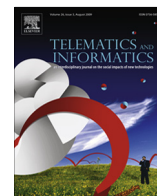




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# Value systems and intentions to interact in social media: The digital natives

Malin Brännback<sup>a</sup>, Shahrokh Nikou<sup>a,\*</sup>, Harry Bouwman<sup>b,c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Economics, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

<sup>b</sup> Delft University of Technology, Netherlands

<sup>c</sup> Åbo Akademi University, Finland

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 26 May 2016

Received in revised form 8 August 2016

Accepted 27 August 2016

Available online xxxx

### Keywords:

Theory of trying

Attitude

Behaviour

Value systems

Domain-specific values

Global values

Social media

## ABSTRACT

Current research on social media focus on perceptions, behavioural intention, usage, and seldom take value systems into account. Values are expected to impact behaviour directly or indirectly via intervening constructs, for example, attitude. This paper explores, starting from the Theory of Trying, how value systems impact the digital natives' interactive behaviour with social media. An empirical research is executed to test a model based on global and domain-specific values, and attitudes towards trying in explaining usage. Based on 116 valid responses from a sample of digital natives, several alternative models were tested. The proposed model based on the theory of trying shows that domain-specific values positively influence behaviour and usage of social media. Attitude towards trying positively mediates the effect of domain-specific values and global values on interactive behaviour with social media. Global values do not influence domain-specific values, nor has a direct impact on behaviour.

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## 1. Introduction

Literature informs us with a tremendous research on interplay of the attitude-intention-behaviour link across various disciplines such as information systems (IS) and acceptance of new technologies and cannot be considered to be new (e.g., Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen and Driver, 1992; Bagozzi, 1992, 2007; Bagozzi et al., 2003; Bagozzi and Warshaw, 1990; Davis et al., 1989; Fazio and Williams, 1986; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Davidsson, 1990; Krueger et al., 2000; Liska, 1980; McBroom and Reed, 1992; Tang et al., 2015; Tate et al., 2015). The dominant theoretical models found in these types of research are theory of reasoned action (TRA) and extension of the TRA, i.e., the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1987, 1991). Other alternative theoretical models have been presented and tested, e.g., Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and its many different variations specifically for acceptance of information technology in organizational contexts and in explaining consumer behaviour of all kind of new information and communication technologies (Davis, 1989). Nikou et al. (2014) argue that research on consumers is mainly focused on acceptance and TAM related concepts and seldom focuses on other issues relevant to consumers' preferences. The Theory of Trying (TT) which is the extension of the theory of goal pursuit and theory of planned behaviour did attract less attention in IS-research (Bagozzi and Warshaw, 1990). The Theory of Trying is a process-based conceptualization of goal directed behaviour where behaviour is not treated as a terminal goal but as a means to more fundamental goals (Ajzen and Madden, 1986). That is, a terminal goal ends the process, whereas

\* Corresponding author at: Gezeliussgatan 2 A, 20500 Turku, Finland.

E-mail addresses: [malin.brannback@abo.fi](mailto:malin.brannback@abo.fi) (M. Brännback), [snikou@abo.fi](mailto:snikou@abo.fi) (S. Nikou), [W.A.G.A.Bouwman@tudelft.nl](mailto:W.A.G.A.Bouwman@tudelft.nl) (H. Bouwman).

with respect to trying, the behaviour is an activity undertaken as a conduit to achieve a final goal. Two illustrations; a person want to create a *successful* company, and manages to formally create the company (volitional control) but fails to raise the amount of required funding (non-volitional) to ensure the success of the venture; a person is skilled in using social media. The person knows exactly how to access the Internet (volitional control), but fails to retrieve the necessary information because distracted by ads or other interesting links that suddenly intervenes and distracts even the most skilled user (non-volitional) and fails to complete the original intended behaviour. Mathur (1998) argue that intention reflects a state of mind of individual and drives one to take action as opposed to trying and consequently reflects action or even some parts of the actual behaviour. According to this theory, trying is considered to be under volitional control while succeeding is not. Moreover, in TT trying is seen as a possible mediating variable between behavioural intention and actual continued usage, and it is the relationship among the three that is of interest here.

Another aspect that directs attention is the critical role of value and how value systems, i.e., personal and social values, is directing behaviour and play a role in attitude towards trying. According to Rokeach (1973, p. 5) the concept of value is defined as “A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence”. More specifically the distinction between global values and values related to specific occurrences and situations need closer consideration. The distinction is of importance because domain-specific values embody people’s perceptions of a given domain and will be determined by global values as well as individuals’ appraisal of the domain’s ability to provide such values. Xie et al. (2008) argue that there are differences across people’s appraisal of the domain’s ability to provide value and how they perceive global values and thus the relationships between global and domain-specific values will be moderate. Few studies have included *values or value systems* in the model of trying in relation to explaining actual behaviour. Values are assumed to be more persistent than attitudes, and are considered to be determinants of attitudes and behaviour (Homer and Kahle, 1988; Xie et al., 2008). Put it simply (Kamakura and Novak, 1992), values are more stable, occupy a more central position than attitude in one’s cognitive system and provide more inner-oriented understanding of users (for instance a social media user). This study examines how values impact attitude towards trying as a mediator for usage of social media. The assumption is that use of social media is driven by fundamental, personal, inter-personal and non-personal values to achieve or accomplish something else, for instance a self-respect, sense of belonging or excitement, as well as to values related to usage of social media per se. According to previous research, values are assumed to influence behaviour directly or indirectly through intervening variables such as attitudes (Bagozzi et al., 2003; Carman, 1978; Homer and Kahle, 1988). According to Homer and Kahle (1988, p. 638) “values are similar to attitudes as both are adaptation abstractions that emerge continuously from the assimilation, accommodation, organization, and integration of environmental information in order to promote interchange with the environment favourable to the preservation of optimal functioning”. Yet, Kahle (1980) argues that values can be considered as the abstractions that serve as prototypes used for manufacturing attitudes and behaviours. Homer and Kahle (1988) argue that values guide behaviour through cognition and are thus antecedents to attitudes.

Because this research focuses on the interplay of attitudes, values, trying and behaviour towards social media interaction, this section explains the concept of social media. Social media are defined as an Internet based platform where actors are assumed to be engaged in behaviour through continuous assimilation, accommodation, organization, creation and integration of personal, inter-personal and environmental information. Hence, social media represents an ideal context for studying how values impact intentions to be almost continuously engaged in interactive behaviour by generating and consuming content. Moreover, since social media are about communities and other actors are involved, there are multiple layers of values (terminal and instrumental) at play –a value system. Here interaction with social media is seen as an experience similar to that where the user or actor assumes a dual role as both the producer and consumer of the experience. Social media come in different flavours and different applications are tried out, as a result of that some applications become part of the repertoire of users and others not. A critical characteristic of trying experience is that it is one of sharing, generating and consuming content, and participation with others. While fun and excitement can be central to such an experience, we argue for a much more complex view including values, e.g., dimensions such as achievement and empathy (Kamakura and Novak, 1992).

Moreover, social Media behaviour is seen as an ongoing *process* where those interacting in social media try to fulfil perceived roles and create ideal self-images, as means to more fundamental goals. Theory of trying was originally introduced by Bagozzi and warshaw (1990) to accommodate for the non-volitional nature of an activity. They argued that the previous models TRA or TPB did not allow for the possibility for an activity to be non-volitional, that something might occur that kept the intending actor from acting upon the intention. Volition is broadly defined as a psychological state that enables persistent goal striving and one with volition can control himself and his environment to reduce barriers in the pathway of achieving a goal (Corno, 1993). Relying on the basis of theoretical assumption of TT, we argue that interaction in social media is typically this kind of non-volitional activity. This is in fact a real problem for other actors who hope and wish for some activity to occur, i.e., they too lack the control over behaviour. Therefore, we adopt theory of trying as a process-based model for studying the value-trying-behaviour link. We argue that while digital natives are already heavy users of social media, their attempts to interact is a series of trials. According to Bagozzi and Edwards (1998) processes involved in trying are needed to convert intentions into action and therefore it can be argued that trying is a necessary but not sufficient precondition of behaviour. These processes are defined by Bagozzi and Edwards (1998, p 435) as “*doing all the necessary pre-behaviour and otherwise satisfying all necessary conditions that are within volitional control for the performance of the subjective behaviour*”. Moreover, a process view is further justified as we view values as a result of interaction between subjective experience and objective existence over a longer period of time (Homer and Kahle, 1988; Xie et al., 2008). Hence despite a massive body of

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