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ABSTRACT
Gender and culture are two important social characteristics. Prior research has demonstrated that both of them have great impacts on users' interaction with ICT. However, most studies examined these two factors in isolation. In this panel, we will identify raise broad awareness of the situations related to the role of culture in gender and ICT interaction, to identify some of the issues and challenges, to brainstorm potential research directions, and to identify potential interventions to narrow the gender gap in ICT interaction by examining situations in difference cultures.

Keywords
Women, Gender, Culture, Information and Communication Technology.

1. INTRODUCTION
Information and communication technologies (ICT) have fundamentally changed human society and affected all aspects of our daily life. Yet, there have been widely recognized gaps in the ways different genders interact with ICT. For example, women in ICT and increasing women participation in ICT professionals have been the center of a good number of international conferences. Besides the fact that much less women choose ICT related fields as their occupations in certain cultures such as the United States, there is also a wide spread phenomenon that women are less participative in utilizing ICT for their work or social lives. What is less covered in the literature and conferences are the cultural issues embedded in the interaction between women and ICT. The gaps between men and women interactions with ICT can be dependent on the specific national or ethnic culture. The gap is wider in some of the cultures such as Arabic culture where women tend to be subject to strong social norms and restricted from social interaction with people outside their family members. Yet in other cultures, the gap can be either minimum or not noticeable.

The goal of this panel is to raise broad awareness of the situations related to the role of culture in gender and ICT interaction, to identify some of the issues and challenges, to brainstorm potential research directions, and to identify potential interventions to narrow the gender gap in ICT interaction by examining situations in difference cultures.

2. POSSIBLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AT THE PANEL
We plan to raise the following questions at the panel.

2.1 Q1: How do cultural differences affect attitude towards ICT, motivations of ICT usage and ICT usage between the male and female?
Extensive research has been done to examine the user attitude towards ICT and motivations of ICT usage in general. Further more, prior research also realizes the gender differences, and cultural differences in affecting users' interaction with ICT (e.g., (Munro, Huff, Marcolin, & Compeau, 1997; Venkatesh & Morris, 2000). Particularly prior research demonstrated that the perceptions of ICT applications vary for gender differences and ethnical differences (Gefen & Straub, 1997; Volman, van Eck, Heemskerk, & Kuiper, 2004); male students are found to seek different aspects from ICT applications from the female students (Colley, 2003); and significant and evolving gender differences in computer and Internet usage were reported (Ono & Zavodny, 2005). It is widely perceived that women are not interested in machines or technologies other than in an instrumental way, whereas men are thought to view science and technology as a source of fun, enjoyment and pleasure (Sorensen, 2002).

However, we still lack understanding of how such differences vary for different cultures since the role perceptions of women are largely shaped and embedded in their respective culture. Most prior research is dominant with the Western culture. Then to what extent such conclusions can be applied to the other cultural contexts, e.g., Chinese culture, Arabic culture, and etc.? Is there any unique pattern of ICT usage, motivational factor for different cultural contexts?

2.2 Q2: How does Internet affect identity development among Arabic adolescents?
According to Erikson (1958), identity is the main developmental task of adolescence. Research in developmental psychology has demonstrated that as Internet becomes a main social environment for most people, it becomes an essential arena for identity experimentation and exploration, playing an important role in adolescent development (Subrahmanyam, Smahel, & Greenfield, 2006).

Same theories are also applicable to Arab youth. For instance, Ayed (2005), in his field study, demonstrated that Internet plays an important role in shaping the political attitudes and culture among the youth.

The young generation in the Arab world are influenced by both Islamic and modern cultures (Solberg, 2002), which may not stay in harmony. The conflict brought by the usage of Internet and exposure to western culture, fundamentally shapes the self-perception of young generation and affects their identity development. Particularly, compared to their counterparts, women in Arab world may experience more conflicts and transformation in their self-identity:

> "The Internet, blogs, and social networking sites now give voices to those most marginalized in the Middle East today --- young people and women" (Eltahawy, 2008).

Therefore, we also speculate that the impact of Internet on identity development would vary for different genders among Arabic adolescents.

2.3 Q3: What is the relationship between women's online and offline life across different cultures?

Internet has dramatically extended social arena beyond the geographic, demographic, social, and cultural boundaries. Particularly, with widely applied social networking sites, e.g., Facebook, people can quickly reach a wide social network, exposed to diversified relationships and social beings. Although much effort has been done to understand users' online behavior, such studies usually take an isolated approach, examining their online behavior/attitude/relationships without considering their life in the "real world".

Actually, women's offline life may help understand the motivations for online activities; moreover, their online involvement also affects their social life in the real world, e.g., social relationships with their family members. Whether is living online a compensation for their offline life or continuity? And what is the role of culture played in shaping the interface between their online and offline social interaction? In this discussion, we would like to take an integral approach to weave the role of ICT in current women's social life into cultural contexts.

3. PANEL FORMAT

Each panelist will first express his/her views on the discussion questions and discuss some preliminary findings. The audiences are encouraged to share their views. We hope to have interactive discussions on the questions or other related issues as raised at the panel, and to form a research agenda to guide future research in this area. It is envisaged that the panel would be for 1 hour and 30 minutes, divided between the 3 talks with time for questions and discussion both within each talk and at the end:

4. THE PANELISTS

Kathy Ning Shen She is currently an Assistant Professor and Chairperson of Management Information Systems (MIS) Department at Abu Dhabi University. She also serves as the Director of Center for Middle East Business Cases. Exposure to the Arabic and Islamic culture inspires her to reflect theories that have been developed in the context of western culture. From social-technical perspective, social characteristics of users (e.g., individual culture and gender) should play an important role in interpreting certain ICT and affecting their interaction with it. Particularly, she is curious about how information technology would affect the identity development of Arabic women, their social relationships, and well-being in general.

Ping Zhang is a professor in the school of information studies at Syracuse University, US. She has a keen interest in studying the disappearing women in IT development such as in open source software projects, especially from a motivational perspective. Having been raised and spent first part of her adulthood in China, she is much interested in the differences between the Chinese culture and the US culture in treating boys and girls as they grow up. She speculates that such subtle culture difference plays an important role in girls' performance in science and technology related subjects in schools and their choices for occupations in their adulthood. The culture difference should also play important roles in women's general attitude toward and interaction with ICT in their daily lives and work in general. To learn more about Dr. Zhang, visit http://melody.syr.edu/pzhang.

Halbana Tarmizi is currently an Assistant Professor and Chairperson of Management Information Systems (MIS) Department at Abu Dhabi University. Built upon his experience working with virtual teams, his research interest has been in collaboration technology, e.g., online communities.

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