



## Full length article

# Why do people use news differently on SNSs? An investigation of the role of motivations, media repertoires, and technology cluster on citizens' news-related activities



Jihyang Choi

Division of Communication & Media, Ewha Womans University, 52, Ewhayeodae-gil, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, South Korea

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 14 March 2015

Received in revised form

4 August 2015

Accepted 7 August 2015

Available online xxx

### Keywords:

Social networking sites (SNSs)

News

Motivations

Media repertoire

Technology cluster

## ABSTRACT

The present study sheds light on the nature of the multi-dimensional aspects of news consumption by focusing on three different news-related activities on online social networking services (SNSs): news reading, news posting, and news endorsing. Borrowing from the literature on uses and gratifications theory, as well as media attendance theory and the concept of a technology cluster, the study investigated why people consume news differently on SNSs.

The results show that each type of news activity may derive from different kinds of motivations, media habits and technology clusters. For example, the motivation of “getting recognition” was found to be an important driving force for news posting, while it was not a significant predictor of news reading and news endorsing. On the other hand, the “entertainment” motivation was revealed to be positively associated with news reading and news endorsing, while it was not with news posting.

In addition, those who have an internet-based news repertoire were more likely to participate in news activities on SNSs and those who have many mobile devices were found to participate in news reading more frequently. The study was conducted using a national online survey.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, news exposure has tended to be identified only with news reception. However, with the advent of interactive media, which may be represented by the Internet, news audiences are not only able to receive news created and disseminated by news media, but also they themselves are able to participate in more diverse ways of news processing, notably by creating, re-contextualizing, and transmitting news. These non-traditional ways of news processing have gained in popularity with the rise of online social networking sites (SNSs). People increasingly log on to SNSs to read, forward, and recommend news or to comment on news stories (Rainie, Smith, Schlozman, Brady, & Verba, 2012; Smith, 2013). This is possible because of the presence of the many user-friendly interfaces within SNSs by which people can enjoy news in various ways—such as by using the “share,” “retweet,” “like,” or “favorite” functions (Lee & Ma, 2012).

Accordingly, people do not consume news in a uniform way. For example, a survey of the patterns of news use on Facebook revealed that the most frequent news related activity on SNSs is reading news by clicking on news links (64%), with endorsing news stories using the “like” button (60%) and sharing news links (49%) following behind (Mitchell, Kiley, Gottfried, & Guskin, 2013).

The present study intends to shed light on these multi-faceted aspects of news consumption and will investigate why people consume news differently on SNSs. Particularly, it will focus on three different news-related activities in which people are now most frequently engaging on SNSs: news reading, news posting, and news endorsing. Recent research has begun to pay attention to the fact that news exposure has become a multi-dimensional behavior, not a monolithic one (Choi & Lee, 2015; Choi, Lee, & Metzgar, 2013; Weeks & Holbert, 2013). Nonetheless, the question of why people use news differently has not been thoroughly addressed. Even when the issue has been explored (e.g., Kang, Lee, You, & Lee, 2013; Lee & Ma, 2012), the focus has been on a single type of news behavior (such as news sharing), thus limiting the ability to compare the mechanisms of people's choice of one news activity over others.

E-mail address: [choi20@ewha.ac.kr](mailto:choi20@ewha.ac.kr).

Thus, the study seeks to extend our knowledge of news exposure in the current media environment. By employing uses and gratifications (U&G) theory, media attendance theory and the concept of a technology cluster, this study will investigate who are more or less likely to choose each type of news activity. In doing so, the study aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of the nature of the emerging patterns of news use and its potential implications on the overall news environment.

## 2. Determinants of news consumption

### 2.1. Motivations and SNS news use

The motivational perspectives of media use and its effects posit that individuals actively choose to use certain types of media based on a thorough evaluation of their instrumental functions, or utility (Fry & McCain, 1983; Rubin, 1994b). The kinds of motivation one has are determined by the reasons or goals that drive an action (Kunda, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wentzel, 2000). This active selection thesis of media use has also been developed in many studies conducted under the umbrella of “uses and gratifications” (U&G) theory, the main argument of which is that citizens’ media choices stem from the expectation of satisfying their social and psychological needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973). Thus, in understanding the predictors of news use on SNSs, it is naturally assumed that particular types of motivations (or gratifications sought from the media) will drive different ways of news processing. This is so because motivations determine not only *which* media to consume, but also *how* to consume the media content (W.P. Eveland, Jr., 2001, 2002, 2004) and, furthermore, the quality of the experience and performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Nonetheless, the motivation for using SNSs for diverse news activities has not been fully investigated. However, the extant research on the motivations of SNS use and other online news-related behaviors provides clues to explore the issue. This is so because the motivation of SNS news use may be found in the intersection between the motivations for using SNSs and online news. A few studies have examined the question of what drives people to consume news online and revealed associated motivations such as seeking specific information and searching for updated news (Flavián & Gurrea, 2009). As online permits newer and more interactive types of news use (e.g., sharing news with others) more attention has been given to the motivations for those behaviors. Findings have shown that such motivations as informativeness, socializing and status seeking (Lee & Ma, 2012), and one-upmanship (Kang et al., 2013) lie beneath the news sharing.

On the other hand, the motivation for using SNSs have been thoroughly investigated. Diverse motivations have been identified: Entertainment, affection, fashion, sharing problems, sociability, and social information (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010); amusement, relationship maintenance, information seeking, sociability gratification, and style (Ku, Chu, & Tseng, 2013); communication with friends, being entertained, and finding out about events (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009); effective communication, satisfying curiosity about others, gaining popularity, and relationship formation (Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009); social connection needs (Han, Min, & Lee, 2015); motivations for social connection (Huang, Hsieh, & Wu, 2014); and seeking friends, social support, entertainment, information, and convenience (Y. Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011).

Seemingly, these studies show that new kinds of motivations have emerged. However, a closer review of those identified motivations for online news and SNSs shows that they are not totally fresh new motivations for media use. Instead, many of them are

closely related to motivations identified in the existing gratifications behind media use. The motivations revealed by U&G studies have been largely categorized into four kinds: “diversion (i.e., as an escape from routines or for emotional release), social utility (i.e., to acquire information for conversations), personal identity (i.e., reinforce attitudes, beliefs, and values), and surveillance (i.e., to learn about one’s community, events, and political affairs),” as was initially conceived by Katz and colleagues in 1974 (see Ruggiero, 2000, p. 26).

For example, recently identified motivations such as relationship maintenance, communication with friends, relationship formation may parallel the more expanded social utility gratifications found in the typology proposed by Katz et al. (1974). In addition, gratifications such as seeking specific information and satisfying curiosity about others may be similar to the surveillance gratifications. Indeed, it has been noted that the traditional typologies may still be useful in investigating the multidimensional motivations of newly emerging media use (December, 1996; Morris & Ogan, 1996). Thus, it is meaningful to re-identify and re-conceptualize the motivations used in past research and to modify them in order for them to better fit the motivations that may drive people’s use of SNSs, reflecting how the use of this newly emerging media reinforces or weakens the existing motivations of media use.

Similarly, in the context of SNSs, the motivation of personal identity building may also have a wider meaning. Personal identity motivation refers to people’s “needs to establish a ‘social location’ in relation to others in society” (Garramone, Harris, & Anderson, 1986, pp. 326–7). A study of the motivation for creating user-generated content indicates that in the context of online space, this sort of motivation may be part of the broader notion of “recognition need,” which encompasses needs such as establishing personal identity, gaining respect, building confidence and publicizing one’s expertise (Leung, 2009). Indeed, people are motivated to perform some behaviors when those activities allow them to be valued by their “significant others,” despite the fact that those behaviors may not be inherently interesting (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is also closely related to certain newly identified motivations of new media use such as one-upmanship (Kang et al., 2013) or status seeking (Lee & Ma, 2012).

Summing up all of these similar concepts, “getting recognition” would be one of the key motivations of SNS news use. In particular, considering the presence of the diverse features through which one can directly observe the extent of recognition by other members within SNSs—such as by liking, retweeting, reposting news—and also considering that one can easily post content related to one’s expertise, it is very likely that this “recognition receiving” would be another of the key motivations for SNS use.

Thus, I will investigate the role of four different types of motivations—surveillance, socializing, getting recognition, and entertainment—in identifying the predictors of different types of news processing on SNSs (reading, posting, and endorsing) by proposing the following research question:

#### RQ1:

*How are the four types of motivations for media use (surveillance, socializing, getting recognition, and entertainment) associated with news-related activities on SNSs?*

### 2.2. Effects of media habits: media repertoires

Media attendance theory posits that media habits are another important factor that may affect the degree of media exposure (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). People do not always select which media

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6837820>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6837820>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)