**Minor thesis topic**: Motives influencing the use of social media behaviours among baby boomer generation in Songkhla province

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**Abstract**

The main purpose of this study is to explore the behaviours of baby boomers generation of social media and the motivations behind these behaviours. Many of the researches done on consumer online behaviour have focused on the motivation to use or not to use with very few focusing the interaction between motivation and behaviour of social media users. This study therefore examined the motives influencing the behaviours of the use of social media of generation Baby Boomers. The social media behaviours were categorized based on previous study into consuming, participating and producing behaviour while the motivations were categorized into information, entertainment and social connection motives. Quantitative research method was used by administering questionnaire to 411 Baby Boomers in Songkhla province of Thailand. The data was analysed with descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis.

The result from this study showed that the most common motivation for using social media by Baby Boomers is the entertainment motive and the most common social media behaviour is the consuming behaviour. The multiple regression analysis results showed that consuming behaviour on social media by Baby Boomers is influenced by entertainment and social connection motives. Participation behaviour on social media by Baby Boomers is influenced by social connection motive. The production behaviour on social media by Baby Boomers is influenced information, entertainment and social connection motives.

**Problem statement**

The prevalent of internet users has led to an increase in consumer activity on social media. According to Stewart and Pavlou (2002), the social media interaction has empowered consumers and changed their role from being passive recipients of information to active generators of information. Consumers are taking part in a variety of activities ranging from consuming content, participating in discussions, and sharing knowledge with other consumers to contributing to other consumers’ activities (Heinonen, 2011). This active consumer behavior is changing the media and marketing landscape as consumers are invading companies’ marketing sphere (Berthon, Pitt & Campbell, 2008). Consumers are actively contributing to marketing content through their user-generated content on social media like Facebook, Line, Youtube and others. Hence, the need for marketing companies and indeed all companies who must do marketing of their product to understand the changing behaviour of consumers in order to create mutual benefit from the use of social media (Heinonen, 2011).

Researches on consumer activity in social media and on user-generated content have examined the motivations for using or not using social media (Baker & White, 2011; Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Shao, 2009). It has been proposed that consumers are either active as posters or contributors or passive as onlookers or consumers of content (Shang, Chen & Liao, 2006; Shao, 2009; Schlosser, 2005). In an online brand community context, practice oriented research has focused on describing the practices related to brand communities (Schau, Muñiz Jr, & Arnould 2009). However, there are few existing researches with detailed investigation of the different levels of activities consumers engage in (Heinonen, 2011). Heinonen (2011) further stated that understanding the consumer motives for engaging in social media will provide insight into consumer’s activities. Much of these researches however, have been done aggregately on all types of consumers or with focus on the young generation because of they are known to be actively involved in the social media. For instance, according to the results of the survey of Internet users behaviour in Thailand in 2017 by the Office of Electronic Transaction Development (Public Organization), Internet usage for Gen Y (born 1977-1995) is as high as 53.2 hours per week, while Gen X (born in 1965-1976), Gen Z (born 1996- 2012 and onward) and Baby Boomers (born in 1946-1964) average internet usage were 44.3, 40.2 and 31.8 hours per week, respectively.

Baby boomers seem to be least users of internet and social media. This is understandably so because the huge rise of social media occurred when Baby Boomers already turned adult and they are used to the way things are when they were teenagers, causing some of them get stuck in between the old form and new form of communication.

Little attention, however, has been placed on understanding the activities of baby boomers generation on the social media. Much of the researches done to understand consumer behaviour on social media has been done on all generations with no special attention paid to the Baby Boomers (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011; Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström, 2012; Heinonen, 2011; Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008; Shao 2009; Sashi, 2012). This research therefore attempts to understand to the behaviour or activities of baby boomers generation of social media and the motivations behind these activities or behaviours.

**Significance of the Study**

This study aims to provide understanding into the behaviour of baby boomers on social media. As Thailand is gradually becoming ageing society due to the increase in the percentage of baby boomers, it is important to note that this generation will be dependent on the other generations in the upcoming future. Hence, understanding their social media behaviour and the motivation for this behaviour will give insight into how to support the baby boomers.

Understanding the social media behaviour and motivation of baby boomers will also help business on how to design their products and market them for these set of increasing customers.

**Research objectives**

1.5.1 To study the behavior of using online social media by Baby Boomers generation in Songkhla province.

1.5.2 To study the motivation for using social media of Baby Boomers generation in Songkhla province.

1.5.3 To examine the association between the motives and behaviour of using social media by Baby Boomers generation in Songkhla province

**Literature review**

Shao (2009) and Heinonen (2011) summarized or grouped the activities of consumers on social media to three activities based on the level of contribution to social media namely; consumption, production and participation. Consumption is when users of social media only consume the social media content like read the news, gist and gossips. Production is when users generate content for social media like post pictures and post news and experiences. Participation is when users of the social media contribute to the content of social media through reviews, likes and other forms of participation. Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) referred to these social media behaviour as consuming, contributing and creating. Although the nomenclature is different from Shao (2009) and Heinonen (2011), the meaning and measurement is very similar.

Consuming behaviour is the least possible behaviour on social media. Heinonen (2011) also found out that consumers are mostly consuming the content of online social media using a sample of 285 young respondents.

Heinonen (2011) classify the activities based on consumer input and consumer motives. Consumer input refers principally the consumption and participation, and barely to production. Further, the motives that incite consumers to visit social media networks are: information, entertainment and social connection (Heinonen, 2011). This classification is based on the motivation behind the activity.

Information Motives: This group include activities such as: acquire information about products or download content, gather information from more formal user-generated sources, share information and access to knowledge online, such as opinions and comments; follow current news from all over the world and use knowledge for personal benefits, such as processing content or exchanging products.

Entertainment Motives: Heinonen, (2011) declares that consumers in social media develop four different types of entertainment activities: escaping the real world and relaxing, looking for inspiration and encouragement, enjoying oneself online and self-expression which include self-articulation and self-promotion.

Social Connection Motives: Finally, related to social connection activities, Heinonen (2011) identify that users develop the following activities in social media: learning about friends and acquaintances, sharing and experiencing with others, connecting with people, knowing what is happening in one’s own community, keeping up relationships within one’s own network and creating and managing a social network of friends and acquaintances.

Shao (2009) explained that the three groups of activities discussed above are interrelated and may show the path for users of social media. He stated that users of social media usually start as consumers of the content and they graduate to participating in the social media content and may graduate to producers of the social media content. Shao (2009) further explained that each group of activity is motivated by different needs.

**Methodology**

Researcher used convenient sampling method to collect data by using the questionnaire. Data were collected from Baby Boomers generation in Songkhla province. The researcher collected information in places such as universities, government centres, department stores, etc.

All questionnaires were analysed using statistical software. The statistics were based on the following characteristics:

Part 1 analysed the general data of the respondents.

Dodge (2006) descriptive statistics aim to summarize a sample, rather than use the data to learn about the population that the sample of data is thought to represent. This generally means that descriptive statistics, unlike inferential statistics, are not developed on the basis of probability theory. In this study, descriptive statistics has been used in analysing data based on frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Part 2 compared the motivations for using online social media of Baby Boomers generation in Songkhla province and their social behaviours.

Jason, and Glenwick (2016) stated that the objective of quantitative analysis was to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena. The data obtained were therefore analysed by using statistical software called IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) 21st version. The SPSS was used to analyse all data including reliability test, descriptive analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The first and second hypotheses were analysed with descriptive statistics in the categories of behaviour and motivations while the third hypothesis was analysed with multiple linear regression.

**Results**

**Motives for using Social media**

Entertainment motive has the highest mean score among the three motives for using social media with (x̄= 4.70, S.D. 0.31). This is followed by Information motive with (x̄= 4.66, S.D. 0.30), and then social connection motive (x̄= 3.95, S.D. 0.34). This shows that entertainment motive is the most common reason or motivation for using social media among generation Baby Boomer in Songkhla province of Thailand.

**Social media behaviour**

Consuming behaviour has the highest mean score (x̄= 4.39, S.D. 0.33) followed by participating behaviour (x̄= 4.01, S.D. 0.41) and lastly producing behaviour (x̄= 3.85, S.D. 0.58). This shows that consuming behaviour is the most common social media behaviour of generation Baby Boomer in Songkhla province of Thailand.

**Regression Analysis**

To test the relationship between the motives and the behaviour on social media, this study used multiple regression analysis. The result of the multiple regression is presented in this section. The motives are regressed on the three previously identified social media behaviours which are Consuming behaviour, Participating behaviour, and Producing behaviour.

**Motives and consuming behaviour**

The multiple regression result of motives and consuming behaviour is presented in the table 1 below:

*Table 1 Regression analysis of Consuming behaviour*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Independent variables** | **Standardized regression coefficients** | ***t*** | **VIF** | **Tolerance** |
| Information Motive | -0.04 | -0.75 | 1.14 | 0.87 |
| Entertainment Motive | 0.10\* | 1.99 | 1.13 | 0.88 |
| Social Connection Motive | 0.35\*\*\* | 7.44 | 1.01 | 0.98 |
| R2 | 0.14 |  |  |  |
| F | 22.02\*\*\* |  |  |  |
| \**p* < 0.05, \*\*\**p* < 0.001. | | | | |

The result of the multiple regression shows that out of the three motives, entertainment and social connection motives have positive and statistically significant effect on consuming behaviour on social media. The social connection motive has a stronger effect on consuming behaviour (*β* = 0.35, *p* < 0.001) than the entertainment motive (*β* = 0.10, *p* < 0.05). The information motive has no statistically significant effect on consuming behaviour. These variables are able to predict 14% of the variance in consuming behaviour. Additionally the VIF and the tolerance show that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), tolerance value that is more than 0.10 and VIF value lower than 10 indicate that there is no multicollinearity.

**Motives and Participating Behaviour**

The three motives were regressed on participating behaviour and the result is presented in the table below:

*Table 2 Regression Analysis for Participating Behaviour*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Independent variables** | **Standardized regression coefficients** | ***t*** | **VIF** | **Tolerance** |
| Information Motive | 0.06 | 1.18 | 1.14 | 0.87 |
| Entertainment Motive | 0.07 | 1.54 | 1.13 | 0.88 |
| Social Connection Motive | 0.43\*\*\* | 9.55 | 1.01 | 0.98 |
| R2 | 0.19 |  |  |  |
| F | 29.87\*\*\* |  |  |  |
| \*\*\**p* < 0.001. | | | | |

From the table 2 above, the result of the multiple regression shows that only social connection motive has a statistically significant effect on participation behaviour (*β* = 0.43, *p* < 0.001). The information and entertainment motives have no statistically significant effect on participating behaviour. The regression model is able to predict 19% of the variation in participating behaviour.

**Motives and Producing Behaviour**

The three motives were also regressed on the producing behaviour and the result of the multiple regression is presented below:

*Table 3 Regression Analysis for Producing Behaviour*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Independent variables** | **Standardized regression coefficients** | ***t*** | **VIF** | **Tolerance** |
| Information Motive | 0.10\* | 2.06 | 1.14 | 0.87 |
| Entertainment Motive | 0.19\*\*\* | 4.15 | 1.13 | 0.88 |
| Social Connection Motive | 0.38\*\*\* | 8.36 | 1.01 | 0.98 |
| R2 | 0.18 |  |  |  |
| F | 31.61\*\*\* |  |  |  |
| \**p* < 0.05, \*\*\**p* < 0.001. | | | | |

From the table 3 above the result of the multiple regression shows that all the three motives have statistically significant effect on producing behaviour. The social connection motive has the strongest effect on producing behaviour (*β* = 0.38, *p* < 0.001), followed by entertainment motive (*β* = 0.19, *p* < 0.001) and information motive has the least effect on producing behaviour (*β* = 0.10, *p* < 0.05). These independent variables are able to predict the 18% of the variation in producing behaviour.

**Conclusion**

This study has obtained data from the Baby Boomers in Songklha province of Thailand to provide in-depth understanding of the behaviour of Baby Boomers on social media and the motivation for such behaviours. It has also tested if there is any relationship between the motivation and behaviour of Baby Boomers on social media. It can be concluded that entertainment and social connection motives have effect of consuming behaviour. Social connection motive also have effect on participating behaviour and all the three motives of information, entertainment and social connection motives have effect on producing behaviour.

**Practical Implication of Findings**

The practical implication from these findings is that companies looking for different level of social media activities of consuming, participating and producing behaviours can know how to stimulate such by creating social media contents that satisfy different motives. Companies looking for consuming behaviour from Baby Boomers should focus on creating social media content that satisfy entertainment and social connection needs of Baby Boomers. This can be done by creating entertaining online content and enabling interaction among the users of the company’s product. For example creating an online brand community where the users of the company’s product can interact through chat.

Companies looking for participating behaviour from Baby Boomers should focus on creating social media content that satisfy social connection need of Baby Boomers. This can be done by creating real time reviews and supporting interaction that reveals the company’s image online. Finally companies looking for producing behaviour from Baby Boomers should focus on creating social media content that satisfy information, entertainment and social connection needs of Baby Boomers. This can be achieved by providing daily facilitation tools, entertaining content, inviting customers in development of new offerings and enabling new social connections among the company’s brand community.

**Limitations**

This study is not without limitation. The first limitation is the bias that may occur due to the use of questionnaire as the respondent might answer inaccurately based on their thought. The questionnaire also may not be able to reveal hidden motivation as the questions are based on preconceptions (Muntinga et al., 2011; Tadajewski, 2006). Secondly, this study focuses on three classification of social media behaviour as observed in the literature and this may three behaviours may not be able to describe all the social media behaviours of Baby Boomers in Songklha province Thailand.

**Recommendation for future study**

Based on the limitation for this study, it is therefore recommended that future studies should also use unstructured interview rather than questionnaire to explore the motivation of social media behaviour of Baby Boomers. Tadajewski (2006) and Gruber *et al*. (2008) stated that unstructured interview will be able to provide meaningful data and deliver valuable insight into consumer behaviour. Also future studies should explore to know if there is any other kind of observed social media behaviour of Baby Bommers.

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