Does Life Satisfaction Influence the Use of Facebook?

Abstract

Several studies have investigated a variety of factors affecting use of social networking sites (SNSs), but the investigation of these factors is still under development. In this study, we aim to contribute to the literature by extending and testing an existent conceptual model in a newer context, with ‘We-Intention’ as the dependent variable, and Life Satisfaction, Subjective Norm, Group Norms, Social Identity, Purposive Value, Self-Discovery, Maintaining Interpersonal Interconnectivity, Social Enhancement, Entertainment Value and Social Presence as the predictor variables. An online survey with Brazilians (n=1111) was conducted. Our structural equation modelling reveals that Life Satisfaction influence on We-Intention is mediated by Subjective Norm, Group Norm, Social Identity, Entertainment Value, and Maintaining Interpersonal Interconnectivity (R-squared value is 0.36). Our findings, while consistent with existing literature in terms of theories, reveal different arrangements among factors influencing Brazilian consumers’ behaviour.

Key words: social networking site, motivation, Life Satisfaction

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1. Introduction

Companies are using SNSs with little knowledge about how and why consumers join these sites. With the growth of SNSs, is essential for any company optimize its marketing
strategy in social media (Souza, 2013), and understand the motivations of consumers to use SNS is therefore important (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). It has been proven that the need of communication motivates the use of SNS such as Facebook (Ross, Orr, Sisic, Arseneault, Simmering, & Orr, 2009).

From a behavioural perspective there are two types of factors affecting consumer decisions (Anderson & Kleiner, 1995): psychological (i.e. personality, perception, attitudes, motivation and learning) and sociological (i.e. socio-economic class, ethnic groupings, family and peer groups). A variety of variables have been studied (i.e. age, gender, personality and utility) in prior studies about SNS use, nevertheless, there are other theories that could be useful to explain use of SNSs (Cheung et al., 2011). Therefore, in this paper, we aim to explain some psychological and sociological factors affecting the intention for using SNSs by people in Brazil. For this purpose, we use four theories: Life Satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffins, 1985), Uses and Gratifications (Katz, 1959), Social Influence (Kelman, 1958), Social Presence (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976b).

The particular social character of Facebook (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), and lack of studies on the use of SNSs in other environments, outside Asia and North America (Cho & Park, 2013) emphasize the relevance of the proposed objective: to analyse the factors psychological and sociological as motivators for using Facebook in Brazil. In this study, a survey was conducted using part of the proposed model by Dholakia et al. (2004) for Virtual Communities in the United States, then extended and tested by Cheung et al. (2011) for a SNS in Hong Kong. The focus of the research was on Facebook and Brazilians. We extend those models, including Life Satisfaction as independent variable to explain participation in this social network.

2 Psychological and sociological factors to Use of Social Network Sites
Factors affecting consumer’s behaviour and intentions regarding SNSs there are: i) demographics, such as age, gender and, income; ii) SNSs characteristics, such as utility, connectivity, security, trust, privacy and network externalities; iii) psychological, such as personality, mental health, need for cognition, satisfaction with life, internal and external motivations, uses and gratification factors, involvement and self-esteem; and iv) sociological, such as social influence factors, social connectivity; social presence, networking and social capital.

There is only one study simultaneously studying variables related to Social Influence, Uses and Gratifications and Social Presence Theories, to explain the intention for using SNSs (i.e. Cheung et al., 2011). These authors constructed they model based on Dholakia et al. (2004), which focus on Uses and Gratifications and Social Influence as determinants to virtual communities’ participation. The variables of the study of Dholakia et al. (2004) explained 54% of its dependent variable. Following this research model, Cheung et al. (2011) proposed a similar study including also Social Presence variables as motivations to use Facebook. They found that only 28% of the variance on dependent variable was explained, less than expected. Despite the differences between the models were tenuous (inclusion of variables related to Social Presence in the second study) the explanatory power of the model felt considerably (from 54 to 28%). A replication of the Cheung’s el al (2011) model in Brazil (Oliveira, Huertas and Lin, 2013) found that 42% of the variance on dependent variable was explained, more than the previous study. Pursuing understanding about use of Facebook, we argue that proposed model could improve its explanatory power adding Life Satisfaction as independent variable.

Life satisfaction is considered subjective happiness or personal satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffins, 1985) and is determined in part by the social ties of the individuals (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006). This concept is also associated with interpersonal
communication (Diener & Pavot, 1991). According Chan (2014) empathic social skills (related to social influence factors) are positively related to life satisfaction. Contrary, Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten (2006), point that that actively participates in social networks, like Facebook, is more likely to experience connection, feeling happier. In front of those different positions, the objective of this research is to explain the relations of some psychological (Uses & Gratification and Life Satisfaction), and sociological (Social Influence and Social Presence) factors affecting the intention for using SNSs by people in Brazil.

2. 3 Constructs and variables of the model: development of hypotheses

In this study, the model is an extension of Cheung’s et. al (2011). The constructs included in the model are shown in Figure 2. There are four groups: Social Influence (SI: Social Influence, GN: Group Norm, SN: Subjective Norm), Use & Gratification (SE: Social Environment, SD: Self Discovery, EV: Entertainment Value, MI: Maintaining Interconnectivity Intercultural, PV: Purposive Value), Social Presence (SP) and Life Satisfaction (LS). We-Intention (We-INT) is the dependent variable. The Table 1 present the definition of the variables of our research.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1: Measures of the model</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>We-Intention (INT)</td>
<td>A special kind of intention where those involved intend to perform an action together with other (Tuomela, 1995). Considered subjective happiness or personal satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, &amp; Griffins, 1985) and this satisfaction are determined in part by the social ties of the individuals (Kahneuman &amp; Krueger, 2006).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction (LS)</td>
<td>Represent social influences, which drive the individual behavioural intention (Ashford &amp; Lecroy, 2013). Based on processes of internalization and manifest as values or goals (Eagly &amp; Chaiken, 1993) shared refer to the use of common self-guides to achieve goals and shared by a group of people, because they coincide with their own goals (Dholakia et al., 2004).</td>
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<td>Subjective Norm (SN)</td>
<td>Based on knowledge of belonging to a social group and not to others. In an online environment, the main task of the individual is to find, create and define their place in existing networks (Tajfel, 1982). Informational and instrumental values, derived from performing some predetermined instrumental purpose (including giving or receiving information), through participation in virtual communities (Dholakia et al., 2004).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Norm (GN)</td>
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<td>Social Identity (SI)</td>
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<td>Purposive Value (PV)</td>
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<td>Dimensions of the model</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Discovery (SD)</td>
<td>Understanding and deepening salient aspects of yourself through social interactions, able to help the person to form, clearly define and develop their own preferences, tastes and values (Dholakia et al., 2004).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintaining Interpersonal Interconnectivity (MII)</td>
<td>Social benefits derived from establishing and maintaining contact with other people, such as social support, friendship and intimacy (Dholakia et al., 2004).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Enhancement (SE)</td>
<td>Value that a participant derives gaining acceptance and approval of the other participants, and improve their social status within the community because of your contribution (Dholakia et al., 2004).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment Value (EV)</td>
<td>Associated with fun and relaxation through games or otherwise interact with others (Dholakia et al., 2004). The feeling of being present at a meeting with another person. This can be seen when connecting with others in social situations, because we create a social presence and even a degree of interpersonal contact (Gunawardena &amp; Zittle, 1997).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Presence (SP)</td>
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When two or more participants are involved, the study of behavioural intentions must change its traditional approach (Bagozzi, 2000). This recommendation is valid to study motivations to participate in SNS. For this reason, Bagozzi (2000) considers that philosophical writing on collective intentionality (Gilbert, 1989; Tuomela, 2005) has provided a research opportunity for this issue: the concept *We-Intention*. It would be a special kind of intention where those involved intend to perform an action together with others (Tuomela, 1995).

Specifically about SNWs we assume that the intentions of participants to engage in it are not only individual ones. There are also joint intentions (Tuomela, 2005), since one of the goals of SNS is social interaction. In other words, participate in a SNW is a collective social action (Cheung et al., 2011). For this reason, the dependent variable of the model proposed in this research is ‘*We-Intention*’: a commitment of an individual to participate in a joint action involving an agreement among the other participants, whether implicit or explicit (Dholakia et al., 2004).

Life Satisfaction is related to the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life as a whole favourably (Veenhoven, 1996). This theory has been used to study the Internet and SNS (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). The theory of Life Satisfaction is incorporated in this study with the objective of analyse its relationship specifically with Social...
Influence (Subjective Norm, Group Norm and Social Identity). A marked effect of Life Satisfaction was observed in actions like “shares” and “check in” of Facebook users (Wang, 2013). Consequently, we hypothesized:

**H1:** Life Satisfaction will positively influence Subjective Norm to a higher level of We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

**H2:** Life Satisfaction will positively influence Social Identity to a higher level of We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

**H3:** Life Satisfaction will positively influence Group Norm to a higher level of We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

**H4:** Life Satisfaction will positively influence We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

The theory of social influence explains the influence of others on the individual’s behaviour (Kelman, 1958). This influence occurs through three processes: compliance, identification and internalization. The study by (Dholakia et al., 2004) analysed the key variables of Social Influence: Subjective Norm (compliance), Group Norms (internalization) and Social Identity (identification), for participants in virtual communities. Related to these variables, three hypotheses were formulated.

**H5:** A stronger subjective norm leads to a higher level of We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

**H6:** Stronger group norms lead to a higher level of We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

**H7:** A stronger social identity leads to a higher level of We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

The Uses and Gratifications paradigm (U&G) is also frequently used as to understand consumer motivation and its origin facing media research and access (Dholakia et al., 2004; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). In social networks, people communicate and interact
configuring a communication media. U&G has been used more frequently in recent years to examine the needs and gratifications with the use of online applications such as media (Chen, 2011). Also this theory is widely used to study the reasons for using social networks (Pai & Arnott, 2013; Doty & Dworkin, 2014; Ku, Chen, & Zhang, 2013; Kim, 2014).

To determine the participation in virtual communities (as a communication media), five major needs are taken into consideration on the Uses and Gratifications theory: purposive value, self-discovery, social enhancement, maintaining interpersonal connectivity and entertainment value. Thus, the following hypotheses are:

\[H8: \text{The level of social enhancement (SE) of using SNS positively affects We-Intention to use SNS.}\]

\[H9: \text{The level of self-discovery (SD) of using SNS positively affects We-Intention to use SNS.}\]

\[H10: \text{The level of entertainment value (EV) of using SNS positively affects We-Intention to use SNS.}\]

\[H11: \text{The level of maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity (MII) of using SNS positively affects We-Intention to use SNS.}\]

\[H12: \text{The level of purposive value (PV) of using SNS positively affects We-Intention to use SNS.}\]

Social Presence represents connecting with others in social situations, because it creates social presence and even a degree of interpersonal contact (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). There is variation among different media (i.e. Skype and Social media) and this affects the nature of the interaction and the environment where the individual wishes to communicate with others (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976). Social presence could be responsible to increase the We-Intention to participate in a social network, thus,
**H13:** A higher level of social presence leads to a higher level of We-Intention to participate in an SNS.

Figure 1 shows our model and the formulated hypothesis for this research.

![Research Model](image)

**3. Method**

We employed an online survey to collect empirical data. In developing our questionnaire, we applied the model showed in Figure 2. The SNS focused was Facebook because of its popularity among Brazilians. To reach participants across the country, we chose the largest company that offers openings for students and trainees in the Brazilian market. There are approximately 50 thousand unique users accessing this site daily, and there are about three million young people registered. Soon after the user login on the site, we invite the user to answer our questionnaire voluntarily.

The research was on the website between February 6 and Abril 6, 2014. During this period, we received 1111 responses and all of them were used for data analysis. The average age of the sample was 25.56 years old (SD = 9.93), and respondents aged 14-24 (57.5% of the sample), 25-40 (32.6% of the sample) with the oldest respondent at 63 years. There are more
women than men (68.4%). Respondents are mostly students from both levels of education: 26.5% high school students and 51.1% higher education students.

Data analysis and results

We used PLS-SEM to estimate the conceptual model. We performed the analysis using SmartPLS 2.0 M3 (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005). Following (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011), we computed the t-values using 5000 bootstrap samples to establish the significance value for each path coefficients.

Assessment of the measurement model

We first evaluated the measurement model by examining the item loading, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Most of the item loadings are above the recommended 0.7 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). Few scores lower than 0.7 were removed from further analysis (EV2, LS5, PV1, PV2, PV6, PV7, PV8, PV9, and SP2). All factor loadings are significant, and the composite reliability (CR) exceeds the recommended level of 0.7. Consistent with the guidelines of Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et. al (2011), the average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure are above the recommended level of 0.50 (Table 2).

All the item loadings on their respective construct are greater than their loadings on other constructs. The square roots of the AVE with the latent variable correlations, and the results show good discriminant validity (Table 2): all square roots of the AVEs are greater than the correlations between every pair of latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), supporting the discriminant validity of our scales.

Table 2: Assessment of the measurement model, discriminant validity (intercorrelations) of variable constructs

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<th></th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>EV</th>
<th>GN</th>
<th>INT</th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>MII</th>
<th>PV</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>GN</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.92</td>
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Assessment of the structural model

Table 4 shows the results of the PLS structural model with the estimated path coefficients and the associated t-values of the paths. The model accounts for 36% of the variation in We-Intention to use SNSs, with Life Satisfaction as a predictor variable.

The significant and positive paths are LS->SN (H1), LS->GN (H2), LS->SI (H3), and from SN (H5), GN (H6), EV (H10), MII (H11) to We-Intention. The remaining paths are either insignificant (LS, SD, PV, SP) or not positive (SE). The most significant exogenous variables of We-Intention are Social Identity, followed by Subjective Norm and Group Norms. Life Satisfaction has strong positive effect in all Social Influence variables (Social Identity, Subjective Norm and Group Norms). The figure 2 shows the results of the structural model.
5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the psychological and sociological factors affecting use of a SNS, specifically Facebook. Literature review showed that theory about factors explaining social network use is evolving. In this regard, traditional and well-established theories like Social Influence, Uses & Gratifications, Social Presence and Life Satisfaction had been used to explain intention to participate in social networks.

We evaluated Life Satisfaction and three factors of social influence. All of them were the significant variables explaining we-intention and its explanatory power was improved with Life Satisfaction as predictor variable. With life satisfaction, the effects of social influence factors were stronger. An explanation could rely on the statement “for a community to exist, its members must have a common feeling of to be part of the community” (Weber, 1978). In
this sense, Facebook would be, for Brazilians, more than a SNS (to share data and information), constituting a place in which relationships are established.

Results of our research show that Brazilian Facebook users’ seem to have a special preoccupation about his/her feeling of belonging, and this feeling motivates his/her intention to use the online social network. Social needs are, after the physiological ones, the second category of needs that motivates human behaviour (Foxall, Goldsmith, & Brown, 1998).

Surrounding U&G variables, Maintaining Interpersonal Interconnectivity and Entertainment Value are significant to explain We-Intention. Both factors were also confirmed by Cheung et al. (2011). Reinforcing the characteristic of virtual community of Facebook for Brazilian users, stay in touch, to have something to do with others and entertainment goals motivate the use of the SNS. Online communities on SNS bring together different people with a common goal of sharing knowledge, entertainment and maintain collective dialogues (Kern, Forman, & Gil-Egui, 2013). Additionally, communication and maintaining relationships with peers is one of the most common activities in virtual communities (Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007; Boyd & Ellison, 2008, Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe, 2014).

Purposive Value, Self-Discovery and Social Enhancement were not significant to explain We-intention. However, this results must been seen carefully because there is the possibility of social desirability bias, with responses based not on what the individuals truly believe, but on what they perceive as the social correct answer (Marlowe & Crowne, 1964). This because, all questions related to those constructs focused on possible personal advantages that the individual could obtain using Facebook.

Social presence was also rejected. Results show that individuals in Brazil are more concerned with interconnectivity and entertainment factors, than with only Social Presence. Contrary,
this factor had the strongest impact on We-Intention on Cheung’s et al. (2010) study. The divergence could be explained by cultural differences.

Understanding the motivations of using Facebook is strategic to an organization and avoids the use of wrong practices and decisions that may harm the image and relationship with your target audience. Marketers will soon gain interest in better understanding how the new virtual communities influence choices of its members, perceptions about new products and opportunities as well as collaboration and closer customer relationships (Dholakia et al., 2004). With the results of this research among Brazilians a path may have been demonstrated.

Limitations of the current research is mainly its concentration only on Facebook, thus cannot be generalized to all SNSs. Research on the use of social networks produce insights into predictors of use, user practices and their consequences, and continue to evolve at a rapid pace (Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Whon, 2011). Despite not having been limited to only an educational institution but have participants from all regions of Brazil, the respondents of this survey were, for the most part, similar profile: young and young professionals looking for a job opportunity in the professional market. As a suggestion for future studies, further research could include other groups and verify the impact of different demographic factors and whether there clusters in the sample.

There is still much to be researched on Facebook. This social network brought a new dynamic online relationship, making private relationships into public relations and transforming marketing firms. Currently, an unsatisfied customer has a potentially viral reaction when put a complaint on a social network. Being the most used and widely recognized social network, Facebook (Special & Li-Barber, 2012) remains a challenge for companies interested in maintaining a good relationship with consumers. Therefore, knowing the engine that drives this environment and its dynamics are critical for those seeking a good relationship for the company’s brand and success strategies with this audience.
References


