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MOTIVES INFLUENCING THE USING OF SOCIAL MEDIA BEHAVIORS AMONG BABY BOOMER GENERATION IN SONGKHLA PROVINCE

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to explore the using of social media behaviors of baby boomer generation and the motivations behind these behaviors. Many of the researches done on consumer online behavior have focused on the motivation to use or not to use with very few focusing the interaction between motivation and behavior of social media users. This study therefore examined the motive influencing the behaviors of the use of social media of baby boomer generation. The social media behaviors were categorized into consuming, participating and producing behaviors while the motivations were categorized into information, entertainment and social connection motives. The questionnaires were collected from 411 baby boomers in Songkhla province of Thailand and was analysed by 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 behavior is the consuming behavior. The multiple regression analysis results showed that consuming behavior on social media by baby boomers is influenced by entertainment and social connection motives. Participation behavior on social media by baby boomers is influenced by social connection motive. The production behavior on social media by baby boomers is influenced by information, entertainment and social connection motives.

Keywords: *Social Media, Social network, The baby boomers*

Introduction

The prevalent of internet users has led to an increasing in consumer activities 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

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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 is important to understand the changing behavior of consumers in order to create mutual benefit from the using 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, Guosong, 2009). It has been proposed that consumers are either active as posters or contributors or passive as onlookers or consumers of content (Shang, Rong-An, Chen, Yu-Chen, & Liao, Hsueh-Jung, 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, & Armould 2009). However, there are few existing researches with investigation details of the different levels of consumer engagement activities. 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 focusing 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 behavior 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. Although baby boomers seem to be least users of internet and social media but the huge rising of social media occurred when baby boomers already turned to adult, causing some of them get stuck in between the old form and new form of communication. However, in recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of elder persons worldwide (Hafez, Bagchi and Mahaini, 2000) and especially in Thailand. Based on the forecasting by the Office of The National Economic and Social Development, the Thai population aged 55 years and over will become approximately 20% of Thai population in 2021. Moreover, the next 20 years, the number of Thai population aged 55 years and over will become one from three parts of Thai population., therefore, the behavior on social media of baby boomers is very interesting to understand. This study aims to provide understanding into the behavior of baby boomers on social media. As Thailand is gradually becoming ageing society due to the increasing in the percentage of baby boomers become elderly people, it is important to note that this generation will be dependent on the other generations in the upcoming future. Hence, understanding their social media behavior and the motivation for this behavior will give insight into how to support the baby boomers. In this research, we selected Songkhla as the destination to collect data. Songkhla is the largest province of lower southern Thailand. It is a center of education, trade and business of the South, which is rapidly advancing and is a gateway to neighbor countries; Malaysia and Singapore. The factors that make Songkhla successful are that it is a center of commerce, transportation, education and tourism (Department of the Interior, Ministry of Interior, 2012).

According to the survey of Internet users on Thailand, 2007-2016, Songkhla ranked 6th in the province with the highest internet usage in 2009, the total number of 298,859 people. By the year 2011, Songkhla has moved up to No. 5, and the number of internet users increase every year. Therefore, we focused on baby boomer generation in Songkhla as the case study to understand the social media behavior. The motivation of baby boomers will also help business on how to design their products and services in order to increase customers of this generation.

Research objectives

1. To study the behavior of using online social media by baby boomer generation in Songkhla province.
2. To study the motivation for using social media of baby boomer generation in Songkhla province
3. To examine the association between the motives and behavior of using social media by baby boomer generation in Songkhla province

Methodology

From our literature reviews, we examined the relationship between the motivation and behavior of social media users. The motivations in this study included information motive, entertainment motive and social connection motive while the behavior included consumer behavior, participating behavior and producing behavior. Based on the reviews of previous literatures, this study adopted the framework model as shown in figure 1 as bellows.

Motives for using Social Media	Social Media Behaviors
- Information Motives	- Consuming
- Entertainment Motives	- Participating
- Social Connection Motives	- Producing
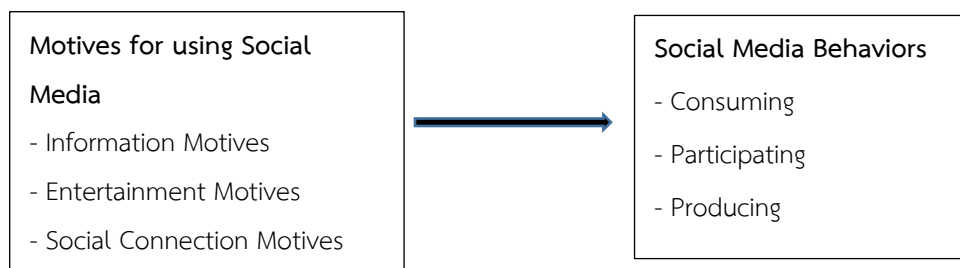
Figure 1 Research framework model

We proposed three hypotheses as stated below:

H1: Consuming behavior is the most common social media behavior among baby boomers in Songkhla.

H2a: Information motive is the most common motivation for using social media by baby boomers in Songkhla.

H2b: Entertainment motive is the most common motivation for using social media by baby boomers in Songkhla.

H2c: Social connection motive is the most common motivation for using social media by baby boomers in Songkhla.

H3: There is an association between the motivation and social media behavior of baby boomers in Songkhla.

The population for this study was baby boomer generation age between 56-74 years (born in 1946-1964) in Songkhla province. We conducted 30 set of questionnaires as a pretest for validity test and reliability test for ensuring the appropriate wording and scale. The required sample size was calculated based on Yamane (1973) method at a 95% confidence level. The minimum sample size required for this study is at least 400 people. Therefore, we collected from 411 baby boomers in Songkhla. The convenient sampling method was used to collect data by using the questionnaires. Data were collected from baby boomer generation in Songkhla province. The researchers collected information in many places such as universities, government centers, department stores, etc. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts. Part 1 was a questionnaire about the demographic information of the respondent to the questionnaire. The questionnaires were closed-ended questionnaires with the characteristics of check list including gender, age, occupation, income and education level. Part 2 was a questionnaire about the motivation for using online social media. This part used Likert Scale to determine on the scale level of five potential choices (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly agree). Motivation has been categorized as information need, entertainment need and social connection needs. Part 3 was a questionnaire about the behavior of using online social media of baby boomer generation. The behavior has been categorized into consuming, participating, and producing. All questionnaires were analysed using statistical software. The statistics using were based on analysing the general data of the respondents such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. In order to compare the motivations for using online social media of baby boomer generation in Songkhla province and their social behaviors, we used SPSS 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 behavior 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 ($\overline{X}$ = 4.70, S.D. 0.31). This is followed by Information motive with ($\overline{X}$ = 4.66, S.D. 0.30), and then social connection motive ($\overline{X}$ = 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 behavior

Consuming behavior has the highest mean score ($\overline{X}$ = 4.39, S.D. 0.33) followed by participating behavior ($\overline{X}$ = 4.01, S.D. 0.41) and lastly producing behavior ($\overline{X}$ = 3.85, S.D. 0.58). This shows that consuming behavior is the most common social media behavior of generation baby boomer in Songkhla province of Thailand.

Regression analysis

In order to test the relationship between the motives and the behavior on social media, this study used multiple regression analysis. The motives are regressed on the three previously identified social media behaviors which are Consuming behavior, Participating behaviors, and Producing behavior.

Motives and consuming behavior

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

Table 1 Regression analysis of Consuming behavior

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
R^2	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 behavior on social media. The social connection motive has a stronger effect on consuming behavior (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 behavior. These variables are able to predict 14% of the variance in consuming behavior. 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 Behavior

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

Table 2 Regression Analysis for Participating Behavior

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
R^2	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 behavior ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$). The information and entertainment motives have no statistically significant effect on participating behavior. The regression model is able to predict 19% of the variation in participating behavior.

Motives and Producing Behavior

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

Table 3 Regression Analysis for Producing Behavior

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	0.96
R^2	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 behavior. The social connection motive has the strongest effect on producing behavior (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 behavior (β = 0.10, p < 0.05). These independent variables are able to predict the 18 % of the variation in producing behavior.

Conclusion

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

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 behaviors can know how to stimulate such by creating social media contents that satisfy different motives. Companies looking for consuming behavior 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 behavior 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 behavior 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.

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 behavior 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 behavior. Also future studies should explore to know if there is any other kind of observed social media behavior of baby boomers.

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