An Analysis of Factors Influencing the SNS Advertising Effect

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ABSTRACT
This study analyzes the influence of the factors considered by users on their acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising. The influencing factors consist of informativeness, entertainment and sociality. This study thus applies a quantitative research approach using survey data from the users who used SNS. The partial least squares (PLS) results suggest that the model is primarily verified. Theoretically, the findings of this study indicate that factors, including informativeness, entertainment and sociality, are user's three significant motivations for the acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising. Practically, it should help practitioners better satisfy SNS users' needs to enhance their acceptance of SNS advertising. As a result, the SNS advertising effect will be significantly improved.

Keywords: informativeness, entertainment, sociality, the SNS advertising effect

I. INTRODUCTION

Social network services (sometimes known as social networking sites or social media), can be seen as an online network platform that users can use to establish social network-based social relationships with other users who have similar interests, backgrounds, activities or real-world connections [1]. As a kind of new media, the number of users of SNS is increasing dramatically across the globe.

Like traditional mass media, SNS can also be seen as an advertising platform. More and more companies have focused their advertising on SNS (e.g., Facebook, YouTube & WeChat). In order to optimize the advertising effect, the influencing factors of SNS advertising effect should be identified and discussed from a user perspective.

Prior literature indicated how do different factors influence user's attitude toward advertising [2] [3] [4], and acceptance of advertising [5] [6], in many different media forms. However, SNS, as a new type of online media, is undoubtedly unique. The existing research lacks an understanding of what factors considered by users can influence their acceptance intention towards SNS advertising. Therefore, more rigorous research is needed.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising

For the past 50 years, the research target of advertising media has been changing from TV, magazines, etc. to web advertising, mobile advertising. SNS advertising has become a hot topic in the last ten years. Compared to traditional media, online media, including SNS, is more interactive, so it is easier to lead to user's positive responses [7]. Online advertising, including social media, also has the advantages of easy targeting, personalized content and interactivity [8]. In this paper, we believe that the user's attitude towards acceptance and adoption of SNS advertising is primarily influenced by three factors, including the user's perceived informativeness, entertainment and sociality.

B. Factors influencing the acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising

The psychological communication perspective focuses on the user's personal usage and choice, allowing the different user to use the same media for different goals. In other words, media users have their motives to meet their personal needs [9] and select specific media according to their needs and satisfaction. The motive, in this case, is the reason or driving factor for achieving user's desired goals [10].

Previous literature suggests that user's satisfaction obtained from using SNS may affect individual usage and behavior. For example, Xu et al. (2012) argued that

the usage of personal SNS can be predicted by the utilitarian and hedonic satisfaction [9]. Papacharissi & Mendelson (2011) revealed that the common motives for using Facebook are habitual and relaxing entertainment [11]. In addition, in virtual world services, SNS suggests that it can be promoted by three types of benefits, including utilitarian, hedonic and social benefits [12]. Based on the review of previous literature, This study identified three SNS usage motives as factors influencing the acceptance intention towards SNS advertising, including informativeness, entertainment and sociality.

1) Informativeness: The motive for using information is one of the user's primary motives because SNS plays an essential role in accessing, disclosing and sharing information. Lin et al. (2015) suggested that SNS provides users with a faster and more effective way to search for information from friends or official information accounts [13]. Then, users can quickly search for the information they want on SNS, and the problem of not finding the answer in a socially constructed digital network rarely occurs [14].

SNS users seeking information motives actively search, collect, and process external information. They conduct exploratory behavior in a goal-directed manner [15]. Users with this motivation are expected to be triggered by incentives to achieve the goal of procuring goods or services through shopping. Therefore, informational motives cause users to act with rational goal orientation [16]. Informational motives derive the benefits generated from the product or service and allow the user to achieve their goals efficiently [9]. In other words, SNS users who are motivated to use information are aiming to finish tasks efficiently. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the informativeness of SNS as a motive would impact on the attitude towards the acceptance of the SNS advertising, thus:

H1: A more substantial degree of the motivation of SNS informativeness leads to a higher degree of user's attitude towards acceptance the SNS advertising.

2) Entertainment: Entertainment means that when a user finds something that brings pleasure to him/her, he/she is motivated to adopt it. Previous studies have also shown that the pleasure experience of online users, including SNS, is a critical determinant of the acceptance of information systems [17].

Furthermore, a study by Ha & Stoel (2009) found that pleasure experiences affect both the perceived usefulness and attitude of college students towards e-shopping [18]. Prior literature also suggested that pleasure has a significant impact on user loyalty to mobile commerce [19].

Pleasure motivation focuses on the emotional needs of users, considering non-functional benefits such as happiness, fantasy, arousal, sensuality and enjoyment. In other words, SNS users with entertainment motives act with the goal of pleasure experience.

Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the entertainment of SNS as a motive would impact on attitude towards the acceptance of the SNS advertising, thus:

H2: A more substantial degree of the motivation of SNS entertainment leads to a higher degree of user's attitude towards acceptance the SNS advertising.

3) Sociality: Regarding sociality, based on Stafford & Stafford (2004), online social satisfaction mainly refers to online users' interpersonal communication [20]. SNS can help both maintain existing social connections and form new ones [21]. This means users can maintain online and offline relationships and meet new friends through social interactions on social media. Besides, SNS can communicate with others, maintain relationships, and strengthen social relationships beyond the limits of region and time. Such sociality is a crucial motivational factor in encouraging users to engage in the usage of SNS [22]. Therefore, it is conceivable that social motives require mutual communication between SNS users and others.

Chen & Qi (2015) found that strong social interactions could help users form emotional responses to their communities by increasing user satisfaction and community attribution [23]. Therefore, if users are satisfied with the SNS network, strong emotions for the community will be formed, and social motives will become more functional. It is also speculated that the more social relationships users seek, the more they want to strengthen their relationships with others [24]. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the sociality of SNS as a motive would impact on attitude towards the acceptance of the SNS advertising, thus:

H3: A more substantial degree of the motivation of SNS sociality leads to a higher degree of user's attitude towards acceptance the SNS advertising.

Therefore, the research model in this study is as follows. This model consists of four variables. The dependent variable is the attitude towards the acceptance of the SNS advertising, and the independent variables are its three influencing factors (informativeness, entertainment and sociality).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The data used for the analysis was obtained from a questionnaire survey of current SNS users in China. 7-point Likert scales were adopted to measure the questionnaire items. The scales in this paper were adapted from prior research (Informativeness [25];

Entertainment [25]; Sociality [25]; Acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising [4]) and adjusted to the current study. Partial least squares (PLS) was applied for data analysis using SmartPLS 3.0. PLS is proper for this study; it focuses on all path coefficients and focuses on variance explained [26].

IV. RESULTS

A. Measurement model

"Table I" shows the loadings and cross loadings of the measurement model. Factor loadings indicate that each item reaches the minimum requirement whereby a loading must be greater than 0.70.

TABLE I.   PLS LOADINGS AND CROSS-LOADINGS

	ATU	ENT	INF	SCI
ATU1	0.924	0.309	0.334	0.324
ATU2	0.944	0.317	0.348	0.322
ATU3	0.914	0.267	0.320	0.262
ATU4	0.869	0.327	0.308	0.249

	ATU	ENT	INF	SCI
ENT1	0.345	0.936	0.464	0.476
ENT2	0.328	0.965	0.464	0.430
ENT3	0.266	0.938	0.483	0.416
INF1	0.262	0.432	0.781	0.350
INF2	0.260	0.383	0.853	0.258
INF3	0.292	0.403	0.868	0.298
INF4	0.320	0.461	0.903	0.346
INF5	0.368	0.423	0.838	0.344
SCI1	0.283	0.423	0.376	0.877
SCI2	0.272	0.392	0.281	0.865

Discriminant validity is considered in two steps. First, the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion is used to test whether the square root of a construct's AVE is higher than the correlations between it and any other construct within the model [27]. Second, the factor loading of an item on its associated construct should be greater than the loading of another non-construct item on that construct. In addition, internal consistency was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha. "Table II" shows the construct reliability and validity.

TABLE II.   CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	ATU	ENT	INF	SCI
ATU	0.834	0.933	0.913			
ENT	0.896	0.942	0.335	0.946		
INF	0.722	0.904	0.359	0.496	0.850	
SCI	0.759	0.682	0.319	0.468	0.378	0.871

B. Structural model and hypothesis testing

Since the evaluation of the measurement model in section A provides enough proof of validity and reliability, the structural model in this section B is examined to evaluate the hypothesized relationships among the variables of this study [28].

Falk and Miller (1992) recommended that R2 values should be equal to or greater than 0.10 for the variance explained of a particular endogenous construct to be deemed adequate [29]. Consequently, the model explains 18% of the variance for acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising. This provides sufficient explanation for the endogenous latent variables in the model.

The estimated path coefficients for the hypothesized relationships among constructs and their significance are demonstrated in "Table III". As shown in the table, all three hypothesized relationships are supported.

TABLE III.   HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The hypotheses	Path coefficients	P values	Support
H1: INF-ATU	0.225	***	Yes
H2: ENT-ATU	0.146	*	Yes
H3: SCI-ATU	0.165	**	Yes

a. ***:p< 0.001,**:p< 0.01,*:p< 0.05.

Like H1, H2 and H3 predict, the study found significant positive impacts of informativeness on acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising (β=0.225, $p < 0.001$); entertainment on acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising (β=0.146, $p < 0.05$); and sociality on acceptance attitude towards SNS advertising (β=0.165, $p < 0.01$).

V. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the formation of users' attitude towards acceptance of the SNS advertising, is not the result of the linear effect of a single factor, but

the result of the interaction of three factors, including informativeness, entertainment and sociality.

The informativeness attribute has a significant positive impact on users' attitude towards acceptance of the SNS advertising. The more sufficient information provided by SNS, the more effective it can satisfy the information needs of users. The greater the value of this information to users, the more convenient it is for users to timely understand the new consumption information, and the more positive the attitude of users towards SNS advertising will be. With a positive attitude towards advertising, users will be more receptive to advertisements with sufficient information, to ensure the advertising effect.

Entertainment attribute has a significant positive impact on users' attitude towards acceptance of the SNS advertising. The more entertaining content SNS provides, the more entertaining and interesting the users perceive in the process of reading or watching advertisements. Users will feel relaxed and happy, and their positive emotion will be transformed into acceptance of advertisements, thus ensuring the advertising effect.

Sociality attributes have a significant positive impact on users' attitude towards the acceptance of SNS advertising. As a social network platform, the stronger the sociality attribute of SNS, the more effective it can meet the social needs of users, and the more positive the attitude of users to SNS advertising. For example, the vast majority of users believe that advertisements shared by friends, will also watch advertisements recommended by friends, which reflects the importance of interpersonal relationships in the real world on the SNS platform. With a positive user attitude, users will actively participate in the activities launched by the business in the advertisements, and thus make relevant sharing, comments and recommendations.

This study enables an in-depth understanding of the influencing factors (informativeness, entertainment and sociality) for users' attitude towards SNS advertising acceptance. Based on this study, SNS platform managers and SNS advertising practitioners can achieve accurate positioning in the advertising planning stage, better satisfy the users' needs in the advertising design stage. As a result, the SNS advertising effect can be improved.

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