Abstract
This research investigates the future of Facebook by the users' perspectives, obtained through a survey and scientific articles. Facebook enables multiple benefits as it is focusing on reaching individuals worldwide. Since Facebook has many wide options in their programming, it entertains users' and has possibilities to explore into an even wider social networking site. A sample of 217 users responded whether or not Facebook will be overtaken by other new services. Overall, 52.5 percent of the respondents did not think that Facebook will be overtaken compared with 47.5 percent of the respondent who thought that Facebook will be overtaken. Some users do not experience Facebook like before, while other users still find it useful. By comparing the theoretical chapter with the empirical chapter, Facebook enables connection with friends, internet marketing and other satisfying alternatives.

Introduction

The online services have ruled the world with their manipulation and their ability to satisfy users to an unimaginable extent, that not even the services or us as individuals barely can keep up with. Mark Zuckerberg, developer of social-networking sites, studied at Harvard University as he established Facebook (Tamm & Varma, 2014). By the time Facebook was founded it allowed students to upload pictures, different information, searching other members that matched with their interest, and so on (Tamm & Varma, 2014). This was a real catch for the Harvard students as the service had opened up a big interest among them. Furthermore, the service evolved globally, as several investors had opened up their eyes for Facebook. This service continued to grow and soon enough it was a big part of many people's lives, since this became a way of keeping the connection with old and new friends, family and customers.

The main statement for Facebook was to keep people connected and make the world more open (Tamm & Varma, 2014). A primary source for Facebook was their advertising, a unique combination of reach, social context, but also engagement and relevance. Yet Facebook possessed specific data which came to be a privacy concern for investigations (Tamm & Varma, 2014). The evolving of Facebook does not stop there, multiple applications have been set and this is barely stopping. The service has developed in a way that users abuse it in such ways as disordering their identity to become someone else
The following study is based on the future of Facebook through the users’ perceptions, to approach the connection in between. The goal is to find the factors that could possibly affect Facebook's future. The emphasis regarding whether Facebook will or will not be overtaken by other new services will emerge from the responses.

Theory

Facebook was introduced as a social networking site at Harvard campus 2004, with a smaller user base than MySpace but the high-quality and campus-based expansion strategies turned Facebook to a larger service than imagined (Cears, De Feyter, Du Bois, De Couck, Stough and Vigna, 2013). The service expanded rapidly and became rather dominant in the United States. Facebook created opportunities in comparison with other services such as eBay, Amazon and Craigslist had, for instance that Facebook was built on existing social networkers (Cears et. al., 2013). Cears et. al. (2013) tells about a similar service to Facebook, which is Orkut, that was created by one of Googles employees at the beginning of 2004. The authors contiunes to narrate about how this service, akin to Facebook, has a young user base, thus their similarity in origin they have a different member base in countries such as Brazil, India and Pakistan. In these countries, the member base is large for Orkut, but insignificant to Facebook. A phenomenon like this can be called as the butterfly effect. Furthermore, Orkut had a benefit through which users could invite other users, as Facebook users could not. Orkut followed the MySpace model, but Facebook was not far behind, as they soon also had updated its principles and functions (Cears et. al., 2013).

On the other hand, Facebook offers security for the users by the alternative of limiting their profiles, as they decide what, to whom and how they want to share (Cears et. al., 2013). Yet the user can begin to search for old and new friends as soon as the account is created (Bukari, Kumar & Yan, 2008). Bukari, Kumari and Yan (2008) explains that the time that users become friends they can exchange information. For instance, there is the snowball effect, which means allowing newcomers going through the friend list of new friends. The authors also narrate that it is shown that many users seek after their old friends that they have not had contact with in a long time.

Brannock Cox (2016) tells about another big service, which is Twitter, that is correlated with speed in comparison to Facebook. Continously, Facebook is a space where users can tell stories which are published on their Facebook wall, for friends and family that will affect the one individual in different ways. Brannock Cox (2016) also explains that it is more likely for users to post politics and new items on Twitter than on Facebook, since storytelling is more associated to Facebook. Farahbakhs, Cuevas and Crespi (2016) describes the
Online Social Networkers such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+ access an important role on the internet market. Thus, it increases the potential of gaining new viewers for politicians, brands, celebrities etcetera, since they can market themselves through these sites (Farahbakhs, Cuevas, and Crespi, 2016).

Bukari, Kumar and Yan (2008) says that Facebook is aimed to be a social capital but also suggests relationships between privacy and disclosure among users ability of choosing a public profile, limited for friends only, or segmented privacy settings. Thus it is not clear that causality will not be determined which means the privacy settings are not completely safe (Bukari, Kumar and Yan, 2008).

Another prospect is the cross-posting on these Online Networking Services, as it is tested that this is more used in Facebook and Google+ than on Twitter, yet users are more active on Twitter than Facebook and Google+ and does not find the benefit of sharing their information with their Google+ account (Farahbakhs, Cuevas, and Crespi, 2016). Moreover there is the WeChat application service which developed in 2010 but was not launched until 2011, getting the idea from Kik Messenger which became very big in a short time with several benefits such as microblogging and voicemailing (Harwit, 2016).

Harwit (2016) explains that the idea was taken on to the company called Tencent who considered the decision of creating WeChat. Yet the service had issues with privacy, since they required a mobile phone number to prove the users’ identity (Harwit, 2016).

The similarities among Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and Orkut are the group connections, finding friends, relatives and so on, also every one of these services extend their communication methods through mobiles, facetime, e-mail, etcetera (Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar, 2013). Businesses find these benefits useful as they can reduce costs through marketing their business at social networking sites (Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar, 2013). Facebook can be seen as the ideal alternative to telemarketing and marketing research, since it gives direct response for marketing platforms in a shorter time (Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar, 2013). Another great impact is the word-of-mouth method which increases the customer acquisitions, as it gives a longer lasting effect for enlarging the customer base for organizations (Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar, 2013).

According to Zywica and Danowski (2008), the social networking has increased people's self-esteem as they can get a chance to become popular online. The authors describes the cause of such services, of how people dare to reveal more about themselves or even act in a different way online, than in real life, which even made them limited since they cannot be friends with real friends on Facebook. The Facebook service reflects the interaction for students...
and can lower loneliness as it encourage people to act differently online in comparison to the reality (Brown & Yang, 2013). By hitting the “like”-button users may become affected of future purchase intentions, especially if their Facebook friends and family already has fallen for the advertising (Mariani & Mohammed, 2014, s. 52). Yet, this behaviour has not been completely verified as there are few studies addressing this (Mariani & Mohammed, 2014), but it surely opens up opportunities of building a relationship between users on Facebook and a company's brand. This is linked to trust since friends rely on eachothers intentions which in return certainly could lead to future purchase (Mariani & Mohammed, 2014).

The social networking on LinkedIn extend users to find one another by using an approach called “who knows who” (Raskin, 2006, s. 56). Musicians, on the other hand, used MySpace as their help to reach out to the world (Raskin, 2006). Raskin (2006) narrate that the exclusivity of Facebook has spread on the internet, and since it started as a site for students it gave false senses of security as it turned out not guaranteeing that people who did not belong there stayed out. Furthermore, this service has become a target for finding out what students are actually doing. Facebook is also being abused by users as they frequently need to check their pages or other pages for comments, messages, etcetera (Raskin, 2006). The service also makes it easier for the users to arrange parties or even study sessions (Raskin, 2006). In accordance to Wilson, Gosling and Graham (2012), social scientist has an interest in services such as Facebook, since people are sharing information and relates to one another which allows social scientist to spy without being noticed. The authors also tells about many disciplines scoping from law, economics, management and so on has found that Facebook is important. Moreover, the Facebook service is many times used just to pass time of boredom and even though people complain about the time, most of it is spent on Facebook (Wilson, Gosling & Graham, 2012).

**Method**

This research is meant to show Facebook's future by the users’ perceptions. Facebook has taken the world by storm and to determine the future of the service, it requires the perspective of Facebook users’ and what they believe. The assignment is based on both primary and seconderary sources; therefore it is based on information collected through scientific articles and a survey targeted at Facebook users. The survey is the primary source, which consists of six questions, but the respondents did not have to answer all of them. Firstly, five of six questions were directed to users who thought that Facebook will be overtaken by other new services. Secondly, four of six questions were directed to users who did not think that Facebook will be overtaken by other new services. The scientific articles are the secondary sources and the base for the
theory as the survey is aimed to describe the chapter of empirical evidence. The sample size is 217 respondents, as they choose one particular option on each questionnaire that is needed to respond on. The questions are limited to choose a specific answer, to avoid open questions. This also avoids biases such as too many different perspectives. A sample size of 217 respondents makes the observation easier to analyze and more reliable, as the data turns out to be valid and relevant.

Thus, the survey was set up on Facebook pages, for the benefit of only getting answers from users’. By this act, biases such as getting answers from the non-representative units will be avoided, but there are still some negative aspects. People may possibly lie and perhaps interpret the questions wrong, which will result into wrong answers. Moreover, this also limited the answers from organizations, which could have increased the percentage on some of the alternatives. Nonetheless, by keeping the survey anonymous it will minimize the interference of getting wrong answers. Hence, sharing the survey on Facebook only, can determine the result if the majority are young Facebook friends, which is a negative bias for such a study. To avoid this the survey has also been shared by e-mail to widen the sample. This resulted into respondents with varying ages, thus most of them are young respondents as Facebook is mostly addressed to a young target group. The younger respondents have the ability to be in the progress of viewing and analyzing on Facebook for not being able to compete with its competitors. Although, it is contrary to follow the development of the service and see how much stronger and difficult the competitive environment has become. The survey results are being compared and analyzed for the final conclusion.

**Empirical evidence**

![Figure 1](image)

The survey comprises 217 respondents as it was formatted for getting both male and female responses. This concluded into 128 (59%) female perceptions and 89 (41%) male perceptions. The importance of this is to see with which qualification they observe this phenomenon commonly.
As the graph is showing the respondents’ are mostly young. 64 (29,5%) respondents goes through the interval between 0-19. 109 (50,2%) respondents goes through the interval of 20-39. Therefore the result will be mostly from young perceptions as 173 (79,7%) respondents are under the age of 40. The perspectives from 36 (16,6%) middle aged respondents lies between the interval of 40-59 and the remaining 8 (3,7%) respondents are older than 60 years.

The results of Facebook’s chances of remaining the big service it is, are essentially fifty percent. 103 (47,5%) users responded that Facebook will be overtaken and 114 (52,5%) users responded that Facebook will not be overtaken. Nevertheless, users’ perspectives of Facebook are limited as the results would have been different if they had more knowledge about the service. The result will give a possible effect regarding whether or not, which and why Facebook will stay stabilized. Although, the observed result shows that like-minded people have an uneven determination.
Figure 4 shows perceptions are nearly even when it comes to Facebook being overtaken by other services. 103 out of 217 (47.5%) believe that Facebook will be overtaken in the future. Further on, 59 out of 103 (57.3%) respondents of Facebook users' believe that another service than the alternative ones, will take over Facebook. The users who responded on Google+ or Youtube were 40 (38.8%) respondents and the remaining 4 (3.9%) respondents chose the other alternatives.

Respondents are determined of why Facebook has changed from when it started operating and that other services will take over as they are evolving. Thus, respondents also think that Facebook's purpose is all about advertising, which could give the opposite benefit of a better development. 42 out of 103 (40.8%) Facebook users' has the perception that Facebook will be overtaken since other services are evolving. 33 (32%) responded did no longer experience Facebook like before. 19 (18.4) respondents thought that Facebook is all about advertising and the remaining, 9 (8.7%) respondents, thought that Facebook abducted their privacy.
Similar thoughts of Facebook’s ability to enable contact with friends, has a strong impact on the users. The results are showing an almost even distribution of perception, regarding whether or not Facebook will be overtaken by others. As 114 (52,5%) users had responded that they find Facebook’s features beneficial. For example, 92 out of 114 (80,7%) users have answered that Facebook enables contact with friends and other common benefits. The remaining 22 (19,3%) respondents had chosen the other options. Nonetheless, it is a prospect of which Facebook will not be overtaken as it has several benefits which could increase. Hence, users also find that the service enables internet marketing and possibilities of earning money.

Analysis

According to Cears et. al. (2013), but also Bukari, Kumar and Yan (2008), Facebook is a networking site which enables contact with friends, as it is similar to the results from figure 6 as 43 percent of 114 respondents had given their perspective. Facebook has great possibilities of increasing their platform usage. The snowball effect is a great description of Facebook since it lets you find friends through friends (Cears et. al., (2013). Nevertheless, Facebook is a networking site associated with storytelling, since friends put information of something they want to share with the world on their wall (Brannock Cox, 2016). Moreover, it is a way of sharing their thoughts with other friends which also is connected to figure 6.

On the other hand, there are multiple services other than Facebook, such as Twitter and Google+. These services almost have the same benefits as Facebook, since they link to each other through cross-posting (Branock Cox, 2016; Farahbakhs, Cuevas & Crespi, 2016). Furthermore, this way users share their information between services which increases the abilities for Facebook and other services to evolve. As figure 5 shows, the people who responded that Facebook will be overtaken in the future, do not think Facebook has the same function as it did before neither will it stay strong as other services are evolving. In comparison with figure 4, it is clearly shown that users’ believe
that other services will take over Facebook. Yet, with a sample size of 217 respondents, the results were almost equal as 47.5 percent thought that Facebook will be overtaken and 52.5 percent did not think that Facebook will be overtaken (Figure 3). As figure 1 shows, 59 percent of the 217 respondents were female. Of the 103 respondents who thought that Facebook will be overtaken, 60.2 percent were female perceptions and 39.8 percent were male perceptions. Of the 114 respondents who did not think that Facebook will be overtaken, 57.9 percent were female perceptions and 42.1 percent were male perceptions. The gender discrepancy in these questions is then likely to be explained by the gender distribution on the entire questionnaire. The contrast cannot therefore be derived from differences in opinion between the sexes.

Moreover, there is WeChat and Orkut, which has had an impact to the world as they also are similar to what Facebook is offering (Harwit, 2016; Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013). The differences between the users’ perception from figure 4 and figure 5, is that other services are competing with Facebook, as they believe that other services are evolving. WeChat had the benefit of voicemailing and similar to Facebook the service had issues with their security (Harwit, 2016). Despite the security issues on Facebook, not many users’ thought the service infringes on their private life (Figure 5). As for Orkut, the similarities to Facebook are many, such as keeping contact with friends (Ramsaran-Fowdar and Fowdar, 2013).

Furthermore, figure 2 shows that 79.7 percents of 217 respondents lies between the intervals of 0-19 and 20-39. This will make the users’ perception different than a sample of older people. Moreover, it will generalize within the common bar charts. The perspectives from the young are key factors for the future of Facebook, since their generation has different thoughts. Continuously, the perspectives from 60+ are not insignificant since they have lived a longer life as they can come up with sensibly future changes. In accordance to Brown & Yang (2013), Facebook enables users to come out of the closet, as they can act in a certain way compared to their real life. As mentioned before, Facebook has a young community according to figure 2, which could explain the insecurity they feel about themselves since they would rather change their identity to become a better version of themselves; showing no or little flaws and problems to their Facebook friends. Further on, users dare to act differently behind the screen, as they think no one will expose them and that the information they are sharing will not be revealed (Zywica & Danowski, 2008). Raskin (2006) agrees with Zywica and Danowski (2008), about which younger users thought that this type of strategy of getting a better status, would keep the uninvited out since they relied on the security on Facebook. Thus, this did not hold since users could be watched and for instance, teachers used this as a strategy to keep an eye on what students were actually doing. Hence, figure 5 displays that only 8.7 percent of 103 respondents thought that Facebook infringed on their life.
According to figure 5 only 18.4% of 103 respondents thought that Facebook was all about advertising, as compared with Mariani & Mohammed (2014), Facebook is actually trying to capture the interest from companies to advertise through Facebook as it will reach out to many users. Nonetheless, Facebook is a great opportunity for arranging different events, such as study sessions. After all people has some sort of addiction to Facebook since they need to check their timeline to see what the world is offering (Raskin, 2006). As the results of figure 6 shows, 80.7 percent of 114 respondents, still believe that Facebook has the future coming ahead. Continuously, both Raskin (2006) and Wilson, Gosling and Graham (2012), finds Facebook as a way of passing the time.

Conclusion

To sum up, in accordance with the young user base figure 2 is displaying, the perceptions of what will happen in the future are perceived by users’ who may see Facebook as an entertainment service, rather than a serious active working place. 52.5 percent of the respondents did not think Facebook will be overtaken by other new services, since Facebook has several benefits which satisfies the users. The other 47.5 percent of respondents who thought that Facebook's popularity has begun to diminish, do think the future has other services coming up that will smash the mighty Facebook since users’ no longer enjoys the service as it was before and that other services are evolving over time. Yet, the advertisement and the infringement of privacy are additional factors. Since most of the respondents are young, the answers are concluded from a young perspective and their visualization. Overall, the results shows both female and male perceptions, which shows a small difference of the responded questions; yet the difference stem from an unbalanced questionnaire respons regarding gender. Therefore, it is not evidence of differences in opinion between genders. Nevertheless, users’ are conflicted and perceptions from both sides has been observed. Finally, Facebook enables the opportunity of keeping in touch with friends worldwide and many other factors. For instance, Facebook is very useful for creating future events. In addition there is the ability of internet marketing, but also the possibilities of earning money.

Further research

Facebook is a worldwide service, which can give many different angles from different users. Since this study is limited to users’ perceptions only, an interesting factor could be the perspectives from other than only Facebook users’. Moreover this research would be intriguing to make the same empirical test again in 10 years, to see if the answers will be similar, perhaps bigger or if Facebook has been overtaken by other new services.
References


