

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE VALUE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN TWO NATIONS

Tao (Eric) Hu, David Nazarian College of Business & Economics, California State University at Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8372, 818-677-4012

eric.hu@csun.edu

Yue (Jeff) Zhang, David Nazarian College of Business & Economics, California State University at Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8372, 818-677-6050

jeff.zhang@csun.edu

Richard Ye, David Nazarian College of Business & Economics, California State University at Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8372, 818-677-3461

richard.ye@csun.edu

David Liu, David Nazarian College of Business & Economics, California State University at Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8372, 818-677-7435

david.liu@csun.edu

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The wide popularity and rapid growth of social media have opened a new arena for business practice and grand opportunities for Information Systems (IS) research. For the past years, IS research has examined value assessment of IS usage in general (e.g., Kim et al., 2007), and social media in particular (e.g., Hu et al., 2015). Associatively, China and the United States (US) represent the two largest population bodies of social media use. The two nations illustrate a very high level of cultural differences (Hofstede, 1991, 2001; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2011; House et al., 2004). While the national culture theory generally suggests that culture directly and/or indirectly affects individuals' experience and behavior of social media use, our knowledge of how culture influences the usage process remains fragmented (Leidner and Kayworth, 2006; Kappos and Rivard, 2008). In this regard, the literature gap has been identified (Kappos and Rivard, 2008), and research questions have yet to be systematically investigated in a cross-cultural manner, such as (1) are there cross-cultural differences in value assessment of social media use in China and the US? And, (2) how do different cultural dimensions moderate the effects of benefits and cost factors on individuals' value assessment of social media use in the two nations?

To approach the research questions, the present study proposes a research framework to examine how cultural differences in China and the US affect individuals' value assessment of social media use in the two nations. The research framework is largely grounded upon the customer value perspective of the service marketing literature (e.g., Grönroos, 2000; Zeithaml, 1988) to theorize a set of cognitive and perceptual factors (e.g., relational, informational, entertaining, cybersecurity, and time and effort) that drive individuals to balance and trade-off benefits against costs for social media use to form value assessment of the use. Furthermore, the framework integrates major cultural dimensions of the national culture theory (e.g., assertiveness, context-culture, individualism/collectivism, long-/short-term orientation, masculinity/femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance. Hall, 1990; Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2011; House et al., 2004; Kim et al., 1998) to examine how the cultural dimensions

moderate the strength and magnitude of the cognitive and perceptual factors influencing value assessment of social media use.

For research methodology, the field survey will be used for data collection. The survey instrument will be developed following standard procedures of the measurement construction and operationalization in established IS research. Measurement scales will be adopted mostly from prior empirically validated studies and adapted to the specific context of social media. The survey attempts to capture respondents' opinions and perceptions of social media use. Two sets of the survey with the same questionnaires but in English and Chinese, respectively, will be hosted online and distributed to randomly selected social media users in both nations. Given the survey will be conducted at the individual level, demographics data regarding individuals' cultural background such as age, education, gender, nationality, native language, and birth place will be collected along with the duration, intensity, and frequency that respondents report in using social media. The statistical analysis of the Structural Equation Modelling based Component Partial Least Squares (SEM-Based PLS) will be performed on the survey data to empirically test both measurement and structural models.

It is our hope that this comparative study shall make significant contributions to IS usage literature through integrating and extending both value perspective and cultural dimensions into the specific context of social media across user populations of China and the U.S. For IS practice, the empirical findings of the research are expected to bear important implications in improving service effectiveness and retaining a critical mass of active users of social media for multinational corporation, marketing extension, business innovations, and customer relationship management.

Keywords: Value Assessment; Cultural Dimensions; Social Media; China; US

References available upon request from the authors.