Online Social Networking: A New Form of Social Interaction

Siti Ezaleila Mustafa and Azizah Hamzah

Abstract—**This paper will present the findings of the pilot studies on the use of online social network in Malaysia. A total of 40 questionnaires were distributed to active users of this social media to get an early indication on this activity. In addition, discussion about the global activities of online social networking is also undertaken as a comparison. The analysis shows that online social networking has been used as a new mode of communication especially for Internet active users to meet and interact with their friends. Early findings indicate that they spent quite many hours in this environment and log in into their accounts a few times a day. This shows that social interaction in cyberspace by using new media applications such as social networking has been adapted by more and more people and has changed human communication.**

Index Terms—**Malaysia, Online community, Social interaction, Social media.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Statistics show that the Internet is increasingly being used and has become a must for some people. Besides being a source of reference or "library" for all forms of information and knowledge, this medium is also used as an effective means of communication tool in social interaction. Because the computing and Internet technology keeps changing over time, people shall always find new ways to use them in communication.

Since the introduction of web 2.0 technologies, the interactivity elements that are offered to the user had turned the Internet into a modern social platform that involved mass participation. It has evolved into this new form of social media that can transmit multimedia content and eased the interaction between senders and receivers or between content providers and the audiences. This media has led to the formation of a new form of communication that has consolidated mass communication and interpersonal communication into new interactivities such as chat groups, virtual groups in workplaces, and online communities [1].

II. MEDIA & ICT REVOLUTION

For McLuhan, new forms of media have changed the human experiences [2]. Harold Innis's words reflected the truth when he said that media technology that was present in a

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society at a certain period of time would affect the individual in society, in their thinking, communication, and behaviour [3]. Therefore, the notion of an evolving technology as alluded to by McLuhan, may be seen in the four eras of the development of human communication such as following: (i) the tribal era, (ii) the literacy era, (iii) the era of printing, and (iv) the electronic era [3]-[5].

This is supported by McQuail [5] who states that there is a relationship between the dominant communication technologies in each era with the important features of community. Thus, in each case, the changes from one era to another era shall bring forth a new mode of communication that would lead to significant changes in human life and society. Each media and communication technologies that exist—from print to electronic media, media, interpersonal, and new media—tend to continue with the same features, which cover longer distances, at greater speed, but also bring more information to the audience. For Brody [6], we are now entering the fifth era, an era that emphasised interactive communication compared to oral, writing, prints, and telecommunication in the previous development of human communication.

This shows that communication modes are changing and has now crossed such distances with the help of computerization and digital technology especially the emergence of Internet and its various new applications. Communication and interaction may now take place through online or in virtual world or cyberspace without having to face each other at the same place and same time.

Many more people use the new media technology, the Internet in particular, to meet their psychological and social needs. Internet is the place to meet and interact and form relationships. In fact, this form of social interaction or communication has become increasingly common in our daily lives. Interpersonal communication has been said to be the main cause of Internet use [7].

III. SOCIAL MEDIA: ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING

Application or mode of communication is enabled by the prevalence of Web 2.0 technology at the end of year 2004. The previous Web 1.0 consists of static pages and offer little interactivity. However, this is different from Web 2.0 or Web "read/write" which refers to the development of online community-centered application based on the degree of interactivity, inclusiveness, collaborative, authentic materials, and digital literacy skills which are higher .

With technological advances from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, new media is changing and growing. According to O'Reilley, Web 2.0 refers to the second generation of web development and is often associated with social media applications. The

important feature of this media is the development of software that enabled mass participation in social and collective activities [8] that can often be seen as "playful".

Web 2.0 helps the user to overcome the technical obstacles that hinder the way earlier and thus making the Internet an instrument for and by the mass user. One can easily consume (read, listen, watch, download, search, and buy), create (personalize, aggregate, and contribute), share (publish, upload), facilitate (tag, recommend) and communicate (send messages, post comments, rate, and chat) online.

The new media technology evolved to meet the technical requirements for creating an effective online social networking, namely (i) bounding: to form an online group meeting, (ii) tracking: the list of community involvement in discussions, (iii) archiving: to maintain records for easy discussion, and (iv) warranting: ensuring the identity of the participants [9].

This social media where individuals can meet and chat with others who share their same interests have sprouted rapidly and have become a very popular application of the Internet. The rapid adaptation of this technology by individuals, groups, organizations, and communities have created "online communities", and "virtual social life" [10]. This media is created with four basic elements based on Preece [11], namely people, sharing purposes, policy, and computer system.

This community is formed and maintained through the Internet. According to Horigan [12], "…an online community has become a 'third place' for the public and it is different from home and workplace." Among the main activity of this "third place" is conversation and the mood is established as "playful", "frivolity, verbal wordplay, and wit", and by the feeling of "human warmth" deriving from "being apart together" [13].

Fig. 1. Social media platforms.

This media is changing all the time, therefore, it appears in various forms or applications such as discussion / Internet forums, weblogs, wikis (like Wikipedia), photo sharing (Flickr), video sharing (like YouTube), social news (Twitter), social games (YoVille), social networking (such asFacebook, Friendster, Second Life, There).

Usage of this social media creates excitement to the user and they are used more often than other media. This is consistent with McQuail's [5] opinion that one of the characteristics of new media is related to the degree of "playfulness", the degree to which a current or potential user believes that the social network site will bring him/her a sense of enjoyment and pleasure [14].

Cyberspace now becomes a new playground and online interaction where people get together and form groups based on interest with the use of social networking and virtual world sites. Millions are logging in, joining up, and participating. It has become more fun, interactive, and "lives" with elements of video, audio, and digital animation offered by this new media.

Higher rates in Internet penetration in almost all countries is due to the increase in online activities. "Digital World, Digital Life" released by TNS Global Interactive shows that the average adult respondents from 16 industrial countries spend one-third of their spare time being online. The use of new media is no longer confined to the home or at work, but can be used anywhere with a wireless technology that can also be used on mobile phones.

According to Damien Cummings (www.the-open-room.com), the year 2008 witnessed the growth of online social networking via social networking sites and virtual worlds. Statistics from comScore World Metrix showed that from 1.1 billion users accessing the Internet in May 2009, 734.2 million or 65% of them, visit at least one social networking site. In fact, it has become a social utility in the friend relationship management with 74% of consumers using it to send messages to their friends. These sites connect people globally and Universal McCann's research has shown that more immigrants such as Filipinos (83%), Hungarians (80%), Polish (77%), and Mexicans (76%) use this social media.

A. What is Online Social Networking

Mew [15] sees online social networking as "social software that has been used to develop social networks." Sites that provide online social networking allows users or members to form a perception or impression, maintain, and acquire new relationships [16]. Therefore, according to Boyd and Ellison [17], although these sites use a variety of technical features, the backbone of these sites is the profile that displays a list of "Friends" which is also a user of the system.

Boyd and Ellison [17] define social networking sites as web-based service that allows individuals to do the following: (i) build public or semi-public profile in a system, (ii) share a connection, and (iii) view and cross-list their relationship and by others in the system. Social networking sites often have a portal, forums, blogs, and galleries (usually a photo gallery). Each element is used by the user of a social networking site to connect with each other and contribute to the formation of a community. If the user is in the blog space, they will receive the latest information from the portal space, gallery, or forum. This online community is always in relation to each other through this communication in cyberspace.

Online social networking has been characterized by sharing activities, trends or preferences, and information for socializing [18]. It becomes a place to meet people who have similar interests, expresses it and act. It has been used as a tool and utility for people to connect with each other. This social media as a public medium has four characteristics which show that friendship maybe "immortal": and has

persistency, searchability, replicability, and invisible audiences [19].

Fig. 2. Social networking sites.

Generally, according to Fraser and Dutta [20], online social networks can be divided into five categories as follows:

- Egocentric networks: These sites are very popular and acts as a platform to build a network of "friends". It is a virtual platform for the identity formation and often involves the fabrication and management of various identities as well as a platform for artistic creativity and personal expression through the photos, songs, videos and other content posted.
- Web communities: Collecting members with strong identity ties based on race, nation, religion, interests, gender, and so on. The gathering here served as reshaping the existing community offline. Sense of belonging in these webs are so strong that it can form micro communities social network.
- Opportunistic web: The members gathered for rational reasons such as for reasons of business or professional relationship. This can be seen in the social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Plaxo.
- Passion-centric network: This site gathered people who share interests or hobbies. It is also known as "communities of interest" because membership in this site is defined based on particular interests such as Goodreads and Shelfari which is a meeting place for fans of books.
- Media-sharing site: This site is defined not by its membership, but based on its contents. YouTube for example, attract users who want to share videos, and Flickr are for those who want to share photos. These pages are visited in order to access the content produced by others.

Social networking sites usually have the following elements:

- Portal: space for registration of information, profiles, and the latest information.
- Forum: chat rooms, and friendly interaction salam members.
- Blog: writing ink space to be shared among members.
- Gallery: space for sharing photos of activities among members.

Online social networking has been used as a place for users to get together and make a connection. This social media is increasingly used to create new relationships and expanding the existing social networks. It does not just allow users to meet other people in cyberspace, but also allows users to state and demonstrate their social networks clearly [17] and maintain relationship with others [21].

B. Global Phenomenon of Online Social Networking

Online social networking is considered as a new phenomenon after the existence of the Internet and web [22]. In this online world, users can also display the status and distinction to the audience that consist of friends, colleagues, and others by stating their taste performance [23], or listing of their interests, sports, books, music, video, favourite movies, and so on.

Social networking sites have increasingly been used by more and more people around the world because of its ability to connect people all around the world easily. There are various types of social networking sites and this creates a variety of online communities.

TABLE I. THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES USED BY REGION, JUNE 2007 VS JUNE 2008

	Visitors ('000)		
	June 07	June 08	% Changes
World	464,437	580,510	25%
Asia Pacific	162,738	200,555	23%
Europe	122,527	165,256	35%
North America	120,848	131,255	9%
Latin America	40,098	53,248	33%
Middle East – Africa	18,226	30,197	66%

Source: comScore World Metrix

Statistics released by comScore World Metrix showed the increasing use of online social networking all over the world, especially in the Middle East-Africa area, which shows a growth of 66% since June 2007 to June 2008. Overall, the use of social networking sites shows a growth of 25% since June 2007.

The fact is that two-thirds of the global Internet population now visits social networking sites. An estimated 800 million users will start using their mobile devices for social network access. Based on VisualEconomics.com report (www.visual economics.com), among Internet users, 80% in Brazil use social network sites. Other countries with high percentages include Italy (73%), Spain (75%), Japan (70%), United States (67%), United Kingdom (69%), France (67%), Australia (59%), Germany (51%) and Switzerland (51%).

Studies by Universal McCann in Wave 3 shows 31% of active users manage their social networking sites every day, while 33% use it regularly (www.universalmccann.com). According to comScore, Facebook is the most popular site with 370 million users, followed by MySpace (123 million), Hi5 (59 million), Orkut (55 million), and Twitter (52 million). More than 35 million Facebook users update their status each day. Photo uploads to Facebook have increased by more than 100%. Currently, there are around 2.5 billion uploads to the site each month. This has been supported by Bellegham's research that showed, 51% of Internet population currently a member of Facebook. This research also indicated that 83% of online population knows Facebook, even if only by name.

The trend towards a form of network communication and online community can be seen when more people are using it,
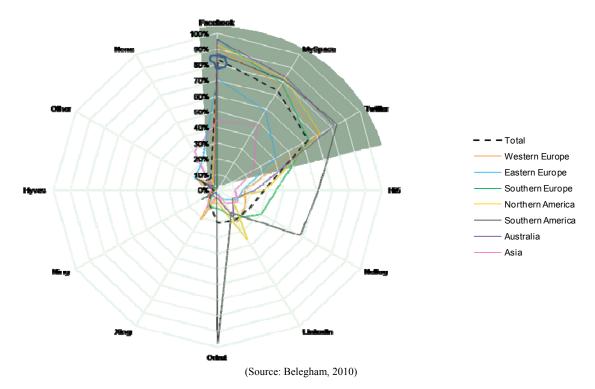
(Source: Belegham, 2010)

Fig. 3. The famous social networking site among online users.

especially young people who are categorized as versatile and optimistic consumers that are always trying something new. They tend to use the Internet for entertainment purposes and communication with family and friends [24]. Online social networking is one of the more popular activities amongst them. They utilize this social media to socialize with others, play games, use applications, send private messages, and discuss about various topics.

In US, until November 2009, 70% of overall usage of social networking among young adults between the ages of 18 to 30 years old (Y Generation), is for communications activities. Of the 93% of teenagers who are online, 65% use social networking site as a tool for daily communication. Of these, 77 percent users are teenagers between the ages of 15 to 17 years old [25].

But, the older user shows their enthusiasm over the past year in embracing new networking tools. Based on Madden's research [26], social networking use among Internet users aged 50 and older had nearly doubled—from 22% in April 2009 to 42% in May 2010. They now rely on social network platforms to help manage their daily communications, even though email is still the primary way for them to maintain contact with their friends, families, and colleagues.

According to Silicon.com report, there are more than 10 billion social-networking and online-world accounts in 2010 and that nearly 4.5 billion of these are active. And this includes accounts set up for online role-playing games such as World of Warcraft and 3D virtual world such as Second Life, and online dating sites.

The penetration of social networking activity in Malaysia, based on the report by comScore World Metrix is rather high, which is 67%, behind the Philippines (87%), Indonesia (84%) and Singapore (77%). In terms of average minutes spent per visitor on social networks, Malaysia ranked second based on Asia Pacific region with 181.2 minutes, Korea (227.8 minutes), followed by Singapore (175.6 minutes). Recently, a

report showes that Malaysia at 97 % now shares the same position with Philippines, in terms of percentage of Internet users who visit social networking site.

TABLE II. PENETRATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BASED ON MARKET, 2009

Market	Internet Usage * (000)	Social Networking Usage (000)	%
Philippines	4,526	3,924	87
Indonesia	6,014	5,074	84
Singapore	2,696	2,085	77
Malaysia	9,401	6,344	67
Hong Kong	3,921	2,502	64
India	35,432	22,259	63
Taiwan	11,932	7,565	63
South Korea	28,978	16,632	57
Vietnam	5,625	2,947	52
China	215,460	105,379	49
Japan	67,586	24,276	36

Source: comScore World Metrix

Source: comScore Media Metrix, June 2010
Persons Age 15+, Home and Work Location
Excludes visitation from public computers such as Internet cafes or access from mobile phones.
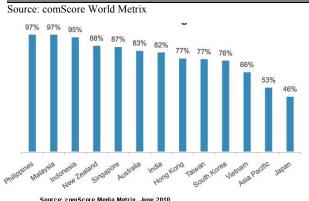
Fig. 4. Percent of Internet users visiting a social networking sites.

IV. Usage of Online Social Networking in Malaysia: Early Findings

A pilot survey was conducted to get an early indication of this activity in Malaysia. A questionnaire was distributed to 40 respondents (f=20; m=20), who are considered as active users of online social networking. Majority of the respondents are between the ages of 26-35 years olds (60%), not married (65%), works in the private sector (40%) and were university/college graduates (87.5%).

TABLE III. DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents' Demography	F	%
Age:		
18-25	13	32.5
26-35	24	60.0
36-45	3	7.5
Gender:		
Male	20	50.0
Female	20	50.0
Race:		
Malay	35	87.5
Chinese	4	10.0
Indian	1	2.5
Status of Marriage:		
Single	26	65.0
Married	14	35.5
Level of Education:		
College/university	35	87.5
PMR/SPM	2	5.0
STPM/Diploma	3	7.5
Occupation:		
Student	12	30.0
Self-employment	1	2.5
Government staff	8	20.0
Private sector	16	40.0
Others	3	7.5

The data from the respondents are analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 17.0 with focus on descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, average and standard deviation (SD).

A. Trends of Usage

In terms of period of usage of this social media, 62.5% of them had used it for more than three years and 45% of these respondents maintained accounts with two to three social networking sites. In terms of gender, the finding found that female respondents aged between 26-35 years represented the highest percentage, namely 17.5% with a three accounts and 48% of the total has been using social media more than three years.

TABLE IV. PERIOD OF USE

	F	%
1-2 years	8	20.0
2-3 years	7	17.5
More than 3 years	25	62.5

However, it also appears that 52% of the male respondents as a whole have used social networking sites for more than three years and 57.5% used it for a period of two- three years compared to the majority of female respondents. 62.5% of female users had been using it for a period of only one - two years.

The main reason for their participation in online social networking is due to the fact that it is the current trend (37.5%), and curiosity/ wants to try a new thing (32.5%).

Only 30% use this media due to the influence of friends or because they are invited. None of them use it because of the influence of advertisements. In terms of gender, a majority of female respondents partcipate in online social networking due to it being a current trend (45%), but the male respondents join in due to curiosity (35%).

TABLE V. PERIOD OF USE

		Period of use		
		1-2 years	2-3 years	> 3 years
Male	Count	3	4	13
	% within gender	15.0%	20.0%	65.0%
	% within period of use	37.5%	57.1%	52.0%
	% of Total	7.5%	10.0%	32.5%
Female	Count	5	3	12
	% within gender pengguna	25.0%	15.0%	60.0%
	% within period of use	62.5%	42.9%	48.0%
	% of Total	12.5%	7.5%	30.0%

TABLE VI. FACTORS OF USAGE

	F	%
Current trend	15	37.5
Curiosity /wants to try something new	13	32.5
Invitation from people who already have accounts in certain social networking sites	7	17.5
Influence of friends	5	12.5
Advertisement	0	0

Based on this survey, 60% of the respondents have accounts in global/international online social sites and only 10% used local sites and 11% have accounts in both types of sites. In line with the global phenomenon, Facebook is the most popular social networking site because this social media is used by 30.1% of the respondents, followed by Friendster (21.1%), MySpace (13%), Tagged (13%), and Hi5. Local social networking sites that have been used by respondents are Myfriends2u and FriendX. Actually, many local social networking site is not yet get encouraging responses from users, even their existence are not known among some of users.

TABLE VII. USAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

	F	%
Facebook	37	30.1%
Friendster	26	21.1%
Orkut	1	0.8%
MySpace	16	13.0%
Tagged	16	13.0%
Hi5	10	8.1%
Bebo	4	3.3%
Kaneva	1	.8%
Myfriends2u	2	1.6%
LinkedIn	1	0.8%
Google Buzz	2	1.6%
FriendX	1	0.8%
Others	6	4.9%

The first social networking site that is used by a majority of the respondents is Friendster (52.5%), followed by Facebook (30%). Others are MySpace, Tagged, Fanbox, and CariKawan. And 63% of them still use their first social networking site.

TABLE VIII.   THE FIRST SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES USE BY RESPONDENTS

	F	%
Carikawan	1	2.5
Facebook	12	30.0
Fanbox	1	2.5
Friendster	21	52.5
MySpace	4	10
Tagged	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Frequency of log in shows 87.5% of respondents log in into their account a few times a day and 37.5% spend more than two hours at each session. This is similar to a study by Marlene Charlotte Larsen [27] on users of social networking site in Denmark which shows that 30.9% of respondents spend more than two hours on the site. Studies by Jeniffer Raacke-Bond and John Raacke [28] from the University of Carolina also show that on average, users spend at least two hours a day and check into their accounts four times a day..

The finding shows that a majority (32.5%) spend 11 to 20 hours per week with social networking and most of the time they use it at home after office hours, from 6.00 pm to 12.00 midnight. Almost 70% of respondent uses laptop to access this social media, followed by desktop (38.5%). Even though, it can be access anytime and anywhere through any devise with Internet access, Only 30% use mobile phone and smartphone to access or use the social networking site. With this device, including laptop, users actually can access this social media anywhere and anytime, but with access to the Internet.

TABLE IX.   DEVICE FOR ACCESS

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	%	
Personal computer (desktop)	15	27.3	38.5%
Komputer riba (laptop)	27	49.1	69.2%
Telefon bimbit (mobile hone)	9	16.4	23.1%
Smartphone (iPhone/Blackberry etc)	4	7.3	10.3%

B.   Friends and Groups

Studies by Universal McCann in Wave 4 show that active Internet users use their social network profiles as hubs for their social media. There are significant increases in number of users finding new friends or joining a group (www.universalmccann.com).

Through the survey that was administered, a majority of the respondents (35%) have 251-500 "friends" and 20% have more than 1,000 "friends" in their profiles. Only 10% of them have less than 100 "friends". A majority of the respondents' friends are their schoolmates and university friends (65%), and because of that, many of them always interact with this type of friends in their online activities (63.9%).

List of friends that they have often become a pull factor to get more friends and the number of friends demonstrate

positive social assessment. For that, Boyd [19] tried to identify the meaning of friendship in the online social networking world and he finds that members in this social media seeked to define community in egocentric sense and they want to interact with all who may have interests or could provide useful information.

TABLE X.   TOTAL OF FRIENDS

	F	%
< 50	1	2.6
51-100	3	7.7
101-250	7	17.9
251-500	14	35.9
501-1000	6	15.4
> 1000	8	20.5

This is supported by a study conducted by Coyle and Vaughn [29] found that communication using this technology is done by people who have known. Therefore, they state that online social networking is just another form of communication that evolve over time with the help of technology.

Besides that, 52.5% of respondents join between 1-10 online groups, while only 12.5% joined more than 50 groups. The main reason for joining this group is to always get updates of information regarding their profesion/interest (36.4%).

Based on the survey, there are several activities that seem popular among the respondents (Table IX). The mean shows score from 3.90 to 1.38. Sixteen items obtained a mean score above 3.00 and the highest is as follows:

TABLE XI.   THE FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS' ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Activities	Mean	SD
Read comments in my wall	3.90	.87
Respond to the comments in personal profile	3.85	.86
Read friends' comment in my photo album	3.75	.81
Send a wish to friends	3.75	.93
Browse friends' photo album	3.60	.84
Send comments to friends' status	3.58	.93
Browse friends' wall	3.55	.90
Comment on friends' photos	3.50	.91
Chatting using IM	3.42	1.17
Sends private message	3.28	.96
Upload photos	3.23	.96
Send and accept friendship invitation	3.22	1.10
Find /see an interesting people's profile	3.10	1.03
Shares video or links from other web	3.05	1.22
State the daily activities	3.02	1.17
Read friends' note/blog	3.02	1.07
Check comments in online group that I joined	2.97	1.19
Update the profile	2.85	1.05
Search the same interest groups	2.85	1.17
Post something to blog/note	2.50	1.24
Play games	2.12	1.18
Play quizzes	2.10	1.19
Use poll feature	1.95	1.11
Promote product or online business	1.75	1.17
Create new quizzes/ application	1.38	.70

- Read comment in my wall" (M=3.90; SD=0.87)
- Respond to the comment in personal profile" (M=3.85; SD=0.86)
- Read friends' comment in my photo album" (M=3.75; SD=0.81)
- Send a wish to friends" (M=3.75; SD=0.93)
- Browse friends' photo album (M=3.60; SD=0.84).

This means that five activities have always been used by the respondents and have been supported with high frequency percentage of "very often" and "often". Analyses show that nearly 70% of respondent always read comments in their "wall" when they log in their social site's account (very often=40%; often=27.5%) and responds to the comment (very often=47.5%; often 22.5%). More than 60% always read friends' comment in their photo album (very often=17.5%; often=45%), while 45% always use this social media to send wishes to their friends (45%)—such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduation days, and so on—and browse their friends' walls (37.5%).

Although many social networking sites provide games and quizzes, the survey shows the lower mean score in those activities among the respondents. The finding also indicates that the respondents still act as a user to this media because they do not actively play the role of content providers because "create new quizzes/application" has the lowest mean (1.38) and the mode is 1.00 (which means "never") and they just post something to blogs/notes only occasionally (mode=3.00; M= 2.50). Only 20% of respondents answer that they "often (12.5%) and very often (7.5%) do this activity in online social networking.

This is almost similar with research conducted by Lenhart [25] on the Y generation which shows that most of the activities performed within this site is to provide comments on pictures of their friends (83%). This group also regularly post messages to a page or wall friends (77%), and send private messages through social networking sites. Users also use social networking site as a means of self expression through uploading photos, videos, and music.

C. Reason for Usage

The early findings show that there are many reasons for the usage of this social media. The mean values are between 4.52 to 1.95 and based on Table VII the highest scores show a similarity with previous studies on uses and gratification for Internet and CMC such as Ruggierio [30], Parker and Plank [31], LaRose and Eastin [32, and Leung [33].

The highest score indicate that the main reasons for the usage of this social media among respondents refer to social relationship or relationship management purposes, as following:

1) Keep in touch with old friend (M=4.52; SD=0.68)
2) Knowing the situation/news of existing friends (M=4.40; SD=0.59)
3) Looking for separated old friends (M=4.38; SD=0.67)
4) Manage and maintain friendship (M=4.33; SD=0.62)
5) Easy to connect with those who live apart geographically (M=4.20; SD=0.94)
6) Easy to connect to one another without too much commitment (M=4.03; SD=0.89)

All these reasons have a high percentage of "strongly agreed" and "agreed". Majority of respondent, namely 60% answered "strongly agreed", while 35% "agreed" that they

TABLE XII. REASONS OF USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

	Mean	SD
Keep in touch with old friends	4.52	.68
Knowing the situation/news of existing friends	4.40	.59
Looking for separated old friends	4.38	.67
Manage & maintain friendship	4.33	.62
Easy to connect with those who live apart geographically	4.20	.94
Easy to connect to one another without too much commitment	4.03	.89
Leisure	3.93	.99
Chat with friends	3.93	.92
To inform something	3.93	.90
Unify all friends	3.93	1.05
Keep in touch with families/ relatives	3.80	1.18
Fun	3.80	1.04
Avoid boredom	3.80	1.04
Self entertainment	3.80	1.18
Expand the network of friendship with those who share same interest / same job	3.78	1.17
To gain knowledge from group discussion	3.68	1.07
Express/ share feelings	3.65	1.12
Join groups that have similar interests	3.35	1.19
To know friends of existing friends	3.34	1.07
Job purposes	3.20	1.24
Learning & education purposes	3.20	1.32
To know new friends closely	3.20	1.20
Make friends with anyone	3.13	1.26
To be a friend / fan of the personality, politicians artist	2.70	1.28
Build a new personal identity	2.53	1.24
To collect friends as many as possible while not know them	2.48	1.32
Business & product marketing purposes	2.35	1.42
To increase the popularity and well-known	2.20	1.16
Wasting time	1.95	1.08

use online social networking to keep in touch with old friends. Only one respondent said "never". 20 respondents agreed while 18 strongly agreed it has been used to get news about their friends. Besides that 95% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed it is used to look for separated old friends, and 92.5% said it is for managing and maintaining friendship.

These findings are almost similar with research undertaken by Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe [25], Hargittai [34] and Joinson [35] which also showed that these new media are often used to communicate with existing friends and other students who meet every day on campus. In Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe's research [25], the phrase "keep in touch" often appear in the responses of the respondents.

For Joinson [34], the phrase has two main functions:

- the oversight function, which shows social networking site has been used to know anything about their connections and old friends, and
- the construction of social capital, which refers to building and maintaining ties with friends and acquaintances far away (in terms of location).

Some of them use the online social networking to get and distribute information easily anytime and anywhere. Therefore, they usually join online groups (M=3.35; SD=1.19) and take part in group discussions (M=3.68; SD=1.07) and become friends with famous persons/celebrities (M=2.7; SD=1.28).

Even though more then half of the respondents do not agree (25%) and strongly do not agree (27.5%), more than one fourth agreed (agreed=27.5%; strongly agreed=2.5%) that it has been used for formation of personalities (M=2.53; SD=1.24) and 15% (agreed=10%; strongly agreed=5%) to increase their popularity (M=2.20; SD=1.16%).

Diversion is also one of the reasons in using this new

media. 47.5% agreed and 25% strongly agreed that it has been used to avoid boredom (M=3.80; SD=1.04), while 40% agreed and 20% strongly agreed that it is for self entertainment. It has been used for fun too (M=3.80; SD=1.04) and has been supported by high percentage of agreed (47.5%) and strongly agreed (25%).

The lowest mean is for wasting time (M=1.95; SD=1.08) that showed 47.5% strongly disagreed and 22.5% disagreed. Only 12.5% agreed with this reason while the rest are not sure. This contrasts with studies conducted by Wasike and Cook [36] among students in Spain which showed that most of them use social media to fill in their free time and for entertainment.

D. Impact of Usage

The pilot survey also showed even though this social media has been used, all respondents said they also use other form or medium in their interaction with friends in social networking sites. The highest is telephone (60%), followed by SMS and instant messaging (57.5% respectively)—via YM, Google Talk and others—and e-mail (55%). Only 7.5% use letter/card to interact with their online friends besides through social networking sites.

TABLE XIII.   OTHERS MEDIUM OF INTERACTION

	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Instant Messaging	23	57.5	17	42.5
E-mail	22	55.0	18	45.0
Telephone	24	60.0	16	40.0
Short Messaging Service (SMS)	23	57.5	17	42.5
Letter/Card	3	7.5	37	92.5
Others	1	2.5	39	97.5

In addition to that, 55% have met face to face with a friend who is known through social networking site for some reasons, such as to know them more closely or deeply, share interest or work, and knew them from existing friends. Most people, who have never met face to face, give the reason that there is no need or no interest in addition to safety and geographical factors.

The survey also found that 55% of respondents had lost contact with friends they had known through this social media.

TABLE XIV.   THE ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

	Mean	SD
Online social networks facilitate the formation of friendships.	3.88	.99
Interaction in online social networks is freer than face to face interaction.	3.88	.82
Interaction in online social networking is only an extension and additional to off-line interaction	3.68	.83
Online social networks will replace other communication media in social interaction in the future.	3.40	1.32
Interaction in social networks is more satisfying than face to face.	2.93	1.16
Relationships in online social networking are more enduring than the established off-line.	2.90	1.10
Friendship in the online social network similar to the off-line friendships.	2.80	1.20
Online social network is only as a place for "play", not a serious.	2.53	1.24

From the usage of this social networking site, nearly 80% of respondents (agreed=52.5%; strongly agreed=25%)

believe that online social networking facilitate the formation of friendship (M=3.88; SD=0.99). Majority also believe this media give more freedom compared to face to face interaction (M=3.88; SD=0.82). Only 7.5% disagreed with this statement and the rest are not sure.

Even though they (agreed=37.5%; strongly agreed=20%) see that this form of interaction will replace other communication media in the future, it just an extension and additional to offline interaction (agreed=57.5%; strongly agreed=10%).

V.   CONCLUSION

The development of media technology has expanded the reach of communication across space and time by allowing anyone to interact with individuals or groups outside of the physical environment to create, maintain, and enhance their social relationship. Although face to face communication is still a very important form of communication in all cases, it is gradually being replaced and equipped with mediated communication, namely interpersonal and new media, including online social networking.

Online social networking has become a new mode of communication especially for Internet active users to meet and interact with their friends. Early findings showed that they spent quite many hours in this new media and log in into their profile or account a few times a day. With this social media, they can gather all their friends in one place and keep in touch with each other easily. This finding similar with research that be done by Bellegham [37] that showed most users use this media for personal reasons.

The comment tool is a popular format of sending messages to their friends and their online groups. This shows conversation and playfulness are important elements for the active users in using this social media.

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