t= 1.972, P< .05) and self-description of own country (β =.184, t= 2.762, P< .05) appeared as the predictors of the model. Finally, the study found that Facebook can be used as promotion tool for a country. Thus, the study suggests examining that factor in the context of countries that are experiencing chaotic situation.

Keywords: Facebook, gratifications, Somali youth, uses and gratifications theory.

1. Introduction

Social media platforms like Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter became popular sites among adults (Pew reports, 2011). About two-thirds of these adults use social media platforms to interact with friends and family members. Each of social media sites fulfills different needs that other tools cannot facilitate completely (Quan-Haase& Young, 2010). There are several reasons that motivate users to adopt social media platforms. The major reasons of using it include staying in contact with the current friends, staying in touch with family members, and maintaining old friendships (Pew reports, 2011). Facebook (FB), a social network site, has become popular platform among youth and university students (Valentine, 2011; Abdullahi, Said, & Ibrahim, 2011, Foregger, 2008). Facebook was used to have a fun and keeping in connect with social activities, compared with instant messaging which was adopted by university students to maintain and develop the old and new relationships (Quan-Haase& Young, 2010).

A recent survey of adoption of social media among Somali students in Malaysia revealed that the majority of them extensively adopted Facebook (Ruslan & Dhaha, 2012). More than three quarters of Somali students (82%) used social networking sites (Facebook), and reported it as their first preference among social media sites (45%), followed by windows live (23%). The least preferred social media sites include Google+, blogs, and instant messaging (11.6%). This study reported that the students also adopted social media sites to lift up awareness about the recent famine in Somalia. The current study seeks to explore the uses and gratifications obtained by Somali youth from using FB. It also intends to find out if the gratifications obtained from FB differ by demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, occupation, and place of living. The study will also examine whether Somali youth use FB to promote the image and reputation of their country, and to determine which of the gratifications factors best predict the time spent on Facebook by Somali youth.

2. Background of the Study

Bounded by the Indian Ocean to the east, Gulf of Aden to the north, Djibouti to the northwest, Kenya to the southwest, and Ethiopia to the west, Somalia is located in the horn of Africa. It has gained its independence from both Britain and Italy colonials on 1st July, 1960. The first language in the country is Somali language.

Somali language was written down in 1972 by revolutionary regime of Siad Bare (19969-1991) in his bid to find a national language for the country. Other languages Somalis spoke include Arabic, English, French, and Italian. The information dissemination channels in the country in early days were through verbal language, particularly poetry. The information is important to Somalis, as they request from each other when they meet in the streets and other places like malls or restaurants to provide information (Issa-Salwe & Olden, 2008). They argue that the developments in telecommunications expanded the interest of Somalis in information dissemination. Afrax (2000) discussed the importance of oral poetry in the life of Somalis and claimed that "oral poetry, oral narrative, proverbs and words of wisdom were an integral part of every aspect of daily life: everything from herding livestock or sewing mats to debating issues or organizing feuds" (cited in Issa-Salwe & Olden, 2008, p.575). Although the internet was introduced to Somalia in late 2000s, there is a great presence for Somalis on the World Wide Web. According to Issa-Salwe (2006) there were over 400 Somali websites in mid 2004, and seems that the number today had doubled twice. He divided the Somali websites into six main categories. These categories include professional/business, online news, religious, personal, radio/TV, community/political, and cultural/literature. Issa-Salwe argued that there are two major reasons behind the increase of the number of Somali websites: "(1) the loss of national identity following the collapse of the state institutions, and (2) the characteristics of the Internet that make it more accessible, participatory and conducive to oral expressiveness (p. 58)".

Moreover, there is a great presence of Somalis in most of social media and social networking sites, but there is a general lack of data and figures. However, there were some attempts by some organizations, who are trying to document the involvement of Somalis in social media tools. Arab social media report (ASMR) produced by Dubai School of government, is one of those attempts. In its last report in 2011 about Facebook usage in Arab world, it showed that Facebook users in Somalia are 6,940 with 0.08 of penetration. According to the report, the majority of Facebook users in Somalia (84%) are youth of 15-29 years old. There is a big gender gap in using Facebook, as the report further revealed that there are more males (85%) who use Facebook than female (15%).

The data reported by ASMR may be inaccurate because of its dependence on official Facebook data, which documents only the registered country name of the users. It is worthy of noting that Somalis are scattered all over the world because of conflict and civil war in the country. Therefore, some of them may register the host country where they live temporarily or permanently on their Facebook profile. Additionally, the report did not mention any classification about the use of official Facebook data. There are options in the site that allow the users to describe their home country or original country. Some of the people did not disclose their original home or country due to skepticism or concerns of identity. However, the report offers some useful insights about how Somalis involved in the most popular social networking site, Facebook.

Another report by SOCIALBAKERS, a global social media and digital analytics company, revealed a different statistics from what ASMR reported. SOCIALBAKARS reported that the total number of Facebook users in Somalia had reached 105, 480 users with male majority (75%) in August 2012. The data also showed that Facebook penetration in the country is 1.04% compared to the country's population. According to the report (SOCIALBAKERS, September 12, 2012) Somalia falls in the number of 143 in terms of ranking of all Facebook statistics by country. The largest age group of Facebook users in the country is currently 18-24 with 51%, followed by 25-34 age groups with 28%. This report has also provided essential notes about Facebook usage in the country, which demonstrates a huge presence of Somalis in the site compared to previous years.

3. Literature review

3.1. Uses and gratifications approach (U&G): A general overview

The uses and gratifications (U&G) approach, one of the popular mass communication theories, severs as a theoretical background for this study. The U&G approach focuses on the goal of the receiver, not the goal of the communicator (Severin & Tankard, 2001). In another way, the audiences use the media to fulfill certain needs. This approach is one of the most cited communication theories as best tool for analyzing new media technologies (Ebersole, 2000). Katz, Blumler, &Gurevitch (1974) argue that the gratifications approach dates back to the empirical studies on mass media research in 1940s. Those studies include Lazarsfeld-Stanton collections (1942, 1944, 1949), that focused on quiz programs, listening to soap operas, music on radio, children's interest in comics, and functions of newspaper reading.

Katz and his associates continue to argue that all of those studies shared, firstly, a common methodological approach, as the statements were derived from the respondents in an open-ended way. Secondly, they shared qualitative approach in order to give labels to gratifications statements. Thirdly, they did not explore the relationship between those gratifications obtained and the sociological or psychological origins of the needs. Fourthly, those studies failed to investigate the interrelationship among the different media functions by quantitatively or conceptually.

The U&G concept had appeared at the first time in an article written by Elihu Katz in 1959. In his response to Berelson who claimed that the communication research seems to be dead, Katz argued that the field could survive if the attention converted from persuasion-oriented to people need-oriented. He argued that this approach asks the people "what do they do with the media" but not "what do the media do with the people". This approach starts with "the assumption that the message of even the most potent of the media cannot ordinarily influence an individual who has no "use" for it in the social and psychological context in which he lives" (Katz, 1959, p.2). On the other hand, Katz, Gurevitch & Haas (1973) identified five major social and psychological needs that the audiences seek to obtain from using the media. They listed 35 needs derived from the literature on social and psychological functions of the mass media by categorizing those needs into five main needs: *cognitive needs, affective needs, integrative needs, personal integrative needs,* and *social integrative needs.*

Moreover, Miller (2002) pointed out that the concept of U&G had undergone two theoretical developments. First, some scholars proposed, "these lists of needs can be divided into fundamentally different types of gratifications" (p.243). The second essential theoretical development is about the difference between the *gratifications sought* and *the gratifications obtained.* This differentiating process "makes the point that what an individual wants from the media is not always what an individual gets from the media" (p.244).

The U&G approach has drawn some criticisms. Scholars argue that the "needs that people seek to fulfill through media use are inferred from questions about why they use the media, leading to the suspicion that the need was created by the media or is a rationalization for the media use" (Severin & Tankard, 2001, p.297).

3.2. U&G and Social Media Tools

The U&G on social media tools literature is rapidly evolving. There are many studies conducted to explore the gratifications obtained by the different people from social media platforms (Leung & Wei, 2000; Chung & Kim, 2007; Raine, 2008; Foregger, 2008; Raake & Bonds-Raake, 2008; Ancu & Cozma, 2009, Shao, 2009; Johnson & Yong, 2009; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Valentine, 2011, Idid, Wok, Dhaha, & Aziz, 2012). These studies focused specifically on one or two of social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, Wikipedia, and mobile phones.

Anco & Cozma (2009) studied how the respondents befriended with the candidates through MySpace. They adopted the U&G approach to determine the gratifications obtained by the respondents from visiting the candidates' profiles in the election of 2008 in United Stated of America. Anco and Cozma's study revealed that the social interaction, information seeking and guidance, and entertainment as the motives for visiting the candidates' profile on MySpace.

Moreover, Raake & Bonds-Raake (2008) applied this approach to investigate the impact of social networking sites (SNS) on college students, through comparing the most two popular sites in SNS (Facebook and MySpace). The study discovered that the majority of students used SNS platforms for many different reasons like establishing new friendships and maintaining old friends. Social interaction, making and maintaining old friendships and information seeking were the motives for using Facebook and MySpace sites among college students.

In user-generated tools like YouTube, Wikipedia, and MySpace, Shao (2009) found that the respondents sought information, entertainment, and mode management gratifications from these tools. Shao's study revealed that the individuals make use of those tools for different objectives. Chung & Kim's (2007) study on involvement in blogging among cancer patients and their companions revealed several gratifications for engaging in blogging activities. Chung and Kim found that those patients and their companions sought problem solving, prevention and care, emotion management and information-sharing gratifications from blogs use. Both of them rated blogs as helpful for emotion management.

On the other hand, Johnson & Yang (2009) found that the social motives and information motives were related to the uses and gratifications of Twitter- a micro blogging site.

Users often adopt many different social media sites to fulfill certain needs from each medium. Quan-Haase & Young (2010) investigated the needs for adopting many social media tools instead of adopting one form of communication through comparing Facebook and instant messaging (IM). Factor analysis showed six dimensions for using Facebook and IM: *pastime, affection, fashion, share problem, sociability, and social information.* Quan-Haase & Young's study revealed that Facebook was adopted by the undergraduate students to "have fun and knowing about the social activities occurring in one's social network, whereas instant messaging is geared more toward relationship maintenance and development" (p.350).

In the context of mobile phone, Leung & Wei (2000) found many motives for different uses of mobile phone. Immediacy, instrumentality, and mobility were found to be strong motives for using mobile phones, followed by affection/sociability. In a more recent study, Idid, Wok, Dhaha & Ab.Aziz (2012) found six gratifications obtained by youth in Malaysia from using mobile phones: *affection/sociability, relaxation, fashion/status, information seeking, and avoidance of public phone hassle.* Idid and his associates found gender and nationality differences among youth. There was a significant difference between female and male youth with regard to affection/sociability motive. Female youth were found to be "more socially-oriented than the male youth" (p.15). The study also found nationality differences, whereby the Malaysian youth tended to use the mobile phone for avoiding the public phone hassle than the international youth.

3.3. U&G and Facebook

Founded on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard's undergraduate student, Facebook allowed students at the campus to network with each other (Facebook, 2012). The idea behind establishing Facebook is to share and connect with people with more comfortable ways of control over the content they share at all the time (Zuckerberg, 2011). As of June 2012, Facebook users reached 955 million people all over the world. About 81% of those active users are living outside the United States of America and Canada (Facebook, 2012). In 2005, the site attracted the high school students as it opened for them to network with each other. By the beginning of 2006, the site had become popular among the public to share and connect with their friends (Valentine, 2011). The site become also the most popular social networking site among the students, and it gained the highest penetration among college students in United States of America (Foregger, 2008).

The popularity of Facebook has attracted many researchers (Raine, 2008; Foregger, 2008; Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009; Valentine, 2011; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011) to investigate the effects, uses, gratifications, attitudes, behaviors, identity, privacy, and involvement in Facebook. There are several studies conducted on the uses and gratifications of Facebook among various populations. As the theory proposed, the gratifications obtained and sought from Facebook vary from one individual to another. Raine (2008) explored the uses and gratifications obtained from using Facebook generally, as well as seeking political information on Facebook among young adults. Raine's study found five basic motives for using Facebook generally among college students, namely social utility, entertainment, convenience, information seeking, and diversion. Moreover, the study found two motives associated with using Facebook for political information: *social utility/entertainment and surveillance.*

Similarly, Foregger (2008) adopted the U&G perspective to explore the undergraduate students' use of Facebook and its gratifications obtained. Three hundred and forty students from communication courses in a university in USA had participated in this study. The students demonstrated different motives for engaging in Facebook including passing time, sexual attraction, utilities and upkeep, connection, accumulation, channel use, social comparison, networking, and establish/maintain old ties.

Furthermore, Park, Kee & Valenzuela (2009) had surveyed 1,715 college students in order to explore their participation of Facebook groups, the gratifications obtained from involvement in these groups, and their political and civic participation offline. The results discovered four key motives for participation in Facebook activities among groups, namely information seeking, entertainment, self-status seeking, and socializing. In addition, the results revealed gender, hometown, and year in school differences in demographics in terms of the gratifications obtained from involvement in Facebook group activities.

Moreover, the study found a relationship between students' motives and civic and political participation, where as "informational uses were more correlated to civic and political action as to recreational uses" (p.729).

In a more recent study of Facebook uses and gratifications, Valentine (2011) investigated the older age demographics of Facebook users from age of 35 and above, who were inadequately represented in previous studies. She found five factors motivated the older people to engage in Facebook usage. The factors include interpersonal habitual entertainment, passing time, virtual companionship escape, information seeking, and self-expression. The results of this study also indicated that the "Facebook members 35 and older tend to use the site most often for communication with people in their network, which is also reflected in previous findings reported for young audiences (p.43).

Additionally, the use of Facebook features emerged as essential to be investigated. Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn (2011) argued that these tools and features are diverse and previous studies did not focus on these issues. By addressing these concerns, they applied U&G perspective to explore the motives for using certain features on Facebook among undergraduate students. Smock and his colleagues found that the students' motives for using Facebook is determined by their use of different features like wall posts, status updates, comments, private messages, groups, and chat. The results indicated different motives for different features. For instance, status updates is predicted by the expressing information-sharing motive, and writing on Facebook friends' walls is positively predicted by social interaction, habitual pass time, and professional advancement.

3.4. Research questions

Based on the literature discussed above, we proposed the following research questions:

1) What are the uses and gratifications obtained by Somali youth from using Facebook?
2) Do gratifications obtained from Facebook usage differ by demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, occupation, and place of living?
3) Do Somali youth use Facebook to promote image and reputation of their country?
4) Which of the gratifications factors best predict the time spent on Facebook?

4. Methodology

4.1. Data collection and sampling procedure

To answer research questions, this study employs survey design in order to collect information from the respondents. Online questionnaire was considered as an appropriate tool for this study. Online survey has many advantages including that it is fast and offers current results (De Leeuw, 2012). The author argues that the respondents "are the ones who decide where and when to complete the questionnaire and how much time it is going to take" (p. 74), and the "question-answer process is very private and respondents can take their time in completing the list, precisely because there is no interviewer present" (p.75). A convenient sample was utilized due to the exploratory nature of uses and gratifications among Somali youth.

Data was collected through online survey from September 15, 2012 until October 15, 2012 (30 days). The researchers posted the link of the survey on their Facebook accounts and invited all their friends and friends of their friends to participate in this study. The link was also posted in several groups on Facebook that run by Somali youth. The respondents were briefed about the objectives of the study and were requested to invite their friends via posting the survey link on their walls as well. They were reminded about the survey several times through posts on walls of Facebook and follow-up messages sent to them through private messages available in the site. Three hundred and eleven (311) respondents participated in this study.

The survey was pilot-tested with 30 students from international Islamic University Malaysia initially. The students answered the survey and gave their feedback about questions whether they were ambiguous or poorly phrased. The pilot test allowed improving the validity of the survey. The pilot test also helped increase our understanding of gratifications obtained by youth and we included five additional items in order to know whether Somali youth used Facebook to promote the image and reputation of their own country.

4.2. Instrumentation

The study utilized survey design. A self-administered questionnaire was developed for data collection purposes. The survey comprised of three sections: **Section 1** asked about demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, marital status, level of education, occupation, and place of living. **Section 2** asked about Facebook account such year of establishment of the respondents' account, time spent online on the site, access time, and number of friends they have on Facebook. **Section 3** asked about the gratifications obtained by the study respondents, which consist 43 items (majority of them adopted from previous study).

4.3. Measurements

Patterns of Facebook usage: this scale was modified from previous studies (Lahabou & Wok, 2012; Shahnaz & Wok, 2011). This scale include year established the account, time spent online on the site, access time, and number of friends connected with. The response choice for year established the account ranged from (1= less than 1 year ago to 6= more than 5 years). For the time spent online ranged from (1= less than hour to 5= more than 4 hours), for access time ranged from (1= morning to 5= all the time), for the number of friends ranged from (1= 0-200 to 6= more than 1000).

Gratifications measure: to ensure the validity of the measures, the gratifications scale used in this study was adopted from a previous study (Valentine, 2011). Participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement with 43 statements using a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Five gratifications factors were evaluated: 1) interpersonal habitual entertainment, 2) virtual companionship escape, 3) information seeking, 4) self-expression, and 5) passing time, comprising of 38 items. Although majority of gratifications items were adopted from a previous study, five additional items are original to this study. These include 1) I use it to promote for my county, 2) I use it to give accurate information about my country, 3) I use it to post news/events about my country, 4) I use it to portray positive image of my country, and 5) I use it to help people understand what is going on in my county.

4.4. Reliability for Gratifications Factors

Table 1 (in the appendix) shows the Cronbach's alpha for the gratifications factors. The reliability for this study ranged from 0.784 to .923. The first factor (virtual companionship escape) has obtained the highest alpha (0.923). The third factor (self-description of own country) has obtained the second highest alpha (0.906). Other factors obtained alpha higher than 0.70.

4.5. Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) WIN version 17.0. The statistical tools used in this study include descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentage, mean, and Standard deviation) and inferential statistics (one sample t-test, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA F-test and regression) in order to answer the research questions.

5. Findings

5.1. Demographic characteristics

As shown in table 2 (in the appendix) the total sample in this study comprised of 311 respondents. Majority of them were male youth (87.1%) compared with one-tenth of female youth (12.9). In terms of highest educational level completed, half of them obtained bachelor degree (50.2%) and less than one-quarter completed master degree (22.5%), followed by those who obtained secondary school leaving certificate (15.4%), diploma (10.0%), PhD (1.6%) and no formal education (0.3%). In terms of age, exactly half of the respondents (50.5%) were between 21-25 years old, and more than one third (40.2%) of them were between 26-30 years old. Less than one-tenth of the respondents are older than 30 years (9.3%). As for marital status, almost two-thirds of the respondents were single youth (62.4%) and about one-third are married (36.7%). With regard to occupation, half of the respondents are university students (49.5%), followed by private sector employees (28.6%), self employed (6.1%), school students (5.1%), unemployed (4.5%), and government staff (4.2%). Few of the respondents were reported as housewives (1.9%). More than two-thirds of the respondents (78.8%) are living in Diaspora, mainly in Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Thailand, with 25.7%) and east Africa (Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania, with 28.9%). Less than one-quarter of the respondents (21.2%) live inside the country.

5.2. Patterns of Facebook Usage

The results in table 3 (in the appendix) depicts that one-third of Somali youth (33.1%) established their Facebook account between 2-3 years ago. A quarter of them opened their Facebook account between 3-4 years ago (26.7%), followed by those who established between 4-5 years ago (18.0%), and those who opened between 1-2 years ago (13.2%). In terms of the time spent by the respondents online on Facebook daily, the results indicate that, slightly less than one-third spent 1-2 hours daily on the site (30.9%), followed by those who spent 2-3 hours (24.4%), less than one hour (19.9%), more than 4 hours (12.9%), and 3-4 hours daily (11.9%). For the access time, almost half of the respondents (47.3%) surf the site in the evening and about one-fifth (19%) accessed all the time, followed by those who surf in the morning and in the afternoon (14.5% and 10.9% respectively). In terms of number of Facebook friends, around one quarter of the respondents have connected with 201-400 friends (24.4%), followed by those who connected with more than 1000 friends (19.9%), 601-800 friends (15.8), 401-600 friends (15.4%), 0-200 (14.8) and lastly those who connected with 801-1000 friends (9.6%).

5.3. Uses and Gratifications of Facebook

In this study, 38 gratifications items from a previous study (Valentine, 2011) were adopted with five additional items, which make them to 43. Six motives comprising the 43 items were evaluated. Table 4 (in the appendix) displays all six factors and Eigenvalues.

To analyze the gratifications obtained by Somali youth from Facebook usage, an exploratory factor analysis of the all items was conducted using principle components with varimax rotation. All items were involved in the process. In the initial factor analysis, seven components (factors) were extracted. All factor loadings exceeded more than 0.40 except one item (it enables me to meet new friends). The reliability for all factors was higher than the conventional level of 0.70 except for one factor. In order to avoid deleting any factor and item, we run the analysis again by forcing it into six factors, accounting for 59.01% of the total variance. The extracted factors are the following: virtual companionship escape ($\alpha = 0.923$), interpersonal habitual entertainment ($\alpha = 0.863$), Self-description of own country ($\alpha = 0.906$), information seeking ($\alpha = 0.839$), self-expression ($\alpha = 0.784$), and passing time ($\alpha = 0.792$). The reliability of all factors is higher than the acceptable level (0.70). Although one item (it enables me to meet new friends) has obtained low factor loading (0.394), but still the factor obtained acceptable reliability.

Virtual companionship escape factor comprised of the highest number of items (12) and accounted for 33% of the variance. Interpersonal habitual entertainment is the second factor with highest number of items (11) and accounted for 8.9% of the variance. Self-description of own country is new factor that is original to this study and accounted for 6.55% of the variance. All five items that were added to the gratifications scale were represented in this factor. The fourth factor (information seeking) consisted of seven items and accounted for 4.1% of the variance. Self-expression, which is the fifth factor, comprised of five items and accounted for 3.4% of the variance. The last factor, passing time, consisted of three items and accounted for 3.1% of the variance.

5.4. Research Questions

RQ1: The first research question asked about the gratifications that Somali youth obtained from Facebook usage. The factor analysis showed that Somali youth were motivated by virtual companionship escape, interpersonal habitual, self-description of own country, information seeking, self-expression, and passing time gratifications.

RQ2: With regard to second research question that asked about if, the gratifications obtained by Somali youth from using Facebook differ by demographic characteristics. A series of t-test and one-ways ANOVA analysis revealed that the gratifications obtained did not differ except for passing time, which showed significant difference. There is no difference between male and female Somali youth with regard to virtual companionship escape (t= -0.471, P= 0.640), interpersonal habitual entertainment (t= 0.314, P=0.755), self-description of own self (t= -0.681, P=0.496), information seeking (t= -0.285, P=0.777), self-expression (t=-0.453, P= 0.653), and passing time (t= -1.251, P=0.217).

In terms of educational level, the analysis of one-way ANOVA reveled no difference among less educated, moderately educated, and highly educated in terms of virtual companionship escape (F= 0.592, P= 0.554), interpersonal habitual entertainment (F=0.419, P= 0.658), self-description of own country (F= 0.581, P= 0.560), information seeking (F= 0.983, P= 0.375), and self-expression (F= 0.456, P= 0.634).

In contrast, there is a significant difference among less educated, moderately educated and highly educated in terms of passing time (F= 3.594, P= 0.029). Less educated youth used Facebook more on passing time (M=3.33, SD= 1.1293) compared to moderately educated (M= 3.30, SD= 0.9939), and highly educated (M= 2.96, SD= 1.206). In addition, there is no significant different among age categories in terms of virtual companionship escape (F=1.483, P=0.219), interpersonal habitual entertainment (F=0.521, P=0.668), Self-description of own country (F=0.493, P=0.668), information seeking (F=0.181, P=0.909), self-expression (F=1.685, P=0.170). Moreover, the analysis revealed a significant difference among age categories with regard to passing time (F= 5.851, P= 0.001). Young adults (21-25 years) use Facebook more on passing time (M=3.25, SD=1.0104) compared to middle-aged adults who aged 26-30 years (M=2.91, SD= 1.0602), adults aged 30-35 years (M= 2.67, SD= 0.9276) and elder adults youth who aged 36-40 years (M=1.83, SD= 0.4303).

Furthermore, the analysis did not reveal significant difference among occupational categories with regard to virtual companionship escape (F= 1.048, P= 0.394), interpersonal habitual entertainment (F= 0.804, P= 0.568), self-description of own country (F=1.913, P=0.078), information seeking (F= 0.201, P= 0.976), and self-expression (F= 0.404, P= 0.876). The only gratification which revealed significant different among occupational categories is the passing time (F= 2.851, P= 0.010). School students use Facebook more on passing time (M=3.56, SD= 0.8838), followed by government staff (M= 3.28, SD= 1.1209), university students (M= 3.19, SD= 1.0203), housewives (M= 3.17, SD= 0.9832), private sector employees (M= 2.80, SD= 1.0344), Self-employed (M=2.72, SD= 1.2134), and Unemployed (M=2.64, SD= 0.8109).

Moreover, an independent sample t-test analysis was run to look at difference among the Diaspora and those who live inside the country. The results did not reveal significant difference among those who live abroad and inside the country in terms of virtual companionship escape (t= 0.555, P= 0.580); interpersonal habitual entertainment (t= 1.072, P= 0.286); self-description of own country (t= -0.324, P= 0.747), information seeking (t= 1.353, P= 0.179); self expression (t= 1.825, P= 0.071); and passing time (t= -0.124, P= 0.902).

RQ3: the third research question asked whether Somali youth use Facebook to promote the image and reputation of their country. A one-sample t-test showed that Somali youth used Facebook to describe their country (t= -10.515, P= 0.000) by promoting the image and reputation of their country, giving accurate information about the country, posting events/news about the country, portraying positive image about the country, and helping the people understand what exactly going on in the country.

RQ4: the last research question asked which of the gratifications factors predict the time spent on Facebook daily (r= .333) and the model was significant, $F(6)= 6.32$, P< .05, R^2= .111. However when the six factors were regressed against the outcome variable using the enter method, virtual companionship escape (β = .281 t = 3.226, p< .05), interpersonal habitual entertainment (β = .145, t= 1.972, P< .05) and self-description of own country (β =.184, t= 2.762, P< .05) emerged as the predictors of the model. This means that these factors are main contributors of the gratifications obtained by the youth.

6. Discussion

As discussed in the introductory part of this study, its objectives include investigating the uses and gratifications obtained by Somali youth from using Facebook. It also intended to find out if the gratifications obtained from FB differ by demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, occupation, and place of living. The study examined too whether Somali youth use FB to promote the image and reputation of their country, and determined which of the gratifications factors best predict the time spent on Facebook by Somali youth.

The data shows that, Somali youth use Facebook because of the needs to obtain virtual companionship escape from the worries of the life. It was also revealed that, the youth use it to look for interpersonal habitual entertainment, to seek information mainly on politics about their country, to promote and give adequate description about their country, to seek self-expression status, and finally to pass the time by resting from the hassle of work or study.

Previous studies (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009) found that college students were motivated by information seeking, self-status seeking, socializing, and entertainment. In addition, Valentine's (2011) study revealed that the virtual companionship escape, interpersonal habitual entertainment, information seeking, passing time, and self-expression needs motivated the students to join Facebook.

The current study found a new motive for joining Facebook by Somali youth: *Self-description of own country*. Since their country is still experiencing a chaotic situation, it is expected to promote the image and reputation of their country, as well as portray a real situation to others who are not familiar with what is exactly going on the ground.

Differences in gratifications obtained from using Facebook were related to differences in demographic characteristics of the respondents. The gratifications aspect of passing time was found to be different by age, education, and occupation. The older the youth are, the less they seek passing time from Facebook usage, and the less they are educated, the more likely to seek passing time from Facebook. In terms of occupation, school students tend more to seek passing time motive from Facebook, followed by university students. One possible explanation can be that the students and young adults have more time compared to elders, and they have to find something to pass the time. Moreover, the results show that government staff is more likely to seek passing time needs than the private sector employees. A possible illustration to this can be related to the work environment. Since the private sector is profit-driven, the employees have to work hard and paid their utmost attention to the work during the work time. This is because less than quarter of the respondents mentioned that they use Facebook all the time, including office hours.

Time spent on Facebook is positively predicted by virtual companionship escape, interpersonal habitual entertainment, and self-description of own country. Foregger (2008) found that passing time predicts time spent on the site, which is not a predictor at all in this study. In addition, Foregger also found that connectedness is another predictor of time spent on the site, which is equivalent to interpersonal habitual entertainment in this study, which also is a predictor of time spent on the site.

One of the main contributions of this study is that Somali youth are motivated to describe the real situation in their country through Facebook usage. They used the site to promote the image and reputation of their country, to give accurate information about the country, to post news/events about the country, to portray a positive image of the country, and to help people understand what is going on in the country. Previous studies do not attempt to explore whether the site can be used as a promotion tool of a country. Future studies should look at this perspective in other contexts particularly from the perspective of countries that experience unstable political situation like Somalia.

This study has several limitations. It cannot be generalized to all Somali youth since the sample is convenient and the population is not well represented. The results of this study have given valuable insights about the Facebook uses and gratifications aspects and to the best of our knowledge, it is the first attempt to explore Facebook gratifications among Somali youth. It enriches the evolving literature on the Facebook U&G perspective.

7. Conclusion

The current study has implication on the uses and gratifications approach that was used as the theoretical base for this study. As the theory proposes, consumers of the media obtain different gratifications from the usage of the media. Consequently, the study found that Somali youth obtained many gratifications from Facebook usage. This is supported by previous studies, which majority of them was conducted in developed countries. The study contributes to the theory, as it is applicable in less developed countries like Somalia.

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Appendix

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha for the gratifications factors

No.	Variables	N	Items	Alpha
1	Virtual companionship escape	311	12	0.923
2	Interpersonal habitual entertainment	311	11	0.863
3	Self-description of own country	311	5	0.906
4	Information seeking	311	7	0.839
5	Self-expression	311	5	0.784
6	Passing time	311	3	0.792
Overall alpha				**0.950**

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	271	87.1
Female	40	12.9
Total	311	100.0
Highest education level completed		
No formal education	1	0.3
Secondary school	48	15.4
Diploma	31	10.0
Bachelor degree	156	50.2
Master degree	70	22.5
PhD	5	1.6
Total	311	100.0
Age group		
21-25	157	50.5
26-30	125	40.2
31-35	25	8.0
36-40	4	1.3
Mean= 30.25		
Total	311	100.0
Marital status		
Single	194	62.4
Married	114	36.7
Divorced	3	1.0
Widowed	0	0.0
Total	311	100.0
Occupation		
School student	16	5.1
University student	154	49.5
Government staff	13	4.2
Private sector employee	89	28.6
Self employed	19	6.1
Unemployed	14	4.5
Housewife	6	1.9
Total	311	100.
Place of living		
Local	66	21.2
Diaspora	245	78.8
Total	311	100.0

Table 3: Patterns of Facebook Usage

Intensity of Facebook Usage	Frequency	%	M	SD
When did you establish your Facebook account?			3.6045	1.18642
1) less than 1 year ago	10	3.2		
2) 1-2 years ago	41	13.2		
3) 2-3 years ago	103	33.1		
4) 3-4 years ago	83	26.7		
5) 4-5 years ago	56	18.0		
6) More than 5 years	18	5.8		
Total	311	100		
How much time you spend online on Facebook daily?			2.6688	1.27872
1) Less than one hour	62	19.9		
2) 1-2 hours	96	30.9		
3) 2-3 hours	76	24.4		
4) 3-4 hours	37	11.9		
5) More than 4 hours	40	12.9		
Total	311	100		
When do you surf online on Facebook?			3.0643	1.23747
1) Morning	45	14.5		
2) Afternoon	34	10.9		
3) Evening	147	47.3		
4) Mid night	26	8.4		
5) All the time	59	19.0		
Total	311	100		
How many friends are you connected with?			3.4084	1.73683
1) 0-200	46	14.8		
2) 201-400	76	24.4		
3) 401-600	48	15.4		
4) 601-800	49	15.8		
5) 801-1000	30	9.6		
6) More than 1000	62	19.9		
Total	311	100		

Table 4: Factor Loadings of Facebook Gratifications

Factors	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
	It makes me forget my problems	**.831**	.058	.071	.105	.122	.162
	It lets me escape my worries	**.811**	.098	.151	.143	.107	.105
	It allows me to find companionship	**.718**	.267	.144	.151	.206	-.037
	It allows me to develop romantic relationships	**718**	.184	.146	.110	.096	-.012
	It helps me to feel less lonely	**.690**	.193	.061	.151	.211	.259
Factor 1: virtual companionship escape	I use Facebook so I won't be alone	**.677**	.163	.108	.137	.037	.184
	It enables me to find more interesting people than in real life	**.659**	-.002	.213	.178	.263	.069
	Visiting Facebook is like second nature to me	**.577**	.337	.183	.056	.026	-.011
	It makes me cool among my peers	**.569**	.175	.173	.098	.319	.245
	I use Facebook when I have no one to talk to or be with	**.565**	.033	.116	-054	.195	.392
	I use it to get away from what I'm doing	**.546**	.003	.091	.154	.348	.340
	I use it to forget about work/study or other things	**.471**	.005	-.009	-.007	.352	.359
	Using Facebook is enjoyable	.241	**.670**	.098	.021	.032	.089
	It allows me to communicate with my family and friends	-.075	**.666**	.211	.123	-.011	.041
	It helps me to get in touch with friends	.012	**.660**	.130	.301	.068	-.013
Factor 2: Interpersonal habitual entertainment	It allows me to stay in touch with friends	-.038	**.653**	.072	.240	.125	.024
	Visiting Facebook is a habit	.227	**.617**	-.042	-.015	.094	-.067
	I just like to use Facebook	.126	**.607**	.149	-.074	.186	.173
	It is one of the routine things I do when I am online	.356	**.584**	.116	.077	.163	-.003
	It is entertaining	.137	**.535**	-005	.386	.049	.196
	It allows me to have fun		**.511**	.064	.376	-.045	.157
	It is cool	.361	**.434**	-.006	.423	-.118	.128
	It enables me to meet new friends	.181	**.394**	.220	.223	.322	.237
Factor 3: Self-description of own country	I use it to portray positive image about my country	.136	.168	**.827**	.150	.088	.006
	I use it to give accurate information about my country	.194	.160	**.807**	.049	.123	.075
	I use it to help people understand what is going on in my country	.148	.059	**.783**	.189	.152	.063
	I use it to post news/events about my county	.205	.173	**.783**	.169	.096	..024
	I use it to promote for my country	.119	.013	**.0762**	.075	.129	.218

(Table continues)

Table 4 (continued)

Factors	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
	Facebook is a new way to do research	.192	.104	.217	**.688**	.240	-.077
Factor 4: Information Seeking	It allows me to explore what is out there	.280	.063	.170	**.612**	.241	.037
	It is easy to get information from Facebook	.066	.281	.350	**.606**	.251	.072
	I use it to send messages to friends	.096	.402	.019	**.574**	.018	.049
	It enables me to get information for free	.063	.244	.412	**.564**	.199	.124
	It is a place to look for information	.043	.408	.338	**.479**	.241	.105
	I post messages on my friends' walls	.404	-.022	.003	**.448**	.059	.272
	It portrays an image of me to others	.296	.055	.104	.121	**.705**	.034
Factor 5: Self-expression	People can use Facebook to judge me	.331	.026	.050	.134	**.678**	.146
	Facebook gives me information about people	.146	.271	.284	.237	**.634**	.003
	Facebook gives others information about me	.143	.307	.309	.238	**.565**	-.007
	It is part of my self-image	.349	.195	.381	.174	**.521**	.097
Factor 6: Passing Time	I use it to pass time when I am bored	.302	.158	.060	.067	.040	.787
	I visit Facebook when I have nothing better to do	.138	.165	.312	.123	-.014	.700
	I use it to occupy my time	.469	.023	.126	.093	.205	.625
	Cronbach's Alpha	0.923	0.863	0.906	0.839	0.784	0.792
	Eigenvalue	14.196	3.831	2.815	1.743	1.469	1.322
	% of total variance explained	33.014	8.909	6.546	4.054	3.417	3.075
	Overall Cronbach's Alpha				**0.950**		

Note: the scale used in these factors ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree