



Understanding the perceived community value of Facebook users



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ABSTRACT

With the growing popularity of social networking services (SNSs) such as Facebook, it has raised important interests about the perceived value implications of such usage. This study examines the usage by combining marketing and IS perspectives through an empirical survey of Facebook users. It was hypothesized that perceived value would be a key multidimensional determinant of behavioral intentions in SNSs. The study holds that the facets of social capital—social interaction ties, trust, and shared vision—and social network information sharing can create a perceived value (i.e., social, experiential, information, and transaction) in SNSs. Analyses conducted on results from a survey of university students ($n = 402$) suggest that trust, an element of the relational cluster, holds the strongest correlation with the sharing and pooling of resources by users over Facebook. Experiential value is found to be most significant, indicating that the interactions between users on Facebook occur mostly to fulfill a psychological need, such as sharing the useful information and receiving enthusiastic replies or praise. In addition, thanks to the emerging development of F-commerce, transaction value is positively affected.

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1. Introduction

Social network services (SNS) are emerging as one of the promising IT-based businesses. Advances in information technology, such as continuous innovation in smart phones and booming development in wireless communications applications and tools, have created avenues for people to access and log into SNSs at any time and place, enabling a high rate of users' revisits to the social network. Indeed, one of the most popular social network sites, Facebook, has transformed into a collective source of value for every Facebook user (Amichai-Hamburger, Kingsbury, & Schneider, 2013; Bulik, 2007; Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011; Ellison, 2007; Hofer & Aubert, 2013; Hughes, Rowe, Batey, & Lee, 2012; Lee, Moore, Park, & Park, 2012; Lin, Hung, & Chen, 2009; Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, & Walther, 2008). In fact, Facebook and other social networking sites enable people to connect and interact with an unprecedented speed and ease. Consequently, the social implications of these communication networks are indisputable, as they are newer innovation or knowledge pools for information sharing (Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Hofer & Aubert, 2013; Hsu, Ju, Yen, & Chang, 2007; Kobayashi, 2010; Lee & Lee, 2010; Lin et al., 2009;

Paroutis & Al Saleh, 2009; Sawhney & Nambisan, 2007; Stefanone & Jang, 2007; Usoro, Sharratt, Tsui, & Shekhar, 2007; Wang & Noe, 2010; Ye, Fang, He, & Hsieh, 2012).

SNSs emerge with the pressing needs of the Internet users' growth and they provide users with the important means for the establishment, development, and maintenance of a user's personal social capital, including making new friends, keeping/maintaining in touch with current friends, reconnecting with old friends, sharing information, and establishing/developing a sense of belonging. Recent studies seek to grasp SNSs by investigating their potential as new venues for citizenship behavior, political engagement, social movement, and social comparison (Brandtzæg, 2012; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Jin, Cheung, Lee, & Chen, 2009; Lee, 2013; Lee, 2014; Mital & Sarkar, 2011; Shirazi, 2013; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009; Yang, 2012). To this end, the concept of social capital is appropriate for the study of the social implications of social network sites (Bohn, Buchta, Hornik, & Mair, 2014; Ellison et al., 2007; Hofer & Aubert, 2013; Kaigo, 2012; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Phulari et al., 2010). Following the study of (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), social capital can be defined to encompass three distinct dimensions: structural (social interaction ties), relational (trust), and cognitive (shared vision). These three dimensions reflect the important facets of social capital in studying the information sharing in SNSs.

The most successful SNS may be Facebook, which has a market value of around \$177 billion as at 28 February 2014 (<http://>

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ycharts.com/companies/FB/market_cap) and over 1 billion users all over the world. Further, it is important to understand the underlying motives of users' behavior when using SNSs (Pai & Arnott, 2013). Behavioral intentions can be regarded as users' perceptions which are the most commonly applied ways of analyzing the use of specific IS (information systems). However, user acceptance of SNSs cannot be fully explained by the technology adoption models that already exist. This is simply because SNSs not only extend their scope to facilitate the organizational processes but also provide enjoyment and other intrinsic stimuli (Turel, Serenko, & Bontis, 2007; Turel, Serenko, & Bontis, 2010). In this study, we assume that an overall assessment of value was a key determinant of behavioral intentions to employ SNS services in general, and for Facebook in particular. While previous research examined only the monetary value dimension of mobile add-value services (Kuo, Wu, & Deng, 2009), we propose a broader view of value that include information, experiential, social, and transaction dimensions. To operationalize this broad view, the multidimensional 'perceived value' concept developed by Sweeney & Soutar (2001) was thus adapted from the area of marketing research.

This aforementioned study draws on the social capital theory and perceived value concept to investigate the influence of perceived value and facets of these three aforementioned dimensions of social capital onto the information sharing in SNSs. Our study examined and expanded it by combining the marketing and IS perspectives through an empirical survey of 402 young-adult Facebook users. Overall, the convergence of marketing and IS viewpoints was assumed to form a better understanding of SNSs usage drivers by identifying the important value dimensions in its adoption. Moreover, it was believed that our investigation may allow us to further develop the theoretical foundations to determine how and when value perceptions beyond efficiency and effectiveness were involved. The results could help the savvy business, IT leaders and marketers to explore, and even take advantage of the opportunities existed in this fast-evolving arena. The obtained results may also assist the discovery of business value in the discipline of social analytics since the current social analytics tools, such as Google Analytics, may need some additional in-depth studies.

2. Literature review

2.1. Social capital

Social capital is a sociological concept that primarily refers to the value derived from connections within and between social networks. In sociology, the term social capital was initially described in community studies by Jacobs (1961). Later, the definition of social capital was further developed and made popular by Loury (1976). (Coleman, 1988b) introduced a concept of social capital, which refers to the resources gathered through relationships among people.

(Hoffman, Hoelscher, & Sherif, 2005) suggested that social capital consists of information channels, social norms, identify, obligations and expectations, and moral infrastructure. Social capital facilitates the development of intellectual capital and knowledge creation in collective intellectual capital (Kogut & Zander, 1996). From an overall perspective, social capital improves knowledge management process within an organization because it enables group action more efficient (Lesser, 2000), resource exchange (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998), and boost knowledge sharing (Coleman, 1988a). Table 1 shows an overview of recent studies relevant to Internet-focused social capital.

The previous research (Putnam, 1995) suggested that social capital facilitates coordination and cooperation for achieving mutual benefit. The social capital theory defined as the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). However, SNSs may be different from various organizational settings since the interaction among network members is occurred through the online communication. In addition, members in SNSs are also quite different from general Internet users in that SNSs members are brought together by shared interested, goals, and needs (Chiu, Hsu, & Wang, 2006).

In the context of this paper, the focus is placed on sharing activities in exchanging of information, ideas, news, and opinions in SNSs (Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Bohn et al., 2014; Lee, 2013). Following the study of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), social capital is defined with three distinct dimensions and they are structural (the

Table 1
Overview of recent studies relevant to Internet-focused social capital.

| Study | Sample | Measurements | Results |
|---|---|--|--|
| Hofer & Aubert (2013) | N = 264 on Twitter | Bonding, bridging social capital | Follows on Twitter has positive effects on online bridging/bonding social capital |
| Stefanone, Kwon, & Lackaff (2012) | N = 49, sent 588 requests on Facebook, average age 20.66 | Bonding, bridging and social status | 80% No replies, people with socially prestigious positions are more likely to get friend's help |
| Brandtzæg (2012) | (N = 2,000, age 15–75 years) in 3 annual waves (2008, 2009, and 2010) | Face-to-face interactions, number of acquaintances, loneliness, and bridging capital | SNS-users, and in particular males, reported more loneliness than nonusers. SNS users report significantly more face-to-face interaction, more acquaintances, and greater bridging capital |
| Hsu, Wang, & Tai (2011) | Facebook | Users' behaviors, their counterparts' relationship types, and the users' perceived acquaintanceships | Facebook is a mechanism for new friends, rather than close friends |
| Barkhuus & Tashiro (2010) | N = 18, college students | Initiating and maintaining social gathering | Facebook use for young people encourage bridging capital |
| Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn, & Hughes (2009) | N = 119, college students, survey and interview, Facebook | Privacy, user attitude, behavior | Perceived risk to the privacy of others > the perceived risk to personal privacy in Facebook |
| Valenzuela et al. (2009) | N = 2,603, college students | Life satisfaction, social trust, civic engagement, and political participation | Facebook is not an effect solution for young people as the social capital is small |
| Ellison et al. (2007) | N = 286, college students, Facebook | Social capital, self-esteem, satisfaction with life | Facebook is strongly related to bridging social capital, and interacted with well-being |

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