

The Factors Affecting Online Social Networks Using Behaviors of High school Students in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to study the endogenous and exogenous factors that had a direct effect on online social networks using behaviors of high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province, Thailand. The endogenous factors include ideas about themselves or self-concept and their attitudes toward online social networks whereas the exogenous factors include reference groups and social values. Questionnaires were administered to 320 samples in data collection from high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima who showed the habit of using online social networking on Facebook. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics to report percentages, means, standard deviations and multiple regression. The results of the study showed that endogenous and exogenous factors affected the behavior of high school students in using the online social network, social values had the greatest influence on the behavior of using online social network ($\beta= 0.263$), followed by the factors of reference group ($\beta= 0.180$); attitudes toward online social network ($\beta= 0.176$); and self-concept ($\beta= 0.138$), respectively, at a statistically significant level of 0.01. It was also found that using the online social network, Facebook, for entertainment and building relationships with others was the greatest influence resulting from their social values. In addition, it was found that using social network to find information and the promotion of products and services was the greatest influence resulting from the reference group.

Keywords: online social network, Facebook, using behavior, endogenous factors, exogenous factors

1. Introduction

In information society, the consumption of information through a variety of channels tend to increase more and more every year, especially, the communication

via Internet. Statistics from Markingchart.com in December 2010 shows that by the rate of use of online social networks, the most popular social network is Facebook, which currently has the 1.23 billion users worldwide (Smith, Online, 2014) and in Thailand there were 28 million people (Zocial Inc, Online, 2014).

The survey of the Internet user behaviors in Thailand conducted by The Office of Electronic Business Development (2014) indicated that the average internet users spent 50.4 hours per week, or 7.2 hours per day. In Thailand, people use Facebook as a social network the most. However, the use of online social networks also has a negative impact, such as too much stimulated environment, too much information, a decrease in spending time with friends and family members affecting their face to face relationship, and flow of non-factual information and misuse or abuse of the media leading to victims of misinformation on the use of personal communication today. So, social media users, especially young generation, aged between 16-19 years who want to decide their own future, must be very careful (Children and Adolescent Psychiatric Society of Thailand, Online, 2014).

The late teens or adolescents tend to have their own ideas or self-concept, and want to be accepted in the society. So, such changes create several problems for teenagers. Bureau of Counseling, Department of Health, found that teenagers aged 15-24 years often have mental health problems, such as smoking, sex, resulting from family pressure, peer influence, economic problem. Based on their Theory of Reasoned Action, Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) explained the attitudes and norms of a reference group of individuals contributing to such behavior. The attitude factor is related to the endogenous factor of consumers such as thinking about themselves or self-concept (Blomfield Neira, Bonnie, & Barber, 2014), and attitudes toward online social networks (Kraichumpone, Online, 2013; Juntanasupaporn, 2011; Rosado-Feger & Bhutta, 2013).

However, the normative factor of the reference group was related to the study of the exogenous factors of the consumer reference group (Tansuwannon, Wongpinpech, & Leesattrupa, 2010; Rattanapreedagul, 2011) and social values (Klamklomjit, 2004; Kongrat, 2011), were related to the study of the endogenous and exogenous factors of such individuals leading to consumer behaviors in order to focus on the four areas of benefits: Functional Benefit, Social Psychological Benefit, Hedonic Benefit, and Monetary Benefit (Kang, Tang, & Fiore, 2014).

Given the significance of the problem that led to the study of factors affecting the use of online social networks, the researcher applied the Theory of Reasoned Action by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) and Kang et al. (2014) as a conceptual framework for the present study. Results of the study would yield factual information about the

impact of such factors on high school students using behavior of online social networks, to better understand their using behavior of online social networks. Such information can be used for communicating with the target audiences who are high school students.

2. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research on the factors that affect the use of online social networks of high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province were put forward as follows:

2.1 To study the endogenous factors, such as self-concept and attitudes towards online social networks that influence the behavior of using social networks of high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province.

2.2 To study the exogenous factors, such as reference group and social values that influence the behavior of using social networks of high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province.

3. Research Hypotheses

For the purposes of research on the factors that affect the use of online social networks by high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

3.1 Levels of opinions of high school students toward endogenous factors such as self-concept and attitudes towards online social networking have a direct effect on their behavior in using social networks to find information, products or services, build relationships with others, for entertainment and access to the promotion of products or service.

3.2 Levels of opinions of high school students toward exogenous factors such as the reference group and social values have a direct effect on their behavior in using social networks to find information, products or services, building relationships with others, for entertainment and access to the promotion of products or service.

4. Concepts, Theories and Related Research

4.1 Concept of Facebook as Social Network

Social network is a website that connects people to communicate with each other and know each other over the Internet that provides the space and a variety of tools to facilitate the creation of the content and networks based on their diverse interest and perspectives (Charungjirakiat, Online, 2012). Besides, Facebook has also been used as a way of doing business, currently, there are many social networks, but

the most popular of all is Facebook, having 1.23 billion users worldwide (Smith, Online, 2014). In Thailand, Facebook has 28 million users (Zocial Inc., Online, 2014).

4.2 Theory of Reasoned Action

Fishbein & Ajzen explained that the intention of behavior is based on a set of two determinants: attitude toward the behavior, which is the positive and negative evaluations of the action; and social factor or reference group close to and has a direct influence on that person whereby the person's behavior is determined by his attitude toward the behavior, or determined by the influence of the reference group of such behavior. The importance of these two factors may vary according to the individual (Wilkie, 1990).

Therefore, the attitude and reference group have a significant influence on the behavior of individuals. It can then be explained that the consumer behavior originates from endogenous factors, which are psychological associated with the personal characteristics of consumers, such as needs, perceptions, motivations, expectations, attitudes; and exogenous factors, which are the external environment of the consumers and have influence on the consumer behaviors, such as the reference group, culture, social norms (Kaewthep, 1998; Samitthikrai, 2010).

This study examined endogenous factors of the individual including self-concept and attitudes toward online social networks. The most important related study was conducted by Blomfield Neira et al. (2014) who studied the use of online social networks of teenagers from high schools across Western Australia and found that the social self-concept is linked to the behavior of using social networks. There are also several other studies which reported that attitudes affected the behavior of using social networks (Kraichumpone, Online, 2013; Juntanasupaporn, 2011; Rosado-Feger & Bhutta, 2013). But from the study of exogenous factors that consisted of a reference group and social values, it was found that family and group variables were associated with the behavior of adolescents (Klamklomjit, 2004; Tansuwannon et al, 2010).

In addition, Kongrat (2011) found that the behavior that made adolescents addicted to the use of online social networks was a result of the social influence and the current popular trends. According to the study by Rattanapreedagul (2011), it was found that attitudes and norms of the reference groups exercised the influence on the consumers' buying behavior of goods and services online, with the statistical significance of 0.05. Thus, the study of endogenous and exogenous factors of individuals will bring the consumers to the Four Benefits: Functional Benefit, Social Psychological Benefit, Hedonic Benefit, and Monetary Benefit (Kang et al., 2014). Based on these concepts, theories, and related research studies, the conceptual

framework of the present research was formulated as shown in Figure 1.

4.3 Conceptual Framework

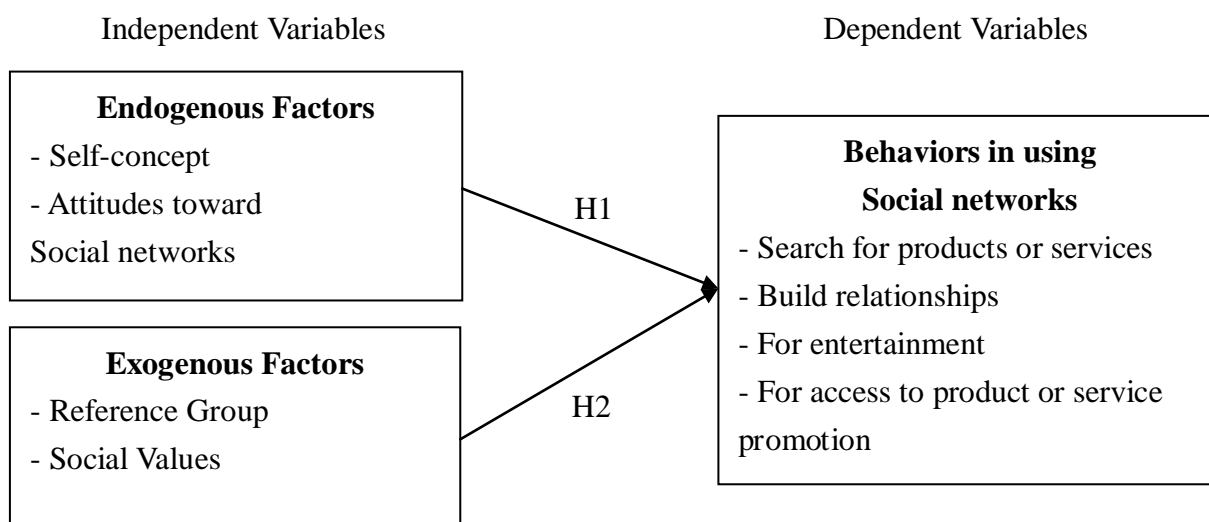


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted from Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) and Conceptual Framework of Kang, Tang & Fiore (2014).

5. Research Methods

This research is quantitative in the form of survey research. The questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of high school students, aged 16-19 years in Nakhon Ratchasima province. According to Statistical Office of Nakhon Ratchasima (2013), there were 39,535 high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province, the size of the sample was determined by using a readymade Table of Yamane (1967) at a confidence level of 95% and deviation of 5% from a sample of 314 students. Thus, to prevent the problem of incomplete data, 320 students were collected the data from, using random sampling based on Probability Sampling, Stratified Random Sampling, divided by classes of high school students, Grades 10-12, the questionnaire approved in validity by 3 experts, and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.

Reliability measurement of the questionnaire showed that the coefficient of reliability of each factor was not less than 0.7. So, it can be concluded that the tools used in this study were appropriate and reliable. The data were analyzed by Descriptive Statistic, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, Inferential Statistics and Multiple Regression.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Results

Most of the samples were female, 62.8 %, aged 16-17 years, and 83.7 % studying in Grades 4-6 in almost equal amounts, with monthly income of less than 3,000 Baht, 65 %. Results of analysis showed that with regard to the endogenous factors related to self-concept, the samples agreed to disclose or share only good stories of their own on Facebook, at a 'Much' level, with the mean of 3.49; in terms of their attitudes towards social networking, the samples agreed that the use of Facebook was a part of life, also at a 'Much' level, with the mean of 3.76. As for the exogenous factors related to the reference group, it was found that the samples agreed that friends or peer group had influence on the use of Facebook, at a 'Much' level, with the mean of 3.72; and for social values, it was found that the samples agreed that Facebook allowed the sharing of experiences, at a 'Much' level, with the mean of 3.84. The samples showed the behavior in using online social networks for entertainment and building relationships with others, also at a 'Much' level, with the mean of 3.94 and 3.68, respectively; and for information on products and services, and access to their promotions, at a 'Medium' level, with the mean of 3.32 and 3.01, respectively.

Table 1 Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Endogenous and Exogenous Factors Affecting Behaviors in Using Online Social Networks

Behaviors	Endogenous Factors		Exogenous Factors	
	Self-concept (β)	Attitudes toward Social Media (β)	Reference Group (β)	Social Values (β)
Product and Service Information	-	.201**	.276**	-
Adj R ² = .156, F = 30.539, Sig. = .000				
Relationships with others	.172**	.265**	-	.265**
Adj R ² = .353, F = 58.900, Sig. = .000				
Entertainment	-	-	-	.543**
Adj R ² = .293, F = 132.936, Sig. = .000				
Access to Promotion	-	.179**	.194**	-
Adj R ² = .092, F = 17.195, Sig. = .000				
Overall Behaviors	.138**	.176**	.180**	.263**
Adj R ² = .366, F = 47.130, Sig. = .000				

** $p < .01$

The hypothesis testing by analyzing the multiple regression of endogenous and exogenous factors related to the behavior of the online social network as a whole showed that the exogenous factors influenced the use of online social networks more than endogenous factors, where the social values influenced the behavior of using the online social network as a whole, at a 'Most' level, with the Coefficient value of .263, followed by the factors of reference group, attitudes toward online social networks, and self-concept, with the coefficient values of .180, .176 and, .138, respectively, at the statistically significant level of .01, and so compatible with the hypothesis.

Besides, when analyzing the multiple regression of endogenous and exogenous factors related to the behaviors of using social networks by high school students by considering the nature of the different behaviors, the outcome is as shown in Table 1.

With regard to the behavior in searching for information about the products and services, it was found that reference group had influence on the behavior of using online social networks to find information, products and services, at a 'Most' level, with the Coefficient value of .276, followed by attitudes towards online social networking, with the Coefficient value of .201, at the statistically significant level of .01. For behaviors in building relationships with others, it was found that attitudes towards online social networking and social values influenced the behavior of using social networks to build relationships with others, at a 'Most' level, with the Coefficient value of .265, followed by self-concept, with the Coefficient value of .172 at a statistically significant level of .01. As for the behavior of seeking entertainment, it was found that social value is the only factor that affected the use of online social networks to seek entertainment, with the Coefficient value of .543, at the statistically significant level of .01. Related to the behavior in accessing the promotion of products and services, it was found that reference group influenced the behavior of using online social networks to access the promotion of goods and most services, at a 'Most' level, with the Coefficient value of .194, followed by attitudes towards online social networking, with the Coefficient value of .179 at the statistically significant level of .01.

6.2 Discussion

The samples, high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province, viewed the use of online social networks on Facebook as part of life in today's society to serve as a channel for revealing good stories of their own, which is the social value that Facebook allows the sharing of experiences, with the peer group influencing the

use of Facebook, and with the main purpose of seeking entertainment, building relationships with others, more than finding the information about products and services, and accessing the promotions of products and services.

Thus, the high school students' behavior of using Facebook's was influenced by both exogenous and endogenous factors (Kaewthep, 1998; Samitthikrai, 2010), which included social values, reference group, attitudes toward social networks, and self-concept, respectively. Majority of students used Facebook for entertainment, which was influenced by or as a result of social values and current popular trends (Kongrat, 2011) whereas the behavior of building relationships with others was influenced by both social values and attitudes towards online social networking. In addition, high school students considered Facebook as a means for sharing experiences, and hence they had a positive attitude toward the use of Facebook as well; they noted that Facebook is part of living and communicating with others. Likewise, their behavior of searching for information and accessing various promotions of goods and services were influenced by the reference group, especially peer group. This is consistent with the study by Rattanapreedagul (2011) who found that the reference group influenced the consumers' buying behavior of goods and services online.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, Facebook using behavior of high school students in Nakhon Ratchasima province placed much emphasis on entertainment and building relationships with others. This was influenced by exogenous factor of social values, and they perceived Facebook social network as a means allowing them to share their experiences. In other words, they preferred to communicate with other people through this channel. However, their behavior of searching for information and accessing various promotions of products and services was significantly influenced by the peer group. Therefore, an entrepreneur or a marketer who wants to offer products and services to the target audiences who are high school students needs to deliver the content that attracts the attention of this group so that they can open up and share the information of products and services on social networks.

However, for further study, there is a need to study the factors that influence the behavior of using online social networks on a wider scale because there are many factors that can affect the use of online social networks, such as personal motivation, personality of the users, types of online social networks, and the content of information, etc. to obtain a clearer and better understanding of the behavior of using the online social network of this group.

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