

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

BRUNO PARK

Exploring different Social Media users from the Millennials' Generation:

A cross-cultural behavioral analysis of

Brazilian users of Facebook and Chinese users of RenRen.

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Adviser: Prof. Dr. Isabela Baleeiro
Curado

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‘The wise adapt themselves to circumstances, as water molds itself to the pitcher.’

Chinese Proverb

RESUMO

Com o aumento da importância da comunicação corporativa no meio digital e suas distintas características, ferramentas e estratégias de marketing adotadas por empresas mudaram dramaticamente. Entre as inúmeras ferramentas digitais e novos canais de mídia disponíveis para executivos de marketing, o fenômeno conhecido como mídias sociais está entre as mais complexas e enigmáticas. Mídias Sociais ainda possuem uma capacidade que ainda é imensamente inexplorada e atualmente transforma a perspectiva de executivos no marketing mix (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Conversas entre usuários de mídias sociais afetam diretamente suas percepções quanto a produtos, serviços e marcas. Entretanto, um leque de outros temas também podem se tornar tópicos de conversas em mídias sociais. Música, esportes, celebridades e até mesmo desastres naturais e política podem se tornar virais na web de acordo com suas dimensões culturais. Por isso, é imperativo que empresas se engajem nessas conversas introduzindo suas marcas para que se tornem ainda mais interessantes e relevantes.

Esse estudo foca-se em como essas interações sociais são manifestadas em duas distintas culturas (Brasil e China) ajudando executivos de marketing a entender como semelhanças e diferenças culturais afetam suas ações de marketing em diferentes regiões e plataformas sociais (Facebook e RenRen). Examinando como empresas deveriam focar suas ações de marketing de acordo com cada segmento, elas podem maximizar resultados e mitigar riscos em suas estratégias de comunicação.

Evidências desse estudo sugerem que diferenças em dimensões culturais entre esses dois países diretamente afetam seus comportamentos em mídias sociais em diversas dimensões (Identidade, Presença, Relacionamentos, Reputação, Grupos, Conversas e Compartilhamentos). Por isso, ações de marketing devem ser personalizadas de acordo com cada comportamento e expectativas.

PALAVRAS CHAVE :

Mídias Sociais, Plataformas, Redes Sociais Virtuais Cultura, Brasil, China, Facebook, RenRen

ABSTRACT

With the increasing importance of digital communication and its distinct characteristics, marketing tools and strategies adopted by companies have changed dramatically. Among the many digital marketing tools and new media channels available for marketers, the phenomenon known as social media is one of the most complex and enigmatic. It has a range that still is quite unexplored and deeply transforms the present view on the promotion mix (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Conversations among users on social media directly affect their perceptions on products, services and brands. But more than that, a wide range of other subjects can also become topics of conversations on social media. Hit songs, sporting events, celebrity news and even natural disasters and politics are topics that often become viral on the web. Thus, companies must grasp that, and in order to become more interesting and relevant, they must take part in these conversations inserting their brands in these online dynamic dialogues.

This paper focuses on how these social interactions are manifested in the web in to two distinct cultures, Brazil and China. By understanding the similarities and differences of these cultures, this study helps firms to better adjust its marketing efforts across regions, targeting and positioning themselves, not only geographically and culturally, but also across different web platforms (Facebook and RenRen). By examining how companies should focus their efforts according to each segment in social media, firms can also maximize its results in communication and mitigate risks.

The findings suggest that differences in cultural dimensions in these two countries directly affect their virtual social networking behavior in many dimensions (Identity, Presence, Relationships, Reputation, Groups, Conversations and Sharing). Accordingly, marketing efforts must be tailored to each compartment and expectations.

KEY WORDS:

Social Media, Platforms, Virtual Social Networks, Culture, Brazil, China, Facebook, RenRen

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1. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has unlocked new channels of communication, introducing new models of selling products, allowing the consumers to access previously inconceivable quantity and quality of information in easy and accessible ways. It has put the customer in charge, creating fundamental changes in marketing dynamics (Wind, 2001).

As Internet is fundamentally about communication, it has dramatically changed the way marketers, PR executives and advertising agencies work. This change is evident on online advertising that, like all publicity tools, attempts to spread a message in order to influence consumer decisions. However, it fundamentally diverges from most of traditional forms of media because it empowers consumers to directly interact with the advertisement enforcing the need of companies to approach the promotion mix differently (Zeff, 1997).

In this sense, Internet communication not only has transformed the media and advertising industries radically, but also increasingly becomes more vital to communication strategies. This importance can be evidenced by the growth of ad spending on Internet in the past three decades. Prior to that, half of all media spending in the US was concentrated in newspapers. With more than \$40bn in the United States, newspapers were the main channels for communication while magazines counted as a tenth of the expenditure. Radio, TV and Cinema collectively accumulated approximately \$30bn. But over the years, advertising spending grew constantly until the financial crisis of 2007, when all investments plunged. After the crisis, all channels investments stayed about the same, except for Internet advertising that was responsible for all the growth since 2009 and today, it accrues over \$42 billion a year while newspapers retained only half of what it used to be in 1980 (The Economist, 2014).

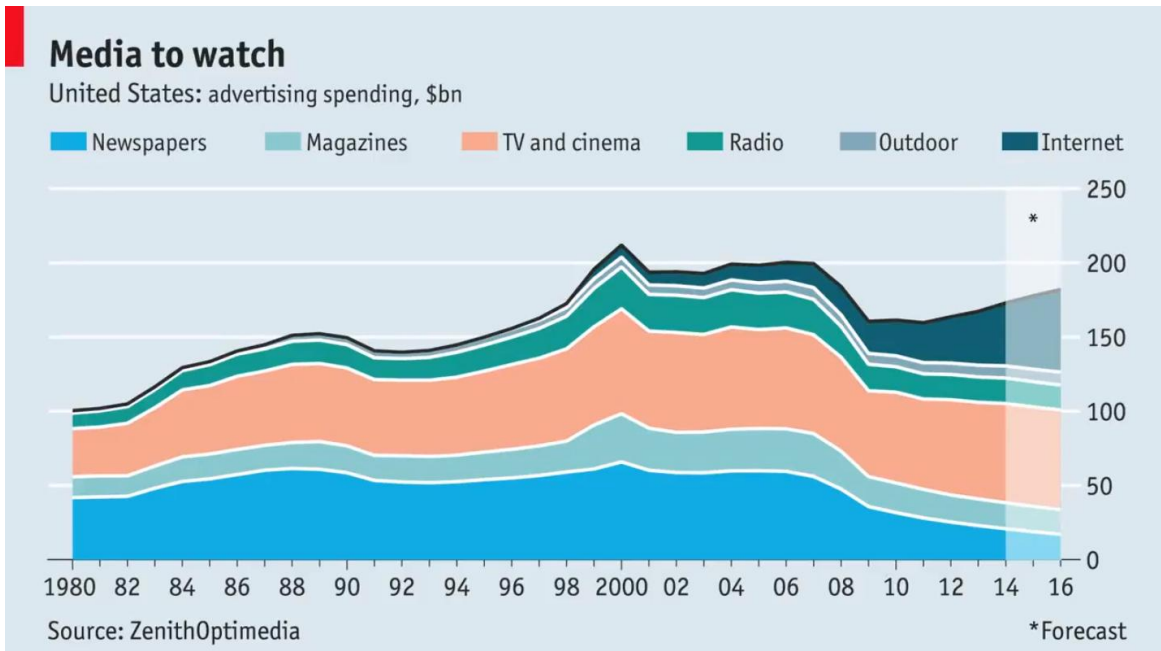


Figure 1.1. Medias to Watch (US ad Spending).

Source: The Economist, 2014

With the increasing importance of digital communication and its distinct characteristics, marketing tools and strategies adopted by companies have changed significantly. Among the many digital tools and new media channels available for marketers, the phenomenon known as social media is one of the most complex and enigmatic. It has a range that still is quite unexplored and deeply transforms the present view on the promotion mix (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Social media allows the upsurge of an immense amount of content that directly affects a company positively or negatively. Since social media allows real time and relevant content that is developed for and by users, academically known business cases such as United Breaks Guitars (Deighton & Kornfeld, 2010) strengthened the necessity for companies to pay more attention to what happens in the Internet sphere beyond traditional media channels.

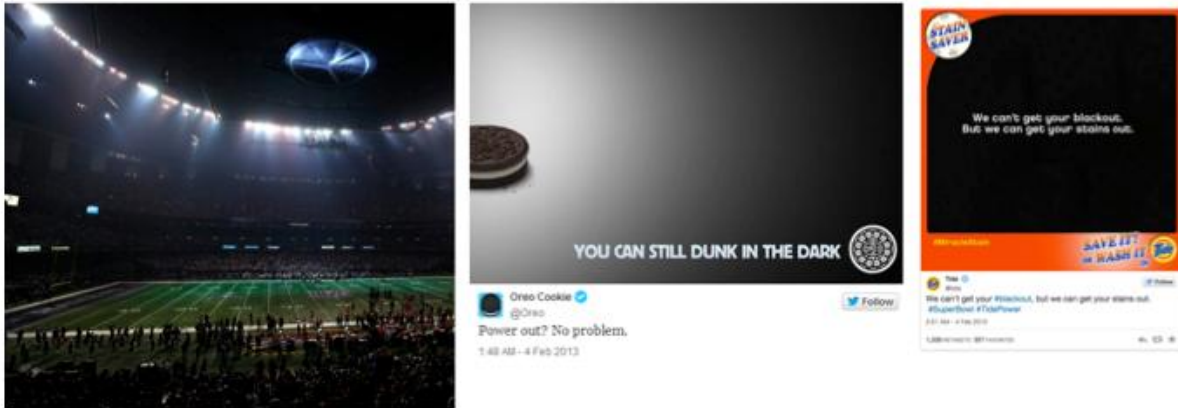


Figure 1.2. SM Content

Source: Elaborated by author

Furthermore, new cases of viral contents that reflects issues and current topics in society developed by companies such as Oreo and Tide during the SuperBowl blackout (Watercutter, 2013), Arby's in the Grammy's (Weisman, 2014), Kit Kat and Apple 6's bendgate incident (Nudd, 2014) often surface the web. Even political risings such as the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong and intimate celebrity photos leaks can became ad content for companies in a real-time user reactive and contextual communication strategy.

These cases reinforce the fact that companies must pay more attention to the conversations that already take place among users on the Internet, not necessarily involving directly the company. Hit songs, sport events, celebrity news and even natural disasters and politics are topics that often become viral among social media users. Thus, companies must notice that, in order to become more interesting and relevant, they must take part in these existing conversations in new forms of media.

These conversations on social media allow consumers choice to be influenced in a direct and meaningful way by the actions taken by other agents, including companies. Therefore they must assume a more dynamic role in this social interaction such as (1) observers, (2) moderators, (3) mediators and (4) participants (Godes et al., 2005).

Yet, social media is a complex form of media that displays many uncertainties. On one hand, many brands desire to benefit from this multilateral conversations phenomenon that allows many different advantages in cost and marketing effectiveness. On the other,

not many companies seem to act confidently in a world where consumers can speak so freely with each other and business have progressively less control over the knowledge obtainable about them in cyberspace (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Being successful on social media is a hard task since social networks present a higher level of complexity than traditional medias, and users join these networks not to consume advertising, but to make friends, share stories, have fun and participate in entertaining relational activities. These users take part on social networks because they desire to know each other as much as to allow others to know them. Therefore, for a brand to be successful in these communities, they must be an active agent inside this social complex net of web interactions (Tuten, 2008).

Once companies take the lead in social media still, there is the challenge of knowing which active role they should assume and how they should position themselves. Certain questions often arise: “What themes are relevant in the communication and discussion in each platform? Should the firm focus only in debating its products and services or also extend the subjects of discussion becoming a more complex branded social being?” And if the answer is for brands to cooperate with users in social media, becoming a driving agent of discussions on the web, what are the issues that most engage each user segment?

Furthermore, since engagement occurs as a subtle, subconscious process in which consumers begin to combine the ads’ messages with their own associations, symbols, and metaphors to make brands more personally relevant (Tuten, 2008), what is then, the influence of the cultural background in the choice of conversation topics in the web dialogue between users and brands? And also, how should a company be present in this online culture fueling discussions and sharing information.

Thereby, this paper focuses on how these social interactions are manifested in the web in to two distinct cultures, understanding the similarities and differences of these cultures will help firms to better adjust its marketing efforts across regions, targeting and positioning themselves, not only geographically and culturally, but also across different web platforms. By examining how companies should focus its efforts according to each

segment in social media, firms can also maximize its results in communication and mitigate risks.

The object of this study emphasizes in users' behavior in Brazil and China through two different social networking platforms: Facebook and RenRen. As two emerging economies with high web penetration but distinct cultures, economic and social environments, it is expected to find different behaviors and therefore different expected marketing strategy variables.

This dissertation is divided in four chapters. Initially, the literature review of this paper will address in three interconnected academic concepts: Platforms, Virtual Social Networking and Social Media, and then, compare the main cultural dimensions between China and Brazil.

The second chapter, Methodology, describes the scope of the research approaches. It explains the procedures and premises of this study by first analyzing the technologic environment in China and Brazil, the relevance of social media chosen (Facebook and RenRen) and finally explaining the sample of the study, the students in Tsinghua School of Economics and Management (Tsinghua SEM) in China and The School of Business Administration of Fundação Getulio Vargas (EAESP) in Brazil under the Millennials' generation point of perspective.

The results chapter examines the information collected contrasting it to the existent managerial academic knowledge concluding in the composition of a table of recommendations for communication strategies in Social Media in distinct cultural contexts. However, the research shows to be merely exploratory and additional research proves to be needed in order to reach more conclusive results for additional discussions around this topic.

2. Social Media, Technological Platforms and Virtual Social Networks

Social media attention has been growing at an astronomical rate and the adoption level of such media has been skyrocketing just as new networks constantly surface. As a consequence of this phenomenon involving groundbreaking technology and its rapid embrace, social media has become a common part of the contemporary life. The assimilation of this massive media brings challenges and opportunities that need to be examined through scholar research (Noor Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012).

As we are still pioneers in social media studies, its genuine array of capabilities is still unknown. The thriving of social media marketing seems very convincing, but there are many fears towards the reach and the effectiveness of social media compared to traditional media. These fears are focused on the uncertainties of Social Media and consumer-generated content that implicate in the lack of absolute control of a structured advertising campaign. Plus, the inability to follow intrinsic socialization rules may result in unexpected backlashes in brand image and sales (Miller & Lammas, 2010).

In order to address the opportunities and challenges of social media communication, the theoretical content of this chapter is divided in four parts, multi-faces of the same technologic phenomenon: Platforms, Virtual Social Networks and Social Media. Then, it concludes with a comparison between cultural dimensions in China and Brazil.

The image below visually illustrates the relationship between the concepts in this chapter. A network graph was considered the best way to represent the social networks and its complex patterns of relationships. The central nod (the hub) is the platform that connects the outwards radiating complementary nods, the users and companies (brands and app developers). The clouds represent the connections influence on one another as a network (the virtual social network and the social media used by companies) (Gawer, 2009). However, this representation shows certain limitations such as the inability to demonstrate the ambiguous nature of content generation of users and companies in Social Media and also the multidirectional picture of connections.

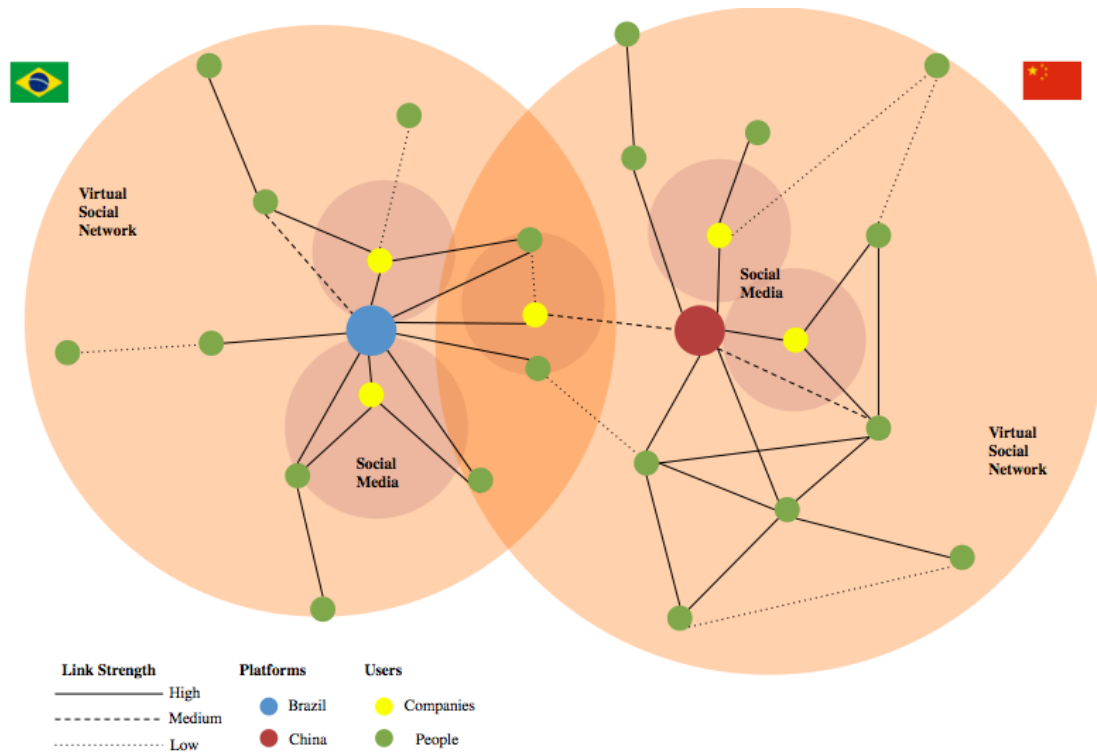


Figure 2.1. Platforms, VSN and Social Media in China & Brazil

Source: Elaborated by author

The first part of this knowledge review theorizes about the existing concepts of technological platforms, its meaning and how it is applied to the online social phenomena.

The second part approaches virtual social networks. It analyzes its origins, main characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages, and addresses a current panorama of the virtual social networks ecosystem.

The third part presents the impact of these networks as a media and advertising channel with some suggestions about the role of brands and firms inside these connections.

Finally, the last part contrasts the main cultural dimensions between China and Brazil with the hypothesis that these cultural behaviors will be reflected on their online culture in virtual social networks.

2.1. Technological Platforms

The understanding of Technological Platforms is crucial to recognize the intricate mechanisms of social media. Since social networks are often conceptualized as a form of platforms, it is important to comprehend the instruments and characteristics of this term in order to understand the rules and practices inside the platform's outlines.

Technological platforms can be broadly defined as a collection of stable components that permits variations and development of new modules within a system. By decreasing the link (relationship) distance among them, it permits the creation of new products and services. In other words, they moderate relationships among parts of a system inducing innovation through the reorganization and diversification of its modules (Gawer, 2009). This is a characteristic that is present in all social media platforms, where relationships between users function as a network with links inside a system, and applications are often developed as modules inside the same platform.

Platforms are the foundation where other companies can develop complementary products, technologies and services. It can be seen in numerous industries and definitely across all high tech industries such as search engines, social networking websites, operating systems, cellular telephony networks and video-gaming hardware (Gawer, 2009).

They represent a recent change in the conventional balance of power between core parts producers and complementary suppliers of most modern industries. In the current world production scenario, not many companies are capable of producing by themselves all the modules and components of its products (nor find it strategic considering its competitive advantages), platforms rise as a propitious arrangement of production and innovation (Gawer, 2002).

Therefore, the centralized approach of production has been transformed therefore both agents must acknowledge their interdependency in order achieve market success and innovation in a platform model (Gawer, 2002). Similarly, social media technologies also affected profoundly the shift in power balance between media, advertisers and audience,

making them increasingly more interdependent and giving more control and influence to the audience.

In high tech industries, the interdependency is even more pervasive and structural; the attachment of products and services is increasing and subsequently affecting the ability of these companies to innovate as one single organism, raising three fundamental questions. Who is in charge of the integrity of the platform and the joint that connects two distinct but coherent organizations? Who leads the platform evolution and through which strategy? And finally, having that in mind: How to reach or preserve platform leadership? (Gawer, 2002)

These questions are all present in social media platforms, and the answer is directly related to the desires of companies to innovate, become leaders and progressively have more companies using their foundation to build their own products. Hence, in order to achieve these goals, companies within the Internet era must act together examining five symbiotic dimensions: Innovation ability, connectivity, complementarities, efficiency and network effects (Lee, Kim, Noh, & Lee, 2010).

This way, platforms can evolve cooperatively, without damaging its integrity. By innovating together, platforms can conserve or reuse core components to achieve economies of scale while also creating a space where a new variety of complementary products can emerge in a harmonic network.

The platforms' concept rise from three different but interconnected fields:

- Product Development
- Technology Strategy
- Industrial Economy

The perspective of product developers lays in projects that build a new generation or family of products based on one or more shared or congruent component. For example, the Google Search Engine platform that allowed the development of several other products based on search technology. With the success of the Google search engine

platform, the company was able to introduce several other products connected to the search competences such as Search Images, Maps, Translate, Scholar, Books and many others. Moreover, Google also was able later to introduce other complementary products also associated to its search products to monitor Internet search traffic such as AdWords and Analytics.



Figure 2.2. Google Platform

Source: Google, 2014

In the second point of perspective, Technology strategy, platforms are seen as valuable points of control and revenue generation in one particular industry that uses competition as a form to determine the success, failure or the evolution of a product. For example, when Microsoft introduced the Internet Explorer to compete directly with Netscape, the company used the high penetration of its platform Windows, to bundle the sale with Internet Explorer. Windows' platform was utilized to move into market faster, blocking the entrance of other Internet browsers such as Netscape.

The third viewpoint, industrial economy, sees the platforms as a term to define products and services that can mediate transactions among groups of agents creating a network. For example, credit card payment networks function as intermediaries for banks,

stores and people. They are a platform that allows the banking connection and money transfer between these agents (Gawer, 2009).

Beyond these three perspectives, new viewpoints on platforms also rise with the same basic concept. For instance, the acquisition of a know-how that is applicable for a set of market opportunities can also be seen as an intangible platform of capabilities where the knowledge diversification can result in innovation and thus, more competitiveness (Kim & Kogut, 1996).

Yet, the platforms perspective of this paper will only focus on the product development, technology strategy and industrial economy standpoints that better fit the topic of social networks study. From the product development point of view, virtual networking sites can be considered a platform because it allows the development of a series of other products.

By sharing the same or similar technology of one networking site, firms were able to expand its products throughout time. For example WeChat, a Chinese instant messenger mobile application that besides messaging, developed a wide variety of other products based on text messaging technology, such as voice chat, calls and dating (Shake and People Nearby).



Figure 2.3. WeChatPlatform

Source: WeChat, 2014

From the technology strategy outlook, virtual social networks are platforms that allow installation of applications that compete with each other or even with the social network itself in operational systems. For example, Facebook mobile app users were forced to download a separate Facebook messaging app although previously, the virtual network mobile platform allowed messages within the original application, in order to compete with other messaging apps. Since Facebook has a dominant position in the penetration of users, competitors could not block the dissemination of the Facebook Messenger app.

From the viewpoint of industrial economy, virtual social networking sites intermediate relations between users by creating a network that only has value as long as other users are in it (Shapiro, 1999). In that perspective, social networking sites, as any other communication technology, have strong network effects that tend to show long lead times and exponential growth usually as a result from positive feedbacks. As the number of users grow, progressively more users will find the embracing of the technology worthwhile and eventually the site will reach a scale that takes over the market (Shapiro, 1999).

Progressively, the accumulative nature of these networks-fuelled systems results in platforms that, after a determined tipping point, it becomes problematic for competitors to move out of the market, making its barriers of entry higher, as the market share grows (Gawer, 2009). Nevertheless, it is important to state that completely unchallenged positions in platforms leaderships are becoming increasingly rare. Technologic advances foster a widespread ability of many actors to innovate, no matter their size (Gawer, 2002).

This movement can be seen clearly in the virtual social networks industry, where small platforms often emerge to compete with big players. These platforms eventually succeed by reaching an astonishing number of users, fail by becoming obsolete or end up being acquired by other companies. In this sense it is crucial to understand the mechanisms of platforms in order to rationalize the nature of social media.

In conclusion, social media networks can be easily defined as a form of technological platform since it is the foundation for several other components. These components can be divided in two spheres, applications and its network of users.

Virtual networking sites are the basis in which many applications can be developed. They allow development of gaming, video and photo sharing, instant messaging and several other applications that can be incorporated inside one unique platform. Additionally, these sites also create a free space where users can get together and create content that can be shared with others, being the basis where users meet, build relationships and share stories.

2.2. Virtual Social Networks

Social networks can be academically defined as sociological shared systems with ties or relationships that have the purpose of gathering one or more participants connecting their needs and desires. It is often seen as the essence of society's structure and the mechanism that connects macro and micro levels of social life (Coleman, 1990).

Social interactions inside the network combined, create distinct types of social structures (anomic, fatalistic, altruistic and egoistic) that shape the behavior of actors that are inside these structures (British Centre for Durkheimian Studies, 2000), creating many divergent academic discussions on how these social ties are manifested and its consequences.

This research focuses in the study of social networks because it allows the construction of an outlook that can answer standard social, behavioral research interrogations resulting in formal definitions of certain aspects of society such as political, economic or social models inside the Internet (Wasserman, 1994).

With that in mind, this chapter focuses exclusively on how these interactions are manifested inside the Internet world shaping a parallel virtual society - the Virtual Social Networks.

Virtual social networks are one of the most recent forms of connections sprouting as a consequence of advanced computing technologies. It is a unique and evolving form of communication that is dynamic and generates series of new areas of activities. It represents a new type of grouping where people with commonalities engage in social

interactions (Chiu, Hsu, & Wang, 2006) that is stretched to several different forms of social expressions in numerous distinct platforms and frameworks.

Since the creation of these platforms, users have been empowered to create message boards, audience generated review sites, blogs, comment boxes, image and video sharing sites, social news sites, bookmarking sites and micro-content blogging sites, just to name the most prominent ones (Mandiberg, 2012).

Therefore, due to the diversity of types of networks that constantly mutate according to contemporary online cultures, it is no wonder that there is a big problematic in defining the terms used to grasp and classify the several different types of networks (Scott, 2011). To clarify the terminology for this paper, virtual social networks can be defined comprehensively as web-based services that allow individuals to:

-
1. Build a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system;
 2. Communicate to a list of other users with whom they share a connection;
 3. Show and navigate their catalog of connections and those made by others within same system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).
-

In other words, these social networks constitute an arena of transparency and openness of social bonds and interactions and as an outcome of the construction of these social ties, they can also be characterized as a place where public information and free communication streams spontaneously and also where norms are shaped and rules get contested (Dijck, 2013).

In that sense, social networks can also be broadly defined by their ability of streaming information or contact sharing with the community in which one is inserted (Halligan, 2010).

This definition is considered quite broad because although the standard definition of social network expresses the perception of all users with whom one shares a relationship, these users do not interact with all the ones part of their network, only a selected amount of users (Huberman, Romero, & Wu, 2009).

One of the most singular features of networks might be fact that they are not organized neatly and limited to the borders of a platform either online or offline. Users have connections across platforms according to their interests, passions, desires and hobbies (Wellman, 1999). Therefore, its communication is not only multidirectional, but also cross multidimensional across different platforms.

Considering that, after the creation of social bonds and the flow of information among these links, social networks are also characterized by its capacity to be transformed into a platform for construction and distribution of knowledge (Inkpen & Tsang, an2005). Basically, there is a knowledge that is generated, often also seen by marketers as user-generated content.

According to that definition, the first social network website was established in 1997. It was called SixDegrees.com, accepting Internet users to build online profiles and connect with their friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

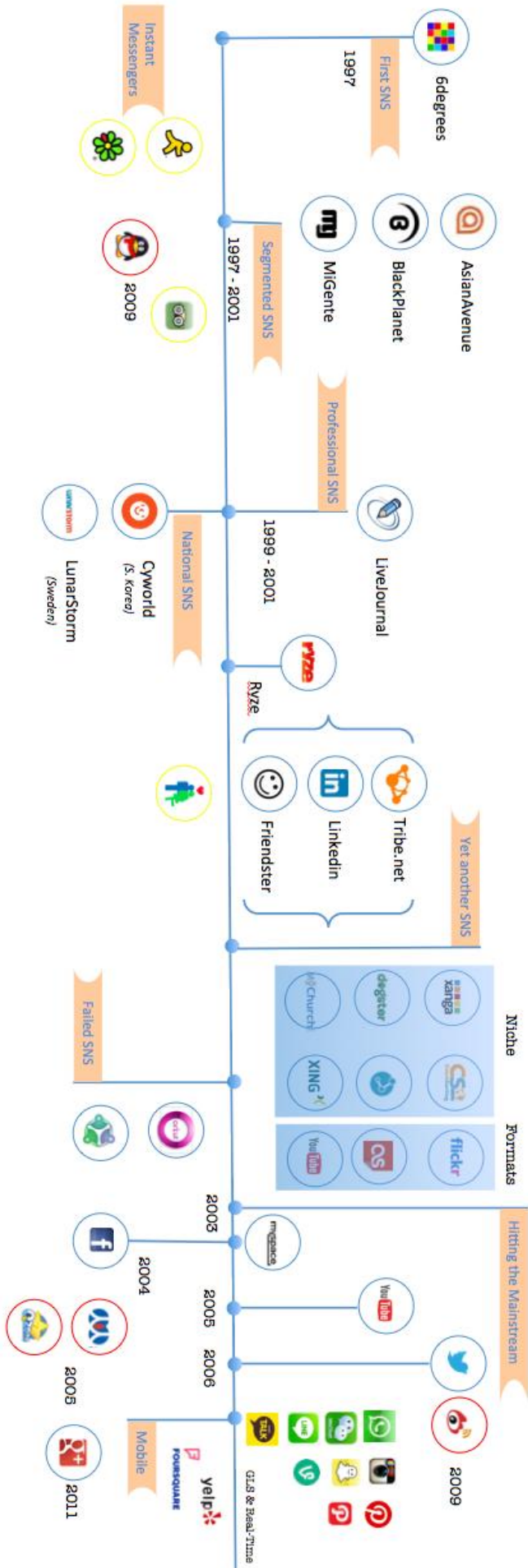


Figure 2.4. Virtual Social Networks

Source: Based on Boyd & Ellison, 2007

Since then, many other social networks emerged for specific demographics, different purposes, distinct business niches and cultural targets. Many of these social networks failed to remain relevant facing the constantly changing social environment, especially during the burst of the dot-com bubble. However, with the popularity of a few networks such as Friendster, category champions have arisen to the mainstream population, creating a new generation of social network organizations (Scott, 2011)

Over time, some of these successful networks appeared backed by ventures in Silicon Valley, such as Orkut, a leader in number of users in Brazil and later in India, supported by Google's corporate backbone (Fragoso, 2006). Others succeeded by reaching remaining segments of users that were not grasped by existing networks either by geography, language or business nature (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

In the table below, the rise of virtual social networks can be seen in the early 2000's according to geographic area and niche strategies.

Local SNS	Niche SNS
Mixi – Japan	Couchsurfing – Travel Enthusiasts
Lunarstorm – Sweden	aSmallWorld - Exclusive
Cyworld – South Korea	BeautifulPeople - Exclusive
Hyves – Holland	MyChurch - Affiliation
Grono – Poland	BlackPlanet – Cultural Affinity
Hi5 – Latin America & Europe	AsianAve – Cultural Affinity
Bebo – United Kingdom & Australia	
QQ – China	
Skyrock – France	
	Format SNS
	Flickr - Image
	Youtube - Video

Figure 2.5. Social Network Sites

Source: Based on Boyd & Ellison

The geographical scope of web resources assumes a crucial role in virtual social networks competitive scenario. Often times neglected by managers, geographic sensitiveness in web pages play a crucial role in the level of relevancy of services for internet users (Zhao, Jin, Zhang, & Wen, 2014).

On the other hand, in the first decade of the year 2000's, a few networks stood out as global players. The pioneer in global networking was Facebook.

Facebook, just as many other networks that followed, changed its strategy. It stepped out from virtual social network focused in students and its limited niche towards a network focused on everyone, that is, fundamentally 'people' (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007).

This trend of sites' strategy from limited niche groups to a broader and more diverse network was nothing more than a reflection of how social interactions happens in real life. It allowed people to step out of numerous niche platforms (Wellman & Hampton, 1999) and to connect itself as a human with various connections and interests in only one platform. That movement consolidated the rise of a few global virtual social networks for example Facebook, RenRen, Twitter, SinaWeibo, YouTube and Youku.

2.3. Social Media

For a long time, virtual social networks have struggled to find a business model that would monetize the organizations. The most common strategy for managers was to have expeditious growth while conducting cautious experimentations with monetizing schemes. Due to web transparency and cost-free nature of the Internet, user participation and profit strategies seemed contradictory in the digital media industry (Vukanovic, 2009). Therefore, most of the virtual networks borrowed monetizing strategies from non-profit models such as Wikipedia, that based its operations on co-creation and donations (Tapscott, 2008)

However, non-profit strategies were inadequate for many ventures. Although many of these platforms were sustained by large corporations and venture capitalists, it was only when the corporate sector itself was embedded inside these social links that the networks found a way to monetize its activities.

The social network's capacity to generate content in a level of peer to peer attracted brands that wanted to be included inside conversations, influencing word of mouth and leveraging the commercial purpose of companies. Online communities became

a new market for business and channels of communication. As a result it increased the attention on the social phenomenon (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

With firms identifying the opportunities of taking part in these relationships and noticing the impact of these networks' content in its business, it was clear for the virtual social network industry that the opportunity for monetization would lie in becoming a profitable new key media multi-directional communication and advertising channels. Forged from a business model retained to gain advantage over user generated content, social media utilized free and easy-to-use technologies as a new form of media (Albarran, 2013).

Nonetheless, the insertion of companies in social networks represented a revolutionary arrangement not only in monetization strategies but also in the balance of power of communication (C. C. Shih, 2011). Since the advent of the first printing press, power of media has been in the hands of broadcasters and the advertisers. The control over content and distribution was entirely determined by few institutions that competed among themselves to reach the audience. Hence, the advent of social media represented a major shift in the dominance of the audience that now has its own voice (Gillmor, 2006).

In contrast to the steam powered rotary press, (the first mass media channel that began in early 19th Century) that designed the parameters of one way communication (Albarran, 2013), internet-based social media not only allowed an individual to communicate with thousands of people about products and companies (Chen & Xie, 2008) but also finally opened a public line of communication between company and consumer, in a more balanced power level (Harridge-March & Quinton, 2009).

The Social Media communication model was in contrast with conventional media such as television; newspapers, radio and magazines were merely one-way static and one-sided transmission technologies where advertisers pay broadcasters to insert advertising into their content.

In social media, anyone can produce his or her own content at a low cost and disseminate it among its network links – a role that previously was restricted to advertisers in conventional media. Nowadays, both of them, consumer and company, are content producers and information consumers. Consequently, often content is mixed with advertising making the dividing line blurry (Zarrella, 2010).

This process represents the democratization of corporate communication (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). A fundamental shift in media supremacy that enforces the notion that brands must listen first, and then speak to be more accurate, relevant and trustworthy. This means that brands can (and should) build on already existing conversations, rather than shouting their messages during commercial breaks. In other words, advertisers should participate in the conversations, not intrude (Safko, 2010).

In parallel to this democratization, another transformation also takes place. Since the boundaries between content produced by users, and content produced by companies are becoming ambiguous, a new array of possibilities for identity and personality formation by brands opens up in this new space (Papacharissi, 2011). In order to blend in the social media platforms, brands must take part of the web interaction assuming a brand personality, engaging other users, consuming others content and producing its own material (Tuten, 2008).

Ultimately, social media can be easily conceptualized as the communication channel used as a social instrument that creates dynamic and multi-directional relationships. It is as instinctual as human networks and as connective as traditional forms of media such as print and electronic (TV and Radio) (Safko, 2010). It is the channel that generates its own content and its own audience.

Still, marketers and agencies are not completely aware and comfortable with this new form of media. This stems from their inability to understand the various forms it can take, how to employ it and absorb knowledge from it (Berthon, Pitt, McCarthy, & Kates, 2007). The amount of information created and distributed on the web can be overwhelming and very toilsome.

Hence, many studies introduce academic frameworks to gather information, monitor data and adjust strategies in Internet communications. Gathering two fundamental dimensions of Social Media, Social-Presence/Media-Richness and Self-Presentation/Self-disclosure, companies can classify the numerous platforms as the picture below in order to facilitate the grasp of the concept (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Figure 2.6. Classification of Social Media

Source: Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010

Social-presence/Media-Richness refers to the level of clarity of communication. With the purpose of resolution of ambiguity and reduction of uncertainty, it remits to the acoustic, visual and physical contact that can be achieved. The second dimension, self-presentation/self-disclosure refers to the level that users reveal personal information such as thoughts, feelings, likes and dislikes according to each person's desire to control the impression they would like to give to others (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

However, although this framework introduces two key elements in social media, it is limited in the sense that with the technological evolution of platforms, the media richness becomes increasingly more uniform. Also, the self-disclosure level not only varies significantly according to the type of media, but also across the same type of platforms and communities inside them.

Other researches introduce other dimensions, such as the type, flow and level of communication between users and companies in Social Media. Frameworks such as the 3-M (Megaphone, Magnet and Monitor) are quite effective in the analysis of social media dialog. The megaphone concept is the use of social media from firms to customers to share their message in a unidirectional strategy. The magnet refers to the communication initiated by the customer, but captured by firms and used to fuel conversations. Finally, the monitor refers to the dialog between customers used to yield customer insight and market intelligence in social media (Gallaughar & Ransbotham, 2010).

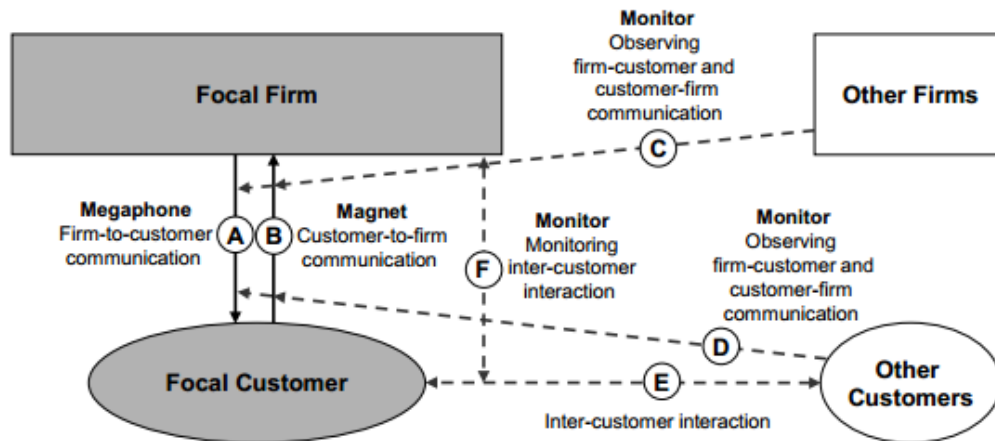


Figure 2.7. Firm and customer communication paths in social media

Source: Gallaugher & Ransbotham, 2010

This framework, although important to analyze platforms recognizing the importance of conversations and user empowerment, is restricted in the investigation of other dimensions previously presented such as self-disclosure and control over self-image (reputation/prestige).

In that sense, many authors also highlight the importance of reputation and prestige in social media. It is directly correlated to people's identities and the image they would like to convey. Moreover, the audience which users like to communicate with, and the type of information they would like to share also play a part in this framework. Therefore, it is important to take in consideration four aspects of reputation on social media:

1. The concern of users on their own digital footprint.
(What information is available when searching themselves)
2. The trust between users and digital medias.
(What information is exposed or traded to companies)
3. Privacy and availability of personal information online
(How can users control what information is private or public)
4. The way users monitor other users digital footprint.
(The actions that users can take to search others information)

(Madden, M & Smith, A., 2010)

In the same way, other models also introduce other fundamental dimensions of social media, the relationships. They analyze the strength of ties between users in social media distinguishing them in strong and weak. Relationships in social media can assume many forms (personal friends, professional colleagues, drinking buddies, school friends and even complete strangers). Different relationships result in different roles inside social media. Therefore, examining the relationship level is another crucial dimension to the analysis of this research (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009).

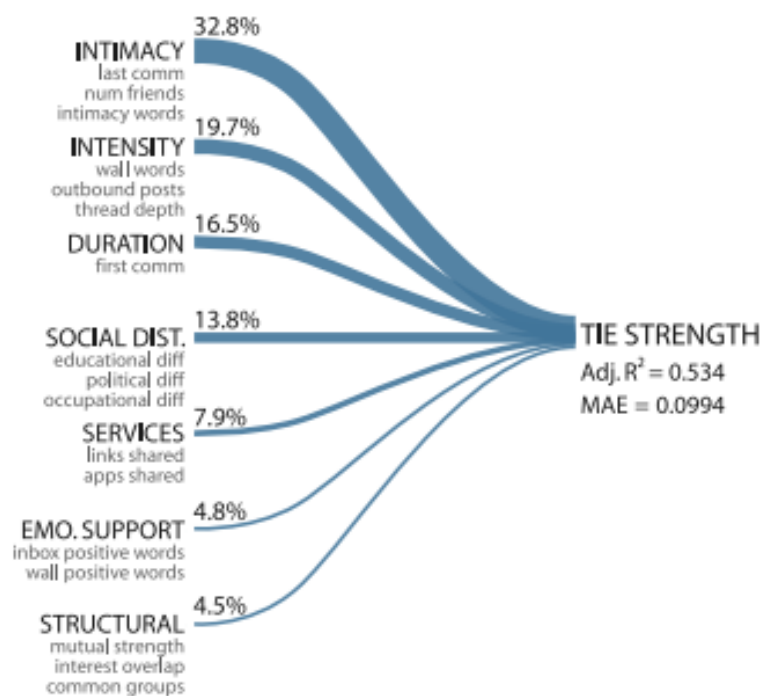


Figure 2.8. Tie Strength Model

Source: Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009

Compiling previously presented concepts, more general frameworks such as the 4 C's of Social Media can be constructed. Assembling four critical dimensions, Content, Conversations, Community and Connections, this framework allows marketing managers to analyse the type of information that is shared online, the topic of conversations, how interactive groups are formed and what types of relationships they build in each platform (UBM TECH's SOCIAL MEDIA, 2013).

4 C's of Social Media

CONTENT	Sharing and using valued content is the glue of Social Media engagement. It is important in the main stages of researching behavior.
CONVERSATIONS	Listening, monitoring and responding to your customers in Social Media are important to maintain relevancy.
COMMUNITY	Social circles such as similar professional roles, areas of need or interest and discussions on real issues.
CONNECTIONS	Prioritizing the social network channels where your prospects and influencers spend the most time is crucial to optimize efforts.

Figure 2.9. The 4 C's of Social Media

Source: UBM Tech's Social Media Report, 2013

However, a deeper analysis around the users, not only as a target group, but also as individuals showed necessary to evaluate other dimensions such as identity, privacy, reputation and sharing patterns. In this sense, the author chose to use the 7 blocks of social media framework in this research. The framework defines social media by using seven functional blocks that can be assembled according to managers needs in order to understand the social media landscape (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

The honeycomb framework tackles the necessity of marketing managers to understand the different platforms and communities inside them, providing information to build personalized communication strategies for different platforms. By analyzing 7 general concepts (Identity, Presence, Relationship, Reputation, Groups, Conversations and Sharing) this functional blocks rationalize the overwhelming amount of organisms inside the social media ecosystem.

These 7 non-mutually exclusive and overlapping concepts will be addressed to analyze two platforms in Brazil and China for this research. But more than just contrasting the two social networks according to this structure, the author aims at using the 7 blocks to investigate users behavior towards companies in social media according to each honeycomb.

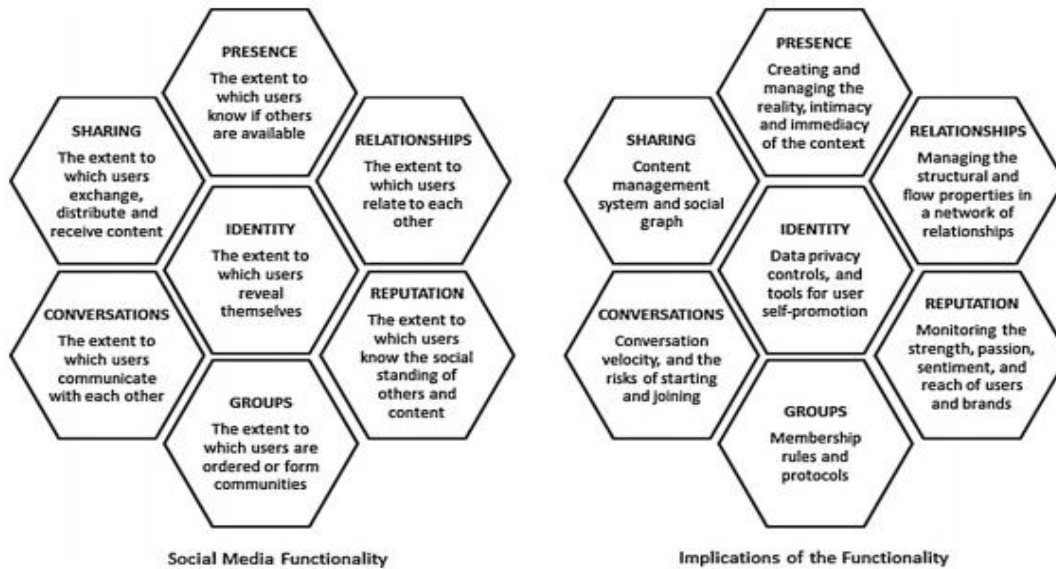


Figure 2.10. The seven blocks of social media.

Source: Kietzmann et al., 2011

- *The identity block represents the extent to which users reveal their identities.*
- *The conversations block represents the extent to which users communicate with other users.*
- *The sharing block represents the extent to which users change, distribute and receive content.*
- *The relationships block represents the extent to which users relate to each other.*
- *The presence block represents extent to which users can know if other users are accessible.*
- *The reputation block represents the extent to which users can identify the standing of others*
- *The groups block represents the extent to which users can form communities and sub-communities.*

2.4. Cultural Dimensions: China x Brazil

In order to analyze the distinct online behaviors in social platforms across two different countries, an examination over the culture of these two societies is needed. The author expects that most of the aspects of cultural behaviors will be reflected in online social networks. This way, by exploring the main cultural dimensions of China and Brazil, the expected findings and hypothesis of this study will be better supported.

The framework chosen for analysis is based on Hofstede empirical study on cultural differences and similarities across countries. The structure of the inter-comparative

cultural study is divided in 6 dimensions that influence national behaviors in society and organizations. They are: Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Pragmatism and Indulgence. The scores for each dimension for Brazil and China can be seen below.

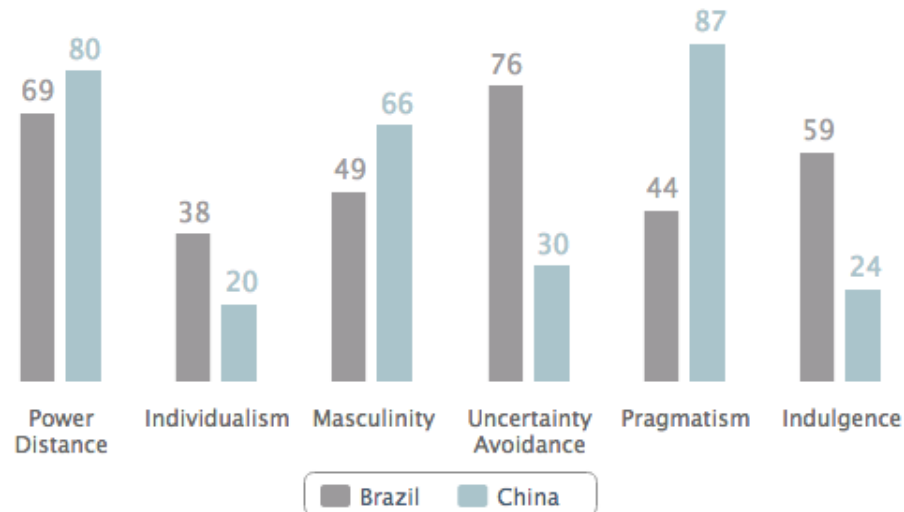


Figure 2.11 Cultural Dimensions of Brazil and China

Source: Hofstede Centre, 2014

By examining national cultures across the globe, researchers developed this framework that varied according to attitudes, values and behaviors of people in these 6 dimensions influencing their organizational culture in multi-national companies (Hofstede, 1984).

In the same way as multi-national companies, social networking sites operate across the globe. Geographic boundaries hardly delimit the barriers of users from different countries in online social networking sites. Nevertheless, even in niche online platforms, where formal and informal set of rules delimit the way users use the online social networking sites, user's culture still seems to vary across certain communities according cultural background and ethnicity. For this reason, the expectation of this study is that the national culture also influences online culture just as organizational culture. The dimensions studied are:

Power Distance

Power distance replicates the extent to which less powerful members of society acknowledge an unequal distribution of power. High power distance countries consider bypassing to be insubordination or disobedience, while low power distance countries expect bypassing to be frequent in order to be effective. Titles, status and formality has less importance in low power-distance countries (Adler, 2008).

With a score of 69 in power distance, Brazil is a society that sees hierarchy as a norm to be respected and inequalities, acceptable. The gap in distribution of power justifies the fact that power holders have more advantages than the less powerful.

In the same way, it is important to respect the older and bosses take complete responsibility in organizations. Status symbols are very important to demonstrate social rank and express respect (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

At 80, China is in the top rankings in power imparity. Chinese society considers inequalities acceptable and subordinate-superior relationship is very polarized. There are no defense mechanisms against power abuse and individuals are influenced by formal authority. It also shows that Chinese society endorses that people should not have ambitions beyond their rank (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

Individualism

Individualism exists when people express themselves predominantly as separate individuals and make their main commitments to themselves. It implies joined social networks in which people focus primarily on taking care of themselves. On the opposite side, collectivism is characterized by close social networks. Collectivistic people strongly are separated between interdependent groups. Collectivism is characterized by common goals and objectives while individualism is focused in specific goals focusing primarily on self-interest (Adler, 2008).

With 38, Brazil is a country where people are integrated into strong, cohesive groups (especially represented by the extended family; including uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins). People in Brazilian society continue caring for its members in

exchange for loyalty. It is important to construct trustworthy and long lasting relationships, and a context rich type of communication style is preferred. People will often speak profusely and write in an elaborate fashion (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

At a even lower score of 20 China is a highly collectivist culture where people act in the interests of the group. In-group considerations affect decision-making and people from close social networks get preferential treatment. However, although relationships tend to be cooperative for in-groups they tend to be very cold or even hostile to out-groups (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

Masculinity / Femininity

Masculinity/Femininity is the dimension that refers to which values society will be driven. A high score in masculinity indicates that society will be driven by competition, achievement and accomplishment. In this case, being the winner defines success, while a lower score means that predominant values are quality of life as sign of success, and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. In other words, masculine societies tend to pursuit being the best, while feminine societies search for enjoying what they do.

Scoring 49, Brazil holds a intermediate position on this dimension, while China is a masculine society with 66 points. China is success oriented and driven. The necessity to achieve success can be exemplified by the fact that many Chinese will sacrifice family and leisure priorities to work or study (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance mirrors the extent to which people in society feel threatened by ambiguity and therefore try to avoid unclear situations. High uncertainty avoidance societies tend to prevent vague situations by increasing predictability, establishing more formal rules, rejecting deviant ideas and behavior, accepting the possibility of identifying absolute truths. They also tend to reach for unquestionable expertise and provide more stability (Adler, 2008).

At 76 Brazil scores high on uncertainty avoidance. Brazilian society, like many other Latin American countries, shows a strong need for rules and elaboration of legal systems in order to structure their life. The individual's need to obey these laws, however, is weak. If rules however cannot be kept, additional rules are decreed.

Brazilians need to have good and laid-back moments in their everyday life. Due to their high score in this dimension Brazilians are very passionate. Emotions are easily shown in their body language (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

On the opposite side, China has a low score on uncertainty avoidance with 30 points. Accuracy may be relative though in the immediate social circles there is concern for absolute truths and rules (but not necessarily laws) proliferate. Nevertheless, obedience to laws and rules may be flexible to suit the actual situations. The Chinese are comfortable with ambiguity. For instance, the Chinese language is very interpretative and contextual, full of ambiguous meanings (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

Pragmatism

Pragmatism describes how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future, and societies prioritize these two existential goals differently. A low score in this dimension characterize normative societies. These types of societies tend to maintain ancient traditions and norms and also view societal change with suspicion. Those with high scores, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

At 44, Brazil scores as intermediate in this dimension. However China scores very high with 87 points in this dimension, which means that it is a very pragmatic culture. Chinese people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context and time. They show an ability to adjust traditions easily to mutable conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest, parsimony, and persistence in achieving goals (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

Indulgence / Restraint

The indulgence dimension relates to the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses. Relatively weak power over desires is called indulgence and strong control is restraint.

Brazil's high score of 59 defines it as an Indulgent society. People in societies classified by a high score in indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to follow their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time and they tend to spend money as they desire (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

On the contrary of Brazil, China is a very restrained society as can be seen in its low score of 24. Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. Also, restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are controlled by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is negative (HOFSTEDE CENTRE, 2014).

In conclusion, by analyzing the cultural dimensions in Brazil and China, it is possible to infer certain hypothesis about users' behavior on Facebook and RenRen. These hypotheses will be addressed in the Expected Findings chapter.

Meanwhile, it is important to observe that power distance allows assumptions of the relationship between users and companies, the acceptance of influence and authority between them.

The individualism dimension permits the inference of levels of identity disclosure and group ties in social media. The more individualistic the society, the more weakly the social networks' group ties. Individualism also gives notions of the types of user relationships and concerns on the importance of reputation.

The masculinity and indulgence dimensions have implications in what type of content is shared, whether it is a relaxed and entertaining, or a driven and goal oriented

content. It is correlated to the types of relationships established whether it is more equalitarian or aggressive and competitive.

The more indulgent the society, the more it is expected conversations, content and relationships to be optimistic.

Finally, the uncertainty avoidance and pragmatism dimensions influence the informal rules inside platforms that shape the behavior within groups and conversations. They can implicate in the presence correlated to the level of companies' availability for communication in social media and how users use these tools to solve their problems or ambiguities.

3. METHODOLOGY

Social media and its impacts in strategic communication is a fairly recent phenomenon, so the empirical research on this topic is somewhat limited (Noor Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012).

Having that in mind, this paper attempts to propose a brief empirical research to gather information around virtual social networks user's behavior to reach a list of recommendations in social media communication strategy. In order to achieve its objectives, a research has been conducted with users of social networking platforms across different geographical and cultural contexts, Brazil and China, in two distinct online social networking platforms: Facebook and RenRen. Guided by the research question presented, the methodology was divided in two phases:

The first phase of this research consists on an exploratory research based on secondary knowledge. It draws a picture around the Brazil and China's technology and social media industry explaining the main reasons why these two countries are relevant for the analysis in the digital world. Then, still based on secondary research, it explains the criteria established for selection of social networks that resulted in Facebook and RenRen. Finally, it concludes explaining the procedures and rationale on the limiting of the participants that resulted in the development of a questionnaire customized for each group.

The second phase consisted in pre test studies based on dynamic interviews with students from the EAESP-FGV management school in Brazil. Since the same dynamic interviews were not possible for the Chinese students pre-testing, the author of this

dissertation is who Brazilian and studied in Beijing-China for a semester, adapted the questionnaire according to his impressions and knowledge acquired during his studies at the Tsinghua School of Economics and Management.

Grounded on these conversations and previous knowledge, a questionnaire has been molded and altered to better fit the necessities of this research according to the 7 functional blocks of Social Media. After the construction of the main questions regarding Social Marketing strategies for companies and brands, the next part of the research consisted in the distribution of the questionnaire to the students from EAESP-FGV in São Paulo and Tsinghua University in Beijing in order to confirm quantitatively the indicators of the research objects. It has been collected 74 answers in the Brazilian school, and 32 answers in the Chinese school.

	OBJECT	ANALYSIS	METHOD
1	Country / Platforms / Users	Secondary Research	Qualitative
2	Questions	Open Questions	Qualitative
3	Users	Questionnaire	Quantitative

3.1. Exploratory Research: Brazil x China / Facebook x RenRen

The next sub-chapters will address the unique and fascinating technological landscape in Brazil and China. It highlights the importance of both users in the social media that helps the shaping of the current social media panorama influencing global trends and adoption of platforms. Then, it analyzes the main platform players in each country explaining the adopted criteria that resulted in the selection of Facebook and RenRen.

3.1.1. Brazil and China

The transition to a consumption driven society boosted China to a 9.2 trillion dollars economy in 2013 reaching the second largest GDP in the world. With a high disposable income, China has more than tripled its income per capita in the last decade (WORLD BANK, 2014). But beyond its economic indicators, when it comes to

technology, China also presents a fascinating phenomenon in the magnitude of its technologic platforms and user bases. China has a population of 1.3 billion people and an Internet penetration rate of 46% in 2013. Consequently, the country holds the largest volume of Internet users in the world (WORLD BANK, 2014) plus, China also holds the highest number of active smartphones in the world with a volume of over 700 million users connecting to the internet with their mobile devices in end of 2013 (Shu, 2014).

But even more than that, the average Chinese technology consumer is highly educated with 43% of the social media users holding a bachelor degree or higher (KANTAR MEDIA, 2014) which means that this population's appetite for digital consumption is still growing, demanding high quality of products and services.

This excitement for high quality customized products can be evidenced by the popularity of mobile applications. China does not have an official Google Play store in the country but still has over a dozen android app stores (Millward, 2014a) which out of the top 10 most downloaded apps in China, all of them are Chinese (QQ, UC Mobile Browser, WeChat, 360 Mobile, SinaWeibo, Taobao, Alipay, QQ Mobile Browser, 360 Mobile Helper, QQ Spaces) (Custer, 2013).

Out of these top 10 apps, 4 are from the same company, Tencent (QQ, WeChat, QQ Mobile and QQ Spaces), a company that is worth over 135 billion dollars (FORBES, 2014) and two other apps are from Alibaba (TaoBao and Alipay), a company worth approximately 231 billion dollars (McCarthy, 2014) and recently conducted its Initial Public Offering at the New York Stock Exchange recording the biggest IPO ever registered in the financial market's history (Mac, 2014).

The custom communication applications have immense user bases in China. QZone and WeChat have over 645 million (CIW, 2014) and (Custer, 2013) 438 million (Millward, 2014b) monthly active users respectively, which is an extraordinary number since their market is limited mostly to China.

Moreover, the economic scale of technologic and Internet companies in China is undeniable. Alibaba and its sister site TaoBao, the largest business and consumer driven online marketplaces, has the twice of the size of Amazon and eBay combined (Popper, 2014).

AliPay, the largest internet transaction company in China is responsible for 50% of electronic payments in China, processed over 519 billion dollars in 2013 versus 180 billion from PayPal (Bertoni, 2014).

The dynamics of the e-commerce industry in China is mesmerizing, “Single’s day”, the largest ecommerce day in China, exceeded the two biggest shopping days in the U.S. combined, with an estimate of over 5.7 billion dollars in one day (Yueh, 2013), a number that computed only the transactions made by AliPay in the two largest retailers in China, Tmall and Taobao.

The voracity of the Chinese consumption for technology is so intense that XiaoMi, a smartphone manufacturer in China sold over 200,000 smartphones in under 3 minutes in the 2013’s Single’s day (Horwitz, 2013), a number that becomes even more perplexing with the fact that XiaoMi has almost zero marketing investment. Its strategy is mainly focused on social media and online consumer boards, gathering millions of followers and fans on social communities such as SinaWeibo (Doland, 2014).

In a bewildering strategy, the company adopts a fan-centric marketing strategy, which means that XiaoMi is able to minimize its communication investment focusing on a powerful and self-sustaining online community that voluntarily provides the company with spontaneous promotion, feedbacks, bug reports and feature recommendations, creating a legion of online brand evangelists (C.-C. Shih, Lin, & Luarn, 2014).

Having that in mind, that is the reason why companies in countries with high penetration of online engaged users such as China, must take advantage of social media in order to maximize its marketing and communication efforts.

Not only China, but also in other countries such as Brazil, that has a population of 200 million people in 2013 with an extremely high Internet penetration rate. With approximately 51.6% of the population having access to the Internet in 2013, Brazil also represents one of the largest communities online in the world, only behind China, the United States, India and Japan (WORLD BANK, 2014). More than that, among the BRIC countries, Brazil has the second largest percentage of smartphone and multi-media phones penetration with 67% of mobile users against 75% in China, 48% in Russia and 19% in India according to Nielsen (Perez, 2013).

However, the most staggering numbers are in its level of social media engagement. According to worldwide studies, 45% of the total population in Brazil has a social media account, reaching a number of 92 million active social media users. Plus, 34% of the total population of Brazil accesses social media through mobile devices with a rate of 68% of monthly active social mobile users (Kemp, 2014).

More than that, the Brazilian social media user has one of the highest levels of average time spent online, only behind China and the U.S (Banks, 2014). Although the data may change according to source, it is estimated that the average Brazilian spends 5h55m per day online, against 5h1m of a user in the United States. Furthermore, the main amount of the time spent online by the Brazilian is on social medias, with 3h05m against 2h29m from an average user in the U.S (Kemp, 2014).

Brazil represents the second largest user base for Facebook, Youtube and Twitter after the United States. Twitter has over 41 million registered users (Holmes, 2013) and Youtube has a rate of 83.8 videos watched per viewer in 2012 in Brazil (Geromel, 2013).

But definitely, the largest network in Brazil is Facebook. With more than 91% of the population online owning a Facebook account, with more than 50% of these having accessed the platform in the last month, Brazil shows a huge volume of monthly active users on Facebook (Kemp, 2014). Plus, the average Brazilian time spent on Facebook is longer than the Mexico and Argentina spent time online combined (Banks, 2014).

In this sense, Brazil plays a major role in the influence of the information being transmitted online, especially on social media. The volume of time spent by the Brazilian users on social media results in remarkable rankings on popular platforms such as Twitter and Youtube.

The 20th most subscribed channel on Youtube, “Porta dos Fundos” has over 9 million subscribers, a staggering number since the channel posts videos exclusively in Portuguese. The 13th most watched channel on Youtube is the Brazilian “DisneyCollectorBR” that posts products reviews directed at children, in a mix of videos in Portuguese, English and Spanish (Social Bakers, 2014). One of the two non-American videos in the most watched videos of all time is the music clip “Ai Se Eu Te Pego” by the country singer “Michel Teló”, only after the other non-American “Psy” (Chao, 2013).

However, these occurrences are not recent. It is often called as “the Brazilian Internet phenomena”, when the number of Brazilian users in a particular online service exceeds widely the number users from the original nationality of the service creating cultural clashes. It happened with social platforms such as Fotolog, but perhaps more powerfully with the Orkut social network where the competition over the cultural influence on the platform was more obvious (Fragoso, 2006).

In conclusion, both Brazil and China show a very vibrant and relevant technologic environment and active users that play significant roles in the global social media ecosystem.

3.1.2. Facebook and RenRen

A significant part of the current academic production around social networking sites has contributed to the analysis of platforms’ descriptions yet, not much research has been done comparing different global platforms such as Facebook and Twitter across domestic players such as RenRen and SinaWeibo in China, Cyworld in Korea and VKontakte in Russia (Li & Chen, 2014) and even less studies has examined the different implications in social capital in these distinct sites. Therefore, this sub-chapter will demonstrate the process of choosing of two distinct two platforms in Brazil and China for the cross-platforms analysis.

The delimitation of the platforms under investigation was a result of a secondary data analysis on the social media landscape in both countries. The landscape of social media represents the numerous players in different niches and formats that together form a unique social media ecosystem.

Based on that, it has been decided that the focus of this study would remain in core networks with high penetration among users, eliminating a priori, specific interests and niche communities.

Moreover, since the data around social media tend to change dramatically with the rise, fall and change in user targeted by the strategy of each platform, especially in China, the scope of the research was defined by analyzing the most relevant platforms in both

countries, evidenced by MAU (monthly active users) and also by the share of time spent by the user on the internet.

The graph below shows the most accessed social media websites worldwide in February 2014.

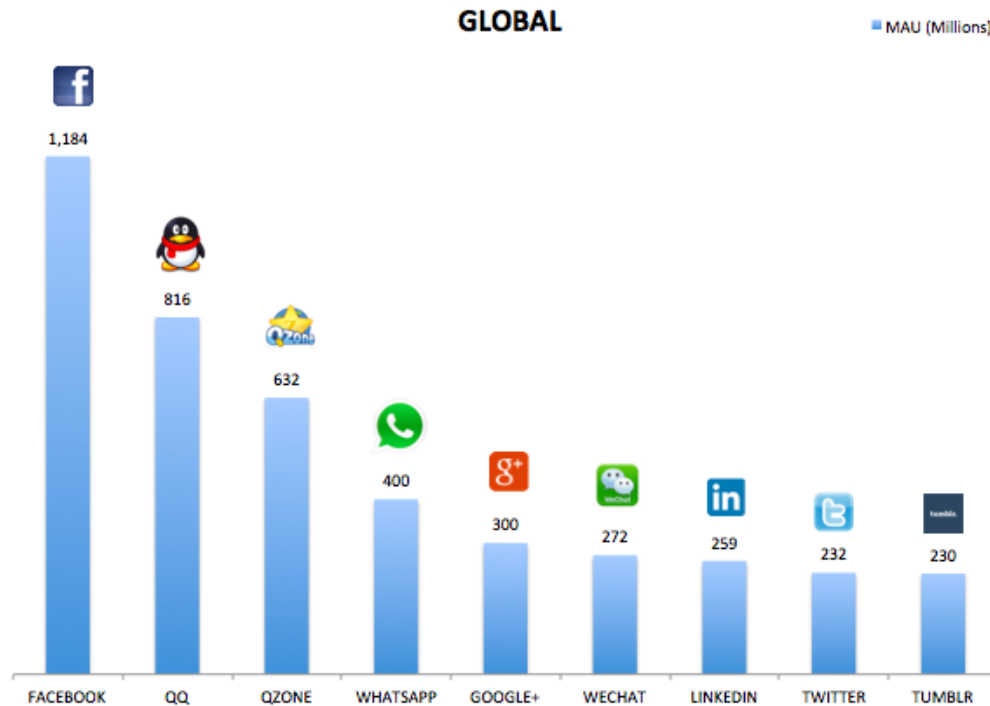


Figure 3.1 World's Most accessed social websites (in MAU's)

Source: Wearesocial, 2014

As it can be seen, the use of Chinese social media such as QQ, QZone and Wechat, play an extremely significant role in the global volume, especially considering that the largest amount of users of these networks are concentrated only in China, not having operating interfaces around the globe.



Figure 3.2 China Social Media Landscape

Source: CIC, 2014

Also because Chinese regulations prohibit the use of the largest global applications such as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter, the social network landscape is quite unusual in China with the dominance of domestic players that emerged in the last five years. Although many of these networks were established as clones of its counterparts, they are becoming increasingly more innovative and personalized for Chinese users. Moreover, recently, the movements of these networks out of China are becoming progressively more relevant. (See the comparison of China Social Landscape with global players in 2014.)

Therefore, analyzing the major players in China, and comparing them with international players with the same use (as seen in the graph bellow), it was chosen to analyze, the RenRen network for several reasons:

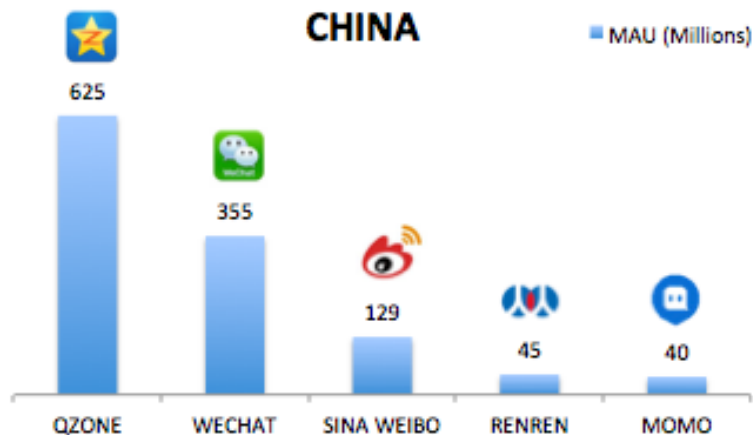


Figure 3.3 China's most accessed social websites (in MAU's)

Source: Wearesocial, 2014

First, it was decided to eliminate the instant messenger networks. This decision was made because these networks are limited only to mobile platforms, and although it shows strong bonds among its network, it is very limited to mobile list of connections, which limits the volume of links to be explored by users, and also, because the extent and capacity that companies are able to communicate with the users (although WeChat, on contrary of Western messaging apps such as Whatsapp, allows companies to access users in many forms). The volume of connections is quite important over the strength of bonds because it determines the capacity of reaching more users through indirect connections. In that regard, WeChat was discarded as a possibility of analysis.

QQ, although it is the biggest and most popular application in China, it was discarded because of conceptual definitions; it cannot be considered a social network. QQ is an instant messenger and since it does not allow users to see other people's list of contacts, it generates controversies about if it can really be considered a virtual social network.

Additionally, QZone was also excluded because, though it represents the largest amount of users in China, it is an extension of QQ. The high growing number of users can be explained because this network is an extension of QQ that automated profiles from existing QQ accounts, not necessarily representing accesses and time spent in social media. A competitive strategy that is not very unusual between platform leadership

seekers. It happened with Windows and Internet Explorer, and more recently with Google + (plus) and Google account holders.

Concluding, the choice of platform for the analysis in China rested in RenRen because it has the highest volume of users in China only behind SinaWeibo, a micro-blogging application. But since micro-blogging applications not necessarily generate a large amount content shared among its peers that help building strong relationships, instead focusing more in real-time information and interaction, it has been excluded as well.

Regarding Brazil, the country shows a similar use of social networks with the rest of the global users (excluding the Chinese networks). But it is interesting to observe that Orkut still played an important part in the social media landscape until its deactivation in October 2014.

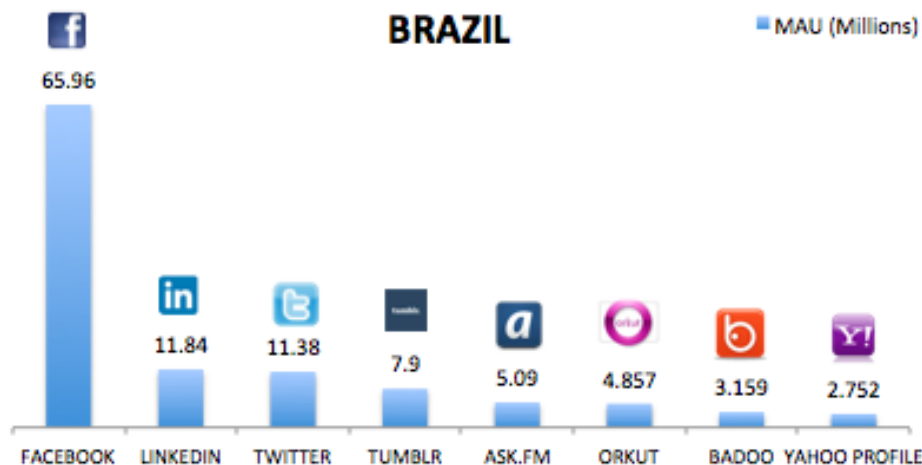


Figure 3.4 Brazil's most accessed social websites (in MAU's)

Source: ComScore, 2014

For the analysis, the choice of platform was limited to Facebook because, just as RenRen, it is a social networking platform, with similar formats and high penetration of users. As RenRen is considered the "Facebook of China", researches show that they are technically similar platforms with analogous features (Qiu, Lin, & Leung, 2013).

Facebook

Harvard University students launched Facebook in 2004 initially limited to members of Harvard schools as a directory with photos and basic information of its students. Later it expanded to other colleges and gradually allowed anyone in the world to become a registered member. Users can create a personal profile; add friends, exchange messages, posts status updates and photos. They also can join common interest groups and follow public pages, besides other applications such as gaming.

RenRen (人人网)

Due the global popularity of Facebook, many platform clones have emerged. Since Facebook had been blocked in China by the government since 2008, RenRen, also regarded as the “Facebook of China”, rose as one of the most popular clones in the country in 2006. Also initially limited to college students, it also allows functions such as profile creation, personal information, friend adding, messaging and posting, but also allows personalization and profile background and music editing. The personalization is based on points and levels that allow users to access skins, emoticons and other feature in a similar model to previous Asian platforms such as Cyworld.

3.1.3. Tsinghua University and FGV: Millennials sample

Online social networks consist on profiles such as geographic location, relationship status, interests and schools attended. This profile information is used as base for group association for sharing content and suggestion of other users to connect. But more importantly, based on the attributes of a small fraction of users, it can be inferred that the other users attributes are more likely to be similar if there is a connection (Mislove, Viswanath, Gummadi, & Druschel, 2010), creating a general profile of the virtual social network connected users. Therefore, by analyzing the online behavior of a small fraction of a group in social media, it is possible to generalize inductions from this group, as they are more likely to have more characteristics in common.

In this paper, the author analyzed the profile of students from EAESP-FGV in Brazil and Tsinghua University in China, a sample described as young people (from 17 to 30 years old) that is highly educated, has access to modern technologies and high level of influence in its environment. However, more than that, this portion of the society is relevant because it represents a specific group of user in social media, the Millennials.

Born between the year 1982 and 2000, the Millennials are unlike any other previous youth cohort in the history. They are more numerous, more affluent, better educated and more ethnically diverse (Howe, 2000). Therefore, today they set the parameter for older and future generations in terms of workforce, politics, economy and media.

Millennials have different expectations, attitudes and skills. In the working environment, as they are currently entering the workforce, they represent a change in the values and expectations from organizations (Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012). They praise work and life balance rather than aiming for economic stability. They are a different group of workers that sets different standards for many fast changing business environment companies, such as high tech firms.

Millennials hold significant political power that should not be neglected. In the U.S., they represent the generation that has voted the most in comparison with previous generations. Due to their capability to connect with others, their mindset is focused on the “we” and not “me” becoming extremely powerful as a group (Evans, 2012). As an evidence, Barack Obama and his campaign strategists disregarded the conformist wisdom over the image of young adults in the United States and made Millennials an important part of the voter alliance that put him in the White House (Winograd, 2011). More than that, they are more involved with social issues (Qualman, 2013) and manifest a wide range of positive social habits such as teamwork achievement, modesty and good conduct (Howe, 2000).

In the last decade, Millennials have transformed the image of the alienated youth to an engaged and potentially seismic powerful force in the world as they are full of technology planners, community shapers, institutional builders and world leaders (Howe, 2000)

More than the political sphere, the economy has also taken much interest in the Millennials. They are the most targeted market segment in society and carry significant purchasing power whose nature is much different from previous generations. Although connected to parent's purchasing power, they represent the segment whose income has increased the most over the 15 years (Howe & LifeCourse Associates, 2007).

That is the reason why most companies focus so much in this segment. The Millennials have moved into the center of the marketing power band. As Internet is simply part of their life, they have considerable influence power and dictate online behavior (Evans, 2012).

Technology and media is part of their upbringing (Rainer, 2011), becoming the first generation that grew up with access to Mobile technologies. However, unlike previous generations, they are more than willing to add branded content into their online communication. They are prone to engage online with brands, manifesting their opinions about the products and services (Qualman, 2013).

As they are not very protected by advertising law as younger generations and since legislation on online advertising is still in development, Millennials are the most targeted group in the companies communication strategies because they are the population that spends most time online (Qualman, 2013).

However they have different characteristics in media consumption. They do not embrace traditional broadcasting (Poindexter, 2012) and are also very aware of the manipulative nature of marketing, even developing disdain for traditional advertising (Sujansky, 2009). Millennials do not want advertisers to shout, they prefer to have conversations and steady ongoing relationships with companies (Qualman, 2013), which raises the necessity of different marketing strategies.

Therefore, using traditional marketing tactics will only mean that probably an organization will fail in this particular segment. Millennials are more disposed to being active audiences and want to create content as much as consume it (Martin, 2010), so it is important to follow certain premises in this generation communication:

1. The brand is no longer at the center of the marketing, the user is (Content produced by users has as much or more importance than company generated content).
2. Have something meaningful and relevant to say (They respond to content that is emotionally intense).
3. Help them belong to the brand (The sense of belonging and connection plays a crucial role in social communication) (Martin, 2010).

In conclusion the sample of this study focuses on EAESP-FGV in São Paulo-Brazil and Tsinghua University in Beijing-China students because they represent a parcel of the society that has large influence over social media use, its habits and transformations. Also, they represent a significant portion of consumers that companies' currently focus on.

3.2. Questionnaire: Data Collection

The most important principle of social media is that it is fundamentally about people. The users shape and transform the way the tool is used continuously and generate content that constantly mutates according to the user's behavior. People drive the information around and in its turn show how companies should act inside the networks and also how its communication should be directed. Therefore, it is of ultimate importance to understand, not only the framework of the platform, but especially its users. They direct the role of brands helping them to build on the conversations that already exist on the web (Boyd & Ellison, 2007)

Having that in mind, a questionnaire to understand what are the expectations of social media users and its conversations around brands has been constructed. The questionnaire was based on the seven functional blocks of social media used to enlighten the propositions that each block can have for firms that want to take part in social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011), however they were altered in order to reflect a better understanding of users expectations around companies and their fan pages on Facebook and RenRen.

The blocks were tweaked in the following manner:

Questionnaire basis

IDENTITY	To which extent users are willing to reveal their identities to companies?
CONVERSATIONS	To which extent are users willing to communicate about brands/products/companies? And how?
SHARING	To which extent users are willing to share companies generated content?
PRESENCE	To which extent are users willing to be found/accessed by companies? How they prefer to be contacted?
RELATIONSHIPS	To which extent are users willing to be related by companies? / Which topics and emotions are they willing to be associated with?
REPUTATION	To which extent are users willing to see company's values and beliefs? How is reputation perceived?
GROUPS	To which extent are users willing to have companies participating in their groups and communities?

The questionnaire was developed to be answered by the students in Brazil and China, so they were translated respectively to Portuguese and Mandarin. The quantitative study was done with 74 interviewers from Getulio Vargas Foundation and 32 from Tsinghua University in the course of 10 days from October 27th to November 5th, 2014.

The methods of distribution of the questionnaires were strictly online for both countries, posting in groups and pages of each university's social network and personal emails to professors that forwarded the questionnaires to its students and also direct emails to the students. The online tool for the questionnaires development and answers collection was SurveyMonkey.com.

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to understand the respondents' profile. It consisted on gender, age, time spent on Facebook/RenRen, number of friends on social network and the division of friends according to level of intimacy. For the second part, the questionnaire's objective was to understand the behavior of users towards branded content according to the seven functional blocks.

The questionnaire consisted in 21 open and closed questions, including one question where the respondents indicated their 9 statement's answer through the Likert scale from 1 to 5, 1 being totally disagree, and 5 - totally agree.

The questions in the quantitative study were presented to respondents in a fixed sequence, but purposely not ordered by topics (functional blocks), but according a clear line of thinking.

4. Expected Findings

By doing this research, the author expects to discover the main differences in online culture between users and company pages in social media. In other words, the author aims to contrast the online knowledge system formed by an array of shared practices, expectations and structures where members can choose to follow with the help of networking technologies (Fuchs, 2008).

The goal of this study is to examine the construction of a set of rules to be followed in social media communication. Focusing on the relationship between users and companies and brands on online sites, this study starts from the premises that cultural dimension differences in different societies also reflects on online communities.

Based on the findings of the previous chapter on cultural dimensions of China and Brazil, this chapter sets the basis for the expected results of the research. For Brazil, as a western country, the expectation of the findings is emphasized in dimensions such as individualism, equality, rights and privileges, self-reliance and self-assertion. As for China, as an Asian country, it is expected for dimensions to rest in collectivity, duty and obligation, deference and dependence (Hofstede, 1984) that might influence on relationships between brands and users.

As other authors previously studied, there are many discrepancies in behavior of users online. Researches in psychology show that East Asians from collectivistic and interdependent socio cultural systems are more prone to contextual online content, having more predilection to process focal and discrete attributes to the environment in social media. In contrast, western cultures where users tend to show more individualistic and

independent, they tend to focus on building a representation themselves around a personal reflection of their identity (Huang & Park, 2013). In this regard, it is expected also distinct forms of connection and expectations of content from different cultures.

However, since both countries are considered fast changing economies, also big transformations in the society also are taking place in both countries. Therefore, it is expected big divergences in political, social and cultural behaviors in both countries also to be reflected in their behavior online, especially in China, where the process of westernization of its culture is much stronger than in the past years since the opening of international trade.

The author assumes the hypothesis below for this study:

H1: Chinese users are less willing to expose their identities to companies in social media than Brazilians.

Previous researches on cultural dimensions comparing Asian and Western countries show that the Chinese culture is more collectivistic than the Brazilian. Therefore, individualism and expression of identity are expected to be more prominent on western societies also in social media (Qiu et al., 2013). Other studies on other social media platforms such as Cyworld in Korea showed that users from Asian societies tend to remain anonymous showing less but more intimate self-disclosure information (Cho, 2010). Thus, it is also expected that this behavior extend also to the willingness of users to be personally identified and addressed by companies and brands.

H2: Chinese users are less willing to follow and communicate with company fan pages than Brazilians.

Previous researches show that Asian cultures are more closed than western societies focusing in smaller and more intimate group associations, restraining the circle of communication. Therefore, it is expected that online conversations are often limited to other users in their immediate circles rather than with companies. Also, it is expected that users tend to follow companies that are already known by them rather than getting to know new ones.

However, once the channel of communication is open, the conversation between the Chinese users and companies are expected to be more objective toward goals and contextual due to the fact that Chinese users are much more pragmatic than Brazilians.

H3: Chinese users are more willing to share company's content than Brazilians.

Previous academic researches on online behavior of RenRen and Facebook users show that Chinese users are more benevolent on group sharing (Qiu et al., 2013). On contrary of Individualistic societies, Asian users are less prone to post and share self-promotion content and more mutual beneficial content. Therefore, while western societies tend to share more narcissistic content, Asian online behavior is expected to focus more on tips and promotions from companies and brands that benefit the group as a whole (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008).

Researches on cultural dimensions describes the Chinese society as very pragmatic, showing that they are more willing to adjust in order to reach their goals. Having that in mind, it is expected that Chinese users favor sharing more content that has direct benefits, such as promotion codes and sales, while in Brazil, as an indulgent society, users will share content with optimistic tones that carries certain emotional level and leisure.

H4: Chinese and Brazilian users are equally willing to be found by companies through social media advertising.

There is no evidence that shows a discrepancy in the effect of advertising tools such as sponsored links and posts on social media. However, in a more collectivistic society recommendations from peers play a more important role. Also, the presence reinforcement of pages by postings that appear on timelines/newsfeed, is expected to be more intrusive in Asian communities, as it is also believed that these users will be more annoyed with excessive postings as they are more pragmatic and desire content that is highly relevant to specific contexts.

H5: Chinese users limit their relationship with company pages much more strictly than Brazilians that instead, show a more emotional relationship with brands and companies.

According to cultural dimensions studies, Brazil is a very feminine value oriented society, focusing in balancing work and leisure. On the opposite side, China is a very masculine society oriented towards work. Therefore, it is expected that the relationship between users in China and companies to be much more rational and pragmatic, while in Brazil, it is expected for the relationship to be more emotional, fun and relaxed.

Moreover, as Chinese society is more prone to accept higher power disparity, it is also anticipated that power balance tends to favor companies as the traditional norm, affecting the relationships between users and brands.

Lastly, Asian social networking sites tend to have tighter relationships with their practices reflecting an indirect communication style (Qiu et al., 2013), thus a more closed circle of relationships. It is expected that relationships with brands and Chinese users are more professional and formal.

H6: Reputation plays a bigger role in the follow pages decision for Chinese users.

Reputation plays a more important role in interdependent societies. As Asian cultures are seen as more interdependent, it is expected that the perception of reputation are much more strict and valued by Chinese social media users. Natural Chinese concepts such as ‘Guanxi’, a concept that embraces relationship prestige and social obligation enforces the importance of reputation in Asian societies.

Additionally, considering the power distance cultural dimension, China is seen as a much more vertical society. Authority and reputation are correlated and are the basis for status also in the Internet.

H7: Chinese users participate in less but more intimate groups. Companies are not part of these groups, being considered intrusive.

Still according to Confucian concepts such as ‘Guanxi’ that dictate certain behaviors in Asian societies and the way businesses are conducted, Asian societies tend to show more intimate and smaller relationship groups.

Considering cultural dimensions such as masculinity pragmatism and collectiveness, Chinese culture tends to be show preferential treatment for in-group associations and even certain animosity towards out-groups.

5. RESULTS

This chapter presents the quantitative results obtained by the questionnaire distributed. It describes the profile of the samples and the scores for each question divided by functional dimensions. Correspondingly, the tables highlight the main differences and the most relevant answers of each sample. The chapter analyzes each question according to the respective hypothesis and elaborates a result for the statements. Finally, it concludes with the analysis of the likert table.

5.1. Profile

From the data collected, the profile below has been drawn.

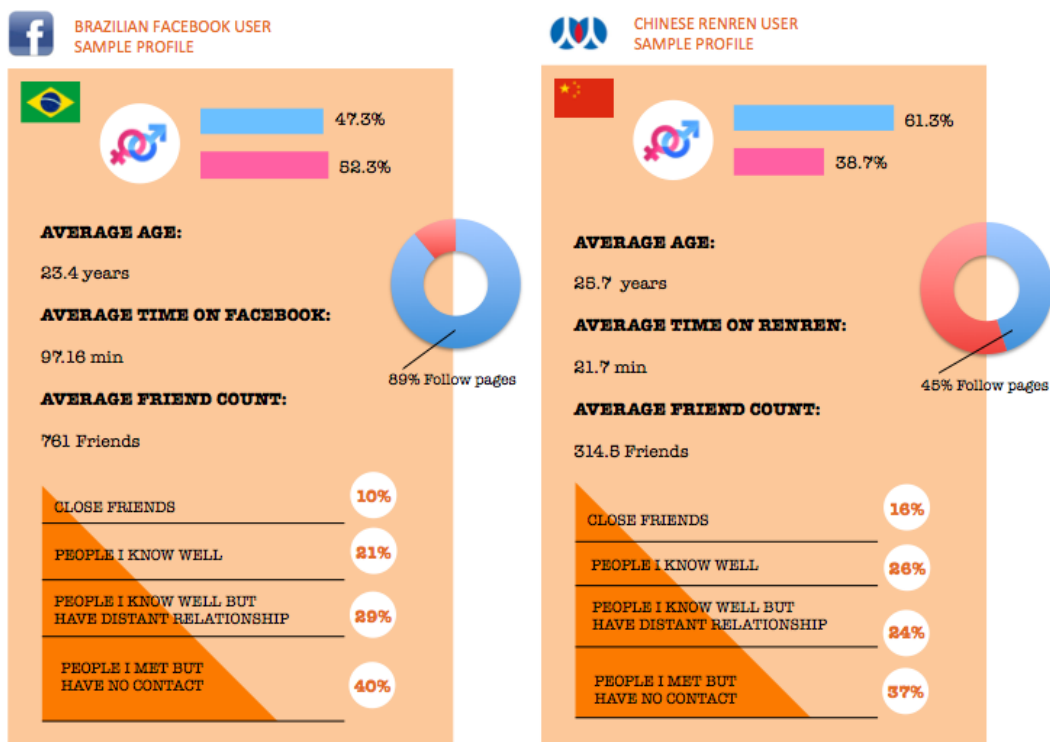


Figure 5.1 Profile of the sample of users in China and Brazil

Source: Elaborated by the author

The gender distribution in the sample collected, Brazil is balanced between female and male with almost 50% from each gender. However, among Chinese respondents, most of the respondents are male, with 61% of the sample. A difference that could reflect the gender disparity of the population in China since the country has produced only 80 female babies for every 100 male babies in the last decades (Cohen, 2013). But in the other hand, could also reflect the populations of users in Renren being more male predominant, or the Chinese school used as sample as more male prevalent.

The average age of Facebook users in Brazil is 23.4 years, slightly younger in comparison to Chinese RenRen users with 25.7 years. This reflects the sample methodological restrictions where data was collected from universities where ages vary from 17 to 30 years old in general.

The average time spent on Facebook by Brazilian users are much higher than Chinese RenRen users, with 97.16 minutes and 21.7 minutes. As previously stated before, Brazilian users are a unique case of extremely high level of time spent on social medias, especially Facebook.

The average friend count of Brazilian Facebook users is 761 friends, and the average for Chinese RenRen user is less than half with 314.5 friends per user. This could be interpreted as an evidence of one of the premises of the study where Asian online communities are taken to be much more closed and social circles smaller.

The friend intimacy distribution also shows similar results. Chinese users retain higher percentage of close friends with 16% against 10% of the friends being more intimate, while the biggest concentration of friends in both countries are in the ones that they do not maintain contact. This allied with the average number of friends show that Chinese users maintain a closer and smaller circle of friends, while Brazilians have a high friend count but distant relationships with most of them.

Also, 89% of the sample of Brazilians follows at least one Facebook page, while only 45% of Chinese users follow RenRen pages indicating that Brazilians are much more open to information and content not coming directly from friends.

5.2. Identity:

To which extent users are willing to reveal their identities to companies?

Based on the question ‘Which Information do you allow others to access?’ it has been analyzed the basic information that constitutes the user profile and what are the information that users are willing to expose. Although many of these information are mandatory for the creation of a profile, the fact that users utilize their real information reveal the level of privacy concern and how much of their real identity they are willing to release in the Internet.

Brazilian Facebook users are more willing to expose more general personal information such as their real name, residency and display pictures, while Chinese users are more willing to expose more social information such as relationship status, profession and place of work/study. In other words, it can be said that Chinese users are more likely to preserve their basic personal identification and expose more intimate information. Perhaps due to the common knowledge that certain information on social media in China is monitored closely by governmental agencies.

IDENTITY DISCLOSURE	BRAZIL	CHINA
Name	100.0%	95.4%
Age	44.4%	54.5%
Gender	66.6%	77.3%
Relationship Status	22.2%	31.8%
Profession/Occupation	31.7%	36.4%
Place of Residency	20.6%	9,1%
Place of work/study	33.3%	63.6%
Display Picture	73.0%	40.9%

Table 5.1 Identity disclosure

Source: Elaborated by the author

However, when asked about further personal information such as their personal content such as Photo albums, friends, interests and groups by the question ‘Which of the following personal content do you allow everyone to access?’, Chinese users show less concern on publishing Pictures (albums), Groups, Places/Events check-ins, Posts, Shares and Recommendations, while Brazilians allow others to see more of their friends and Interests (likes).

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE	BRAZIL	CHINA
Pictures (albums)	7.94%	54.55%
Friends	36.51%	27.27%
Interests (Likes)	39.68%	36.36%
Groups	9.5%	18.2%
Places / Events (Check-ins)	4.8%	27.3%
My posts / Shares / Recommendations	9.5%	45.4%
I don't know.	34.9%	13.6%

Table 5.2 Information disclosure

Source: Elaborated by the author

R1: Chinese users are willing to expose less of their basic identity than Brazilians. However, compared to Brazilians, Chinese users are more willing to expose intimate information related to personality traits without exposing their identity.

5.3. Conversations

To which extent are users willing to communicate about brands/products/companies?

When asked about ‘What types of pages do you follow?’ Brazilians follow more pages in general (89%) than the Chinese users (45%). Both have their highest percentages on Entertainment pages and lowest in small local businesses and places. Brazilians are willing to follow brands and products just as much artists and public figures, while between the two, Chinese users are much more influenced by artists and public figures such as celebrities, entrepreneurs, journalists and politicians which in percentage, it is as much as they follow companies and institutions.

TYPES OF PAGES FOLLOWED	BRAZIL	CHINA
Small local businesses and places	34.9%	0.0%
Companies, Institutions and Organizations	50.8%	39.1%
Brands and products	44.4%	8.7%
Artists and Public Figures (Celebrities, Entrepreneurs, Journalists, Politicians...)	44.4%	39.1%
Entertainment (Books, Films, Music, Sports...)	69.8%	47.8%
Causes and Communities	39.7%	21.7%
None	9.5%	4.3%

Table 5.3 Types of pages followed

Source: Elaborated by the author

When asked ‘In pages on Facebook, I prefer: to meet new companies and brands or follow companies and brands already known?’ Brazilians demonstrate a different behavior than Chinese users. Brazilians prefer to follow companies already known, while Chinese prefer to meet new companies and brands.

INTENT OF FOLLOWING	BRAZIL	CHINA
Meet new companies and brands	30.2%	68.4%
Follow companies and brands I already know	76.2%	47.4%

Table 5.4 Intent of following

Source: Elaborated by the author

R2a. Chinese users are less willing to follow company pages compared to Brazilians, especially small and local businesses, but both favor Entertainment contents.

R2b. Chinese users prefer to meet new companies while Brazilians prefer to follow companies they already know.

5.4. Sharing

To which extent users are willing to share companies generated content?

When asked ‘What type of content do you share?’ both users prefer to share content that they personally find interesting, followed by causes and issues (politics and social-environmental), then news/entertainment and content from company pages. However, Brazilians are a bit more willing to share complaints/insatisfactions and promotions/tips in comparison to the Chinese that do not share any of these information. This is an unexpected result, since Chinese society is more collectivistic, and sharing these type of information is seen as a group benefiting action. But since the percentage rate is rather low, further research with a larger sample is needed for more conclusive discussions. And another interesting fact is that 26% of the sample declared that they do not share content on social media, while 0% of Chinese stated the same.

TYPE OF CONTENT SHARED	BRAZIL	CHINA
Content I personally find interesting (Photos, Poems, Videos...)	60.3%	87.0%
Causes and issues (Politics and social-environmental)	30.2%	60.9%
Content from company pages	4.8%	13.0%
Promotions and product tips	1.5%	0.0%
Entertainment content	27.0%	21.7%
News	28.6%	26.1%
Complaints and Insatisfactions	3.2%	0.0%
I don't share	27.0%	0.0%

Table 5.5 Type of content shared

Source: Elaborated by the author

In terms of formats preferred to share, when asked ‘What types of formats do you prefer to share?’ both users prefer texts accompanied by images. As a second option, most Brazilian users prefer videos followed by links to other sites and texts, while Chinese users prefer texts and then videos followed by links.

FORMATS OF SHARING	BRAZIL	CHINA
Text	19.0%	63.6%
Text with image	63.5%	77.3%
Videos	47.6%	45.4%
Links to other sites	44.4%	4.5%

Table 5.6 Formats of sharing

Source: Elaborated by the author

When asked about the ‘With which frequency your friends share your posts?’, most of both users declared that its colleagues rarely share their content the most. However, Brazilian users seem to be more spread between always and never demonstrating they either always share or never, considering that 0% Chinese user declared that they always have their content shared.

FREQUENCY - BRAZIL

Always	Frequently	Rarely	Never
1.6%	11.1%	60.3%	27.0%

FREQUENCY - CHINA

Always	Frequently	Rarely	Never
0.0 %	9.1%	68.1%	22.7%

Table 5.7 Frequency of sharing

Source: Elaborated by the author

R3a. Chinese people are more willing to share company content, while Brazilians, in smaller number share more complaints and promotions than the Chinese users.

R3b. Both of users prefer Texts with images.

R3c. Content shared from user to user is a bit more likely to happen with a higher frequency between Brazilians.

5.5. Presence

To which extent are users willing to be found/accessed by companies? How they prefer to be contacted?

When asked ‘What is the frequency you expect companies to post?’ Chinese mostly prefer that companies posts monthly and Brazilians Weekly. Considering that Chinese users spend much less time online than Brazilians, it can be inferred that Brazilians are more avid consumers and need content more frequently than Chinese.

PRESENCE FREQUENCY	BRAZIL	CHINA
Many times a day	3.2%	0.0%
Daily	42.9%	31.8%
Weekly	47.6%	31.8%
Monthly	6.3%	36.3%

Table 5.8 Presence frequency

Source: Elaborated by the author

When asked ‘How did you become aware of the pages you follow?’ both countries prefer recommendations from friends the most important factor of awareness followed by newsfeed/timeline sponsored links/ads. However, Brazilians consider much more important offline recommendations than the Chinese that consider friends’ check-ins more important to know pages to follow.

PAGE AWARENESS	BRAZIL	CHINA
Newsfeed/Timeline Ads	42.9%	21.7%
Shares and Posts from friends	87.3%	65.2%
Friends check-ins	7.9%	17.4%
Offline Recommendations	28.6%	8.7%

Table 5.9 Page Awareness

Source: Elaborated by the author

R4a. Chinese users are less willing to have frequent content from companies present in their timeline.

R5b. Both users value friends shares and posts to follow a company, but Brazilians are often more influenced offline than the Chinese.

5.6. Relationships

To which extent are users willing to be related by companies? / Which topics and emotions are they willing to be associated with?

By asking, ‘Why do you follow companies/brand pages?’ it can be discovered that user behaviors between Chinese and Brazilians have very distinctive comportments. 42.37% of the Brazilian sample declared they want to follow companies and brands to know more about promotions and sales, while 40.9% of the Chinese said they just do not follow brands. For the Chinese users that do follow company pages, they declared that they mostly want to know about sales as much as hear about career opportunities evidencing the seek for a direct benefit (promotions and jobs). Considering the pattern of Brazilians, 33% prefer to know about the company and its business then, 28.8% wants to know more about the content that goes beyond the brand and the company, which evidences the avid appetite from Brazilians for company’s and other forms content.

In that sense, it can be said that Brazilians demonstrate a variety of types of relationships with companies online showing willingness to be heard and communicate dynamically (evidences by the users that want to give feedbacks and also complain about products), while Chinese show a strictly business formal relationship, that is, they are more interested in topics that are directly related to the company and its products in a one way communication – from company to customer.

REASONS TO FOLLOW	BRAZIL	CHINA
I don't follow companies/brands	30.5%	40.9%
To know more about products	35.6%	13.6%

To know more about promotions and sales	42.3%	27.3%
To know more about the company and its business	33.9%	13.6%
To know more about career opportunities	25.4%	27.3%
To show everyone that I like this company	11.9%	0.0%
To give feedback about its products	1.7%	4.5%
To complain about its products	3.4%	0.0%
Because the page has other content beyond brand and the company	28.8%	0.0%

Table 5.10 Reasons to follow

Source: Elaborated by the author

When asked about feelings they like to have displayed in posts, Brazilians focus on positive feelings such as enthusiasm and happiness. They also prefer irony and sarcasm as a facet of fun and dark amusement. On the other hand, Chinese, although also preferring positive feelings, also are open, in smaller scale, to other sentiments such as sadness, anger and fear in the posts they read. However, in this case, further research with a larger sample shows needed to confirm the results.

EMOTIONS PREFERRED	BRAZIL	CHINA
Enthusiasm	68.2%	56.5%
Happiness	74.6%	78.3%
Sadness	0.0%	4.3%
Anger	0.0%	4.3%
Fear	0.0%	4.3%
Irony / Sarcasm	60.3%	39.1%

Table 5.11 Emotions preferred

Source: Elaborated by the author

R5a. Chinese users tend to have a formal and unidirectional purpose communication with companies, while Brazilians tend to communicate dynamically.

R5b. Chinese users have a less emotional connection with companies than Brazilians that are more partial towards expectations of positive feelings.

5.7. Reputation

To which extent are users willing to see company's values and beliefs? How is reputation perceived?

When asked about ‘What factors do you consider before following a page?’, half of the Brazilians declared that they see the overall number of likes/followers on a page, a different attitude than the Chinese users that mostly look at the number of likes each posts of the page. That evidences that Brazilians consider more the average global performance of a page as a indicator of reputation, while Chinese users are more interested in content and micro performance of a page.

Both however consider as a second factor of indication of reputation, the number of friends liking the page, showing that both countries prioritize friends validation, but the number rather than the quality of reputation, the number, over the who.

REPUTATION INDICATORS	BRAZIL	CHINA
Number of likes/followers	50.0%	4.5%
Number of friends that follow the page	39.3%	22.7%
Number of likes on posts	10.7%	68.2%
Number of comments on posts	7.1%	4.5%
Who are the people liking	28.6%	13.6%
Who are the people commenting	25.0%	13.6%

Table 5.12 Reputation Indicators

Source: Elaborated by the author

In order to understand whether values and beliefs towards certain topics a company should not express online, it has been asked what subjects should be avoided in social media conversations. With more than 40.9% of Brazilians stating that they should not avoid any of these topics, Brazilians can be considered much more open towards sensitive topics. This behavior is very different than the Chinese that are quite open to discussion towards economy and society, however, very closed concerning politics, which in their opinion, should not be expressed in companies and brands posts.

VALUES & BELIEFS	BRAZIL	CHINA
Politics	49.2%	72.7%
Economy	14.7%	4.5%
Society	21.3%	4.5%
None (polemic topics in general)	41.0%	18.2%

Table 5.13 Values and Beliefs

Source: Elaborated by the author

R6a. Patterns of reputation play similar roles in both users. Chinese search deeper in the analysis of reputation while Brazilians are more focused in general indicators of reputation.

R6b. Chinese are less open than Brazilians regarding topics such as politics, but much more open to economic and society's subjects on social media posts.

5.8. Groups

To which extent are users willing to have companies participating in their groups and communities?

When asked about user behavior in social media groups of discussion, 100% participates in groups of work or study on Facebook, and 90.5% also participates and friends groups. Although Chinese users also prioritize groups of school/work and friends, the number is quite lower, showing that the channel of communication with colleagues and friends is mostly done somewhere else. Another point is that none of the respondents answered they participated in either classified, family and company and brands groups,

showing that companies opening for discussion in these groups in both countries is quite small.

GROUPS	BRAZIL	CHINA
School/Work	100.0%	65.0%
Friends	90.5%	55.0%
Common interests	49.2%	40.0%
Classified	17.5%	0.0%
Family	0.0%	0.0%
Discussion about companies and brands	4.8%	0.0%

Table 5.14 Groups

Source: Elaborated by the author

R7. Chinese users participate in fewer groups than Brazilians. Brazilians are a bit more open towards discussions about companies and brands.

5.9. Likert Analysis

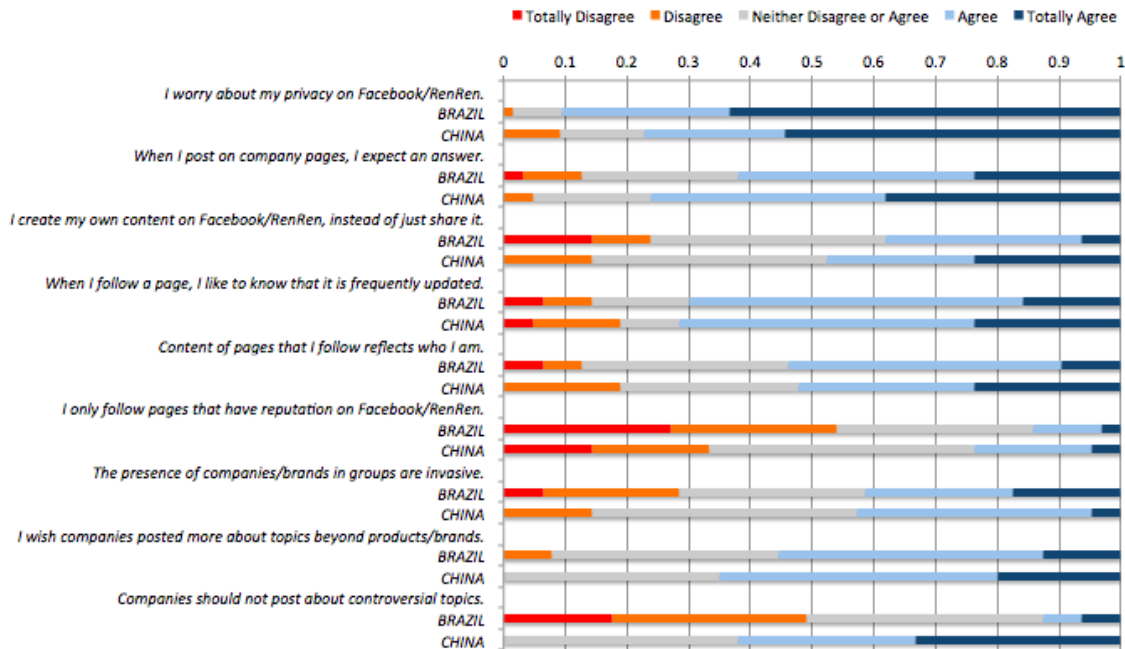


Figure 5.2 Likert Analysis

Source: Elaborated by the author

On the second part of the questionnaire, users were asked to indicate their answer through a likert scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree) in order to analyze the different perspective of users on social media identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationship, reputation and groups. The results showed similar results from both users to the majority of the questions by a difference of less than 1 point (as it can be seen on the table bellow). The only exception was in the statement ‘companies should not post about controversial topics’ where most of Brazilians disagreed or remained in a neutral position, while most of Chinese users agreed or totally agreed.

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Totally Agree	
I worry about my privacy on Facebook/RenRen.						
BRAZIL	0.00%	1.59%	7.94%	26.98%	63.49%	4.52
CHINA	0.00%	9.09%	13.64%	22.73%	54.55%	4.23
When I post on company pages, I expect an answer.						
BRAZIL	3.17%	9.52%	25.40%	38.10%	23.81%	3.70
CHINA	0.00%	4.76%	19.05%	38.10%	38.10%	4.10
I create my own content on Facebook/RenRen, instead of just share it.						
BRAZIL	14.29%	9.52%	38.10%	31.75%	6.35%	3.06
CHINA	0.00%	14.29%	38.10%	23.81%	23.81%	3.57
When I follow a page, I like to know that it is frequently updated.						
BRAZIL	6.35%	7.94%	15.87%	53.97%	15.87%	3.65
CHINA	4.76%	14.29%	9.52%	47.62%	23.81%	3.71
Content of pages that I follow reflects who I am.						
BRAZIL	6.35%	6.35%	33.33%	44.44%	9.52%	3.44
CHINA	0.00%	19.05%	28.57%	28.57%	23.81%	3.57
I only follow pages that have reputation on Facebook/RenRen.						
BRAZIL	26.98%	26.98%	31.75%	11.11%	3.17%	2.36
CHINA	14.29%	19.05%	42.86%	19.05%	4.76%	2.81
The presence of companies/brands in groups are invasive.						
BRAZIL	6.35%	22.22%	30.16%	23.81%	17.46%	3.24
CHINA	0.00%	14.29%	42.86%	38.10%	4.76%	3.33
I wish companies posted more about topics beyond products/brands.						
BRAZIL	0.00%	7.94%	36.51%	42.86%	12.70%	3.60
CHINA	0.00%	0.00%	35.00%	45.00%	20.00%	3.85
Companies should not post about controversial topics.						
BRAZIL	17.46%	31.75%	38.10%	6.35%	6.35%	2.52
CHINA	0.00%	0.00%	38.10%	28.57%	33.33%	3.95

Table 5.15 Likert table

Source: Elaborated by the author

Regarding other statements, most of Brazilians and Chinese users agree that ‘*Content of pages that I follow reflects who I am*’ showing that disclosing this information is a fundamental part of their online identity construction.

They totally agree on ‘*I worry about my privacy on Facebook/RenRen*’ which demonstrates a general concern over the personal information spread around social media from both users. However, as previously validated before, the type of personal information protected by each user is different. While Brazilians tend to expose more personal basic information, Chinese users are more likely to expose social information related to personality and character.

Most of Brazilians and Chinese users also agree on ‘*When I post on company pages, I expect an answer*’ which demonstrates willing of users to carry on a conversation on social media or at least receive a feedback from companies.

They also agree that, ‘*When I follow a page, I like to know that it is frequently updated*’ which shows that both users take into consideration the presence and use of the

company in social media when choosing to follow a page, however Chinese and Brazilians expect distinct frequencies of posting.

Both users also agree that *'I wish companies posted more about topics beyond products/brands'* but based on the previous results, that is not the main reason why users follow company and brand pages. While 28.8% of Brazilians indicated that this is one of the main motives of why following pages, 0.0% of Chinese users indicated the same.

Most Brazilians and Chinese disagreed on *'I only follow pages that have reputation on Facebook/RenRen'* showing that social media reputation is not the only factor considered in the process of following company pages on Facebook or RenRen. This result exhibits that other aspects such as identity construction have significant roles in the influence of the following a page.

Finally, most Brazilian and Chinese remained neutral on *'I create my own content instead of just sharing it'* and *'The presence of companies/brands in groups is invasive'*.

In conclusion, based on the results obtained by the research, the next chapter will address the functional blocks sketching a guide on best practices in Brazil and China according to the behavior of social media users.

6. Conclusion:

Recommendations for social media communication strategy

Once brands are inserted inside the virtual social communities, managers are still unsure how social media can be used in marketing in order to monetize its business. If a firm wants to manage an online community to boost its marketing and communication efforts, it must understand how to connect, communicate, create content and collaborate with other users.

By understanding these processes, online relationships will become a valuable asset for businesses linking operations to customers and prospects. Online Social networking can become vital to businesses as advertising channels or even CRM platforms, influencing conversations about products among the 'netizens' (C. C. Shih,

2011), or as some authors call it Social Relationship Management (Woodcock, Green, & Starkey, 2011).

Eventually, marketing executives will be forced to adopt many of the principles and techniques of relationship marketing in social media in order to manage the multiple niches of co-creation of products and services (Miller & Lammas, 2010).

However, prior to getting involved in Social Media, executives must understand not only firms strengths but also the online cultural framework of each platform, in order to optimize budget (Hann, 2013), and even, before that, understand the nature of social media: Communication.

Only then, brands can benefit from advantages such as online marketing research, developing new opinion leaders and brand advocates, placing of advertisements, co-develop new products, lower costs to serve, higher brand loyalty and amplification of awareness and buzz.

In this chapter, the author summarizes the main take-aways from the research translating them into management applications.

IDENTITY

As users navigate the web, thousands of third party vendors can access the data trail they leave behind. Information such as interests, hobbies, profession, browsing history, demographics and location can be accessed by companies to track and target specific groups according to a detailed profile of the users. By accessing this large amount of information, marketers can reach customers in a real time and personalized way, resulting in extremely personalized ads (The Economist, 2014).

Currently, consumers benefit from customized ads that satisfy their specific current and future needs based on their digital footprint. Plus, most of internet users are not completely insecure about their loss of privacy, but companies should be sensitive to the imminent potential of overstepping the mark (The Economist, 2014)

Nonetheless, the concerns on how brands and platforms use their information as a source for personal data mining should be definitely addressed. Identity construction and self-disclosure are directly correlated since personal online branding is only possible by

controlling the amount of private information exposed and by the time advertisers cross the line of privacy, the damages might be too big to fix, especially under the magnifying glass of social media.

Company should cautiously exploit instruments such as Big Data, Tracking, Remarketing, Cookies and Privacy Control according to the willingness of users to disclose its own data. For instance, as a result of this study, it has been discovered that Chinese users are less willing to expose their basic identity than Brazilians, while Brazilians are less willing to expose deeper information about their location, groups, posts and friends.

Perhaps due to the level of censorship in countries such as China, Identity disclosure plays an important role in Social Media. For example in China, users of social media have to abide regulations that prevent spread of rumors and controversial topics in the Internet. The government puts pressure on social media to police the behavior of users to avoid misconducts such as contents that contradict government sovereignty, illicit activities, threats to national security, unethical ideas' incitation and propagation of evil teachings and superstitions.

In the same way, the level of personal security in countries such as Brazil may also play a significant part in identity disclosure. The information publicized in social media may have consequences in offline activities implicating in menaces to personal and physical safety of the user.

Consequently, companies should take a less invasive approach towards Chinese users speaking to them in anonymity, while towards Brazilian users, they should not worry so much about anonymity, but the extent of data collected about their private information guaranteeing the security of their information and the capacity of the use of this data for wrong purposes.

CONVERSATIONS

People access social media for all sorts of reasons, to meet similar people, to join groups, build self-esteem, find true love, to inform themselves or to be on top of the rise of new ideas. Others see social media as a way to spread their message that can be about several issues: humanitarian, social, environmental, political and economic. Yet, although several different topics can take place on the web, there are certain formats and protocols to be followed (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

These rules can assume formal and informal arrangements. Limits on use of characters, enabling videos, images, texts and its lengths directly impact on how conversations are made. These rules determined by each framework influences on either the topics of conversations are ephemeral, informative, relaxed, entertaining, time dependent or not. Also, it affects on other user behaviors such as quantity of times logged in the platform, its time spent and content production and consumption.

Therefore, since these rules affect how conversations are made on the social media, changing the tone, formats and topics of conversation, it is important to understand how they are interpreted and followed by different cultures as a new form of social etiquette.

For instance, Brazilians tend to have higher uncertainty avoidance than Chinese, resulting in a very strict and bureaucratic society. On the contrary, Chinese society tends to be much more flexible and accept ambiguity in rules. So, they have different views on how these formal and informal rules on conversations are made.

For example, since ambiguity is much more accepted in Chinese language, it is very interesting to use figures of language when communicating. Double meaning caused by similar sounds or symbols can make content much more interesting and dynamic, increasing users attention and its retention to the message, as it has been seen in many success cases in China.

Additionally, as a result of this research, it has been determined that both Chinese and Brazilians prefer to share content that are texts accompanied by images. However, in the second best preferred format, Chinese users expressed they prefer texts, while

Brazilians prefer videos. That indicates that Brazilians are much more visually stimulated while Chinese tend to enjoy higher complexity in writing.

Having that in mind, companies should not only take in consideration the limitations and rules of platforms, but also, how these rules are interpreted, followed and preferred by users in different cultural contexts.

On a deeper analysis on conversations, however, the most evident difference is not on the formats and protocols. The most mutating variable across cultural contexts in the conversations' dimension is the topic of discussions.

Topics of conversations are a fundamental part of social media management since it is in companies' interest to start, continue, fuel and manipulate discussions on their favor. In that sense, Brazilians and Chinese users diverge significantly.

Although they both prefer to follow entertainment pages the most, and to follow small and local businesses the least, they diverge in the position of willingness to follow companies, institutions, organizations, brands and products.

Brazilians are much more willing to follow companies and institutions than the Chinese. Also, they are much more willing to follow brands and products. Therefore, it is understandable that Chinese users engage less in conversations from companies than the Brazilians and it is expected that a multinational present in both platforms might have significant differences in relative/proportional number of followers in their pages in both countries.

Having that in mind, according to this research, a firm would benefit from using artists such Artists and Public Figures as brand ambassadors to promote and optimize their pages performance. Chinese users follow celebrities, entrepreneurs and journalists just as much they follow companies and institutions, while Brazilians follow these personalities just as much brands and products. The use of this strategy could increase companies and brands performance in both countries.

Popular bloggers, celebrities and other public figures play an important role in Internet in countries such as China. The vast number of followers of these personalities

can benefit or damage the brand equity of a company. Moreover, there is a phenomenon in China where ghost writers with significant amount of followers, are hired to create artificial reviews attacking competitors products and services, thus mining consumer insights. Therefore it is important to be aware of the competitor's actions on the web and mitigate risks properly.

However, it is also true that Brazilian users are also less willing to follow companies they do not know. They are more likely to follow pages of companies and brands that they already have previous awareness than the Brazilians that seek on the social media, to meet new companies and brands.

Therefore, it is important to understand which stage of awareness in both countries, companies are (Awareness, Consideration, Conversion, Loyalty or Advocacy) in order to define a strategy on social media. In Brazil, it would be recommended to focus on using offline medias to increment awareness in social media creating a trans-media cycle, while in China, investing in online social media advertising would be more beneficial.

SHARING

People love sharing stories, information and news with those around them. It is part of human nature and affects directly on marketing strategic tools such as word-of-mouth. This form of communication has crucial importance on how humans think, behave and make purchase decisions. Thus, word or mouth and social influence are a very effective tool for communication managers. It is more effective and persuasive than traditional media and it is much more targeted to social circles (Berger, 2013).

When it comes to sharing, it seems that the online goal of marketers is to have their content shared to the most users possible diffusing their message, products, ideas and behaviors. However, the real epitome of successful marketing strategies nowadays seems to be Internet virality or social epidemics. Having their content shared spontaneously and voluntarily by users on social media seems to be the ultimate goal in online marketing, since it is cost efficient and very effective in spreading to immense volume of people across the globe.

Some authors argue that social epidemics can be reached by elaborating a systematic communication plan. By contemplating concepts such as Social Currency, Mind Triggers, Emotional charge, Public/Channel, Practical values and Story Telling capacity of contents, authors argue that it is possible to predict, create and achieve Internet buzz (Berger, 2013).

However, it is important to bear in mind the capacity and differences in behavior of sharing of different user communities first. For example, according to this study, content is more likely to be shared at a higher frequency among Brazilian users than among Chinese users. Thus, Chinese networks seem to have less capacity for virality than Brazilian networks, that seems to have this limitation a bit higher.

Also, Chinese users are more willing to share company's content than Brazilians. In the same way, Brazilians are, in a much small scale more willing to share promotions, product tips, complaints and insatisfactions in social media than Chinese users. However, in this case, more research should be done with a larger sample in order to confirm the results.

Therefore, companies in different cultural context should focus their social media content where is more effective (Corporate content in China and Promotions and tips in Brazil). Also making it interesting since users in both countries tend to share more contents that they personally find interesting (photos, poems, videos...) and making it engaging, since the second most shared content is causes and issues (Political and social-environmental). Finally, in the case of both countries, they should invest in texts with images that are more likely to be shared.

Finally, although part of the content that is viral in China is cloned and translated for domestic users without access to foreign platforms such as Youtube, the tone and substance of most viral content in both countries tends to diverge. While Brazilians tend to share more content associated with positive feelings and humorous, Chinese users are open to other types of emotions that are more solemn and serious. Also, while in Brazil, amusing contents are the most shared, in China, contents that are substantially 'cute' rank in the top most watched.

PRESENCE

In this study, presence is directly correlated with the willingness of users to be found by a company and the frequency that they are accessible for conversations through social media. On one hand, it is important to show availability on social media, being present on ads and interacting with other users. On the other hand, it is also important to understand the limits of the presence because over exposure can result in intrusion.

Studies on the willingness to be found by companies showed that awareness of pages to follow comes mainly from shares and posts from friends in both countries. The second most effective way was newsfeed and timeline ads. Concerning the availability for conversations, Brazilians prefer companies to post on a weekly basis, while Chinese users prefer it mostly on a monthly basis.

Having these results in mind, companies can leverage their presence by investing in online word of mouth to increase social circle persuasion to increase page follows and focus on relevancy of posts to increase visibility on pages. Then, companies can avoid intrusion or unwanted presence on users interface depending on the frequency of posts preferred by users.

In this sense, strategies of programmatic ad buying in social media can be affected according to users behavior. Although most of the concern around ad spending in Internet remains in the power balance between media channels and agency/brands, it is likely that markets will shift towards a more data driven ad market. Thus, marketers must pay attention to factors such as frequency of ads, channels inventory and overlap of audience in social platforms in order to, not only be efficient, but also relevant and not intrusive. Then, by moving towards a advertising market where power is more balanced, trust and transparency between media and agencies will result in more statistical and data driven models to be present in social media.

RELATIONSHIPS

In the case of this research, the relationship functional block was studied as how connections between users and companies were made in the scope of corporate pages. It expresses the nature of the relationship of the company, delimiting the barriers, which the company should not cross.

As a result, Chinese users tend to have more formal and pragmatic relationships (Company and Consumer), as well as seeking direct benefits such as promotions/sales and career opportunities, while Brazilians tend to be more dynamic seeking to consume content.

In parallel, Brazilians tend to prefer positive feelings associated in posts, while Chinese users are open to other feelings such as anger, sadness and fear. This shows that the relationship between Brazilians are much more emotional, whilst Chinese are a little bit more impartial in their expectations from posts.

This remits to the type of relationships companies should pursuit with their users. In Brazil for instance, it would be more efficient to focus on emotional and personalized approaches, while in China, a formal relationship would be more appropriate.

Also, it is important to reply to social media messages on both countries. Although very overwhelming due to its volume, 62% of users in Brazil and 76% users in China agreed or totally agreed that they expect an answer when posting in company pages.

REPUTATION

In a world where online reputation is highly valued, reputation stipulates the intangible value of online brand and the perception of reputation and its capacity of influencing in the Internet world. Statistics such as number of followers online and number of friends and responses are starting to play a bigger role in a brand's equity and signal certain authority that influences in the decision to interact with a brand on social media.

Not only they reflect the number of users that are consumers of a specific product or service, but they also indicate that a certain number of users agree with values and beliefs of a company. More than half of users in China and Brazil either agreed or totally agreed that content of pages that they follow reflect who they are. This means that by following a company page, users show that they trust the brand, they want to interact with it and they want to show to others that they are aligned with the brand's image.

The social media reputation can assume many forms (number of followers, likes, comments, friend and etc.). However, different cultures might view each indicator differently and have different criteria in the decision to interact with brands.

According to this study, standards of reputation are quite similar between users in China and Brazil. They both valorize the quantity over the quality (number over the who). However, Chinese users seem to explore deeper in the analysis of reputation, analyzing posts while Brazilians analyze the overall page the most, although 54% disagree or strongly disagree that they only follow pages with reputation. Open questions indicated they also follow pages based on requests of friends and colleagues.

Having that in mind, companies should invest in each indicator according to the perception of reputation of their users. In Brazil, companies should focus on quantity of followers on the page. Thus, use strategies such as Cost per action investments (the action being followers conversion). In China, where number of likes on posts is the most important indicator of reputation, companies should focus on investments in impressions of posts in user timelines/newsfeeds.

Moreover, in case of reputations based on quality of likes, it would be interesting to invest in Brand Ambassadors that has the profile congruent to the brand's or companies values. Therefore, using influential spokespersons can support the expansion of likes from people that matter.

Concerning the values and beliefs that a company should express in social media, Brazilians are much more open to general topics such as politics, economy and society than Chinese users. However, Chinese users are much more closed towards political subjects.

In contrast, when asked if companies should post about controversial topics, 62% of Chinese users agree or strongly agree, compared to 13% in Brazil. Hence, it is advised for companies to avoid posting about politics in China, and any other topic involving politics, economy and society in Brazil. Also it is recommended to avoid controversial topics in China, but certain looseness is allowed in Brazil.

GROUPS

In virtual social networks, the number of contacts tends to exceed the capacity that users are able to handle all these relationships. Knowing that, platforms allow tools that help manage these friends according to the level of relationships (School/work, friends, family, common interests and etc) dividing them in groups. These groups vary in level of permission for entrance, intimacy, communications and purpose. Therefore, it is important to understand how these groups work in order to make efforts to create or enter this sub-space of conversations.

According to this study, Chinese users participate in fewer groups than Brazilians, which in its turn, are more open to groups about companies and brands and common interests. This allows companies to create small groups of discussion about their products and services, harvesting valuable data. Also, it allows relationship management and customer care through social media.

Finally, it is important to be careful in groups in order to not be intrusive, since 24% of Brazilian and 38% of Chinese users agree that presence of companies in groups are plump intrusive.

7.Limitations

The data collected for the analysis of this study can be limited in many aspects. This research focused in students from Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo and Tsinghua School of Economics and Management in Beijing; therefore the study shows certain bias towards these specific samples.

As both universities receive students from all around their respective countries, from different states and provinces, from different social and economic backgrounds, and diverse cultural heritages due both countries' continental size, the study also demonstrates restrictions towards geographic and cultural generalizations.

The language of the questionnaire also shows certain limitations. The questionnaire for Brazil was translated into Portuguese and the one for China into Mandarin, therefore, it does restricts other users from other languages in these platforms.

The volume of the answers collected by this study, 74 in Brazil and 32 in China, also shows restrictions concerning the behavior of the whole population. And also, the timing throughout the 10 days that the questionnaires were collected, October 27th to November 5th, 2014, may have shown influences on the answers as monthly active users in both platforms tend to vary significantly in time. For more conclusive results, further research with a larger sample more spread across the time is needed.

Nonetheless, both samples exhibit behaviors of management students in both countries from the age delimited using their respective social networking platforms and their relationships with social media branded content.

BLOCK	Hypothesis	Results	Recommendations
IDENTITY	H1: Chinese users are less willing to expose their identities to companies in social media than Brazilians.	R1: Chinese users are willing to expose less of their basic identity than Brazilians. However, compared to Brazilians, Chinese users are more willing to expose intimate information related to personality traits without exposing their identity.	Based on self-disclosure willingness, companies must pay attention to marketing strategies that uses certain individual data such as Remarketing and Tracking.
CONVERSATIONS	H2: Chinese users are less willing to follow and communicate with company fan pages than Brazilians.	R2a. Chinese users are less willing to follow company pages compared to Brazilians, especially small and local businesses. R2b. Chinese users prefer to meet new companies while Brazilians prefer to follow companies they already know.	Understand the formal and informal rules of Social Media and how they impact users. Analyze the stage of engagement of your customers and prospects. Invest in awareness before social media performance indicators.
SHARING	H3: Chinese users are more willing to share company's content than Brazilians.	R3a. Chinese people are willing to share more company's content, while Brazilians, in smaller number share more complaints and promotions than the Chinese users. R3b. Both of users prefer shared Texts with images. R3c. Content shared from user to user is a bit more likely to happen with a higher frequency between Brazilians.	Before designing your social media strategy, understand where you should focus (promotions, tops, sales, content). Make it interesting and dynamic. Virality is directly correlated to capacity of sharing of your network.

PRESENCE	H4: Chinese and Brazilian users are equally willing to be found by companies through advertising.	R4a. Chinese users are less willing to have frequent content from companies present in their timeline. R5b. Both users value friends shares and posts to follow a company, but Brazilians are often more influenced offline than the Chinese.	Social Media advertising (sponsored links) are the second best way of gaining awareness. The first is friend's recommendations and posts. Understand the relevancy and appetite for content of the users before stipulating a programmatic buying strategy in order to avoid intrusion.
RELATIONSHIPS	H5: Chinese users limit their relationship with company pages much more strictly than Brazilians that instead show a more emotional relationship with brands and companies.	R5a. Chinese users tend to have a formal and unidirectional relationship with companies, while Brazilians tend to be more dynamic. R5b. Chinese users have a less emotional connection with companies than Brazilians that are more partial towards expectations of positive feelings.	Find out the boundaries of your relationship with users. Understand expectations of response and emotional needs.
REPUTATION	H6: Reputation plays a bigger role in the follow pages decision for Chinese users.	R6a. Patterns of reputation play similar roles in both users. Chinese search deeper in the analysis of reputation while Brazilians are more focused in general indicators of reputation. R6b. Chinese are more open than Brazilians regarding topics such as economy and society, but much more closed towards political subjects.	Invest in social media indicators according to the users needs. Quality of followers can be leveraged by Brand Ambassadors and Quantity can be achieved by Online Marketing investments in CPC. Understand the limits of the content of SM pages.

GROUPS	H7: Chinese users participate in less but more intimate groups. Companies are not part of these groups, being considered intrusive.	R7. Chinese users participate in fewer groups than Brazilians. Brazilians are a bit more open towards discussions about companies and brands.	Understand the capacity of openness of a conversation. Avoid intrusion by increasing relevancy focusing in common interests groups.
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Table 6.1 Recommendations

Source: Elaborated by the author

8. APPENDIX

Appendix I:

Quantitative Research / Questionnaire in Portuguese:

Part I. Profile

1. Gênero:

- Masculino
- Feminino

2. Idade

3. Aproximadamente quantos minutos você gasta no Facebook?

4. Quantos amigos você possui no Facebook?

5. Como você dividiria seus amigos nas seguintes categorias?

- Amigos próximos.
- Amigos que conheço bem.
- Pessoas que conheço bem porém mantenho relação distante.
- Pessoas que conheci porém não mantenho contato.

Part II. Questions

6. Quais informações pessoais você permite que todos usuários do Facebook acessem?

- Nome
- Idade
- Gênero
- Status de relacionamento
- Profissão
- Residência
- Escola/Trabalho
- Foto do display

7. Quais dessas informações pessoais você permite que todos os usuários vejam?

- Fotos (albuns)
- Amigos
- Interesses (likes)

- Grupos
- Lugares / Eventos (check-ins)
- Meus posts /compartilhamentos /recomendações
- Não sei.

8. Eu prefiro ler posts que expressam:

- Entusiasmo
- Felicidade
- Tristeza
- Raiva
- Medo
- Ironia/Sarcasmo

9. Que tipo de conteúdo você costuma compartilhar com seus amigos?

- Conteúdo que pessoalmente acho interessante (Fotos, poemas, vídeos...)
- Conscientização (Política e problemas sócio-ambientais)
- Conteúdo de páginas de empresas
- Promoções e dicas de produtos
- Conteúdo de entretenimento
- Notícias
- Reclamações e insatisfações
- Não compartilho nada.

10. Que tipo de formatos de post você prefere compartilhar?

- Texto
- Texto com imagem
- Vídeos
- Links para outros sites

11. Você acompanha páginas no Facebook?

- Sim
- Não

12. Quais tipos de páginas você costuma acompanhar?

- Pequenas empresas locais ou lugares
- Companhias, Instituições ou Organizações
- Marcas ou Produtos
- Artistas ou Figuras Públicas (Celebridades, Empreendedores, Jornalistas, Políticos...)
- Entretenimento (Livros, Filmes, Música, Esportes...)
- Causas ou comunidades

- Nenhuma

13. Que fatores você considera antes de seguir uma página no Facebook?

- Número de likes/seguidores.
- Número de amigos que seguem a página.
- Número de likes dos posts.
- Número de comentários dos posts.
- Quem são as pessoas dando like.
- Quem são as pessoas fazendo comentários.
- Outro (especifique)

14. Porque você acompanha páginas de empresas/marcas no Facebook?

- Não sigo empresas/marcas no Facebook
- Para saber mais sobre produtos.
- Para saber mais de dicas e promoções.
- Para saber mais sobre empresas e seus negócios.
- Para saber mais sobre oportunidades de carreira.
- Para mostrar aos outros que gosto dessa empresa.
- Para dar feedback sobre produtos.
- Para reclamar sobre produtos.
- Porque a página possui conteúdos que vão além da empresa/marca.
- Outro (especifique)

15. Como você soube das páginas que segue?

- Anúncio no NewsFeed do Facebook
- Compartilhamento/Posts de amigos no Facebook
- Check-ins de amigos
- Recomendações offline
- Outro (especifique)

16. Sobre empresas no facebook, eu prefiro:

- Conhecer novas empresas/marcas.
- Seguir empresas/marcas que já conheço
- Outro (especifique)

17. Com que frequência você prefere que páginas de empresas postem.

- Várias vezes ao dia
- Diariamente
- Semanalmente
- Mensalmente

18. Com que frequencia seus posts são compartilhados pelos seus amigos no Facebook?

- Sempre
- Frequentemente
- Raramente
- Nunca

19. Em quais grupos você participa no Facebook?

- Escola/Trabalho
- Amigos
- Interesses comuns
- Classificados
- Discussão sobre empresas/marcas
- Família
- Outro (especifique)

20. Avalie as seguintes declarações.

- ✓ Eu me preocupo com a minha privacidade no Facebook.
- ✓ Quando eu posto em páginas de empresas, eu espero que elas me retornem.
- ✓ Eu crio meu próprio conteúdo no Facebook, ao invés de somente compartilhar.
- ✓ Quando sigo uma página, gosto de saber que ela é frequentemente atualizada.
- ✓ Sinto que o conteúdo de páginas que sigo, reflete quem eu sou.
- ✓ Somente sigo páginas que possuem reputação no Facebook.
- ✓ Sinto que a presença de empresas/marcas em grupos é invasiva.
- ✓ Eu gostaria que empresas postassem mais sobre assuntos além de produtos/marcas.
- ✓ Empresas não deveriam postar sobre assuntos polêmicos.

21. Na minha opinião, as empresas deveriam evitar se pronunciar em relação à:

- Política
- Economia
- Sociedade
- Nenhuma

Appendix II:
Quantitative Research / Questionnaire in Mandarin:

Part I. Profile

1. 性别

- 男性
- 女性
- 不愿意回答

2. 年纪

3. 每天大概花多少时间(分钟)在人人网上?

4. 在人人网你有多少朋友?

5. 如何分类你的朋友于下列的种类 (百分比) ?

- 亲近的朋友
- 熟悉的朋友
- 熟悉的朋友
但有些疏远
- 认识的朋友
但没有联系

Part II. Questions

6. 那些私人信息你允许所有人人网的用户访问?

- 姓名
- 年纪
- 性别
- 关系现状
- 职业
- 地址
- 学校/工作

- 相片

7. 那些私人信息你允许所有人人网的用户观看？

- 相片
- 朋友
- 爱好
- 团体
- 地方/活动
- 我的帖子/分享/建议
- 不知道

8. 我更喜欢阅读有表达性的帖子：

- 热情
- 幸福
- 悲伤
- 愤怒
- 恐惧
- 讽刺

9. 哪一种内容你喜欢和朋友分享？

- 个人觉得有趣的内容（相片、诗词、影像...）
- 启发醒悟性内容（政治和社会环保问题）
- 关于企业的页面的内容
- 介绍产品及促销
- 关于娱乐的内容
- 新闻、
- 抱怨和不满
- 不分享

10. 你喜欢分享哪一格式种类的帖子？

- 文字
- 文字连影像
- 视频
- 和其他网站的链接

11. 你关注人人网的页面？

- 是
- 不

12. 哪一种类的页面你常关注？

- 小型当地或地方企业
- 公司、机构或组织
- 品牌或产品
- 艺人或公众人物(名人、企业家、记者、政治人物...)
- 娱乐(书籍、影片、音乐、体育...)
- 原因或社区
- 无

13. 什么因素使你访问人人网的页面？

- 追随者的数量
- 有多少朋友追随页面
- 有多少喜欢的帖子
- 帖子的评论数量
- 那些人喜欢
- 那些人写评论
- 其他(请注明)

14. 为什么你在人人网关注企业的页面/品牌？

- 不在人人网页关注企业/品牌
- 对产品认识更多

- 知道更多的消息和促销
- 对企业和他的生意有更多的了解
- 认识更多的就业机会
- 告诉别人对这企业的喜爱
- 提供产品的反馈
- 对产品的抱怨
- 因为页面的内容超越企业/品牌
- 其他 (请注明)

15. 你是如何知道下面的页面？

- 刊登在人人网的 NewsFeed / Timeline
- 共享/人人网朋友们的帖子
- 朋友们的 Check-ins
- 离线建议

16. 我喜欢人人网但对企业的介绍：

- 认识新的企业/品牌
- 认识新的企业/品牌
- 追随认识的企业/品牌
- 其他 (请注明)

17. 你期望企业页面的更换频率

- 一天数次
- 每天
- 每周
- 每月

19. 你的帖子在人人网和朋友共享的频率？

- 永远

- 时常
- 偶尔
- 家庭
- 从不

20. 你参加人人网的那些团体？

- 学校/工作
- 朋友
- 共同嗜好
- 广告
- 企业/品牌讨论
- 其他 (请注明)

21. 评估下列声明。

- ✓ 我在乎我的隐私在人人网
- ✓ 当我留话在企业的页面我希望他们的答复。
- ✓ 我建立自己的内容在人人网，而不只是分享。
- ✓ 当追随一个页面，喜欢它经常更新。
- ✓ 感觉我追随的页面内容能够显示我是谁。
- ✓ 只追随人人网里有声望的面。
- ✓ 我感觉企业/产品以团体的姿态出现是强势的。
- ✓ 我希望企业提供更多除了产品/品牌以外的信息。
- ✓ 企业不应当发表有争议的话题。

21. 我的意见，企业应该避免声明关于：

- 政治
- 经济
- 社会
- 无

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