

---

## **Affiliation or Power: What Motivates Behavior on Social Networking Sites? And Role of Self-Consciousness on Behavior on Social Networking Sites**

Satabdee Das<sup>1</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

The present study investigated the relationship between explicit and implicit measures of affiliation, power, and achievement motives and behavior as related to social networking sites (SNS) in a sample of 40 participants. SNS appear to be designed to enable social connection via the Internet, so the potential for influence of the affiliation motive seemed self-evident. Additionally, we hypothesized that the power motive drives certain aspects of SNS behavior such that individuals with a high power motive have a larger number of friends and upload more pictures. The results of regression analyses showed that the explicit affiliation motive and the explicit power motive were related to different outcomes of SNS activity. Specifically, the explicit power motive predicted number of friends and number of uploaded pictures, whereas time spent on SNS per day was predicted by the explicit affiliation motive. Only weak evidence was found for an influence of implicit motives on SNS activity.

**Keywords:** *Social Networking, SNS Activity, Behavior, Power*

**Social Networking:** Social networking is the use of internet-based social media programs to make connections with friends, family, classmates, customers and clients. Social networking can be done for social purposes, business purposes or both. The programs show the associations between individuals and facilitate the acquisition of new contacts. Examples of social networking have included Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Classmates.com and Yelp.

**Self-consciousness:** Self-conscious really means self-aware. Self-consciousness is a healthy part of being human, even when it is slightly discomforting. But when it is excessive, it can interfere with a person's quality of life. When most people talk about "feeling self-conscious", they mean that they are extremely conscious of a flaw or shortcoming they believe they have. Excessive self-consciousness can prevent a person from being able to form relationships. It can cause shyness, isolation, and depression in severe cases. Adolescence is often a time of extreme self-

---

<sup>1</sup> Student, University of Delhi, Delhi, India

\*Responding Author

## **Affiliation or Power: What Motivates Behavior on Social Networking Sites? And Role of Self-Consciousness on Behavior on Social Networking Sites**

consciousness, because teenagers and young adults are developing their personalities and figuring out their place in the world.

There are basically two forms of self-consciousness: private self consciousness and public self consciousness.

Private self- consciousness: Private self- consciousness is the tendency to focus on oneself from a personal vantage point and attend to aspects of the self that are not readily apparent to others, such as one's thoughts and feelings.

Public self-consciousness: Public self-consciousness is the tendency to focus on oneself from the perceived vantage point to real or imagined others and to attend to aspects of the self that are observable by others, such as facets of one's appearance and behavior.

### **McClelland's needs theory of power and affiliation:**

David McClelland and his associates proposed McClelland's theory of Needs / Achievement Motivation Theory. This theory states that human behavior is affected by three needs - Need for Power, Achievement and Affiliation.

Need for achievement is the urge to excel, to accomplish in relation to a set of standards, to struggle to achieve success.

Need for power is the desire to influence other individual's behavior as per your wish. In other words, it is the desire to have control over and to be influential.

Need for affiliation is a need for open and sociable interpersonal relationships. In other words, it is a desire for relationship based on co-operation and mutual understanding.

The individuals with high achievement needs are highly motivated by competing and challenging work. They look for promotional opportunities in job. They have a strong urge for feedback on their achievement. Such individuals try to get satisfaction in performing things better. High achievement is directly related to high performance. Individuals who are better and above average performers are highly motivated. They assume responsibility for solving the problems at work. McClelland called such individuals as gamblers as they set challenging targets for themselves and they take deliberate risk to achieve those set targets. Such individuals look for innovative ways of performing job. They perceive achievement of goals as a reward, and value it more than a financial reward.

The individuals who are **motivated by power** have a strong urge to be influential and controlling. They want that their views and ideas should dominate and thus, they want to lead. Such individuals are motivated by the need for reputation and self-esteem. Individuals with greater power and authority will perform better than those possessing less power. Generally, managers with high need for power turn out to be more efficient and successful managers. They are more determined and loyal to the organization they work for. Need for power should not

## **Affiliation or Power: What Motivates Behavior on Social Networking Sites? And Role of Self-Consciousness on Behavior on Social Networking Sites**

always be taken negatively. It can be viewed as the need to have a positive effect on the organization and to support the organization in achieving its goals. The individuals who are **motivated by affiliation** have an urge for a friendly and supportive environment. Such individuals are effective performers in a team. These people want to be liked by others. The manager's ability to make decisions is hampered if they have a high affiliation need as they prefer to be accepted and liked by others, and this weakens their objectivity. Individuals having high affiliation needs prefer working in an environment providing greater personal interaction. Such people have a need to be on the good books of all. They generally cannot be good leaders. **Ideal self:** According to the humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers, the personality is composed of the real Self and the Ideal self. Our real self is "who we are" and our ideal self is "what we want to be".

The ideal self is an idealized version of ourselves created out of what we have learnt from our life experiences, the demands of society, and what we admire in our role models.

**Real Self:** The real self is the individual's bodily self ( and whatever lies behind the body). The bodily self is seldom perfect and therefore is seldom satisfactory to its owner.

**Virtual Self:** Virtual reality is an artificial environment which is experienced through sensory stimuli (as sights and sounds) provided by a computer and in which one's actions partially determine what happens in the environment. Also virtual reality means the technology used to create or access a virtual reality.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Previous studies have provided the first empirical data regarding the specific motivations to which people attribute their online activity (e.g., Joinson, 2008; Sheldon, 2008). Proponents of the uses and gratifications approach (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973) assume that users select media on the basis of their capacity to satisfy their needs; this approach has provided the theoretical framework for several research studies on SNS usage (e.g., Baek, Holton, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011; Bumgarner, 2007; Chung, Koo, & Park, 2012; Kim, Kim, & Nam, 2010; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009). For example, Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) identified nine motives for Facebook use: expressive information sharing, habitual passing time, relaxing entertainment, cool and new trend, companionship, professional advancement, escape, social interaction, and new friendships. Smock, Ellison, Lampe, and Wohn (2011) found that different patterns of motivations (e.g., relaxing entertainment, expressive information sharing, social interaction) predicted different usage of Facebook features such as chat, groups, or wall posts. Lin and Lu (2011) found that different patterns of motivations (e.g., relaxing entertainment, expressive information sharing, social interaction) predicted different usage of Facebook features such as chat, groups, or wall posts. Lin and Lu (2011) found that network externalities, usefulness, and enjoyment are associated with the continued use of SNS, thus reverting to the theory of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Other studies found that the need to belong was positively associated with attitudes

## **Affiliation or Power: What Motivates Behavior on Social Networking Sites? And Role of Self-Consciousness on Behavior on Social Networking Sites**

toward SNS and willingness to join SNS (Gangadharbatla, 2008), and that the need for popularity predicted disclosure of personal information (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009). In a similar vein, a recent meta-analysis suggested that the “most common internal motivation discussed in the literature was users’ desire to keep in touch with friends” (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012, p. 209). Although the latter finding reflects a view of SNS behavior as generally being affiliatively motivated, surprisingly little is known about the role that general and well validated Motives such as the affiliation motive play in SNS activity. The investigation of the relationships between social motives and different aspects of SNS behavior goes beyond studies that formulated “social interaction” as Motivation to use SNS because “social interaction” can be Affiliative and power-motivated. McClelland coined the term “big three” to refer to three extensively researched stable motives that account for many facets of human behavior: the motives for affiliation, power, and achievement (Langan-Fox & Grant, 2006; McClelland, 1985b). People scoring high on the affiliation motive generally like being with their friends or others, readily accept others, try hard to form friendships, and maintain contact with others (Smith, 2008; Stumpf, Angleitner, Wieck, Jackson, & Beloch-Till, 1985). Highly power-motivated people exert a high level of effort to keep their (social) surroundings under control, manipulate others, are emphatic in their views, and like to be considered leaders (Smith, 2008; Stumpf et al., 1985). People with a high achievement motive strive to solve challenging tasks, set high standards for themselves, and are predisposed to working on long-term objectives (Stumpf et al., 1985). McClelland, Koestner, and Weinberger (1989) proposed two independent motivational systems: the directly measured “conscious” explicit motives (self-report) and the indirectly measured “unconscious” implicit motives (thematic content analysis of written stories). Evidence supports the independence of these two sets of motives in that implicit and explicit motives are not correlated (e.g., Spangler, 1992). Implicit motives predict operant behavior, which is spontaneous and has no objective external trigger (McClelland et al., 1989), whereas explicit motives predict respondent (stimulus-driven) behavior, which is an intentionally controlled reaction to an objective external stimulus (Biernat, 1989; Spangler, 1992). In a study by Constantian, the implicit affiliation motive was associated with the time spent with others when beeped by a pager, whereas the explicit affiliation motive was associated with the self-reported preference for social activities but not with the behavioral affiliation measure (see McClelland, 1985a). Additionally, fear of rejection was formulated as a facet of the implicit affiliation motive (e.g., Schultheiss & Hale, 2007), whereas there is no such evidence for the explicit affiliation motive. The assignment of operant and respondent behavioral aspects should also be translatable to SNS behavior. For example, spending time on SNS as a spontaneous and intrinsically motivated behavior should be more operant, whereas adding a friend as a controlled response to an external stimulus should be a more respondent behavior. Certainly, this distinction is rather simplistic as most behaviors should not be viewed as either operant or respondent, but probably entail portions of both.

## Affiliation or Power: What Motivates Behavior on Social Networking Sites? And Role of Self-Consciousness on Behavior on Social Networking Sites

We propose that both the affiliation motive and the power motive are associated with different markers of SNS behavior. We chose four SNS-related behavior variables (i.e., number of friends, number of uploaded pictures, frequency of posting messages, and time spent on SNS) that have been assessed by others as well (e.g., number of friends and time spent on SNS using the Facebook Intensity Scale; Ellison more popular with others.”) and resembles the power motive, predicted information disclosure on Facebook.

### METHODS

**Objective:** To examine if there is a relationship between social networking activity and self-consciousness, power and affiliation respectively.

**Hypothesis:**

1. There is a positive correlation between public self consciousness and social networking activity.
2. Participants having greater power/affiliation motive will devote in higher social networking activity.

**Sample:** The sample in the study consisted of 40 young adults falling in the age group of 18-25 years of age.

**Materials:** McClelland’s Need Assessment Questionnaire was used for assessing the affiliation and power needs of the participants. Scheier, M.F; & Carver, C.S. scale was used to assess the public and private self-consciousness of the participants. And then by taking the ideas of all the group members, a questionnaire was formed to assess the social networking behavior of the participants.

**Design & Procedure:** The participants were asked to fill up the three set of questionnaires and they were given as much as time as they required to complete the questionnaire.

### RESULTS

The raw score for public self consciousness and social networking sites behavior is found to be 0.35. The p- value of the two- tailed test was found to be 0.0268 which is statistically significant. This implies that there is a direct correlation between public self consciousness and social networking sites behavior.

The raw score for private self consciousness and social networking sites behavior is found to be - 0.109. The p- value of the two- tailed test was found to be 0.5032 which is negatively correlated. This shows that there is an inverse relationship between private self consciousness and social networking sites behavior and it is statistically insignificant.

The raw score for public self consciousness and social networking sites behavior is found to be 0.043. The p- value of the two- tailed test was found to be 0.7922 which is statistically insignificant. This implies that there is a minor positive correlation between power and social networking sites behavior.

## **Affiliation or Power: What Motivates Behavior on Social Networking Sites? And Role of Self-Consciousness on Behavior on Social Networking Sites**

The raw score for affiliation and social networking sites behavior is found to be 0.197. The p-value of the two-tailed test was found to be 0.2219 which is statistically insignificant. This shows that the correlation is due to chance factors.

### **INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

Externally visible aspects of SNS behavior, including number of friends and posted pictures, were related to the power motive, but time invested in SNS activity, a non-visible aspect of SNS behavior, was related to the affiliation motive. Overall, these findings are in line with our hypotheses regarding the important role of the power motive in SNS behavior. The power motive predicted the number of friends on SNS, supporting the assumption that a disproportionately high number of “friends” might serve the need to impress and influence others more than actual affiliative needs. The same was true for the number of uploaded pictures, suggesting that such pictures are motivated by the desire to gain reputation and to impress others. The number of pictures, however, was also marginally positively related to the explicit affiliation motive. Uploading pictures – especially pictures showing activities with others – may be a convenient way to maintain and strengthen meaningful relationships with others. We can only speculate about this, as we did not investigate what kinds of pictures were posted. It seems plausible, however, that different types of pictures (e.g., self-portrayals or pictures with friends and social activities) are differentially related to different motives. A more fine-grained content analysis of types of picture or other SNS features such as the content of posted messages in relationship to different motives may be an interesting venue for future research. There was a positive correlation between need for affiliation and time spent on SNS per day. But it was statistically insignificant. Hence, correlation occurred due to chance factors. There was only significant relationship between public self-consciousness and social networking sites behavior and this means that there is direct correlation between the two. Previous researchers have suggested that the implicit affiliation motive might be negatively motivated and reflect the fear of being rejected (see McAdams & Constantian, 1983; Schultheiss & Hale, 2007).

### **STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

Our results provide insight into the motivational background of important and frequently used features of SNS behavior (i.e., friends, pictures, and messages). By investigating the relationship between social motives and SNS behavior, we have contributed information to the phenomenon of the (still growing) influence of SNS on the daily life of the population worldwide. The study is generative because it connects the traditional concept of motives to a novel form of communication.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

A limitation was that the number of participants was rather small due to time constrain. Our sample was characterized by unequal gender different.

**REFERENCES**

- Amichai-Hamburger, Y., & Vinitzky, G. (2010). Social network use and personality. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26, 1289–1295. doi 10.1016/j.chb.2010.03.018
- Ashton, M.C., Jackson, D.N., Helmes, E., & Paunonen, S.V. (1998). Joint factor analysis of the Personality Research Form and the Jackson Personality Inventory: Comparisons with the Big Five. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 32, 243–250. doi : 10.1006/jrpe.1998.2214
- Back, M.D., Stopfer, J.M., Vazire, S., Gaddis, S., Schmukle, S. C., Egloff, B., & Gosling, S. D. (2010). Facebook profiles reflect actual personality, not self-idealization. *Psychological Science*, 21, 372–374. doi 10.1177/0956797609360756

**How to cite this article:** S Das (2016), Affiliation or Power: What Motivates Behavior on Social Networking Sites? And Role of Self-Consciousness on Behavior on Social Networking Sites, *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 3, Issue 3, No. 8, DIP: 18.01.146/20160303, ISBN: 978-1-365-12176-0