

# Investigating the use of multiple social networking services: A cross-cultural perspective in the United States and Korea

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## Abstract

The rise in recent technology has changed the ways, in which people communicate with one another. Social networking services (SNSs) have become one of the most representative means. General SNSs allow users to create their own unique profiles, search for fellow members, share information, etc., while other SNSs have functions that cater to different needs of users. As a result, users of SNSs have begun to pick and choose different SNSs and concurrently use multiple SNSs in order to fulfill all their needs. This exploratory study examined which SNSs are used together and the characteristics that predict the use of multiple SNSs. In addition, it observed the differences between consumers' usage of multiple SNSs in different cultures. An online survey was administered to SNS users in the United States and Korea. The results of the study showed that the use of multiple SNSs is not yet prevalent in Korea, the country that represented a collectivistic culture. In addition, in the U.S., the highest number of users reported that they were active on at least three SNSs.

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**Keywords:** social networking services; cultural studies; Korea; United States; individualism; collectivism

## 1. Introduction

The development of new devices and web technologies has prompted consumers to defy the limitations of time and space brought by face-to-face communication. In particular, recent technology such as smart devices provides easy access to the Internet, resulting in the multifaceted ways through which users can communicate with their networks. According to Nielsen [1], nearly 64% of social media users in the U.S. access social media services at least once a day via personal computers, while 47% of smartphone users use social networking services daily. Additionally, by the beginning of 2014, the number of digital media consumers using multiple platforms equaled to 56% [2].

A good portion of the time people spend on the Internet is used to access social networking services (SNS). SNS can be defined as a web-based service that offers a space for users to communicate with their social networks and participate in the exchange of information through the Internet [3,4]. The dynamic nature has resulted in the popularity of SNSs around the world. According to We Are Social Singapore [5], the global average social networking penetration increased by 26%, with over 1.8 billion active users worldwide.

Catering to diverse needs, SNSs have evolved in varying forms. With the diversification of SNSs, on one hand, the number of options offered to a user increases and the user is forced to make decisions on which services are the most appropriate for his or her needs. On the other hand, users are not bound to one particular SNS, but instead use several SNSs at once. Not only is it easier to access multiple SNSs at once through a variety of devices such as computers and smartphones, but social-network connecting services allow users to operate one SNS account to access third-party sites without creating separate accounts [6], like using a Facebook account to post comments on blogs and uploading the same content on other SNS profiles. Indeed, this trend of multiple SNS usage is happening. By the end of 2013, Pew Research Center [7] discovered that 42% of adults in the U.S. used multiple SNS platforms, enriching their online experiences.

With different cultural norms, the decisions on which services best accommodate to users' needs lead to cultural differences in the way which people use specific SNSs and how they are used to interact. As SNSs are a global phenomenon and services are offered everywhere, it is important to understand the cross-cultural dimension of SNS usage in theory. While the numerous types of SNSs available to choose from and the users' ability to simultaneously access several SNSs at once make it important to investigate collective usage patterns, no research, to the best of our knowledge, has looked into the burgeoning global phenomenon of multiple SNS usage, especially in a cross-cultural context. Existing research on SNS has explored motivations behind usage [8, 9, 10], characteristics of the users of a single SNS [11, 12, 13, 14], or comparisons between two SNSs [15, 16]. Studies that have examined the usage of SNS across cultural contexts have also focused on an individual SNS or a comparison of two of the most popular SNSs in the respective cultures [17, 9, 18, 19].

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore the use of multiple SNSs and lay a foundation for further examinations. In addition to offering a snapshot of the usage of multiple SNSs, this study investigates motivations and individual characteristics that are expected to influence multiple SNS usage. Additionally, this study examines cross-cultural differences in the patterns of multiple SNS use and users' characteristics. Findings from this study contribute to both academia and practitioners, where academic researchers can carry out further research

on the psychological mechanism behind multiple SNS usage in diverse cultural environments and managers of SNS platforms can better manage their services and strategize to increase traffic flow and the size of their userbase around the world.

## 2. Conceptual Background

### 2.1 Social Media & SNS

Social media are services that allow users to create, share, and consume content while interacting with other users [20]. Additionally, social media are tools used to build social and professional identities that represent users' offline personalities [21, 22]. Each social medium has its own characteristics, which can be categorized as general SNSs, content-sharing services, blogs and microblogs, location-based services, content management services, and games [20]. SNSs have become particularly popular among social media, thus researchers have sought to define the concept of SNS. Boyd and Ellison [23] proposed that SNSs allow users to create profiles and interact with other users within existing networks. Other studies defined SNS as web communities that offer a space for users to share content to maintain their social ties and build new networks [24, 12, 13]. To fulfill the purpose of this study, SNS is defined as online communities that offer methods through which existing connections may be upheld and new ties be brought together by the various functions of SNS.

According to Pew Research Center [7], 42% of American adults used multiple social networking platforms in 2013; in December 2013, 75% of digital media consumers visited Facebook, making it the most frequented SNS in the U.S. [2]. Additionally, in the beginning of 2014, 92% of the U.S. population owned at least one social networking account [5].

The Korea Information Society Development Institute [25] reported that 31.3% of the Korean population would become an SNS user by the end of 2013. Among the most frequently used SNSs, KakaoStory was discovered to be the most used SNS at 55.4%, with Facebook (23.4%) and Twitter (13.1%) following behind [25].

### 2.2 Use of SNS in Different Cultures

Cross-cultural studies employing the cultural dimensions by Hofstede [26] and the concept of high versus low culture by Hall [27], have often observed the differences in communication methods across different cultures. Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which include individualism versus collectivism, were developed to offer a quantitative outlook by which cultures could be categorized [18]. Individualistic cultures consist primarily of self-oriented individuals who seek to fulfill personal needs, while collectivistic cultures are composed of individuals that tend to be other-oriented [28].

High context culture refers to a society that highlights the shared knowledge and norms among its members and is characterized by visually expressive messages full of signs and symbols, but lack concrete information in communication. A low context society refers to a culture in which individuality is underscored and little common ground exists for its members. Therefore, in this culture, communications tend to be explicit and rich in information [29].

As SNS developed into a key communication method, researchers have studied how people of different cultures use SNS to communicate. With the explanations of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Cho and Park's study [28] found differences in SNS-based social relationships between the U.S. and Korea. Specifically, Americans tended to have a larger amount of connections on SNS that were also superficial. However, Koreans were more likely

to have fewer, but more intimate relationships on SNS. Similarly, Kim et al. [9] observed that the types of relationships in the networks of Americans were more casual, resulting in short-term relationships, whereas the closeness of Koreans' networks made for more permanent relationships.

The above findings suggest potentially differing SNS usages in different cultures. With the receive massive increase in the popularity and diversity of SNS, there is a growing need among managers of SNS to learn how to better manage their services through better understanding user preferences. However, to the best of our knowledge, there has been a lack of research on the combined use of more than one SNS despite the increasingly various SNSs available for users. Our study therefore aims to explore consumers' use of multiple SNSs in two different cultures – South Korea and the U.S.

### 2.3 Motivations for SNS usage

To identify the reasons behind users' decisions to use an SNS, researchers have applied the uses and gratifications model, which infers that individuals have core motivations based on which needs are satisfied to determine which media they will use [30], in their studies. For instance, Bonds-Raacke and Raacke [15] identified the three dimensions of motivation behind the use of SNSs: the information, friendship, and connection dimensions. Other studies have focused on the functions of SNSs to study motivations for using specific SNS.

Although motivations behind the use of SNSs have been examined, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have explored the concurrent use of multiple SNSs. According to a study by Ku et al. [31], the primary motivation behind the combined use of SNSs, instant messaging, and e-mail is that users seek to fulfill the relationship maintenance gratification. Another important motivation is the need for self-presentation [11]. Social media leaves room for anonymity, which allows for users to filter through information to form an identity. It can be assumed that motivations for the use of multiple SNSs lay behind not only the specific functions of SNSs, but also how the services fulfill the needs of users when put together as a whole.

### 2.4 Social Influence

Social influence refers to when the actions of one person are intentionally or unintentionally changed by an influencer, who may be another person or society, when there is an existing relationship between the two parties [32]. The popularity of SNSs has pushed the development of services with different primary functions. The relationship maintenance gratification draws the importance of exploring the types of connections that affect the use of different SNSs. The social influence model [33] shows that a single person cannot use SNSs alone. Similar to e-mail, there must be another person to communicate with [34, 35]. As users adopt specific SNSs they will become more significant to those in the same network, creating motivation for the use of those specific SNSs [35]. However, each SNS gratifies different needs of individuals, bringing people to use different SNSs and building various networks.

Developing social connections is a valuable aspect of SNS use. Social capital, a concept explored by Ellison et al. [12] in the context of SNS, refers to the resources that are built through the virtual connections developed by individuals or a group. Along with the bridging and bonding dimensions of social capital, Lineberry [36] included a third dimension of social capital: linking.

Social relationships vary depending on the characteristics of different cultures. Ji et al. [18] investigated cultural differences that appear in the use of SNSs in Korea, the U.S., and China

and the formation of social capital. According to the findings of this study, one of the main features of SNSs is that they allow users to interact with others and form social capital. Because the types social capital that users are able to form through different SNSs often vary, users will choose which SNSs will best accommodate to the social capital they aim to attain, influencing their decisions to use single or multiple SNSs.

## 2.5 Personality

Aside from motivations for use and social influence, another factor in the differences among ways that people use SNS are the dimensions of personality such as self-disclosure, innovativeness, and need to belong.

### 2.5.1 Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure is divulging information that is intimate and personal about the self to other people [37, 38]. SNS is a tool that is used to develop and maintain personal relationships and self-disclosure plays a key role in the growth of relationships [38, 39]. As relationships develop, individuals disclose more information about themselves and their identities. However, depending on the amount and type of information that is revealed, self-disclosure can have a negative or positive affect on the relationship [39].

Cross-culturally, persons in individualistic cultures tend to disclose more accurate information on personal profiles than those in collectivistic cultures [28, 40]. Depending on cultural influences, users disclose information about themselves in different ways. Therefore, the higher the likeliness of a user to disclose personal information online, the higher chance there may be that users will use multiple SNS.

### 2.5.2 Innovativeness

Innovativeness, defined as “the degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than the other members of a system” [41], is another aspect in predicting how people use SNS. Specifically, personal innovativeness refers to the amount of likeliness that a person would accept new technology compared to other individuals [42, 43]. The way that individuals respond to new innovations and accept new technology determines whether they will persistently search for things that are new [44]. This is because those with higher levels of innovativeness are able to accept things they are uncertain of [41]. This study assumes that those with higher levels of innovativeness are more prone to accept and adopt multiple SNS.

### 2.5.3 Need to Belong

The need to belong refers to the desire for people to be accepted and have a sense of belonging in relationships [11, 45, 46]. This characteristic is present in all human beings, as people tend to depend on the interaction and intimacy of having interpersonal relationships. It is also a personality trait that is reflected from offline connections to online networks via SNS. Through SNS, users can fulfill this need by expressing their thoughts when building relationships. Cultural differences, however, affect this dimension. Persons in individualistic cultures are more likely to share private information and discuss controversial topics, while those from collectivistic cultures tend to build a tighter network with whom they interact with often [11]. Therefore, the extent to which individuals feel the need to belong may explain why this leads them to use more SNS in order to be accepted into different social groups.

### 2.5.4 Privacy settings

Privacy settings are an important feature of SNS that affects consumers' patterns of usage. This is particularly so, as SNSs are virtual, web-based communities and the openness of the Internet makes it difficult to guarantee the protection of personal information on SNS [47]. Research has shown that cultural differences may affect the extent to which users are concerned about privacy issues on SNS. A study by Krasnova et al. [48] found that users from collectivistic and individualistic cultures both have relatively high concern for privacy.

## 3. Research Questions

In the above sections, we have discussed many factors that can be considered in determining the use of multiple SNSs: cross-cultural differences, motivations, social influence, personality characteristics such as innovativeness, self-disclosure, the need to belong, and privacy concerns. Each of these variables may affect not only consumers' use of SNS separately, but also one another. For example, as it was mentioned previously, self-disclosure and privacy concerns are related such that individuals with higher concerns for privacy may be less likely to highly disclose information about their selves. Similarly, persons who feel a higher need to belong can be prone to be more affected by social influences, compared to those with a lower need to belong. However, the fact remains that studies on SNS use have generally focused on the use of a single SNS or the comparison of two specific SNSs in various cultural contexts. Therefore, this exploratory study surveys the cross-cultural differences in the usage of multiple SNS and the variables, which affect the active use of more than one SNS.

The countries of interest to this investigation are Korea and the U.S. Due to their technological advancement and SNS popularity, the two countries are among the most studied, which previous research on SNS has tapped into. However, prior research has shown that there exist differences in which way people use SNS to communicate in the two countries. Culturally, it has been observed that Korea is a country that can represent a collectivistic and high-context culture, which tends to be composed of individuals that tend to be other-oriented [28, 29]. The U.S. is a representative of individualistic and low-context culture, which contains primarily of self-oriented individuals who seek to fulfill personal needs [28]. Therefore, in order to examine the new phenomenon of multiple SNS use in varying contexts and capture its cultural variations, this study focuses on the two diametrically different cultures: Korea and the U.S. The following research questions were thus developed:

**RQ1:** What is the pattern of multiple SNS use? Are there differences in the usage pattern between Korea and the United States?

**RQ2:** What characterizes active users of multiple SNSs? Are there differences in the characteristics of users between Korea and the United States?

**RQ3:** What predicts multiple SNS usage? Are there differences in the predicting factors between Korea and the United States?

## 4. Method

### 4.1 Procedure

This study was conducted as an exploratory study. In order to examine the research questions, online surveys were administered to users of SNS in Korea and the U.S., via the research firm, Macromill Embrain, and Amazon MTurk. The participants in the study were filtered through the question of whether they were users of SNS to ensure that all responses came from SNS users. Following this, they were questioned on their usage of SNS and their perceived personal characteristics. Finally, questions to analyze the demographic information of the participants were given. The survey was originally written in English and translated into Korean by a bilingual graduate student. Then, it was back-translated into English by another bilingual graduate student to ensure language equivalency.

## 4.2 Sample

The number of valid responses by Korean participants equaled to 326. Among the sample, 165 participants were male (50.6%), while 161 were female (49.4%). The average age of the participants was 30.43 and ranged from 14 to 49 years. The highest number of people held at least an associate's or bachelor's degree (42%,  $n = 137$ ) and held white-collar professions (34.7%,  $n = 113$ ).

Among American participants, 279 responses were valid. The sample consisted of 146 male (52.3%) and 133 female participants (47.7%), ranging between ages 21 and 69, with the average age being 35.74 years. The highest level of education for most number of participants was a master's degree (45.4%,  $n = 127$ ) and the most number of participants held white-collar professions (36.1%,  $n = 73$ ). Ethnicity was not addressed.

## 4.3 Measures

The survey requested information on which SNS participants had accounts on and which of those they were active on. Participants were given a list of SNS from which they could choose multiple answers. The list had a couple of differences in the English and Korean versions, as they were tailored according to the SNS trends in each culture. Following this, they were asked to rank the order of which SNS they used most from their list of active SNS. Additionally, the study inquired upon the year they began using SNS, how much time they spent using SNS per day, and how many connections they had on each account.

Through the surveys, participants also answered questions that explored psychographic information. Using seven-point likert scales, they were asked about motivations for SNS use [socializing ( $\alpha = .684$ ), entertainment ( $\alpha = .879$ ), self status seeking ( $\alpha = .756$ ), and information seeking ( $\alpha = .690$ )] [49, 50], social influence [subjective norm ( $\alpha = .905$ ) and critical mass ( $\alpha = .919$ )] [45], self-disclosure [intended disclosure ( $\alpha = .789$ ), amount factor ( $\alpha = .796$ ), honest accuracy factor ( $\alpha = .851$ ), control of depth factor ( $\alpha = .781$ ), and relevance-messages nature factor ( $\alpha = .650$ )] [51], innovativeness ( $\alpha = .875$ ) [52, 53, 54], need to belong ( $\alpha = .823$ ) [55], and privacy concern ( $\alpha = .698$ ) [56] (Fig. 1).

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### Constructs

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#### Motivations for SNS use [49, 50]

- I use social networking services...
  - ...to get peer support from others
  - ...to meet interesting people
  - ...to feel like I belong to a community
  - ...to talk about something with others
  - ...to stay in touch with people I know
  - ...because it is entertaining
  - ...because it is fun
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...because it is exciting  
 ...because I feel peer pressure to participate  
 ...because it makes myself to look cool  
 ...to develop my career through group participation  
 ...to learn about events that occur within groups I belong to  
 ...to learn about events that occur within groups I belong to  
 ...to get useful information about products/services  
 ...to generate ideas  
 ...to negotiate or bargain  
 ...to learn about myself and others  
 ...to get to know others  
 ...to learn how to do things  
 ...to provide others with information  
 ...to get someone to do something for me  
 ...to solve problems  
 ...to relax  
 ...to make decisions  
 ...to contribute to a pool of information  
 ...to gain insight into myself

#### **Social Influence [45]**

People I'm influenced by think I should use these social networking services.  
 People who are important to me think that I should use these social networking services.  
 My friends think I should use these social networking services.  
 Of the people I am in contact with regularly, many use these social networking services.  
 Of the people I network with, many use these social networking services.  
 The people I am in contact with using these social networking services will continue to use them in the future.  
 Of the people I am in contact with using these social networking services, many use it frequently.  
 Many people I know in my social circles use these social networking services.

#### **Self-disclosure [51]**

When I wish, my SNS profiles are always accurate reflections of who I really am.  
 When I express my personal feelings on SNS, I am always aware of what I am doing and saying.  
 When I reveal my feelings about myself on SNS, I consciously intend to do so.  
 I do not often talk about myself on SNS.  
 My statements of my feelings are usually brief on SNS.  
 My conversations on SNS last the least time when I am discussing myself.  
 Only infrequently do I express my personal beliefs and opinions on SNS.  
 I usually disclose positive things about myself on SNS.  
 On the whole, my disclosures about myself on SNS are negative than positive.  
 I cannot reveal myself when I want to on SNS because I do not know myself thoroughly enough.  
 I am often not confident that my expression of my own feelings, emotions, and experiences on SNS are true reflections of myself.  
 I am not always honest in my self-disclosures on SNS.  
 I do not always feel completely sincere when I reveal my own feelings, emotions, behaviors, or experiences on SNS.  
 I intimately disclose who I really am, openly and fully in my conversations on SNS.  
 Once I get started, my self-disclosures on SNS last a long time.  
 I typically reveal information about myself on SNS without intending to.  
 My messages on SNS reveal mostly what I like.  
 My disclosures of personal beliefs and opinions on SNS are always directly related to the conversation.

#### **Innovativeness [52, 53, 54]**

If I heard a new SNS was available I would be interested enough to adopt it.  
 In general, I am the first in my circle of friends to know the names of, and ways to access, SNS.  
 I know more about SNS than other people do.  
 I adopt a new SNS because of the advantages it offers me.  
 Before adopting a new SNS I think about the benefits introduced by the innovation and its related status quo.  
 If I heard that a new SNS service was available in an easy to use way I would be interested enough to adopt it.

#### **Need to Belong [55]**

If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me.  
 I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me.

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I seldom worry about whether other people care about me.  
 I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.  
 I want other people to accept me.  
 I do not like being alone.  
 Being apart from my friends for long periods of time does not bother me.  
 I have a strong need to belong.  
 It bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people's plans.  
 My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me.  
**Privacy Concern [56]**  
 I feel comfortable giving personal information on social networking services  
 I feel in control when specifying and updating my profile on social networking services.  
 I feel that the privacy of my personal information is protected by the social networking services.

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**Fig. 1.** Constructs

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Active and multiple SNS use

According to the responses by Korean participants, the average amount of years that participants spent using SNS was 3.79. The minimum length of usage was less than one year, while the maximum was reported to be 18 years. The average amount of time spent on SNS per day was 98 minutes, with the maximum being 600 minutes per day ( $SD = 96.99$ ).

The results showed that Facebook ( $n = 202$ ), Kakaostory ( $n = 177$ ), and Twitter ( $n = 58$ ) were the SNSs that participants were the most active on. The other SNSs, which included Line Band ( $n = 49$ ), Cyworld ( $n = 12$ ), Tumblr ( $n = 5$ ), Google+ ( $n = 4$ ) and LinkedIn ( $n = 3$ ), were reported to be used less actively. Moreover, the results conveyed that most participants were active on only one SNS ( $n = 188$ ).

It was noted that some participants were active on two ( $n = 92$ ) or three ( $n = 32$ ) SNSs. When asked to create rankings by which participants used most actively, Facebook was reported to be the most actively used ( $n = 113$ ). The order of the SNSs commonly used to complement the use of Facebook were the following: KakaoStory ( $n = 44$ ), Twitter ( $n = 22$ ), Line Band ( $n = 17$ ), Instagram ( $n = 10$ ), Cyworld ( $n = 3$ ), Google+ ( $n = 2$ ), LinkedIn ( $n = 1$ ), and Tumblr ( $n = 1$ ). Overall, the consistency in the ranking of most actively used SNSs when consuming multiple SNSs determined that Korean users tend to stick to services that are also used by the other members of their personal networks.

The results of the survey administered in the U.S. indicated that the average number of years the participants spent using SNS was 9.11. Two years was the minimum number of years, while 21 years was reported as the maximum. When asked about how much time they spend on average per day using SNS, participants' responses averaged that they spend about 123.43 minutes on SNS per day ( $SD = 94.50$ ) and the maximum amount of time spent per day on SNS was reported as 645 minutes.

When asked to state which SNS participants were currently active on, results showed that Facebook ( $n = 267$ ), Twitter ( $n = 188$ ), and Google+ ( $n = 140$ ) were the SNS that participants were most active on. The other SNSs, which included Instagram ( $n = 97$ ), LinkedIn ( $n = 96$ ), Pinterest ( $n = 93$ ), Tumblr ( $n = 68$ ), and Myspace ( $n = 60$ ), followed after, while FourSqaure ( $n = 15$ ) was reported to have much less active use.

Additionally, it was noted that a significant number of participants were found to be active on more than one SNS ( $n = 255$ ), with Facebook being one of the SNS actively used, like the results from Korean participants. Among participants that reported to use Facebook the most, many complemented their use of Facebook with Twitter ( $n = 182$ ) and Google+ ( $n = 132$ ).

Instagram ( $n = 94$ ), LinkedIn ( $n = 94$ ), Pinterest ( $n = 91$ ), Tumblr ( $n = 68$ ), Myspace ( $n = 59$ ), and FourSquare ( $n = 14$ ) followed in this respective order.

Different from the results of Korean participants, the ranking of which SNS were most commonly used to complement the active use of Facebook changed depending on the number of SNSs that were used together. When two SNSs were used together, LinkedIn and Instagram were more commonly used with Facebook. However, for those who used three or more SNSs, it was reported that users who combined Facebook with Twitter simultaneously used Pinterest more than they did Instagram.

## 5.2 Comparison of active SNS users in Korea and the U.S.

An independent-sample t-test was used to analyze the difference in means among Korean and American participants. The results showed significant differences in motivation for socializing ( $t(603) = -3.04, p = .003$ ), motivation for entertainment ( $t(603) = -6.20, p < .001$ ), motivation for self-status seeking ( $t(603) = -2.08, p = .038$ ), intended self-disclosure ( $t(603) = -15.42, p < .001$ ), amount of self-disclosure ( $t(603) = -3.17, p = .002$ ), honest accuracy of self-disclosure ( $t(603) = -7.90, p < .001$ ), depth of disclosure ( $t(603) = 7.11, p < .001$ ), relevance of message in self-disclosure ( $t(603) = -6.33, p < .001$ ), social influence – critical mass ( $t(603) = -6.36, p < .001$ ), and need to belong ( $t(603) = 5.01, p < .001$ ).

## 5.3 Comparison of multiple SNS users in Korea and the U.S.

Significant differences in multiple SNS usage in Korea and the U.S. were discovered through the comparisons of means. An independent-sample t-test was used to analyze if Korean and American users were significantly different in the number of SNS accounts they held and the number of SNS they used actively. The results suggested that American SNS users ( $M = 3.71, SD = 1.78$ ) hold significantly more SNS accounts than Korean SNS users ( $M = 3.32, SD = 1.59$ ),  $t(603) = 2.86, p = .003$ . SNS users in the U.S. ( $M = 3.66, SD = 1.71$ ), were active on significantly more SNS than users in Korea ( $M = 1.63, SD = 0.92$ ),  $t(603) = 18.45, p < .001$ .

Additionally, the means of the amount of time spent using SNS per day in Korea ( $n = 326$ ) and the U.S. ( $n = 279$ ) were compared. The results indicated that users in the U.S. ( $M = 123.43, SD = 94.50$ ) significantly spent more time using SNS than users in Korea ( $M = 98.02, SD = 5.37$ ),  $t(603) = 3.25, p = .001$ .

## 5.4 Users of single vs. multiple SNS

To test the association between Korea and the U.S. and the use of single versus multiple SNS, chi-square was used. The result was significant,  $\chi^2 = (1, n = 605) = 159.01, p < .001, \phi = .51$  (see [Table 1](#)). It is concluded that a greater number of American SNS users are more likely to use multiple SNS, while a larger number of Korean SNS users are more likely to use only one SNS.

**Table 1.** Usage of single vs. multiple SNS

	Korea		United States	
	n	%	n	%
Single SNS	188	57.7%	24	8.6%
Multiple SNS	138	42.3%	255	91.4%
Total	326	100.0%	279	100.0%

## 5.5 Predicting the use of SNS

A hierarchical logistic regression analysis was conducted, where the demographic variables

were in the first block and psychographic variables were in the second block. The gender variable was dummy coded (male = 1 and female = 0) and variables were mean-centered in order to avoid multicollinearity. Additionally, variance inflation factor (VIF) for the predictors was less than 2.331.

### 5.5.1 Active use of more than one SNS among Korean participants

The model for predicting the active use of more than one SNS among Korean participants held was statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (19) = 47.363$ ,  $p < .001$ . The variables in the first block explained 1.2% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in multiple SNS use and correctly classified 57.7% of the cases, indicating a weak relationship between prediction and grouping,  $\chi^2 (2) = 2.827$ ,  $p = .243$ . The variables in the second block explained 18.2% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in multiple SNS use and correctly classified 57.7% of the cases, indicating a relatively strong relationship between prediction and grouping,  $\chi^2 (17) = 44.536$ ,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .182$ . The Wald criterion demonstrated that only motivation for entertainment ( $p = .014$ ), honest and accurate self-disclosure ( $p = .004$ ), and innovativeness ( $p = .002$ ) were predictors of active use of multiple SNS.

**Table 2.** Regression results for total number of SNS accounts as the dependent variable among Korean participants

				<i>CI</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
<b>First Block</b>					
Gender	-.008	.011	.992	.971	1.014
Age	-.344	.225	.709	.456	1.103
$\chi^2 (2) = 2.827, p = .243, \text{Nagelkerke } R^2 = .012$					
<b>Second Block</b>					
Motivation – Socializing	-.078	.215	.925	.607	1.411
Motivation – Entertainment	.364*	.148	1.439	1.076	1.923
Motivation – Self-status seeking	-.159	.136	.853	.653	1.113
Motivation – Information Seeking	-.065	.176	.937	.664	1.322
Social Influence – Social Norm	-.098	.146	.907	.681	1.207
Social Influence – Critical Mass	.057	.165	1.059	.767	1.462
Self disclosure – Intended	.171	.157	1.186	.871	1.615
Self disclosure – Amount	-.021	.157	.979	.720	1.331
Self disclosure – Honesty Accuracy	-.424**	.149	.654	.488	.877
Self disclosure – Depth	-.098	.155	.906	.669	1.227
Innovativeness	.471**	.151	1.602	1.191	2.154
Need to Belong	.060	.206	1.061	.709	1.590
Privacy – Concern	.113	.107	1.120	.908	1.381
Privacy – Settings	.057	.100	1.058	.870	1.288
Privacy – Comfort	-.061	.118	.941	.747	1.184
Privacy – Control	-.014	.122	.986	.776	1.254
Privacy – Protection	-.004	.112	.996	.800	1.240
$\chi^2_{\text{step}} (17) = 44.536, p < .001, \text{Nagelkerke } R^2 = .182$					
Overall Model: $\chi^2 (19) = 47.363, p < .001$					

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , CI = Confidence Interval

### 5.5.2 Active use of more than one SNS among U.S. participants

The model for predicting the active use of more than one SNS among American participants held was statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (19) = 45.201$ ,  $p = .001$ . The variables in the first block explained 11.8% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in multiple SNS use and correctly classified

91.4% of the cases, indicating the presence of a relationship between prediction and grouping,  $\chi^2(2) = 14.96$ ,  $p = .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .118$ . The variables in the second block explained 33.7% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance and correctly classified 91.8% of the cases. The results indicated a strong relationship between prediction and grouping,  $\chi^2(17) = 30.241$ ,  $p = .025$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .337$ . The Wald criterion demonstrated that age ( $p = .01$ ), gender ( $p = .002$ ), and privacy – protection ( $p = .046$ ) were predictors of active use of multiple SNS.

**Table 3.** Regression results for total number of SNS accounts as the dependent variable among U.S. participants

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>CI</i>	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
<b>First Block</b>					
Gender	-.048**	.018	.943	.902	.986
Age	1.182*	.495	3.262	1.237	8.601
$\chi^2 (2) = 14.96, p = .001, \text{Nagelkerke } R^2 = .118$					
<b>Second Block</b>					
Motivation – Socializing	.027	.336	1.027	.531	1.985
Motivation – Entertainment	.361	.267	1.435	.849	2.424
Motivation – Self-status seeking	-.183	.296	.833	.467	1.486
Motivation – Information Seeking	.410	.225	1.506	.968	2.343
Social Influence – Social Norm	-.106	.221	.900	.583	1.389
Social Influence – Critical Mass	.188	.273	1.206	.706	2.061
Self disclosure – Intended	-.108	.326	.898	.474	1.700
Self disclosure – Amount	.190	.260	1.209	.727	2.012
Self disclosure – Honesty Accuracy	-.350	.255	.705	.428	1.161
Self disclosure – Depth	.172	.245	1.187	.735	1.919
Innovativeness	.277	.281	1.319	.760	2.289
Need to Belong	-.124	.243	.883	.549	1.422
Privacy – Concern	-.135	.248	.873	.537	1.421
Privacy – Settings	.390	.233	1.476	.936	2.330
Privacy – Comfort	-.114	.184	.892	.622	1.279
Privacy – Control	.184	.213	1.202	.793	1.824
Privacy – Protection	.435*	.218	1.544	1.008	2.366
$\chi^2_{\text{step}} (17) = 30.241, p = .025, \text{Nagelkerke } R^2 = .337$					
Overall Model: $\chi^2 (19) = 45.201, p = .001$					

Note:  $p = .025$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , CI = Confidence Interval

## 6. Conclusions

The results of this study showed that, while there are indeed users that consume multiple SNSs, it is not yet predominant, contrary to what was expected. Despite the numerous options available, Korean participants tended to stick to actively using a single SNS. However, significantly more American participants were active on more than one SNS.

This study assumed that people are likely to collectively use multiple SNS with the intention of connecting to different networks that can be accessed by individual services. As part of a collectivistic culture, Korean participants would not have felt the need to be active on multiple SNS and instead actively use the SNS which most of their networks are connected to. For example, KakaoStory was the second most commonly used SNS among Korean participants after Facebook. A key characteristic of KakaoStory is that it is very personal and many of the connections originate from users' contacts in KakaoTalk, the most popular messenger application in Korea [57]. Therefore, as many close connections are already

connected through this SNS, participants may not feel the need to turn to an SNS like Tumblr, which was found to be rarely used by Korean participants.

On the other hand, the individualistic character of American participants explains why they collectively use multiple SNS more often than Korean participants. Without the need to be in an intimate relationship with all connections on SNS, these users would explicitly interact with fellow members of the same SNS. However, as each SNS offers different features that cater toward specific types of groups, American users may split their time on SNS according to which network they are able to access.

Both studies discovered that Facebook is the SNS that is used most actively among participants. Not only does Facebook reach billions of people in numerous countries, but also, the general networking nature of Facebook is that there are many different types of services that are offered to its users. This makes Facebook both high- and low-context, as it becomes a matter of how users use each feature. For example, a user influenced by the culture of a high-context society may post detailed comments or share pictures, videos, and/or links to support what is being communicated, while an individual from a low-context culture may simply click “like” to portray his or her thoughts.

KakaoStory, the second most used SNS among Korean participants, is an example of a high-context SNS. The diary-like SNS offers a space for users to exchange information about life events in detail by adding text, images, or videos. Even when offering feedback, the users have three different options to choose from: click on an icon that expresses a feeling such as “like” and “sad”, posting a comment, or posting a sticker to represent personal thoughts. Each of these methods is an expressive method, which is used to maintain close relationships. Twitter was the second most used SNS among American participants. As observed in a previous study, Twitter is a highly low-context SNS, which can be seen from its 140-character limit on posts, to its public nature that often make it difficult to disclose very personal information [17]. Users can use it for quick and easy access to information and communication.

It was also established that Korean participants were more motivated by the motivation for entertainment, tendency to disclose honest and accurate information, and innovativeness in their use of multiple SNS. On the other hand, age, gender, and the perception of protection in privacy settings were the variables that predicted use of multiple SNS among American participants. This showed that while the personality characteristic influenced Korean participants, general demographics influenced Americans.

The results can be seen as consistent with a cross-cultural study that was conducted by Cho and Park [28], which surveyed whether cross-cultural differences create differences in the way which people use SNS. The results of this previous study found that Korean participants were more likely to have a smaller number of relationships connected through SNS, but these connections were often more intimate and personal. This finding is consistent with the present study’s result that Korean participants use SNS with the intention of building long-term, intimate relationships by disclosing honest and accurate information about their selves.

On the other hand, it was found that age and gender were predictors of American participants’ use of multiple SNSs. Additionally, the perception of protection through privacy settings was another predictor of their use of more than one SNS. This is in line with a prior study conducted by Krasnova et al. [48], which found that American users of SNS are more likely to feel reassured from the advocacy of privacy setting. On SNS, users can choose specific privacy settings for their profiles and control who has access to what information. It is due to this feature that American participants are more likely to use multiple SNSs.

Finally, while it was found that American participants were generally more likely to consume multiple SNS, the variables that were explored in this study better explained Korean participants' usage. According to the results, innovativeness and motivation for entertainment were significant predictors in Koreans' use of SNS; however, they tended to hold more accounts than be active on more than one SNS. This implies that Korean users are more willing to create more SNS accounts and begin its use, but they eventually do not continue the use of all the SNS accounts they hold. It can be assumed that the reason for this lies in cultural differences in that although Korean SNS users will try out new SNS, they will ultimately stick to using the service through which they are able to build intimate relationships with other users. However, American participants use more than one SNS together to connect with more networks in a less personal way.

The popularity of social media and SNS continues to grow as technology develops to offer users more convenient and efficient ways to communicate. Over time, much research has been conducted on how users decide on which SNS to use. However, the increasing trend of the use of multiple SNSs has not been addressed in prior studies. This study found, that while there are still a good number of users that stick to using a single SNS, much of the social media market has become fragmented and SNSs must come up with new ways to maintain their target audiences or gain new groups of users to remain as players in the ever-expanding industry. Therefore, SNSs need to constantly update their services in order not to be dropped from the list of SNSs that users consume.

By observing the types of SNSs that are used together, companies can gain insight on which SNSs create a synergistic effect for users' constantly changing communication needs. This knowledge can show existing players in the social media market what they can do to enhance the SNS experiences of users, and new players how to take advantage of the segmented target audiences by offering services that are unique, yet efficient with the currently trending SNS. From a managerial perspective, this will provide clues for which types of SNS would complement one another well, should mergers and acquisitions of SNS occur.

In addition, when observing the cross-cultural differences in the active use of multiple SNS, it can be implied that the types and number of personal networks that can be accessed via each SNS will affect whether users will truly collectively use multiple SNS. In the case of collectivistic societies such as Korea, SNSs should provide users with the ability to maintain long-lasting relationships by offering services that prompt users to feel comfortable sharing private information and intimate interactions. On the other hand, for individualistic cultures like the U.S., SNSs should continue to reach wide audiences and stimulate the need to disclose a large amount of information, thus motivating users to remain active on multiple SNSs.

Finally, by observing the trends of which SNSs are used together by different users, players in the industry will be able to better categorize the different types of SNS and, eventually, other social media. This may also play a role in building a new, more specific definition of SNS and create new, more focused business areas in the social media industry.

A major limitation to this study was the sample size. The ideal sample size for an exploratory study such as this is much bigger. The result that the use of multiple SNSs is not as prevalent among users as expected may be because of the sample size. Additionally, ethnicity was not taken into consideration among the American participants. However, the U.S. is made up of different ethnicities, which in turn may influence the type of culture that surrounds users and the way they communicate. Another limitation was the fact that the responses to the questions in the survey were self-reported. This makes it impossible to determine how accurate the data collected is.

Because the U.S. consists of many ethnicities and Korea is always evolving as well, the concepts of individualism versus collectivism and high- and low-context are also a limitation. As time passes, it should be assessed whether the cultural concepts can truly be applied to the respective countries.

Similarly, it was noted that the Korean sample did not consist of participants that were aged 50 years and older, while the American sample did not consist of participants that were younger than 20 years old. In regards to the American sample, the limitation of MTurk in terms of age is that one must be a legal adult to participate in studies. It was also found that out of Internet users in Korea that are 55 years of age and over, only 25% are smartphones users compared to the 97.7% of Internet users aged between 18 and 24 who owned smartphones [58].

Moreover, for the purposes of this study, the survey that was administered in Korea and the U.S. consisted of shallow information. This study was meant as the first step in delving into the trends in multiple SNS use today. Future studies on the use of multiple SNS can explore the concept of repertoire [59] and examine if users create repertoire.

Additionally, future studies could use other methodology to collect information on the usage patterns of participants. Adopting a diary, or focus group method would allow the researcher to closely monitor the specific details such as individual users' activities and what type of content is created, shared, and consumed, as well as the in-depth exploration of the characteristics of SNS users.

Finally, future studies should consider exploring other types of social media such as content sharing sites and social gaming services to get a true picture of social media repertoire. The present study has only considered SNS; however, there are many other forms of social media available, which people can use for the purposes of enhancing their communication and experiences online.

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