Social Networking Sites
- Consumers’ assessment of the value of advertisements (Extended Model)

Hossam A. Deraz
This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished with time and a great deal of patience.
I cannot believe that I am actually at the finish line for my doctoral dissertation! The research you are holding in your hands right now, and will hopefully start to read, is only a second station in my scientific career as a teacher and a researcher after my licentiate’s degree in 2016. As inspired by Jonas Rundquist, “A process like this is about keeping on the move.” After five years of work, it is quite a strange feeling, and I cannot help but wonder if there is something in my dissertation that I could have done better, developed further, or presented differently. Of course, yes. However, at some point the line must be drawn, and it is simply time to finish this part of my research journey and to move on to the next stage, whatever that will be.

I have truly enjoyed these years, even though getting my dissertation into print was not easy, and sometimes in such a process the researcher is moving in the wrong direction and needs some people around to guide and to support him. In this regard, there are quite a few people to whom I wish to show my appreciation to for helping and inspiring me along the way. First of all, I must give my great thanks to two persons who have always believed in me during these years, encouraged me, and inspired me to stand up for who I am - my supervisors Professor Gabriel Awuah and Professor Tontini Gerson. They did a tremendous job in scrutinizing my work. Their perceptive and rich comments were constructive, especially during the data analysis, and this has enhanced the quality and precision of this dissertation. Without them, I probably would never have gotten to this stage in my research journey. Thank you for always showing great enthusiasm for reading and for inspiring me.

Professor Jonas Rundquist: I will never forget you. Your door was almost open for me to ask questions, and you had the patience to guide me through the different stages of the data analysis. It would simply not be the same without you. We are all missing you, and I hope you are resting in peace. Also, I want to thank my colleagues and dear friends Dr. Faisal Iddris and Dr. Gideon Amos, who were enrolled as Ph.D. students at the same time as I
was, which has led us to have countless discussions about our research. They have been excellent supporter of my work and my confidence.

Last but not least, I want to send a big kiss to my family. Thank you to my parents for raising me to believe in myself, and for your support. Thank you, my wife, for supporting me during these years. Thank you, my sisters, for being loving and supporting.

Halmstad

Hossam Deraz
Doctoral Dissertation

This doctoral dissertation consists of two main parts: an introductory text to summarize, reflect upon, and connect the papers, and the following six papers appended in full:

Paper I


Paper II


Paper III


Paper IV

Paper V


Paper VI

Paper I
Systematic Literature Review
Aimed at locating and aggregating the outcomes from relevant studies explaining consumers' relationship to ads on SNSs.

Paper II
Conceptual Study
Aimed at providing an extended conceptual framework of factors that predict users’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.

Paper III
Empirical Quantitative
Aimed at extending Ducoffe's (1996) model and testing the new model with SNS users

Paper IV
Empirical Quantitative
Aimed at testing the extended model with a wider frame of samples from brand community consumers

Paper V
Empirical Quantitative
Aimed at testing the effect of cultural background of SNS users on their assessment of ad value on an SNS.

Paper VI
Empirical Qualitative / Cross-cultural Focus Group Study
To gain deeper understanding of how SNS users assess the value of ads on SNSs.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<td>SOI</td>
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<td>UGT</td>
<td>Uses and gratifications theory</td>
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Definitions of Central Concepts

**Advertising:** “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013:673).

**Advertisement value:** “a subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers” (Ducoffe, 1995:1).

**Advertisement’s credibility value:** “the degree to which the consumer perceives claims made about the brand in the ad to be truthful and believable” (Lutz, 1985:53).

**Advertisement’s entertainment value:** “the degree of pleasure and involvement in the interaction with the advertising as perceived by the consumer” (Hoffman & Novak, 1996:26).

**Advertisement’s information value:** “the ability to provide effectively relevant information in the advertising context as perceived by the consumers” (Blanco, Blasco & Azorin, 2010:4).

**Advertisement’s interactivity value:** “the extent to which users can participate in modifying the messages they receive through the advertising” (Steuer, 1992:84).

**Consumer’s motives:** “the personal orientation that drives the consumer behavior toward the advertisement” (Rodgers, 2002:22) that “represents the consumer’s cognitive and affective needs, e.g. information learning, entertainment, personal identity and para-social interaction” (Yoon & Kim, 2001:1146).

**Internet marketing (online marketing):** “the application of the Internet and related digital technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve a marketing objective” (Chaffey et al., 2009:9).

**Marketing innovation:** “the process of doing something new with ideas, products, service, or technology and refining these ideas to a market**
opportunity to meet the market demand in a new way” (Kleindl, Mowen & Chakraborty, 1996:214).

**National culture:** “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1991:5).

**Online advertising:** “the process of using the Internet as an advertising medium where the promotional message appears on the computer screen” (Vurro, 2010:5).

**Online brand communities:** “affiliative groups whose online interactions are based on a shared enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a certain consumption activity or related group of activities” (Kozinets, 1999:254).

**Social media marketing (SMM):** “the process of promoting a product or service by gaining website traffic or attention through various social media sites” (Broker, 2014)

**Social networking site (SNS):** “a site that facilitates peer-to-peer communication within a group or between individuals through providing facilities to develop user-generated content and to exchange messages and comments between different users” (Chaffey et al., 2009:11).

**Traditional advertising:** “the process of using the traditional offline media e.g. TV, radio, printed media, and billboards to advertise an idea, product, or service by an identified sponsor” (Janoschka, 2004:6).

**Values:** “are those evaluative concepts are used to assess the worth of things or that evaluative judgments express such assessments” (Tapolet & Rossi, 2016:7)
Part I: The Introductory Text
Abstract

In light of the identified shortcomings in the earlier studies of consumers’ assessment of advertisement value on social networking sites, and the relative importance of explaining advertisement value, the overall purpose of this dissertation is to develop and empirically test a conceptual framework that can advance knowledge and increase our understanding of how online consumers assess the value of advertisements on social networking sites. In reference to this purpose, this doctoral dissertation has sought to answer the following overarching research question: What are the relevant variables that predict online consumers’ assessment of advertisement value on social networking sites, and how do these variables affect their assessment?

To achieve the purpose of this study and to answer its overarching research question, a mixed method approach was used, adapting both quantitative and qualitative methods. A sequential explanatory strategy using mixed methods was the primary approach used to explain and interpret the quantitative results, by collecting and analyzing follow-up qualitative data. Consequently, this study started by doing a systematic literature review to identify the related factors, followed by a conceptual study to provide an extended conceptual framework that connected consumer beliefs to their sources of gratifications from using SNSs. That conceptual framework was partially examined in three survey papers to test the effects of its five belief factors (information value, entertainment value, irritation value, interactivity value, and credibility value) on assessments of advertisement value on SNSs. The three survey papers found that these five belief factors have significant effects on assessments of advertisement value on social networking sites. However, those effects varied according to consumers’ cultural backgrounds. The three survey papers were then followed by a qualitative focus group study to give a deeper explanation, and to discover the underlying reasons behind consumers’ assessment of advertisement value. That focus group study confirmed the role of culture in assessing the value of advertisements, and it gave deeper explanations behind the reasons for that variance in assessments of advertisement value within the context of social networking sites from one research population to another.
In general, this study contributes to the understanding of consumers’ assessments of advertisements on social networking sites. It offers a new approach by connecting consumers’ gratifications from using social networking sites to their assessment of advertisement value. In turn, it helps to reflect a number of valuable insights that can be utilized by both researchers and marketers in order to understand how the addressed factors enhance consumers’ assessments by testing the contribution of credibility, interactivity value, social influence, pre-purchase search motivation, and cultural backgrounds, in addition to previously tested variables: information value, entertainment value, and irritation value.

**Keywords:** Internet marketing, advertisements, online social networks, assessment of advertisements, value of advertisements, national culture, brand communities.

***************
Chapter I: Introduction
Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter introduces the author’s motivations to study the value of advertisements on social networking sites. It begins by presenting background about the main concepts of the study. That is followed by a discussion of the problem and the research purpose. It ends with an outline of the dissertation.

1.1 Background

In recent years, social networking sites (SNSs) have attracted millions of users every year, and the number of those users continues to rise year after year. Facebook is arguably the world’s most famous SNS; in the first quarter of 2018 it had 2.19 billion monthly active users around the world, with 1.74 billion of them using a mobile phone to log in to their accounts (Statista, 2018a). Also, the number of international brands using Facebook as a marketing and communication platform has continued to rise. By the start of 2017, Facebook had 65 million local business pages, and 4 million of those pages were actively advertising on it (Kaplan, 2017). As a result, advertising revenue on SNSs had reached more than 41 billion U.S. dollars by the end of 2017 (Statista, 2018b). That ability of SNSs to attract both users and business partners—such as national and international brands, private businesses, governmental organizations, and service centers—is considered one of the main advantages of such sites in attracting advertisers and marketers to use the sites as one of their main marketing vehicles. In contrast, researchers have shown more interest in investigating different research phenomena within the context of SNSs. Some of those researchers have explored factors predicting consumer assessments of advertisement (ad) value on those sites.

Ad value is one of the core determinants of brand success (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). It simultaneously represents a crucial variable in explaining consumers’ attitudes and behaviors, based on the model of the advertising communication process proposed by Preston (1982) and the model for assessing the value of online ads proposed by Ducoffe (1996): ad value is the main determinants in explaining consumers’ attitudes and behavior.
toward the advertised products. From that viewpoint, misunderstanding how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs may mislead us as we seek to understand consumers’ attitudes and behaviors toward these ads. Therefore, it is crucial to identify and understand the main factors for assessing the value of ads on such sites and to find out how these factors are affecting consumers’ assessments of ad value on these sites. Yet little is known about online consumers’ assessments of ad value on SNSs. Hadija, Barnes, and Hair (2012) reported the inadequacy of the literature in this research context. Also, assessments of ad value on SNSs remain an overlooked research area. In the end of 2017, a search of the Halmstad University mega index database (OneSearch)—which contains the majority of resources from Emerald, IEEE Xplore, Inderscience publishers, JSTOR, Libris, Sage Journals Online, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Taylor & Francis Online, SpringerLink, Web of Science, Wiley Online Library, and others—produced only a few peer-reviewed empirical studies focused on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. In total, seven survey studies (see Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Dao et al., 2014; Dar et al., 2014; Haida & Rahim, 2015; Martínez-Navarro & Bigné, 2017; Shareef et al., 2017), and one exploratory interview study were found (see Gaber & Wright, 2014).

In addition to the lack of earlier studies to investigate consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, previous scholars have not produced a comprehensive list of underlying factors that enhance consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs in any single source; collectively, they suggest several factors in consumers’ beliefs about advertising. The most repeated constructs to explain the value of ads on SNSs are perceiving the ad as entertaining, informative, or irritating. Their findings confirm that both entertainment value and information value have a significant positive effect on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Dao et al., 2014; Dar et al., 2014; Haida & Rahim, 2015; Martínez-Navarro & Bigné, 2017). However, researchers had contradictory findings regarding the effect of irritation on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs; most of them found that it does not affect consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs (see Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Dar et al., 2014; Haida & Rahim, 2015). In contrast, some studies found it has a negative effect on the assessment of ad value on SNSs (see Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Beuckels, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Furthermore, Shareef et al. (2017) found that when the ad message is generated through aspirational reference groups on SNSs or through marketers, feelings of irritation have a significant negative effect on assessing ad value,
but not when the ad is generated through the associative reference group. Finally, perceiving an ad as credible is one of the constructs that has a positive effect on assessment of ad value SNSs (see Dao et al., 2014; Shareef et al., 2017; Martínez-Navarro & Bigné, 2017).

In summary, most previous studies that explain ad value on SNSs depend on Ducoffe’s (1996) model, which aimed to test online ad value. After the booming development of online ad systems, in addition to users’ recent experience with SNSs and their gratifications needs from those sites, do we think a twenty-year-old model is relevant without extending it to accommodate the development of new electronic media? Ducoffe’s (1996) model, with its three variables (informativeness, entertainment value, and irritation value) did not fit with many of the previous studies within the context of SNSs (see Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Dar et al., 2014; Haida & Rahim, 2015). Moreover, according to the use-diffusion model presented by Shih and Venkatesh (2004), diffusion in adopting new technology will lead to change in consumers’ use-diffusion patterns. That change in use-diffusion patterns will, in turn, change outcomes in the form of perceived impact of the used technology, satisfaction with technology, and more interest in future technologies. In contrast, we need to extend the models for assessing the value of online ads in order to have something more reflective of the nature of SNSs and their users’ needs.

1.2 Research Purpose

In light of the identified shortcomings in earlier studies on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, the lack of investigation in this particular research area, and the global and national reach of SNSs as marketing platforms, the overall purpose of this dissertation is to develop and empirically test a framework that can advance our knowledge of how online consumers assess the value of such ads. The detailed purposes of the dissertation are:

- To review and analyze relevant literature on consumer response to ads on SNSs to guide empirical studies, and to present the relevant variables that explain the value of ads in the context of SNSs.
- To test the effects of consumers’ beliefs on their assessment of ad value on SNSs empirically, using different research samples.
- To test the effects of consumers’ national culture on their assessments of ad value on SNSs, empirically.
To investigate and explain qualitatively how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs.

In reference to the above, the overarching research question guiding this dissertation is thus formulated as follows:

*What are the relevant variables that predict consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, and how do these variables affect their assessment of ad value on SNSs?*

1.3 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation includes two main parts:

I) **An extended summary**: This consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the motivations for the study and the research purpose and ends by presenting the overall purpose of the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature on assessment of ad value on SNSs and gaps in earlier studies and ends by presenting the purpose of the study and its overarching research question. Chapter 3 presents concepts related to ads on SNSs in order to distinguish between different types of social media and to present the relative importance and novelties involved in using SNSs as marketing vehicles. Chapter 4 presents the theoretical framework of the study by introducing the theory of Uses and Gratifications, and the most-often cited models related to consumers’ assessment of online ads. Finally, this section ends with a presentation of the extended conceptual framework for this dissertation. Chapter 5 offers a reflection on the research methods used in the six articles. Chapter 6 presents a summary of the articles. Finally, chapter 7 presents conclusions, implications, and limitations of the present research and an agenda for future research.

II) **The articles**: The six full-length articles are appended, followed by their list of references.
Chapter II: Literature Review
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of related literature that is mainly focused on exploring ad value on SNSs. The author aims to identify variables that have been tested and shortcomings found in earlier studies on consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs.

As stated in Chapter 1, despite the growing body of literature on SNSs, assessment of the value of advertisements (ads) on SNSs remains an overlooked research area; only a few peer-reviewed empirical studies concerned about consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs were found (see Table 1.1). In total, seven survey studies (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Dao et al., 2014; Dar et al., 2014; Haida & Rahim, 2015; Martínez-Navarro & Bigné, 2017; Shareef et al., 2017) were found, along one exploratory interview study (Gaber & Wright, 2014).

The first survey study was by Logan, Bright and Gangadharbatla (2012). These authors compared female students’ assessments of the value of ads on SNSs versus their assessments of the value of television ads. In that empirical study, the authors used Ducoffe’s (1996) model, with its three primary variables of irritation value, entertainment value, and information value. The authors concluded that Ducoffe’s model for ads did not provide a good fit for assessing the value of ads on SNSs or TV as perceived by young female students. According to that study, irritation as a reverse-coded variable obtained a small alpha value 0.056 in the case of SNSs. In general, Logan, Bright and Gangadharbatla (2012) showed that only entertainment value and information value had significant impacts on assessing the value of ads on SNSs.

In the second survey study, Saxena and Khanna (2013) also used the three variables from Ducoffe’s (1996) model to assess the value of ads on SNSs. Their research sample consisted of students at an Indian university who completed 189 questionnaires. The authors used a structural equation modeling approach to show that the information and entertainment content of SNS ads had significant positive impacts on the perceived value of these
ads. They also found that irritation value had a substantial negative impact on the assessment of ad value.

The third survey study, by Dao et al. (2014), studied factors predicting consumers’ assessment of ad value on an SNS and the effect of ad value on consumers’ online purchase-related behavior. The authors also explored the moderating effect of different types of SM on the correlations between the predictors and the value of ads. They used expectancy-value theory to propose that informativeness, entertainment, and credibility are the main factors that predict consumers’ assessment of ad value, and that the perceived value of the ad affects consumer purchasing behavior. By using structural equation modeling and the paired t-test, the authors found that the three consumer belief factors (informativeness, entertainment, and credibility) had positive effects on the 295 undergraduate students; assessment of ads on an SNS, which in turn positively influenced their online purchase intention.

In the fourth survey study, Dar et al. (2014) examined students’ perceptions of ad value on Facebook versus television. These authors also used Ducoffe’s (1996) model, with its three variables. Based on their structural equation modeling, they found that Ducoffe’s variables did not fit either the Facebook ads or the television ads, which supported the results of Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla (2012). The authors found that entertainment value of ads could actively predict students’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs, while information value had no significant effect and irritation value had a small and unexpected positive p-value of 0.037 (the significance level was p < 0.05).

The fifth survey study, by Haida and Rahim (2015) investigated ads on an SNS and how consumers in Malaysia assess their value. The authors tested the effect of Ducoffe’s (1996) three variables on both the value of ads and product awareness. They found that entertainment is a predictor of the value of ads on SNSs but not of product awareness. They also found that informativeness is a predictor both of the value of ads and of product awareness. However, they also found that irritation does not predict consumers’ assessment of ad value but does negatively predict product awareness.

In the sixth survey study, the authors explored the effect of enjoyment and media credibility on assessing the value of marketer-generated content (MGC) on Facebook fan pages (Martínez-Navarro & Bigné, 2017). The
survey study included 395 Zara fans on Facebook, and the authors found that users’ enjoyment with Facebook and their perception of Facebook credibility positively influenced their perception of the value of marketer generated content (MGC) posts on a fan page. In turn, their perception of valuable MGC posted on a fan page positively influenced electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) recommendations of the marketer to others on Facebook but not their purchase intention.

The last survey study aimed to identify source derogation in terms of credibility to create value and a positive attitude toward Facebook ads (Shareef et al., 2017). The authors carried two sequential survey studies with Facebook users, with a total of 425 participants, using Ducoffe’s (1996) model. They observed significant differences in developing ad value and forming a favorable attitude towards ads on Facebook when the product-related message was developed by three distinct groups, who have different source derogations (an associative reference group, an aspirational reference group, and marketers themselves).

Finally, the last identified study was a qualitative focus group study by Gaber and Wright (2014). The authors aimed to explore factors that affect young Egyptian consumers’ attitudes towards fast food ads on Facebook. They used Brackett and Carr’s (2001) model of consumer attitudes toward advertising, with its six variables (credibility, entertainment, irritation, informativeness, ad value, and attitudes toward ads). The 40 young participants in that study mostly liked the idea of fast food fan pages on Facebook. They added that ads on Facebook made them aware of brands and consequently encouraged them to try their meals. They also like posts, share them with their friends, and commenting on them. Finally, they reported that the majority of the content on the fan pages is informative content.
Table 1.1 Summary of the reviewed articles according to a year of publication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Theoretical concept</th>
<th>Approach/strategy</th>
<th>The sample fame/size</th>
<th>Variables tested</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Logan, Bright &amp; Gangadharbatla (2012)</td>
<td>Facebook versus television: Advertising value perceptions among females</td>
<td>Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing</td>
<td>Ducoffe (1996)</td>
<td>Quantitative/online survey</td>
<td>SNS users/259 female students (USA)</td>
<td>Information value, entertainment value, and irritation</td>
<td>Ducoffe’s ad value model does not provide a good fit for assessing ad value on either social media or television. The structural models revealed that irritation value is not directly related to the assessment of ad value for either SNSs or television.</td>
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<td>Saxena &amp; Khanna (2013)</td>
<td>Advertising on Social Network Sites: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach</td>
<td>The Journal of Business Perspective</td>
<td>Ducoffe (1996)</td>
<td>Quantitative/online survey</td>
<td>SNS users/189 undergraduate students (India)</td>
<td>Information value, entertainment value, and irritation</td>
<td>Perceived information and entertainment value of ads on SNSs were positively associated with the perceived value of these ads. However, irritation is negatively associated with ad value on Facebook.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dao, Le, Cheng &amp; Chen (2014)</td>
<td>Social media advertising value The case of transitional economies in Southeast Asia</td>
<td>International Journal of Advertising</td>
<td>Expectancy-Value Theory</td>
<td>Quantitative/survey study</td>
<td>SNS users/295 undergraduate students (Vietnam)</td>
<td>Information value, entertainment value, credibility value, ad value, and purchase intention</td>
<td>Ads’ informativeness, entertainment, and credibility values have positive effects on consumers’ perceived value of Facebook ads, which in turn positively influence users’ online purchase intention.</td>
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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Theoretical concept</td>
<td>Approach/strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dar et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Facebook versus Television: Advertising Value Perception among Students</td>
<td>International Journal of Business and Management Invention</td>
<td>Ducoffe (1996)</td>
<td>Quantitative study/survey study</td>
<td>SNS users/300 undergraduates (Pakistan)</td>
<td>Informativeness, entertainment, irritation value, advertising value, and attitude toward advertising</td>
<td>Ads’ informativeness and entertainment variables have a significant influence on assessing the value for both Facebook and television ads. Yet irritation had no significant effect on ad value for both Facebook and television ads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaber &amp; Wright (2014)</td>
<td>Fast Food Advertising in Social Media. A Case Study on Facebook in Egypt</td>
<td>Journal of Business and Retail Management Research</td>
<td>Brackett and Carr (2001)</td>
<td>Qualitative/ Focus group study</td>
<td>SNS users/4 focus groups with a total of 40 young participants</td>
<td>Information value, entertainment value, credibility value, ad value</td>
<td>The participants reported that they preferred ads on Facebook over traditional online pop-up ads. Most participants indicated that if they perceive an ad to be from a credible source, contain an element of entertainment, be informative and not be annoying by being very repetitive, they may respond to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haida &amp; Rahim (2015)</td>
<td>Social Media Advertising Value: A Study on Consumer’s Perception</td>
<td>International Academic Research Journal of Business and Technology</td>
<td>Ducoffe (1996)</td>
<td>Quantitative/ online survey</td>
<td>SNS users/253 users (Malaysia)</td>
<td>Information value, entertainment value irritation, product awareness, and ad value</td>
<td>Entertainment value is a predictor of Facebook ad value, but not of product awareness. Yet informative value is a predictor for both ad value and product awareness. Finally, irritation value is not predictive of the ad value, but is negatively predictive of product awareness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Theoretical concept</td>
<td>Approach/strategy</td>
<td>The sample fame/size</td>
<td>Variables tested</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martinez-Navarro &amp; Bigne (2017)</td>
<td>The Value of Marketer-Generated Content (MGC) on Social Network Sites</td>
<td>Journal of Electronic Commerce Research</td>
<td>U &amp; G theory [Katz 1959] the motivational model [Davis et al. 1992]</td>
<td>Quantitative /online survey</td>
<td>Fan page followers/ 395 Zara fans on Facebook</td>
<td>Enjoyment, credibility, MGC value, eWOM, website visit intention, and purchase intention</td>
<td>Enjoyment of Facebook and users’ perception of site credibility positively influence their perception of MGC value. User perception of valuable MGC posted on a fan pages positively influences e-WOM recommendation of the marketer to others on Facebook. However, their positive recommendations of the marketer on Facebook do not influence their purchase intention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shareef et al. (2017)</td>
<td>Social Media Marketing: Comparative Effect of Advertisement Sources</td>
<td>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</td>
<td>Ducoffe (1996)</td>
<td>Quantitative /survey study</td>
<td>Facebook users/215 peers (Bangladesh)</td>
<td>Informativeness, Entertainment, irritation value, ad value, ad source</td>
<td>SMA beliefs, i.e. informativeness, entertainment, and credibility, have positive effects on consumers’ perceived value of SMA, which in turn influences their online purchase intention.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above literature review reveals three shortcomings in the literature on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs which may mislead both marketers and scholars investigating this research context:

- First, researchers focus on Ducoffe’s (1996) model, with its three variables. They ignore other related variables, such as interactivity value and social influence, which are more logically related to SNSs since they represent the main functions of SNSs, as proposed by Tuten and Solomon (2017). Also, Logan, Bright, and Gangadharbatla (2012) and Dar et al. (2014) showed that Ducoffe’s (1996) model does not fit when assessing ad value on SNSs, as presented in table 1.1. In addition, according to the use-diffusion model presented by Shih and Venkatesh (2004), diffusion of new technology leads to change in consumers’ use-diffusion patterns, and that change in use-diffusion patterns changes the outcomes in the form of perceived impact of the used technology, satisfaction with technology, and more interest in future technologies. In return, adopting SNSs leads to a set of new use-diffusion patterns, such as social interaction, communicatory utility, convenience utility, and expression of opinion (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Choi et al., 2016), which may change consumers’ assessment of ad value on those sites. In that regard, using just Ducoffe’s (1996) might mislead research and subsequent understandings about the assessment of ad value on SNSs., and the related outcomes of perceived value on consumers’ attitudes and behaviors.

- The second problem revealed in the literature on assessing the value of ads on SNSs is the focus on university students as the primary research sample. According to Statista (2015), the 17–24 age group only represents 25% of total active users on Facebook, which means that previous studies have ignored the majority of active Facebook users. This might also misguide the way knowledge is produced concerning consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. Only one previous study explored perceptions among active SNSs users in brand communities (fans of brands on SNSs), yet, the authors focused on marketer-generated content as perceived by fans of ZARA’s brand on Facebook (see Martinez-Navarro & Bigne, 2017), which also may reflect the shortcoming in investigating the fans’ responses to ads on SNSs.

- The third problem revealed was that researchers mostly explored the aggregate relationship between variables by focusing on the quantitative research method and therefore missed offering an in-depth
analysis to answer how SNS users perceive the value of ads on SNSs and why online consumers are looking for specific predictors as main factors when assessing the value of these ads in particular. Based on this, it would be interesting to increase our knowledge and deepen our understanding of how online consumers are assessing the value of ads on SNSs and to pinpoint additional factors that might predict their assessments.

As presented in the first chapter, in light of the identified shortcomings in earlier studies on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, the overall purpose of this dissertation is to develop and empirically test a framework that can advance knowledge on how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs.

In respect to the above research purpose, the overarching research question guiding this dissertation is thus formulated as follow:

*What are the relevant variables that predict consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, and how do these variables affect their assessment of ad value on SNSs?*

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Chapter III: General Understanding of Main Concepts
Chapter 3 - General Understanding of Main Concepts

This chapter introduces concepts related to ads on SNSs in order to distinguish between different types of social media and to present the relative importance and novelties in using SNSs as marketing vehicles.

3.1 Social Media Sites & Social Media Marketing

“Social media sites are those independent and commercial online communities where people congregate, socialize and exchange views and information” (Kotler et al., 2017:659)

Using the comment distinction between interest and work-related purposes, Schrammel, Köffel and Tscheligi (2009) have classified social media sites into four main types:

1. Business Networking Sites: mainly used to maintain and administer existing and new business contacts, such as LinkedIn and private business networks.
2. Social Networks: used to maintain private relationships and contacts, e.g. Facebook and Twitter.
3. Content and Media-Sharing Networks: significant focus on sharing content with others and not on maintaining relationships, such as Flickr and YouTube.
4. Social News and Bookmarking Sites: sites such as delicious.com and dig.com used to share and discover entertaining links to news and content on the web.
5. The fifth type of social media which is presented by Kotler et al. (2017), is Branded Community Websites, which present brand content that engages consumers and create customer community around the brand, such as Harly Owners Groups (HOG) and Nike+ running communities.

More types of social media can be presented, and others will be introduced in the near future. Mainly, social media is a difficult research context to clearly conceptualize due to the speed at which the technology is expanding.
and evolving. In return, scholars need to continue to investigate these expanding and evolving changes in social media and their effects on users’ attitudes and behaviors toward different marketing activities on those sites.

Social media marketing (SMM) is defined as the process of promoting a product or service by gaining website traffic or attention through various social media sites (Broker, 2014). Social media itself provides a platform for firms to engage in timely and direct contact with end customers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). It can, therefore, be utilized as an advertising platform that creates and strengthen bonds between firms and their customers, thereby developing more trustworthy relationships between firms and their potential customers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Yet, recent studies found that the relationship between firms and their customers in social media can be affected negatively by certain factors, such as negative word of mouth (WOM) - Arli and Dietrich (2017) found that negatively perceived social media campaigns forced consumers to disassociate from the company and discouraged their willingness to share their message, or in the worst case share and comment negatively on the advertising of the company. Also, researchers found that types of social media have a significant effect on users’ attitudes and behaviors toward the marketing activities each medium engages in (see Prendergast, Liu & Poon, 2009; Dao et al., 2014). In that regard, the scholars need to understand better positive and negative factors that predict users’ perception while investigating marketing aspects on social media sites; also, they need to distinguish between each type of social media when investigating any research topic. Similarly, researchers studying SNSs need to use variables that relate better to the nature of SNSs or to retest variables related to social media in general.

3.2 Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

SNSs are those sites that facilitate peer-to-peer communication within a group or between individuals by providing facilities to develop user-generated content and to exchange messages and comments between different users (Chaffey et al., 2009). In 1997, the first social networking site (SNS) was launched by SixDegrees.com (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). After adopting Web 2.0 implementations in 2000, blogging sites began to flourish, especially in 2003 after the adoption of XML-based data standards and contextual advertising that allowed data to be exchanged between sites (Chaffey et al., 2009). In 2003, SNSs like LinkedIn, Hi5, and Myspace appeared, and in 2005 Facebook and Yahoo 360 were launched to the public, followed by Twitter in 2006 (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Nowadays,
there are hundreds of SNS vehicles: some are international SNSs, such as Facebook, Google+, Instagram, and Twitter, while others are domestic SNSs such as QZone in China and Vkontakte in Russia and some of its neighboring countries.

Also, within brand communities on SNSs, we can now find that many brands that have established their pages on SNSs such as Facebook have millions of fans and followers. For example, in the global market, Coca-Cola has more than 106.1 million fans on Facebook, and McDonald’s has more than 74.1 million fans (Socialbakers.com, 2017a). On the Swedish national market, we have G5 Entertainment Games, which had 2.25 million fans, and SAS with 1.22 million fans (Socialbakers.com, 2017b). The increasing number of fans reflects the crucial role of those sites in helping companies achieve their marketing objectives, such as increasing awareness, identifying their customers’ needs, and attracting more customers from the surrounding network of their fans, as proposed by Dann and Dann (2011).

The above discussion shows the global and national reach of SNSs to be used as marketing and communication vehicles. However, we could not ignore some inhibiting factors that may prevent some online consumers from interacting positively with marketer-produced content on those sites. Scholars found that ad skepticism (Kelly, Kerr & Drennan, 2010; Hadija, Barnes & Hair), privacy concerns (Mahlangu, 2014), perception of ads as irritating (Mir, 2015; Kim, Kang, Choi & Sung 2016), and expectation of negative experience (Kelly, Kerr & Drennan, 2010) made it more likely that SNS users would ignore marketing message on SNSs. From that point of view, scholars, advertisers, and marketers need to gain a deeper knowledge regarding the potential of using those sites as marketing and communication vehicles. They also need to develop their understanding of the inhibiting factors to reduce the negative effect of any negative noise around their brands on those sites.

3.3 Marketing Innovation and Social Networking Sites

The function of innovation is to introduce novelty (variety) into the economic sphere (Fagerberg, 2004) and to create new possibilities for added value; this includes marketing innovation, organizational innovation, resource and input innovation, in addition to typical product and process innovation (Schumpeter, 1943; Martínez-Ros & Orfila-Sintes, 2009). Currently, innovation is introduced as the implementation of new or significantly improved products, services, processes, marketing methods, or organ-
izational methods in business practices in internal or external business organizations to find a better way on the market (OECD, 2005; OECD, 2015). That means a new product, new service or new business process cannot be considered innovation unless it is being introduced to the market by using the marketing process. In that regard, the Oslo manual defines marketing innovation as the implementation of new marketing methods involving significant changes to a firm’s marketing mix in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing (OECD, 2005). Some examples of innovative marketing approaches are:

- Using consumer-tracking technologies such as clickstream tracking, online registration, and cookies (Shapiro & Varian, 1999)
- Using a new marketing program or technology that allows a firm to acquire consumer information more efficiently (Chen, 2006)
- Using the calorie-based packaging, purpose-based packaging, or innovative store designs (Grimpe et al., 2017).

From the above presentation, the type of novelty that contributes to processes and differentiation in using alternative distribution channels is a useful concept for identifying marketing innovation. One such recently developed channel is SNSs. From that perspective, to discuss marketing innovation on those sites we need to address novelty in using those sites at the organizational level, and reflect the significant improvement in their marketing systems to be identified as innovative marketing channels.

Focusing on novelties in using SNSs in the organizational context, research on how organizations use SNSs to achieve their marketing objectives remains very limited (see Knoll, 2016; Alalwan et al., 2017). However, scholars propose some activities that can enhance organizations’ marketing and innovation performance when using SNSs, such as:

- Knowledge acquisition from social media in proactive and reactive marketing orientations (Nguyen et al., 2015).
- Using SNSs to manage relationships with current and prospective customers (Killian & McManus, 2015).
- Using SNSs to gain insights from consumers’ generated content that can enhance product development (Rathore, Ilavarasan & Dwivedi 2016).
• Facilitating knowledge sharing for sense and decision making within product design by using social media (Irani et al., 2017).
• Using social media to improve customer relationship capabilities and firm performance (Wang & Kim, 2017; Tajvidi & Karami, 2017).

The above-proposed ideas do not provide enough evidence about how organizations are using SNSs as a source of marketing innovation, since they depend on the authors’ view and not the organization’s perception; the exception is Nguyen et al. (2015), who collected data from new online technology firms in China. In that regard, scholars need to do more investigation to cover that gap in the literature on SNSs by doing more case studies to investigate marketers’ and advertisers’ views on innovative ways of using SNSs in marketing. However, that inadequacy of knowledge can prove the novelty of using SNSs as marketing and communication channels, since that research context remains a black box.

The second point demonstrating the novelty of SNSs is the renewal of marketing process. For example, in 2007 Facebook launched “Fan pages” to allow users to interact and affiliate with businesses and organizations. This was the first manifestation of marketing communication in SNSs. The fan pages enabled firms to deliver more-tailored and relevant ads to Facebook users (Hof, 2007). In late 2007, Facebook started a new concept called “company pages” that offered a platform to tout products and to interact with users (Richmond, 2007). The development of Facebook as an advertising platform has been a work in progress since then. In November 2010, Facebook started a new messaging platform called “Project Titan” that allowed users to communicate directly with each other using email, text messaging, or a mobile app (Gabbatt & Arthur, 2012). In March 2012, Facebook announced the App Center for mobile web users (BBC, 2012), and in February 2014 it added a new feature that allows users to choose up to 10 different gender definitions (Crook, 2014). Later, Facebook added a new feature called “Control the Ads You See” that enables the SNS users to update their ad preferences to reflect things they care about and to see more appealing and relevant ads on Facebook. Finally, in 2018 Facebook launched many features; one of which is the live video streaming— “Facebook Live”—which is the best way for individuals and companies to interact with their viewers in real time (Facebook, 2018).

The novelty in using SNSs as marking vehicles may lead to change in users’ use-diffusion patterns, which may affect their attitudes and behaviors toward these ads over time. According to the use-diffusion model, as present-
ed by Shih and Venkatesh (2004), the diffusion of new technology adoption will lead to change in consumers’ use-diffusion patterns, and that change in use-diffusion patterns will change outcomes in the form of the perceived impact of the used technology, satisfaction with technology, and more interest in future technologies. In return, researchers need to carry out updated investigations to identify new patterns of SNS use to identify any change in users’ sources of gratifications from using those sites.

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Chapter IV: Theoretical Framework
Chapter 4 - Theoretical Framework

This chapter introduces Uses and Gratifications Theory and the most-cited models related to consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. Finally, it ends by presenting the extended conceptual framework of this dissertation.

4.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is a theoretical framework that is used to study how mass media, including social media and SNSs, are utilized to fulfill the needs of individual users with different goals (Smock et al., 2011). The approach suggests that people use specific media to fulfill their needs and gratifications (Katz, 1959). On this subject, the focus of the theory is on what people do with the media rather than the influence or impact of the media on the individuals (Katz et al., 1974). Katz, Gurevitch and Hass (1973) classified needs and gratifications for people to use mass media into five main categories: cognitive needs such as acquiring knowledge and information, affective needs such as satisfying emotional needs, personal integrative needs such as enhancing credibility, confidence and status, social integrative needs such as enhancing connections with family, friends, and so forth, and the tensions needs such as escape and diversion (West & Turner, 2010).

As proposed by West and Turner (2010), UGT is unique in its assumptions, as it assumes that:

- Audience members are active and their media use is goal oriented.
- The initiative in linking need gratification to a specific choice of medium by the audience member.
- Media compete with other resources for users’ need satisfaction.
- People have enough self-awareness of their media use, motives, and interests to be able to provide an accurate picture of that use.
- Value judgments of media content can only be assessed by the audience.

Limitations of UGT
UGT has been viewed by some scholars as a classical view from communication theory, which is to say its critics argue that it does not meet the standards necessary to be a theory. Critics argue that it instead is more of an analytical approach or data-collecting strategy (Severin & Tankard, 1997). Although the uses and gratifications approach holds a significant status in communication research, it receives criticisms on both its theory and methodology, some of which include:

- UGT does not provide very successful predictions or causal explanations of media choice and use (McQuail, 1994).
- Since it is the case that much media use is circumstantial and weakly motivated, the approach seems to work best in examining specific types of media where motivation might be present (McQuail, 1994).
- Due to the individualistic nature of uses and gratifications, it is difficult to take the information that is collected in previous studies. This makes self-reports complicated and unmeasurable (Severin & Tankard, 1997).
- Audiences with different demographic characteristics are likely to have different motivations for using identical media, and they likely have different gratifications (Greenberg, 1974).

Despite such criticism, in order to conceptualize the widespread adoption of social media sites, scholarly researches have drawn upon UCT to examine the effects of SNSs users’ gratifications on their attitudes and behaviors (see Quan-Hasse, 2012; Krause, North & Heritage, 2014; Musa, Azmi & Ismail, 2015; Choi et al. 2016; Ifinedo, 2016; Phua, Jin & Kim, 2017a; Phua, Jin & Kim, 2017b). The authors argue that the emergence of social media sites changes the way audiences use mass media, since they differ in form and context (Musa, Azmi & Ismail, 2015). Also, they are unlike the traditional media, which provided users with limited choices. These new media come up with new options, which come with new changes in roles and in personal and social habits of media users (Gallion, 2010, as cited in Musa, Azmi & Ismail, 2015).

Also, previous studies have argued that to understand how online consumers respond to advertising, it is crucial to understand their motivations for going online (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). Similarly, to study consumer response to ads on SNSs, we need to take into account consumers’ motivations for engaging in those sites, as recommended by Taylor, Lewin, and Strutton (2011). From that perspective, for further understanding of the factors likely
to impacts consumers’ assessments of ad value on SNSs and to extend the related models, it is appropriate to consider consumer needs and gratifications from viewing those ads.

**UGT and Social Networking Sites**

Several scholars have applied UGT and identified unique gratification factors from SNS usage. Researchers have tested the adaptability of UGT on the use of SNSs; their findings show that UGT is relevant to the area of SNSs (see Park, Keev & Valenzuela, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Urista, Dong & Day, 2009; Quan-Hasse, 2012; Choi et al. 2016). For example, Park, Keev and Valenzuela (2009) found that for SNSs, socializing, entertainment, self-status, and information seeking are the four main gratifications from using Facebook, as perceived by college students. Whiting and Williams (2013) identified ten gratifications from using Facebook in their in-depth interview study. The ten uses and gratifications they identified are social interactions, information seeking, passing time, entertainment, communicatory utility, relaxation, expression of opinion, convenience utility, information sharing, and surveillance/knowledge about others (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Further, Choi et al. (2016) have listed five gratifications for hotel fans on Facebook. The authors identified, using a mixed-method study, that information seeking, convenience, entertainment, self-expression, and social interaction are the main gratifications that hotel fans seek on Facebook. However, Choi et al. (2016) found that information seeking, convenience, and self-expression are the only three gratifications that have a significant effect on the fans’ satisfaction with the hotel’s Facebook page. Contraditorily, Celebi (2015), by applying UGT, found that interpersonal utility was the most prominent motivation that affected participants’ all attitudinal and behavioral process toward Facebook advertising. Pre-purchase search motivation is another gratification for SNS users, as proposed by Mir (2014).

Choi et al. (2016) found that not all perceived gratifications have an effect on online consumer responses. Yet they show that some consumer needs are crucial predictors in explaining their satisfaction. Also, according to UGT-based research, individuals’ basic needs and personal characteristics and the social environment interact and consequently create perceived solutions/problems (Singh, 2016). In respect to the findings of Choi et al. (2016) and Singh (2016), I assume that some of the gratification factors for using ads on SNSs—such as social interaction, information seeking, communicatory utility and convenience utility—can give better explanations of con-
sumers’ assessments of ad value when combined with the other consumer belief factors.

4.2 Models for Assessing the Value of Online Ads

Ad value is defined by Ducoffe (1995:1) as “a subjective evaluation of relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers.” Ducoffe (1996:24) has further defined the value of online ads (ONAs) as “a cognitive assessment of the extent to which advertising gives consumers what they want.” Thus, ad value is deemed to be a market-oriented index that provides insight into whether the product meets customer expectations or not (Ducoffe, 1996). Ducoffe (1996) explained that the distinction between ONA value and consumers’ attitude toward ONAs is based on consumer responses, and that online consumers might dislike invaluable ads and vice versa. Ducoffe (1995) developed a framework for predicting ad value and consumer’s attitude toward general advertising. He found that entertainment, informativeness, and irritation were factors that contribute to consumers’ assessment of ad value and their attitudes toward the ad. Further, Ducoffe (1996) applied his model to ONAs and found that consumers’ attitude toward web-based advertising directly depends on its perceived value, and that the value of ONAs depends on the perceived level of entertainment, informativeness, and irritation value (See Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1: Path coefficients of Ducoffe’s (1996) model for assessing the value of ONAs. Source: Ducoffe (1996:29).](image-url)
Further, Brackett and Carr (2001) added credibility and consumer demographics in their validation of Ducoffe’s (1996) model (See Figure 4.2). These authors found that credibility was directly related to both the assessment of ONAs and the consumer attitudes towards ONAs. However, demographic variables such as college major, age, and gender only predicted online users’ attitudes, but not the value of ONAs (see Figure 4.2).

![Figure 4.2: Brackett and Carr (2001) Model of Attitudes toward Web Advertising. Source: Gaber & Wright (2014:56)](image)

4.3 Assessment of Ad Value on SNSs

As presented previously in the literature review, the main studies assessing ad value on SNSs identified the following three variables as the main variables that contributed to consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs:

1. Informativeness of the ad.
2. Entertainment value.
3. Irritation value.

To build a new conceptual framework that may give a better explanation about how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs, the following conceptual framework draws on three main sources:

1. Uses and gratifications theory/approach.
2. Main bodies of research regarding the assessment of ad value on SNSs.
3. A systematic review of peer-reviewed articles on consumer response to ads on SNSs (The first paper in this doctoral study).
4.4 The Extended Conceptual Framework

The extended conceptual framework of factors contributing to consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs posits five consumer belief factors, one consumer motive, and two social influence factors (see Figure 4.3). The eight factors might be seen to stem from investigations of online consumer responses to SNS ads. The proposed eight factors collectively can enhance our understanding in order to explain how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs. In addition, the present framework may offer a new approach for assessing the value of ads by connecting consumer gratification from using a specific medium with their assessment of ad value on that medium.

4.4.1 Consumers’ Beliefs Factors

This group represents consumers’ personal utility beliefs toward an advertisement. Consumers’ beliefs toward advertising are important indicators of advertising effectiveness (Mehta, 2000). Scholars postulate that beliefs about advertising are antecedents of advertising value (Brackett & Carr,
In previous studies, researchers mainly identified information value, entertainment value and irritation value as the main three belief factors in assessing the value of ads on SNSs. This doctoral study proposes interactivity value and credibility value as additional belief factors for assessing the value of these ads.

**Information value (INF)**

An ad’s information value represents the ad’s ability to provide effectively relevant information in its context, as perceived by its audiences (Blanco, Blasco & Azorin, 2010). It is one of the leading driving factors for assessing the value of online ads (Brackett & Carr, 2001; Ducoffe, 1996; Schlosser, Shavitt & Kanfer, 1999; Wang et al., 2009). Also, it reflects one of the main gratifications from using SNSs, which is the cognitive needs of the online users to collect information and gain knowledge (Park, Kee & Valenzuela, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Choi et al., 2016). Thus, it is one of the leading driving factors for assessing the value of ads on SNSs (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Dao et al., 2014; Haida & Rahim, 2015; Shareef et al., 2017).

Focusing on SNSs, researchers have found that ads’ information value affects online users’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. Thus, information value is deemed to have a significant effect on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, and it is considered to play a central role in contributing to ad value on SNSs.

**Entertainment value (ENT)**

Entertainment value of an advertisement reflects the degree of pleasure and involvement in the interaction with the advertising, as perceived by the consumer (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Advertisers believe that entertainment value increases the effectiveness of an ad’s message and generates a positive attitude toward the brand (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Shavitt et al., 1998). Ducoffe (1996) found that the success of online ads depends on their level of entertainment.

Regarding the SNSs, entertainment value reflects consumers’ need to be entertained, which is one of the main gratifications from using SNSs (Park, Keever & Valenzuela, 2009; Williams, 2013; Choi et al., 2016). Entertainment value is particularly salient in SNS ads, as scholars have identified it as one of the primary factors in assessing the value of such ads.
Scholars have concluded that entertainment value has a significant positive effect on users’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs. Based on these notions, entertainment value is therefore deemed to have a significant effect on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, and it is considered to play a central role in contributing to ad value on SNSs.

**Irritation value (IRR)**

A feeling of irritation toward social media ads arises when the consumer experiences discomfort while watching these ads (Saxena & Khanna 2013). Many researchers (Chu, 2011; Kim & Ko, 2012; Logan et al., 2012; Hayes & King, 2014; Shareef et al., 2017) have argued that if online consumers feel irritation toward viral ads for any reason, they are unwilling to be exposed to these ads. Taylor, Lewin, and Strutton (2011) asserted that feeling irritation toward viral ads contributes to a loss of privacy, and it can distract consumers from receiving the intended meaning of the statement and thus have a negative effect on the value of an advertisement. Based on the models for assessing the value of online ads, irritation value is a negative predictor of online users’ assessment of these ads (Ducoffe, 1996; Brackett & Carr, 2001).

Focusing on ads on SNSs, some researchers have found that irritation value does not predict consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Haida & Rahim, 2015). Contradictory, others found irritation value had a significant negative effect on assessing the value of these ads (Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Shareef et al., 2017). Finally, Dar et al. (2014) found that it has a small and unexpected positive coefficient for assessing the value of ads on an SNS. As a research community, we need to better understand the reasons behind these different effects of irritation value on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. Thus, it is important not to ignore irritation value, as it is one of the leading dimensions for the extended model for assessing the value of ads on SNSs, for both general SNS users and for brand community consumers. Irritation value is therefore deemed to have a significant negative effect on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.

**Credibility value (CRE)**

Lutz (1985:53) defined ads’ credibility value as the degree to which the audience perceives claims made about the brand in the advertising to be
truthful and believable. Moore and Rodgers (2005) have added the extent to
which consumers believe or trust in the media claims as an additional source
of ad credibility. According to Brackett and Carr’s (2001) model of con-
sumer attitudes toward Web advertising, ads’ credibility value is an essen-
tial dimension that directly predicts consumers’ assessment of online ad
value. In contrast with Brackett and Carr’s (2001) findings, credibility is
considered by some researchers to be a crucial dimension when assessing
both the value of online ads and consumers’ attitudes toward these ads
(Breitsohl, Khammash & Griffiths, 2010; Clewley, Chen & Liu, 2009;
Prendergast, Liu & Poon, 2009; Wang & Sun 2010a). Likewise, consum-
tion credibility is considered to play a central role in contributing to the
assessment of ad value on SNSs, as perceived by Southeast Asian social
media users (Dao et al., 2014). Dao et al. (2014) found that credibility value
has a positive effect on consumers’ perceived value of ads on Facebook.

Based on UGT, audiences in an online brand community have empathy,
trust, and feelings of safety with the online brand based on their personal
integrative needs (Brodie et al., 2013). Also, credibility value is an essential
dimension when assessing online consumer responses to certain online
brands (Lee, Park & Han, 2011; Chatterjee, 2011). Consistent with these
findings and the lack of investigation into the effect of credibility value on
consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, credibility value has been con-
sidered to be an essential dimension of the extended model for assessing the
value of SNS ads by both regular SNS users and by brand community con-
sumers (BCCs). Credibility value is therefore deemed to have a decisive and
significant positive effect on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.

**Interactivity value (INT)**

Interactivity value of an advertisement is defined as the extent to which
audiences can participate in modifying the messages they receive through
advertisements (Steuer, 1992). It has been identified as a factor that can
explain both the value of Web advertising (Brackett & Carr, 2001) and con-
sumers’ attitudes toward ads on Facebook (Yaakop, Marhana & Khatijah,
2013). However, it has not been tested in the context of assessing ads on
SNSs.

It is apparent that the recent focal point of using SNSs is to build and
maintain a network of friends for social interaction (Trusov, Bucklin &
Pauwels, 2009). One of the interactive capacities of SNSs is its ability to
courage users to use text, images, videos, and links as interactive content
and as strategies to track and share new products with consumers (Yaakop, Marhana & Khatijah, 2013). Also, based on UGT, it is claimed that communicatory utility and information sharing are the main gratifications from using SNSs (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Thus, based on the role of interactivity value in consumers’ attitudes toward ONAs and the nature of interactivity as a central purpose of using SNSs, this study posits that interactivity value is one of the leading belief factors in assessing ad value on SNSs. Interactivity value is therefore deemed to have a positive significant effect on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.

4.4.2 Consumers’ Motivations

_Pre-purchase search motivation_

Consumer motives reflect the physiological needs and desires of consumers in using online media (Wang et al., 2002). Scholars consider consumer motives to be driving factors of consumer behavior, related to the level of satisfaction with their needs and desires (Rodgers, 2002). Regarding SNSs, one of the purposes of using them is to fulfill users’ pre-purchase information needs (Ha, 2002; Goldsmith & Horowiz, 2006). That information advantage of SNSs helps users to arrive at well-considered purchase decisions (Muntinga, Moorman & Smit, 2011) and make sensible brand choices (Ha, 2002). As mentioned by Park, Keev and Valenzuela (2009), online consumers employ SNSs to find appropriate information that can help them in making correct and risk-free purchasing choices.

Drawing on UGT, Mir (2014) found that users’ pre-purchase search motivation for using SNSs influences users’ cognitive attitude toward ads on those sites. Also, information seeking is one of the main consumer gratifications in using SNSs (Park, Keev & Valenzuela, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Choi et al., 2016). Yet no one has tested the effect of consumers’ pre-purchase search motivation on the assessment of ad value on SNSs. In keeping with these findings concerning the role of pre-purchase search motivation in consumers’ attitudes toward SNS ads, thus study thus considers the pre-purchase search motivation of SNS users to be an essential factor that contributes to the assessment of ad value. Pre-purchase search motivation is therefore deemed to have a positive significant effect on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.
4.4.3 Social Factors

From our previous discussion and the definition of SNSs presented, social engagement and consumer interactions are the focal activities on SNSs. This unique social nature of SNSs gives some of the social factors a focal role in consumers’ behavior and their attitude toward these ads. Based on UGT, social interaction is one of the main user gratifications from using SNSs (Park, Keev & Valenzuela, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Choi et al., 2016). In contrast, we assume that social influence and national culture are additional factors that influence consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.

Social influence

Within the context of the online communities, social influence occurs when a user adopts his/her behavior, attitudes, or beliefs to those of others similar to him or her (Leenders, 2002). Focusing on SNSs, individuals join those sites to satisfy their social needs, such as strengthening contact with family, friends, and the world (Wang, Tchernev & Solloway, 2012). Also, they achieve these social needs by connecting with each other and engaging in interpersonal communication as a way of enjoying their activities and getting approval from other individuals using the same site (Urista, Dong & Day, 2009). According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), this interpersonal communication creates group intention, which results from an internalization process in which a person adopts the values, beliefs, or attitudes of others based on congruence criteria. In contrast, social media users intuitively evaluate the reliability and trustworthiness of ads on these media through other participants’ comments, especially comments from members of their existing networks (Okazaki, 2004). Furthermore, they may seek other consumers’ comments and recommendations on the Internet to reduce the perceived risk involved in a purchase decision (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006). Moreover, collective consumers are also more likely to be conformist and influenced by friends, and then to adopt their opinions (Erdem, Swait & Valenzuela, 2006).

Within the context of SNSs, previous studies have found that the effect of social influence on consumer response to ads on SNSs was derived from certain factors, such as personal social identity and group norms (Zeng, Huang & Dou, 2009), personal needs for online social capital (Chi, 2011), social ties and endorser expertise (Chang, Chen & Tan, 2012), or subjective

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norms (Lee & Hong, 2016). Yet, no researchers have tested the effect of social influence on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.

In keeping with these findings, this study considers social influence to play a central role in contributing to the establishment of ad value on SNSs. Consumption social influence is therefore deemed to have a significant influence in assessing the value of ads on SNSs.

**National culture**

Individuals’ cultural background affects their patterns of message processing (Nisbett, 2004). Scholars have argued that advertising messages that are congruent with the message recipient’s cultural characteristics and that avoid conflict with beneficiaries’ fundamental cultural values tend to be more efficient than those that are culturally incongruent (Cui et al., 2012; de Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; Han & Shavitt, 1994).

As noted by Hyder, Abraha, and Mukhtar (2014), attempts have been made to measure the impact of national culture on different research contexts since the 1960s. However, researchers only began to focus on the effects of national culture on business practices in the 1990s (Luthans, Welsh & Rosenkrantz, 1993; Offermann & Hellmann, 1997; Thomas & Ely, 2001; Gitman & McDaniel, 2008). Likewise, researchers in the field of online marketing have recently begun to examine online users’ behavior and attitudes in the context of national culture (Chau et al., 2002; Wei-Na & Sejung, 2006; Shu-Chuan & Jhih-Syuan, 2012; Brosdahl & Almousa, 2013; Kim, Jeong & Hwang, 2016).

Regarding consumers’ perception of electronic ads, researchers identified differences in consumers’ attitude toward mobile ads depending on their cultural backgrounds (Chia-Ling et al., 2012). In another cross-cultural study, Wang & Sun (2010) identified differences in consumer beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral responses toward ONAs in the United States, China, and Romania. Moreover, Tsai and Men (2012) reported differences between Eastern and Western cultures for some values regarding the appeal of users’ communication. The authors argued that scholars need to advance their understanding of marketing communications on SNSs from a cross-national perspective. Finally, Kim, Jeong, and Hwang (2016) found that individuals from different cultural backgrounds tend to have different attitudinal responses to similar ads on Facebook. The authors found that consumers from individualistic cultures (e.g., the United States) had different response rates
compared to those from a collectivistic culture (e.g., Korea) regarding comparative vs. non-comparative advertising. Nevertheless, the effect of national culture on the assessment of the value of SNS ads has not been explored.

Based on the above, cultural differences might explain differences among consumers in assessing the value of ads on SNSs. Consequently, scholars need to advance their understanding of the effect of culture on consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs. The consumption of national culture is considered to play a central role in contributing to the assessment of ad value on SNSs. Thus, it is part of the extended conceptual framework.

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Chapter V: Methodology
Chapter 5 - Methodology

*This chapter presents the research methods used in this dissertation. As inspired by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), this chapter starts by introducing the research paradigm that includes the philosophical assumption, the approaches, the research strategy, the sampling strategy, and the sampling technique, and it ends by presenting the data-collection methods, the measuring technique, and the guideline for data analysis. Finally, a discussion of trustworthiness is presented to explain the author’s attempts to achieve validity and reliability in this study.*

5.1 Research Paradigm

The theoretical paradigm—the philosophical assumptions—forms the foundation upon which a researcher constructs a scientific investigation (Krauss, 2005). Further, it is the net that contains the researcher’s beliefs about the nature of reality and humanity (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology), and how to gain that knowledge (methodology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Tuli, 2010). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2005), researchers have different views about the nature of knowledge and reality, which helps them to explain the methods and approaches used. However, social science research has traditionally depended on two fundamental paradigms: the functional or scientific paradigm (*positivism*) and the interpretive or constructivist paradigm (*subjectivism*) (Shah & Corley, 2006; Scotland, 2012).

*The scientific paradigm (*positivism*) has an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2012) and that there is a single objective reality for any research phenomenon or situation, regardless of the researcher’s perspective or belief (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Thus, the researcher who follows this paradigm takes a controlled and structural approach to research by identifying a clear research topic, constructing*
appropriate hypotheses, and adopting a suitable research methodology (Churchill, 1996). Positivists pay close attention to the logical form of the relationship between scientific knowledge and facts—facts that have been derived from observation (Chalmer's, 2013:3). In that regard, those who follow the positivist paradigm tend to adopt quantitative research methods (Saunders, Lewis & Thornfill, 2012).

**Interpretivism (social constructionism)** is a research philosophy that views the social world as being socially constructed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornfill, 2012:601). Understanding reality depends on the details of the situation (Remenyi et al., 1998). Formally, *social constructionism* can be defined as an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2007:726). It is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts; it is, therefore, best studied within its socio-historic context, reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Because interpretive researchers view social reality as impossible to abstract from its social setting, they “interpret” that reality through a “sense-making” process rather than a hypothesis-testing process (Maxwell, 2012).

**Pragmatism (multiple methods paradigm)** is a research philosophy that argues that it is possible to work with both positivist and interpretivist positions (Creswell, 2013). It applies a practical approach, integrating different perspectives to help collect and interpret data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornfill, 2012:598). As outlined by Denzin (2010), pragmatic approaches became a popular way to address social research questions when social science scholars found compatible ways to combining qualitative and quantitative methods in the same research project.

In the pragmatist worldview, researchers emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem, instead of focusing on methods (Rossman & Wilson, 1995). Furthermore, according to Creswell’s view (2013), the pragmatist worldview has the following ideas:

- First, it is not committed to any specific philosophy and reality; it is applied to mixed methods research.
- Researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures that best meet their needs and purposes, rather than subscribing to just one way (either quantitative or qualitative).
• Pragmatists see truth as “what works at the time.” Thus, they use mixing methods to provide the best understanding of a research problem.
• They look to what and how to research based on the intended consequences. Thus, they open the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis.

From my perspective, in social science, it is hard to isolate knowledge from social actors, especially in marketing research. Marketing scholars used to connect their studies to particular social actors, such as customers, companies, or suppliers. This makes it difficult to find a study that follows positivism in a fair manner. On the other hand, constructionists assert that reality is not singular or objective but rather is shaped by human experiences and social contexts (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In that regard, when exploring hidden reasons, we need to be involved with the social actors to gain deeper insights. For that reason, I can see the world from different views; reality is external, but researchers have the right to choose the best approach that can enable them to answer their research questions—no matter how observable the phenomena or subjective the meaning. The best way to gain a more coherent understanding of the research subject is by combining both methods. However, since value plays a significant role, I tried to use positivist concepts by having a precise topic, constructing appropriate hypotheses, and adopting a suitable research methodology to increase the level of trustworthiness of the papers and to derive facts from observation.

5.2 Research Approach

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009; 124), deductive and the inductive are the main approaches to business research studies. A deductive approach uses the literature to identify and develop a theoretical framework, which will be subsequently tested using data. In contrast, the inductive approach plans to explore the data and develop theories from them that will be subsequently linked to the literature. This general logic explains quantitative research as a deductive approach and qualitative research as an inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

This study followed the deductive approach; it started by reviewing the body of literature of ads on SNSs, mainly those exploring the relation between users and those ads. After conducting a systematic literature review, this was followed by a conceptual paper addressing the most
relevant factors contributing to the assessing of the value of SNS ads. The extended framework was first tested in three quantitative papers that investigate the theoretical concepts related to the research questions and then hypotheses were generated and tested in the first and second articles. Moreover, to achieve external validity of the findings and to provide explanations for those findings, the research questionnaires were constructed according to the five belief factors in the dissertation’s conceptual framework (see Figure 4.3, page 46). That was followed by applying the constructed framework in a qualitative focus group study to gain deeper insights into the effect of each presented factor (see Figure 4.3, page 46).

As shown in the above clarification, this study used a deductive approach throughout all phases of the research. The extended models used in this study for assessing the value of ads on SNSs were based on the literature on assessing the value of ONAs, the literature on consumer response to ads on SNSs, and UGT. It also included the primary body of research on assessing the value of ads on social media to find more relevant factors in the research context.

5.3 Research Methods

According to Creswell (2013), research methods can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. The quantitative method uses numbers and statistical methods and tends to be based on statistical measurements of specific aspects of phenomena (Thomas, 2003). The qualitative method is an inquiry process for understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem (Creswell, 2003). It is vital in the behavioral sciences, where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behavior (Kothari, 2004). Finally, a mixed method is the general term used when both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures are used in a research design (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). There are about forty mixed-methods research designs, as reported by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). However, Creswell (2009) proposed six main types of mixed-method research, which include three concurrent and three sequential designs.

Choice of Research Methods

In this dissertation, mixed methods were used, adopting both quantitative and qualitative methods to best answer the overarching research question of
A sequential explanatory strategy was applied. As suggested by Creswell (2009), the sequential explanatory design is typically used to explain and interpret quantitative results by collecting and analyzing follow-up qualitative data. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem. Sequentially, the qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants’ views in more depth, which will help to create a deeper understanding of the research subject. In addition, as presented by Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2006), the advantages of using the sequential explanatory design include straightforwardness and opportunities for exploration of the quantitative research findings in more detail. Consequently, the empirical papers in this study start with three survey papers that test factors predicting consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, followed by a paper on qualitative focus groups that gives a deeper explanation and uncovers the underlying reasons behind their assessments, according to their cultural backgrounds.

5.4 Data Collection Methods

To identify relevant variables that predict consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, and to explore how these variables affect consumers’ assessment of ad value, both secondary and primary data collection methods were used in this doctoral dissertation. According to Given (2008), secondary data is data that is collected and archived or published by others. In this study, the secondary data was based on the literature regarding consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs, as well as literature about consumer response to these ads. The secondary data were obtained from multiple bibliographic databases (OneSearch). The OneSearch database was selected because it is a Halmstad University mega index database that contains the majority of resources from Emerald, IEEE Xplore, Inderscience publishers, JSTOR, Libris, Sage Journals Online, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Taylor & Francis Online, SpringerLink, Web of Science, Wiley Online Library, and others. In addition, some of the top marketing journals were reviewed, such as the European Journal of Marketing, International Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Retailing, and others. That review was aimed to determine potentially relevant studies concerning consumer response to ads on SNSs.
Primary data are those that are collected afresh and for the first time and thus are original in nature (Kothari, 2004:95). There are several conventional instruments for collecting primary data for business studies, including questionnaires, interviews, and observation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Each of these instruments has its own strengths and limitations in terms of time, cost, and quality of the collected data (Kothari, 2004; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

For the three quantitative papers of this dissertation (Papers III, IV, V) structured questionnaires were the main instrument used for collecting primary data. The author used the questionnaires as an objective data-collection technique that focused on gathering numeric data that allow for quantitative analysis, as guided by the positivist paradigm and within the realism paradigm (Neuman, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005). The questionnaires for the three quantitative papers were constructed based on the study’s extended theoretical framework in order to achieve construct validity, as recommended by McBurney and White (2010). Moreover, a pilot study was undertaken before administering each paper’s questionnaire in order to pretest those questionnaires, as recommended in the research methodology literature (Kothari, 2004; Byman & Bell, 2007; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Creswell, 2013). The author gathered feedback from participants in the pilot studies, and this confirmed the data collected from the respondents and increased the validity of the papers. It also helped when administering the questionnaires for the three studies before distribution. After performing the pilot studies, electronic questionnaires were then created in addition to the printed version. In addition, the online versions were distributed through SurveyMonkey.com.

Focusing on qualitative studies, interview guides can be categorized into three main types according to their level of formality and structure: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Structured interviews are used to collect quantifiable data (King, 2004), and unstructured interviews are used to explore a general area without a predetermined list of questions to work through (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). Finally, semi-structured interviews have a list of themes and questions that guide the flow of the conversation between the interviewer and the respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).
The focus group study (Paper VI) in this doctoral dissertation aimed to offer a more in-depth explanation of the results of the survey studies, in addition, to exploring additional factors that contribute to users’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. The author used a semi-structured interview guide as a subjective data collection method; it included a list of themes and questions that guided the flow of conversation between the interviewer and the respondents. He used the same interview guide through two different focus group discussions (FCDs) with two different ethnic backgrounds (Indian vs. Swedish). As explained by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), in business studies researchers following a qualitative design can use semi-structured interviews to find out what is happening and to seek new insights, in addition to understanding the relationships between variables in explanatory studies.

5.5 Sampling Strategies

5.5.1 Population

A population can be defined as “the total of all the elements that share a standard set of characteristics; these elements can be people, supermarkets, companies, hospitals, and so on” (Hair et al., 2010:164). Scholars describe the target population as the complete group of objects or elements relevant to the research problem.

In this doctoral dissertation, the target populations of each paper were SNS users. For the first quantitative paper, the survey population included undergraduate students at Halmstad University (Sweden) who had used Facebook for at least two years. The primary reason for choosing this population was to allow for comparisons with the previous literature, which has focused mainly on university students in the context of SNSs. However, Swedish university students have not been tested before in the context of assessing the value of ads on SNSs.

For the second quantitative paper, the purpose was to test the effect of the five belief factors from the extended framework within the context of brand community consumers (BCCs). Thus, the population for the second study was BCCs who belonged to one or more fan pages on Facebook. There were two main reasons for choosing this population. First, based on the finding in the first empirical study, irritation value was not predictive of the assessment of ad value on Facebook. The second reason was that no previous study had investigated BCCs’ assessment of ad value, even though
they are a more representative sample of active SNS users in terms of age, gender, and nationality, which helped to yield information from a wider sample of active SNS users.

For the third quantitative paper, as the aim was to explore the effect of cultural backgrounds on assessing the value of ads on SNSs. The population included SNS users from Egypt, Netherlands, and the UK who belong to one or more fan pages on Facebook. The choice of this research population was based mainly on the analysis of the second quantitative paper, in which the respondents gave answers that could be categorized into four different groups based on their nationalities. The three different nationalities belong to one of the four different groups identified in the second paper. Moreover, the assessment of the value of ads on SNSs has not previously been investigated in the context of national culture.

Finally, the last paper included SNS users from India and Sweden who had belonged to at least one SNS for two years or more. The choice of this population was based mainly on the paper’s aim to gain a deeper understanding of factors contributing to SNSs users’ assessment of ad value, as well as to explain variations in SNS users’ response to ads on SNSs based on their cultural backgrounds.

5.5.2 Sampling and Sample Size

5.5.2.1 Sampling in the Quantitative Papers

A research sample is a set of elements selected in some way from a population that aims to save time and effort and obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of a population’s status regarding whatever is being researched (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) divide sampling techniques into two main types: probabilistic (or representative) sampling and nonprobabilistic (or judgmental) sampling.

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), random numbers allow the researcher to select a sample without bias, which is part of probabilistic sampling. However, because of the difficulties encountered in generating a random sample from online communities (Sheehan, 2002), nonprobabilistic sampling techniques were used in the four empirical papers for this dissertation. For example, in the third paper, there was no access to the student database to know who had used Facebook for at least two years. The same was true for the fourth and the fifth papers, because there was no
way to access the database of BCCs on Facebook. Moreover, a combination of online data collection methods was used in the survey studies to ensure the collection of a specified number of respondents from Facebook fans of the shared brands and their communities. That made it impossible to control random numbers.

**Sample Size**

It is widely suggested in the literature that sample size should be calculated based on the population size at a 95-confidence level, with a ± 5% margin of error (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:219; Cohen, Lawrence & Manion, 2005). However, it was difficult to determine the sample size because the population sizes for the three papers in this study were unknown. Instead, to determine an adequate sample size, the author adapted the rule of thumb regarding each of the analytical methods and their estimated statistical power, as presented by VanVoorhis and Morgan (2007).

- For the third and the fourth papers, the main aim was to determine how the five belief factors predict consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. The author used the rule of thumb that $N > 104 + m$ (where $m$ is the total number of independent variables) to test the effect of each of the five predictors, as recommended by Green (1991). Because we had five independent variables, a sufficient number of participants should be any number more than 109 participants in order to assume a medium-sized relationship between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable. However, I aimed to collect as many responses as possible to achieve a lower sampling error. In the end, 201 completed questionnaires were collected for the first paper, and 573 for the second paper.

- For the fifth paper, 30:1 is the rule of thumb used to achieve a statistical power of 80% (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007:48). This means that we needed 30 participants for each variable. Because we had five variables in the third paper, we needed to have at least 150 participants. In the end, 278 completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed.
The survey study respondents

Paper III

Table 5.1: Valid completed questionnaires classified according to the sampling technique for the third paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Techniques</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Distribution Channels</th>
<th>Collected Questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Convenience</td>
<td>Face-to-face distribution</td>
<td>Halmstad University</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-selection</td>
<td>SurveyMonkey.com</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail invitation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weblink</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Snowball</td>
<td>Through friends and colleagues</td>
<td>Halmstad</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total completed questionnaires</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the third paper, the questionnaires were distributed using three different sampling techniques, as shown in Table (5.1). The author collected 214 questionnaires, but 13 were rejected because the respondents did not have Facebook accounts or did not complete the entire questionnaire.

Papers IV and V

For the fourth and the fifth papers, the questionnaires were administered online at SurveyMonkey.com. The program ensured that participants could not fill out the questionnaire more than once. The questionnaires were then distributed through web distribution by uploading them directly from the SurveyMonkey website to eight brand communities on Facebook, and through a convenience distribution by sending personal invitations to active participants in those brand communities.

The sample frame for the two papers consisted of people who were members of Facebook brand communities for the following hotels in the Red Sea region: Club Paradiso Hotel El Gouna, Dawar El Omda Boutique Hotel - El Gouna, Grand Plaza Hotel & Resort, Mirage New Hawaii, Panorama Resort, Sea Star Beau Rivage, The Three Corners Royal Star, and Three Corners Ocean View. These hotels had around 17,500 BCCs on Facebook.
For the fourth paper, a total of 673 questionnaires were returned. After deleting incomplete questionnaires and respondents who answered all the questions with the same answer, 590 completed questionnaires remained. The sample covered BCCs from 18 different nationalities from the targeted population. The respondents’ nations of origin were Germany, 17.1%, the Netherlands 10%, the United Kingdom 8.7%, Slovakia 7.9%, Belgium 7.6%, Russia 7.5%, Egypt 6.2%, Poland 5.8%, Hungary 4.7%, France 4.5%, Serbia 4.2%, Sweden 3.1%, Italy 3%, Switzerland 2.4%, Czech Republic 2.3%, the United States 1.8%, Georgia 1.8%, and Denmark 1.3%. The gender breakdown of the sample were 51% women and 49% men. The largest age band in the sample was 35–44 (28.4%), followed by 45–54 (26%), 25–34 (20.5%), 17–24 (12.9%), 55–64 (11.6%), and 64+ (0.6%).

For the fifth paper, 357 questionnaires were obtained. After discarding incomplete questionnaires and those in which the respondents answered all the questions with the same value, 278 completed questionnaires remained. The three samples covered BCCs from three different nationalities in the targeted population. The total sample included 111 Egyptian, 78 Dutch, and 89 British respondents.

Response Rate

The response rate is the percentage of the usable questionnaires from the total sample, excluding unsuitable or uncontactable members of the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2007). However, because a combination of methods was used in the three quantitative papers to administer the questionnaires online, it was difficult to estimate non-responses to the distributed questionnaire. Moreover, the questionnaires were distributed on the Halmstad University Facebook page for the third paper, and on the hotel pages for the fourth and the fifth papers, which made it impossible to determine the total number of the nonresponse questionnaires. As noted by de Vaus (2002), it is impossible to calculate a response rate in many online surveys because the numbers of inappropriate and unreachable responses are hidden.

5.5.2.2 Qualitative Paper Sampling

The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher understand the problem and answer the research question (Creswell, 2013). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are exceptionally knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In that regard, purposeful sampling is a widely used technique in
qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most efficient use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) distinguished among 16 different purposeful sampling methods: extreme or deviant case sampling, intensity sampling, heterogeneity sampling, homogeneous sampling, typical case study, snowball sampling, convenience sampling, mixed purposeful sampling, and so on.

Focusing on focus group discussions (FGDs), when the population is not homogeneous this may lead to a very biased result (Kothari, 2004). According to Patton (2002), the purpose of a homogenous sample is to describe some particular subgroup in depth, which is the purpose of the sixth paper in this study—to give clearer explanations about the effect of national culture on consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. Moreover, to avoid biased results and to ensure homogeneity, each selected group member had the following characteristics:

- They were 24–35 years old.
- They had all been daily active users of one or more SNSs for at least two years.
- They had the same cultural background (the first group was Indian, and the second one was Swedish)
- They represented a particular group (the first group was from the industrial marketing master’s degree program at Halmstad University, and the second group was from the healthcare service in the city of Falkenberg).

5.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is discussed individually in each paper. In this section, I present some general reflections about the various analytical approaches applied in each paper.

In paper 1, Consumer responses to ads on Social Networking Sites: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR), I could not find any evidence about existing studies providing an in-depth analysis of consumer response to ads on SNSs. Therefore, I used previous studies about online ads (see Cho & Khang, 2006; Kim & McMillan, 2008) and reviewed a body of research related to ads on social media in general (Knoll, 2016) as the main guides of my SLR. However, because the aim of my SLR in connection to this dissertation was to identify updated factors that could give a better explanations of consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, I undertook
additional efforts to understand each of the examined factors in the 100 collected articles. In the end, I identified hundreds of factors that were difficult to analyze containing “consumer response” in the title. For that reason, I classified the articles based on each article title and as guided the steps of consumer responses to ads as presented in the association model of the advertising communication process (Preston, 1982) to six main research trends (antecedents of acceptance or avoidance of ads, consumers’ perception and assessment of ad value, consumers’ attitude towards ads, consumers’ purchase intention, consumers’ referral mechanism, and benefits gained). Also, based on the information provided in the reviewed articles, I grouped the tested constructs into seven main groups that showed more related characteristics (personal identity and group norms, consumer belief factors, consumer motives, consumer attitudes, consumer behavior, advertiser-controlled constructs, and benefits gained). That sorting helped me to provide a more objective summary of the research evidence and shortcomings from the antecedents of consumer responses to ads on SNSs. In that regard, each of the identified trends helped me to set a research agenda for neglected research topics and theoretical and methodological issues. Researchers have used several definitions to define a specific construct, as observed from the collected articles. I consider my work a starting point to achieve that goal.

Paper II, “Users’ Assessment of the Value of Ads on Social Networking Sites: A Conceptual Study,” aimed to develop a new conceptual framework that can advance knowledge and increase understanding of how SNS users assess the value of ads on SNSs. The new conceptual framework emerged by connecting uses and gratifications theory with the main body of research regarding the assessment of ad value on SNSs. Uses and gratifications theory (approach) is used because it explains a range of consumer needs that can link to their perception, not like other theories that have a specific focus, such as social influence theory, which focuses on personal characteristics and social factors, or expectancy-value theory, which focuses on the effect of consumers’ beliefs on their assessment of the value of ads. In addition, previous studies have reflected on the role of online consumer needs in assessing the value of online ads (Ducoff, 1996; Brackett & Carr, 2001). The problem with using uses and gratifications theory is that it links need gratification to a specific choice of medium by the audience member, which makes it difficult to generate comparisons of SNS ads with other media types without investigating the audience needs for that media. Also, by connecting uses and gratifications theory to diffusion in adopting new technology and online consumer roles, personal, and social habits of media users
may change by offering new services on the same media. This will lead to certain changes in consumer gratification concerning the same media over time, the appearance of new gratifications, and the decline of others. For that reason, for this specific period and with respect to SNSs, I suggested a framework consisting of five belief factors (information value, entertainment value, credibility value, irritation value, and interactivity value), one motive factor (individuals’ pre-purchase search motivation), in addition to two social factors (social influence and national culture) to advance our knowledge and to increase our understanding of how SNS users assess the value of ads on SNSs.

In papers 3 and 4, the main purpose was to introduce interactivity and credibility as additional predictors for the model of assessing ad value on SNSs, in addition to the three variables from Ducoffe’s (1996) model for assessing the value of online ads, using different sample frames. Because the main focus was on the collective effect of the proposed five belief factors on consumers’ assessment of ad value (the only independent factor), regression analysis was used, and not structural equation modeling. Regression analysis with multiple correlation coefficients (R), coefficients of determinations (R²), and F-ratios were examined to predict the goodness-of-fit between the five factors and consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. That helped me to confidently determine which factors matter most, which factors can be ignored, and how these factors influence each other. In addition, paired t-tests were used to compare the means of the identified factors. This helped to characterize the research sample of each study. After that, tolerance statistics (TOL) for the predictors and the variance inflation factor (VIF) were tested to ensure that there was no collinearity problem among the identified predictors (Menard, 1995; O’Brien, 2007). Finally, the hypotheses were tested based on the standardized coefficient of each of the identified predictors.

Because paper 5, “The Effect of Culture on Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites: A Cross-cultural Analysis” aimed to test how national culture influences consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post-hoc tests was conducted, as recommended by some researchers (Pallant, 2007; Tabanick & Fidell, 2007). To address the interrelations among the variables used and to assess the factorability of the collected data, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test with cutoff criteria > 0.6, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity with a significance level of p < 0.05, were conducted on the items retained from the three samples, as recommended by Tabanick and
Fidell (2007). Then, ANOVA was used to identify the power of variability for each of the identified variables between the three tested research samples. Based on the ANOVA test, the eta squared ($\eta^2$) values were calculated to test the percentages of variance explained by each of the dependent variables. Finally, post-hoc comparisons were conducted to test how the research samples from the three nations varied in their assessments of the value of ads on SNSs.

Paper VI is titled “Factors Contributing to Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisement Value on Social Networking Sites: A Cross-cultural Focus Group Study.” As mentioned by Rabiee (2004), qualitative research in general, and focus group discussions in particular, generate large amounts of data, and to be able to arrive at the final results, after transcription of the audiotapes alongside the written field notes, I followed Krueger and Casey’s (2000) guidelines in having a written transcript for each of the FGDs independently, and then arranging the working transcripts in a reasonable order according to the interview guide and factors present in the conceptual framework of this doctoral dissertation (see Figure 4.3, page 46). This helped to compare findings between the two groups based on their cultural backgrounds. Finally, I started interpreting the collected data by exploring the frequency of comments, specificity of responses, and “big pictures” for each group about each of the investigated factors, which helped to identify which factors matter most for each group, which factors can be ignored, how each group interpreted the explored factors, and how these factors influence each other.

5.7 Approaches to ensuring trustworthiness of the research

As proposed by McBurney and White (2010) for a measurement to be of any use in science it must have both reliability and validity. In particular, the trustworthiness of this doctoral dissertation is very important to the author, and therefore reliability and validity are discussed in this section.

5.7.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept (Bryman & Bell, 2007). It is the property of consistency of a measurement that gives the same results on different occasions (McBurney & White, 2010). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) outlined three common approaches to assessing reliability: test/retest, internal consistency, and alternative form. The test/retest approach requires administering the questionnaire twice to the
same respondents, which was difficult to achieve in this dissertation, since it was difficult to reach the online respondents for the quantitative studies as second time. The second approach is alternative forms, which compares the responses to alternative forms of the same question or group of questions. The alternative forms approach was also difficult to use, since it requires respondents to answer two or more different questionnaires for each study. Finally, internal consistency measures the consistency of responses across either all questions or a subgroup of questions.

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), there are a variety of methods for calculating internal consistency, but the most frequently used one is called the coefficient alpha or Cronbach’s alpha. In that regard, for the three quantitative paper (papers 3, 4 and 5), after using principal component analysis (PCA) method of factor extraction with varimax rotation to remove items that loaded heavily on more than one construct factor and to eliminate fragile items in the three survey studies of this dissertation, I tested the internal consistency coefficients for each group of remaining items using Cronbach’s alpha to test pairwise correlations between items to find their internal reliabilities.

To measure internal consistency between variables using Cronbach’s alpha, I blocked the dependent variables into five main groups: information value, entertainment value, irritation value, interactivity value, and credibility value. A widely accepted social science cutoff for Cronbach’s alpha (alpha cutoff criteria), as shown by Garson (2011), is .80 alpha or higher, but some use .70 as acceptable, even for confirmatory research. In exploratory research an alpha equal to or greater than .60 but less than .70 is sometimes considered acceptable.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), reliability is comparable to dependability in qualitative studies. It refers to the stability of the findings over time (Bitsch, 2005). That means the researcher evaluated the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are all supported by the data received from the study participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). To achieve that, I did an audit trail by keeping raw data, interviews with each of the focus groups discussions, observation notes, documents and records, and coded transcriptions, as recommended by Lincoln and Gubas (1985). In addition, I did a peer examination by discussing my research process and findings with some of my colleagues who have more experience with the qualitative research, as recommended by Bitsch (2005).
5.7.2 Validity

This is the property of a measurement that tests what it is supposed to test, as proposed by McBurney and White (2010). It concerns with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about (Sauders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Two forms of validity are usually mentioned in the research literature: internal validity and the external validity (Kothari, 2004).

**Internal Validity**

In relation to survey studies, internal validity refers to the ability of the questionnaire to measure what the researcher intends to measure with it (Sauders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009); this can be achieved by enhancing research content validity and construct validity.

Content validity refers to the extent to which the measurement instruments provide adequate coverage of the investigative questions (Sauders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). To guide the measurement questions in my questionnaires and interview guide, I carefully defined the explored variables from the related literature to ensure that the instruments used included an adequate set of items that touch on each of the explored variables. Also, the instruments used in each study went through several rigorous procedures, discussing them with some of my colleagues and supervisors and at several Ph.D. meetings at Halmstad University to ensure the development of good measures with high content validity. Finally, I did a pilot study to improve the instruments used before distributing each of them.

Construct validity refers to the extent to which the measurement questions actually measure the presence of the constructs the researcher intended them to measure (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Construct validity for both the questionnaires and the interview guide was assessed through the question design procedure. This design was based on the extended conceptual framework of this dissertation, which was conducted based on the relevant theory for each of the variables used. Finally, to ensure high construct validity for the quantitative studies (papers 3, 4 and 5), before analyzing the collected data I did a principal component analysis (PCA) using factor extraction with varimax rotation to remove items that loaded heavily on more than one construct factor. This helped to eliminate fragile items in the three survey studies of this dissertation. In addition, using PCA helped me to extract the latent constructs for each study.
External Validity

External validity is the extent to which the investigator can conclude that the results can be applied to a larger population. This can be achieved by selecting a representative sample (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Due to the fact that the population of this doctoral dissertation and its papers are SNS users in general, which number in the billions, the frame of the samples in each paper was limited to a specific group of SNS users. In that regard, to be able to generalize this study we may need to replicate the study at a later time to determine if the same results occur as those found at the earlier time, as recommended. However, I carried out the same study with groups with different characteristics (in paper 3 with Swedish Facebook users and in paper 4 with brand community consumers on Facebook), and both studies confirmed the role of ad credibility and interactivity value on assessing the value of ads on SNSs, which can reduce threats of external invalidity, as presented by Creswell (2013).
Chapter VI: Summary of the Six Articles
Chapter 6 - Summary of the Six Articles

Paper I

Title: Consumer Responses to Ads on Social Networking Sites: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

Author: Hossam Deraz


Background: Scholars are more frequently investigating a widening range of phenomena to explain ads on SNSs as a marketing tool. Investigations about consumer response to ads on SNSs are the dominant research purpose in this field. However, researchers come from different disciplines, use a wide range of theories, and are inevitably limited in scope regarding their flows and sampling variation. That results in some conflicting findings. In such a situation, it is not always clear what the overall picture is, or which results are most reliable and should be used as the basis for theory and management decisions.

Also, there is no evidence of existing studies that provide an in-depth analysis of the investigated research context. That failure to provide an in-depth analysis of this line of research means there is a need to adopt systematic approaches to assess and aggregate different outcomes.

Purpose: To provide an in-depth analysis of investigations into the relationship of consumers to ads on SNSs and to identify the major themes and areas of deficit in investigating that research field.

Method: Systematic literature review. A search was conducted through two multiple bibliographic databases (OneSearch & Scopus).

The Results: The paper helped to identify 100 relevant studies published in the period of 2009 to 2017 in different management and social science fields, including marketing, advertising, communication, social science, and relationship management. It reflected six predominate research trends; 1) antecedents of acceptance or avoidance of ads; 2) consumers’
perception and assessment of ad value; 3) consumer attitudes towards ads; 4) consumers’ purchase intention 5) consumers’ referral mechanism; and 6) benefits gained.

The paper revealed the following shortcomings in researching consumer response to ads on SNSs. For example, regarding the research topics, there is still a lack of a general empirical overview of how companies and organizations use ads on SNSs to enhance their relationship management with users and the extent to which firms gain from using SNSs as advertising platforms. Also, customer satisfaction is one of the foundations in marketing processes for building customer relationships (Kotler et al., 2017). In particular, dissatisfied customers generate negative WOM and reduce the chances of repeat purchases (Baker, 2003). Based on that concern, organizations interested in quantifying customer satisfaction should develop data-gathering and analytical tools to better understand this elusive and ever-changing perception (Cochran, 2013). As presented by Arli and Dietrich (2017), customer satisfaction has a significant effect on SNS users to share online ads. However, none of the previous studies tested whether SNS users are satisfied with ads on SNSs and what factors predict their satisfaction. Investigating the level of customer satisfaction with ads on SNSs could be an appealing approach, not only for advertisers but also for SNSs themselves. It could help marketing planners to modify their ads in order to monitor customer satisfaction and gain their loyalty. Finally, firms’ views concerning ads on SNSs would certainly be an area worth researching. Studies in other advertising areas have revealed that the practitioner’s view is often far from homogeneous; that is, advertisers, marketing managers, media salespeople, and website owners may differ in their opinions (Smit, van Reijmersdal & Neijens, 2009). Also, it could be interesting to determine whether marketing practitioners’ perceptions match academic perceptions, as recommended by Ha (2008).

**How the paper contributes to the dissertation:** the first paper contributes to the dissertation by showing the knowledge gaps in earlier studies, and also by identifying an overview of the different driving and inhibiting factors influencing consumer response to ads on SNSs.
Title: Users’ Assessment of the Value of Ads on Social Networking Sites: A Conceptual Study.

Author: Hossam Deraz

Publication status: Published (International Review of Management and Marketing, 8(6), 1-9).

Background: SNSs are becoming an increasingly important part of organizations’ media strategy (Peters et al., 2013). Also, marketers can gain rich, unmediated consumer insights through SNSs faster than before and can promote loyalty through networking (Hudson et al., 2015). These additional advantages give SNSs great potential to engage with current and prospective customers and make marketers more interesting on using them as crucial advertising platforms.

Simultaneously, assessing the value of ads is one of the core determinants of brand success (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013), expressly about purchasing decisions and behavior concerning ads (Ducoffe, 1995). However, in regards to assessing the value of ads on SNSs, as identified in the previous systematic literature review, scholars mainly depend on either Ducoffe’s (1996) model or Brackett and Carr’s (2001) model. After the booming development of online ad systems, in addition to users’ recent experience with SNSs, is a 20-year-old model relevant without extending it? Ducoffe’s (1996) model, with its three variables (informativeness of the ad, entertainment value, and irritation value) did not fit with many of the previous studies within the SNSs context (see Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Dar et al., 2014; Haida & Rahim, 2015). According to the use-diffusion model presented by Shih and Venkatesh (2004), diffusion in adopting new technology will lead to change in consumers’ use-diffusion patterns, and that change in use-diffusion patterns will change outcomes, in the form of perceived impact of the used technology, satisfaction with technology, and more interest in future technologies. Thus, we need to extend the models used for assessing the value of online ads so they are more attuned to the nature of SNSs and their users’ needs.

Purpose: To provide a conceptual framework addressing factors that predict consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.
**Method:** Build a conceptual framework using a mix of variables from scientific articles that investigate consumer responses to ads on SNSs, consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, and the main gratifications from using SNSs based on uses and gratifications theory.

**The Results:** The action scenario is composed of a set of components that together shape the outcomes of the model to identify these factors. The suggested framework consists of five belief factors (information value, entertainment value, credibility value, irritation value, and interactivity value) and one motive factor (individuals’ pre-purchase search motivation), in addition to two social factors (social influence and national culture). (See Figure 4.3, page 46).

**How the paper contributes to the dissertation:** Paper II contributes to the dissertation by extending Ducoffe’s (1996) model for assessing the value of online ads to make it more appropriate to consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs.

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Paper III

**Title:** Factors Predicting Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites.

**Authors:** Hossam Deraz, Gabriel Baffour Awuah, and Desalegn Abraha Gebrekidan.

**Publication status:** Published in the *International Journal of Digital Information and Wireless Communications (IJDIWC)* (2015), 5(2), 111–123.

**Background:** Very few survey studies have been conducted that assess the value of ads on SNSs, and almost all of the previous literature in the field has presented results based on Ducoffe’s (1996) model, with its three primary variables of information value, entertainment value, and irritation value. The previous literature is also heavily skewed towards university students as the primary sample frame. In this regard, this article presents the results of a quantitative survey study on assessment of the value of ads on SNSs, as perceived by Swedish undergraduate students from Halmstad University who have had a Facebook account for at least two years.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the first empirical paper in this doctoral dissertation was to introduce interactivity and credibility as additional predictors for the model of assessing ad value on SNSs, in addition to the three variables of Ducoffe’s (1996) model for assessing the value of online ads.

**Theoretical framework:** The study relates to three areas of research: consumers’ attitudes toward ONAs, the assessment of ONAs, and the assessment of ads on SNSs. The theoretical framework of the paper was not based directly on assessing the value of ads on SNSs but was benchmarked from previous studies of consumer response to ads on SNSs, including factors predicting their attitudes and behaviors.

**Method:** A survey approach was used in this paper; the structured questionnaire was distributed among students at Halmstad University, primarily master’s degree students in the business program. Three distribution methods were used, including a *convenience method* by distributing the questionnaire to relevant students at Halmstad University face-to-face, *online distribution* by sending invitations on Facebook and by e-mail to the targeted students, and *snowball sampling* by distributing the
questionnaire to friends and colleagues of the respondents. A total of 201 respondents fulfilled the study criteria, out of 214 responses.

Based on principal component analysis, the completed questionnaires gave five construct factors that covered the main dimensions of the conceptual framework. Cronbach’s alpha was used to test the dimensionality of the remaining items of the constructed factors, and regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses and the coefficients of the predictors.

More details about the method are found in the first appended article, and there are some additional reflections in the chapter on methodology.

**The results:** This paper shows that ad credibility and interactivity value are critical factors in assessing the value of ads on SNSs. Based on a multiple regression analysis, four extracted factors together gave the best coefficient for assessing the value of ads. These factors and their coefficients are interactivity value (0.313), entertainment value (0.261), credibility value (0.146), and information value (0.139). Irritation value did not predict consumers’ assessment significantly. Finally, paired t-tests were used to compare the means of the identified factors, which helped to characterize the research sample of Swedish SNS users as being highly irritated by ads on SNSs and feeling that these ads are less credible. Also, they were more information-oriented when viewing ads on SNSs and were less interested in interacting with them or being entertained by them. Figure 6.1 shows the findings of the first article.

![Figure 6.1: Factors for assessing the value of ads on SNSs.](image)
**How the paper contributes to the dissertation:** Paper III contributes to the dissertation by showing that interactivity value and ad credibility are additional factors for assessing the value of ads on SNSs. The results of the study also contribute the first survey data to explore Swedish perceptions toward the value of ads on SNSs.
Paper IV

Title: The assessments of social networking site advertisements as perceived by brand community consumers.

Authors: Hossam Deraz and Gabriel Baffour Awuah.


Background: Almost all of the previous studies about assessments of ads on SNSs, including the first paper, have presented results based on the perceptions of younger SNS users. However, Hampton et al. (2011) found that users younger than 22 years old make up just 16% of total active users of social media. Moreover, according to the latest statistics about the distribution of active Facebook users in 2014, the 25+ age group represents 75% of total active users (Statista.com, 2015). Based on these numbers, it is not reasonable to look only at younger SNS users as the primary sample frame for exploring different activities on SNSs.

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to extend the results of the first empirical paper in assessing the value of ads on SNSs as perceived by a research sample other than the Swedish SNS users: in this case, active users from specific brand communities on Facebook. Moreover, it sought to determine the characteristics of BCCs while assessing ads on SNSs.

Theoretical framework: In addition to the three research areas from the first paper, this paper discussed the contradiction between consumers’ engagement in the virtual communities and the dimensions of assessing ad value. The theoretical framework was the same as the one used in the first paper, with the addition of brand communities that represent the research sample.

Method: In the second empirical paper, the questionnaire from the first article was modified, adding more items to the variables as recommended in the pilot survey study. The final structured questionnaire was then administered online through SurveyMonkey.com and was distributed among a population of BCCs for eight different brands on Facebook. Two online distribution techniques were used: a convenience sampling by sending personal invitations to the active participants on the Facebook pages of the eight brands, and web distribution by placing invitations with a link to the
questionnaire on the Facebook pages of the eight brands. A total of 590 respondents fulfilled the study criteria out of 673 responses received.

Based on principal component analysis, the completed questionnaires gave six main construct factors that covered the six principal dimensions (see Figure 6.2), five of which represented the independent variables (information value, entertainment value, irritation value, credibility value, and interactivity value) and one of which represented the dependent variable (SNAV). Cronbach’s alpha was used to test the dimensionality of the remaining items of the constructed factors, and regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses and the coefficients of the predictors.

More details on the method are in the second appended article, and there are some additional reflections in the methodology chapter.

**The Results:** The second paper confirmed the roles of ad credibility and interactivity value as additional critical factors in assessing the value of ads on SNSs. Based on the multiple regression analysis, the five extracted factors (and their coefficients) that predicted BCCs’ assessment of ads on SNSs were irritation value (−0.231), entertainment value (0.239), interactivity value (0.184), credibility value (0.155), and information value (0.125). A paired t-test was used to compare the average means of the identified factors, which helped to shape the characteristics of the research sample from the BCCs on Facebook. The respondents found ads on SNSs to be highly credible, and they felt less irritated by ads on SNSs. Also, the BCCs were more information-oriented when viewing ads on SNSs and were less interested in interacting with them or being entertained by them. Figure 6.2 shows the findings of the second article.

![Figure 6.2: Factors for assessing the value of ads on SNSs as perceived by BCCs.](image-url)
How the paper contributes to the dissertation: Paper IV contributes to the dissertation by showing that younger users are not representative of the primary active users of SNSs. It confirmed the existence of interactivity value and ad credibility as additional factors when assessing the value of ads on SNSs. The results of the study also contributed the first survey data that explore BCCs’ perceptions of the value of ads on SNSs.

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Paper V

Title: The Effect of Culture on Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites: A Cross-cultural Analysis

Authors: Hossam Deraz, Gabriel Baffour Awuah, and Desalegn Abraha Gebrekidan.

Publication status: Published in IEEE Xplore Digital Library (2015).

Background: As noted in the literature review, few researchers have conducted cross-cultural studies to explore consumers’ assessments of ad value on SNSs. Thus, this study followed previous attempts at measuring the effect of national culture on business practices by exploring the impact of national culture on the assessment of the value of ads on SNSs.

Purpose: The purpose of paper V was to gain knowledge about how the national culture of SNS users can affect their assessments of the value of ads on SNSs.

Theoretical framework: In addition to the three research areas from the first paper, this paper studied the impact of national culture on the variables for assessing the value of ads on SNSs. The theoretical framework was the same as the first article, with the addition of national culture, which was represented by the three research samples.

Method: The questionnaire from the second article was used to collect additional responses from the three selected nationalities. The questionnaire was distributed among the BCCs for the same eight brands used in the second paper. A total of 278 respondents fulfilled the study criteria out of a total of 357 responses received.

Based on principal component analysis, the completed questionnaires gave five main construct factors that covered the five predictors affecting the assessment of the value of ads on SNSs. Cronbach’s alpha was used to test the dimensionality of the remaining items of the constructed factors, and ANOVA and post-hoc tests were used to answer the research questions.

More details on the method are found in the third appended article, and some additional reflections are provided in the methodology chapter.
The Results: The third empirical paper (Paper V) confirmed that active SNS users from different nations have different assessments of four of the main factors in assessing ad value on SNSs. Those factors, according to the F-test, are interactivity value (335,549), irritation value (69,537), information value (54,935), and credibility value (12,689). However, the assessments of entertainment value, as perceived by the three samples, were not significantly different. The post-hoc tests described the differences between the three tested nations in consumers’ perception of ads on SNSs. Regarding the assessment of the ads’ information value, Egyptian and British respondents had a significant and positive difference compared to Dutch respondents, but there was no significant difference between Egyptian and British respondents. Regarding the assessment of credibility value, Egyptian respondents had the highest positive mean scores, while British respondents had the lowest. For the evaluation of interactivity value, Egyptian respondents had the highest assessment, and Dutch respondents had the lowest value. Finally, for feelings of irritation, Dutch respondents had the highest value, followed by Egyptian and British respondents; British respondents were less irritated than the Egyptian respondents.

How the paper contributes to the dissertation: Paper V contributes to the dissertation by showing that national culture affects the assessment of ad value on SNSs, and it highlights the importance of considering more nationalities in order to gain a deeper understanding of how SNS users assess the value of these ads. The results of this study also provide the first insights into how national cultural background might affect SNS users’ perceptions of ads on SNSs.

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Paper VI

Title: Factors Contributing to Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisement Value on Social Networking Sites: A Cross-cultural Focus Group Study

Author: Hossam Deraz

Publication status: Being revised (Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising).

Background: Based on my systematic literature review, there were three previous studies that used qualitative methods to investigate users’ engagement with ads on SNSs. The first study examined the antecedents of advertising avoidance on SNSs (Kelly, Kerr & Drennan, 2010). The second study explored content on SNSs that mitigates the attractiveness of ads (Hadija, Barnes & Hair, 2012). Finally, Gaber and Wright (2014) explored factors that affect young Egyptian consumers’ attitudes towards fast food advertising on Facebook. These three studies were inevitably limited in scope and did not investigate the value of ads. In that regard, we can say that there is no evidence of existing studies providing an in-depth qualitative analysis regarding consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. Thus, this article seeks to qualitatively identify a range of consumers’ perspectives regarding their assessments of these ads by using the extended framework of papers III and IV.

Purpose: To identify the main factors contributing to users’ assessment of ad value on SNSs and deepen our knowledge about how these factors predict the assessment of ads as perceived by SNS users from different cultural backgrounds.

Theoretical framework: This dissertation’s conceptual framework (See Figure 4.3, page 46).

Method: Data were collected through two focus group discussions (FGDs). This method was chosen to give a deeper explanation about users’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, since qualitative researchers argue that FGDs are quite suitable when investigating experiences, attitudes, and emerging ideas from a group (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Pope, Van Royen & Baker, 2002). To ensure homogeneity between each group, FGD sessions for group from the same profession, age group, and cultural background were carried out separately, in a location chosen by the participants and the
facilitator. Moreover, the extended conceptual framework was used to address the factors measured during each session in order to address construct validity. A semi-structured interview guide was created to guide the facilitator through the sessions.

**The Results:** The results of Paper VI have important implications for scholars and marketing managers alike. They contribute to the understanding of consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. In turn, they reflect a number of valuable insights that can be utilized by both researchers and marketers in order to understand how the addressed factors enhance consumers’ assessment of the value of these ads.

In general, this paper found that the seven presented factors affected consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs to some extent. Interestingly, the two FGDs revealed variations in each group’s interpretation of how each of those factors affects their assessment.

For example, concerning the frequency of comments and specificity of the respondents, using Krueger and Casey’s (2000) five weighting factors, the participants revealed different weights for the tested factors. For instance, the Indian group was more information-oriented and the factors they presented seemed applicable to them. In comparison, the Swedish group was more focused on credibility value, and factors like interactivity seemed not applicable to them.

**How the paper contributes to the dissertation:** Paper VI contributes to the dissertation by showing how each factor contributes to users’ assessment of ads on SNSs. Also, it offers a comparative analysis of findings from the two groups based on their cultural backgrounds.
Chapter VII: Conclusions
Chapter 7 - Conclusions

7.1 Discussion

The overall aim of this doctoral dissertation is to contribute to the understanding of consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. In particular, its purpose is to develop and empirically test a framework that can advance knowledge on how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs. To achieve that purpose, this study had sought to answer following overarching research question:

*What are the relevant variables that predict consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs, and how do these variables affect their assessment of ad value on SNSs?*

The overall research purpose and its question have been explored via four detailed purposes as presented in chapter 1. These detailed purposes have been developed into six academic papers as shown in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1 The six academic papers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>Consumer Responses to Ads on Social Networking Sites: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR).</td>
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<td>Paper III</td>
<td>Factors Predicting Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper IV</td>
<td>The Assessments of Social Networking Advertisements; as Perceived by Brand Community Consumers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper VI</td>
<td>Factors that Contribute to Online Consumers’ Assessment of Ad Value on Social Networking Sites: A Cross-cultural Focus Group Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of the six papers are discussed below and connected to each of the related detailed purposes.
1. To review and analyze relevant literature on consumer response to ads on SNSs in order to guide the empirical studies and to present relevant variables that explain the value of ads in the context of SNSs.

To identify primary variables in assessing the value of ads on SNSs, the dissertation started by doing a systematic literature review to locate and aggregate the most relevant variables. That systematic review helped to provide a balanced and objective summary of research evidence on antecedents of consumer response to ads on SNSs. In addition, it offered additional evidence about the moderating role of media type and ad type on consumer response to these ads. Moreover, based on the analysis of that systematic literature review and uses and gratifications theory, a conceptual paper was written. That conceptual paper provided an extended conceptual framework that addresses factors that contribute to consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs. That extended conceptual framework had a special focus on five belief factors (information value, entertainment value, irritation value, credibility value, and interactivity value), one motivation factor (pre-purchase search motivation), and two social factors (social influence and national culture), which together give better explanations for how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs and what the insights behind their assessments are.

2. To test the effects of consumers’ belief variables on their assessment of the value of ads on SNSs empirically among different research samples.

To achieve this sub-purpose, Ducoffe’s (1996) model for assessing the value of online ads was extended by considering credibility value and interactivity value, in addition to Ducoffe’s (1996) three variables of information value, entertainment value, and irritation value. The first two empirical papers tested the extended model with Swedish users and multinational brand community consumers. For the Swedish users, four of the five extracted factors predicted consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs. These factors and their coefficients are interactivity value (0.313), entertainment value (0.261), credibility value (0.146), and information value (0.139). However, irritation value did not predict consumers’ assessment significantly. Finally, paired t-tests were used to compare the means of the identified factors, which helped to characterize the research sample of Swedish university students as being highly irritated by ads on SNSs and feeling that these ads are less credible. Also, they were more information-oriented
when viewing the ads on SNSs and were less interested in interacting with them or being entertained by them.

Concerning active users from the investigated brand communities, the five extracted belief factors (and their coefficients) that predicted the BCCs’ assessment of ad value on SNSs were irritation value (−0.231), entertainment value (0.239), interactivity value (0.184), credibility value (0.155), and information value (0.125). A paired $t$-test was used to compare the average means of the identified factors, which helped to shape the characteristics of the research sample from the BCCs on Facebook. The respondents from the brand communities on Facebook found ads on SNSs to be highly credible, and they felt less irritated by these ads. Also, they were more information-oriented when viewing these ads and were less interested in interacting with them or being entertained by them. Despite the variations in the value of the coefficients for both studies, both studies showed the crucial role of the extended factors (interactivity value and credibility value) when assessing the value of ads on SNSs.

3. To test the effects of consumers’ national culture on their assessments of ad value on SNSs empirically.

To identify the role of national culture in assessing the value of ads on SNSs, both Paper V and Paper VI investigated that role. Paper V explored the effect of national culture on assessing the five belief factors, investigating assessments of brand community consumers from three different nations (Egypt, the UK, and the Netherlands). ANOVA and post-hoc tests revealed that active SNS users from different nations made different assessments of four of the main factors in assessing the value of ads on SNSs. Those factors, according to the F-test, are interactivity value (335,549), irritation value (69,537), information value (54,935), and credibility value (12,689). However, the assessments of entertainment value as perceived by the three samples showed no significant difference. Moreover, the post-hoc tests described the differences between the three tested nationalities in consumers’ assessment of ad value on SNSs. According to the final qualitative paper (FGDs), the two FGDs revealed variations in each group’s interpretation of how each of those factors affects their assessment of the value of ads on SNSs. Those variations in the interpretation of the explored factors may give an explanation behind the variations in assessing the value of these ads based on users’ cultural backgrounds. Moreover, concerning the frequencies of comments and the specificity of the respondents, the Indian participants frequently presented the information value of ads as a focal factor for as-
sessing the value of ads on SNSs. In comparison, the Swedish participants put more weight on feelings of credibility regarding the source of the ad and the media as a focal factor in their response to these ads. Concerning the emotions of the participants, the Indian group seemed more at ease with ads on SNSs, while the Swedish participants seemed more confused and deceived by those ads. In sum, both studies confirmed the crucial role of cultural backgrounds in assessing the value of ads on SNSs.

4. To investigate and explain qualitatively how online consumers assess the value of ads on SNSs.

The focus group study was conducted with the aim of investigating online consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs. The discussions were based on two themes. In the first one aimed to identify consumers’ thoughts about those ads, and the second theme aimed at understanding the factors that drive participants’ assessment of ads on SNSs and comparing that with the participants’ cultural backgrounds. Based on the two FGDs with participants from two different cultural backgrounds, the Indian participants seemed to carry a more positive attitude toward these ads. They distinguished between the pros and cons of ads on SNSs. They identified product relevance, offering complete and accurate information, feeling the brand is credible, and the potential appeal of the ads as the most important factors that attracted them to an ad on Facebook. Also, they pointed to unnecessary ads, a lack of accurate information, and unreliability of ads as the most frustrating factors. In comparison, the Swedish participants were more suspicious and gave more skeptical impressions about ads on SNSs in general. They were more focused on their feelings of credibility toward the medium, the brand, the source of the ad, and the ad’s relevance to their needs as the main factors. Also, they explained that ads on SNSs make them feel insecure when browsing Facebook.

Concerning the five belief factors, most of the Indian participants indicated that information value is the most crucial factor in assessing an ad’s value on Facebook. They clarified that companies have to consider what information they should give and not just depend on the company name. The Indian participants look for information that is relevant to their needs and expectation. In comparison, most of the Swedish participants agreed that if an ad is not relevant to them, they will never click on it. They added that they believe that companies on SNSs mostly offer inaccurate information about their products and keep a lot of information hidden.
As for entertainment value, both groups confirmed the role of entertainment value in assessing ad value. Moreover, they both perceived ads on Facebook as less entertaining. Furthermore, the Indian participants indicated that environmentally friendly ads and ads related to the family and their culture are the most appealing ads to them. They added that ads on SNSs that are discriminatory against a particular group of people are something they refuse to watch. In comparison, the Swedish participants focused on children, historical and cultural content, and also environmentally friendly ads as the main factors to attract them to an ad on Facebook. They indicated that ads on SNSs are more information oriented, and video ads are not appealing for the most part; some companies put an effort into making their ads look nice but that was not common.

For irritation value, the Indian participants indicated that false information, pop-up ads while watching videos or playing games, unclear information, using personal data, and discriminative ads are the main factors that make them annoyed with ads on SNSs. In comparison, the Swedish participants focused more on aggressive attacks from irrelevant ads, at being fraud by others, account hacking, and the lack of media credibility as the main reasons they feel annoyed with and deceived by ads on SNSs.

For credibility value, both FGDs revealed the crucial role of a feeling of credibleness when assessing the value of ads on SNSs. The FGDs reflected that feeling the ad was credible make the SNS users more comfortable when watching the ad. The Indian participants mentioned that trusting the media, brand familiarity, accurate information, and offering security in the payment process are the main factors to make them feel safe when responding to Facebook ads. In comparison, the Swedish participants focused on having a feeling of credibility toward the media and the ad source as the main reasons that they feel safe when watching an ad on Facebook.

For interactivity value, the Indian participants described Indian companies using SNSs to distribute their ads and collect reviews from their customers in order to modify the product or even to decide which ad they should adopt in their campaigns. They added that companies need to be fast and honest when using that system, which helps to build trust and respect with their customers on SNSs. They see companies that use efficient forms of ads to interact with their customers as more successful in gaining customer loyalty, and companies that do not use those forms or do not respond to their customer efficiently as not being qualified; they therefore ignore their ads. In comparison, the Swedish participants focused on the process of sharing
interesting ads with their Facebook network as the only mean of interaction. They perceived that Swedish companies use SNSs to encourage users to share ads with more people and not to create an atmosphere of direct interaction between the company and its potential or sought-after customers.

Focusing on the pre-purchase search motivation, the Indian participants connected pre-purchase motivation to their needs for the advertised products. They explained that they gained much from ads on SNSs by gathering the information they need before any purchase decision. After they see that an ad that matches their purchase requirements, they go through the information in the ad offer and compare it with the information on the company web page and personal reviews of that product on SNSs. In that way, they assess the information value of that ad and decide either to purchase the product or to recommend it on their timeline. In comparison, Swedish consumers confirmed that if they need to buy a product they do not depend on SNSs to gather information. They usually go directly to the company’s web page to gather information or even use some specific websites to compare prices and specifications for the advertised product.

Finally, social influence seemed to be an applicable variable for assessing the value of ads on SNSs for the Indian participants, but not for the Swedish FGD. The Indian participants indicated that their assessment of a specific ad on Facebook may depend on others’ reviews of the product and the brand. They clarified that if an ad has positive comments, it is a sign of the quality of the advertised product, and that encourages them to interact with it by sharing it on their timelines. Also, they indicated that their emotional needs help them to share good content with their friends and family members. However, they insist that this social influence effect is not valid if the ad is forwarded from members who are not relatives. In comparison, the Swedish participants limited the effect of social influence on the closer ties of relationships between family members and friends. They clarified that because they feel less credibility toward the medium, they could not trust any ad if they were not sure of its source.

In sum, the above points show the different ways of responding to the FGD questions based on the participants’ cultural backgrounds; they also confirm the role of each investigated variable. They also show that it is difficult to generalize one model when assessing the value of ads on SNSs. In general, the model that applies to one national background may not apply to another.
7.2 Implications

In general, this study helps to contribute to the understanding of consumers’ assessment of ad value on social networking sites. It offers a new approach by connecting consumers’ gratifications from using social networking sites to their assessment of ad value. In turn, it helps to reflect a number of valuable insights that can be utilized by both researchers and marketers in order to understand how the addressed factors enhance consumers’ assessment. It tests the contributions of credibility, interactivity value, social influence, pre-purchase search motivation, and cultural background, in addition to the previously tested variables of information value, entertainment value, and irritation value.

7.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of the six papers have different theoretical implications. The first concerns extending models of assessing the value of ads on SNSs, the second is about identifying active users on SNSs and determining relevant research sample frames when investigating activities on SNSs, the third is about the role of national culture in assessing the value of ads on SNSs, and finally, the fourth theoretical implication concerns its offering of an in-depth analysis to answer how SNS users assess the value of these ads, and what are explanations behind their assessment, using a multicultural focus group study.

Regarding the model of assessing the value of ads on SNSs, Paper II offers a new conceptual framework for better understanding how SNS users assess ad value on SNSs by connecting consumers’ assessment to their needs and sources of gratifications from using such sites. New factors, such as interactivity value, credibility value, pre-purchase search motivation explains the needs of cognition and social influence. Social needs were added to give a deeper explanation of those factors, contributing to the assessment of ad value on SNSs. In addition, by testing the effect of the five belief factors, Paper IV confirms the findings of Paper III about the role of credibility and interactivity, in addition to the previously identified items. However, when the identified factors are viewed in conjunction with each other, they support the findings of some previous studies and contradicted other findings, especially those concerning the coefficients for each of the identified factors. For example, irritation value had a significant adverse effect on assessments of the value of ads on SNSs, which does not contrast with the findings of other researchers (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla
2012; Dar et al., 2014). Also, information value had the lowest coefficient in conjunction with interactivity value and credibility value, which contradicts the findings of Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla (2012) and Saxena and Khana (2013), who reported that information value had the most substantial effect.

Concerning active SNS users, this study supports the findings of Hampton et al. (2011) and emphasizes that younger users such as university students are not the primary active users on SNSs, as has been argued elsewhere (Taylor, Lewin & Strutton, 2011; Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna 2013; Hadija, Barnes & Hair, 2012; Zernigah & Sohail 2012; Dar et al., 2014).

Regarding the cross-cultural literature, the findings of Papers V and VI provide some confirmations and some contradictions. For example, as presented in Hofstede (1980), low individualism enhances conformity to group attitudes and decreases the variety of opinions. This was confirmed by the fifth paper, because the Egyptian participants had the lowest individualism score and were more accepting of the ads on SNSs; they also had a lower irritation value than the Dutch respondents. Also, the Indian group in the last paper (Paper VI) confirmed those findings in comparison to the Swedish group.

Moreover, as identified by van Dyck (2014), people who have a lower power distance are more analytical and critical of ads on SNSs, and this was confirmed by the third study, in which the Egyptian participants who had the highest power distance score (70) were less irritated by SNSs and found them to be more credible than Dutch participants, who had a lower power distance score (38). However, the third paper did not confirm the findings of Hofstede (2001), who argued that cultures with low uncertainty avoidance exhibit higher tolerance for risk and are willing to try new things; the Egyptian participants who had the highest uncertainty avoidance score (80) were instead more willing to interact with ads on SNSs and felt less irritated by them than the British and the Dutch participants, who had lower uncertainty avoidance scores.

Final, the last paper has important implication for scholars and marketing managers alike. It contributes to the understanding of consumers’ assessment of ads on SNSs based on their cultural backgrounds. Interestingly, the two focus group discussions revealed variations in each group’s interpretation of how each of these factors affects their assessment based on
the cultural backgrounds of each group. The variations in the groups’ interpretations can explain the effect of cultural background on assessing the value of ads on SNSs by SNS users. In addition, that paper helps to reflect a number of valuable insights about how the presented factors affect consumers’ assessment of these ads. These findings can be utilized by both researchers and marketers in order to understand how the addressed factors enhance consumers’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs.

7.2.2 Practical Implications

This dissertation provides relevant evidence for online advertisers and marketing managers who are seeking to establish a communication platform with their SNS users. First of all, it presents the role of interactivity value, ad credibility, pre-purchase research motivation, and social influence in assessing the value of ads on SNSs, in addition to information, entertainment, and irritation values. It also offers the first survey studies on assessing the value of ads on SNSs for the following research samples: young Swedish SNSs users, BCCs, and Egyptian, British, Syrian, and Dutch SNS users. Finally, it offers focus group discussions that can help marketers to better define those market segments and to identify their needs and be more effective with their use of SNSs as marketing platforms.

The papers in this study show that SNS users’ feelings of irritation harm their assessment of SNAs, as do users’ feelings of a lack of credibility in ad sources. This negatively affects the level of interaction between firms and their consumers. Thus, online marketers need to find ways to increase the trustworthiness of their ads, which might decrease SNS users’ feelings of irritation and encourage online consumers to be more interactive with them.

Furthermore, this dissertation offers evidence that younger SNS users are a market segment that represents less than 15% of total active users, and they are not representative of the whole population of active SNS users. According to the data collected for the fourth paper in this study, just 12.9% of respondents from the eight brand communities were younger SNS users in the 1724 age range. In addition, advertisers also need to consider consumer culture as one of the leading driving factors that predict both consumer perceptions of ads on SNSs and their intention to interact with these ads.
7.3 Limitations

This dissertation tested factors that predict SNS users’ assessment of the value of ads on SNSs in different settings and using different research methods. However, the author focused on Facebook users because this is the most popular SNS worldwide. Also, Facebook’s ad system is well developed in comparison to other SNSs like Twitter or LinkedIn. Also, the research samples were limited to Halmstad University master’s degree students in the first paper, fans from specific brand communities on Facebook in the second and the third papers, and active Facebook members for the focus group study from the surrounding communities, including one group of master’s degree students.

7.4 Future Research

This study offers a developmental model to measure factors contributing to SNSs users’ assessment of ad value. However, that model was tested partially by the three quantitative papers, as only the five belief factors were tested in those papers. More studies are needed to test the entire model. In addition, concerning the effect of cultural backgrounds, media types, and ad types in each medium, as revealed in the systematic literature review, additional studies are needed to investigate the model and complete the picture for each specific ad type, especially marketer-produced content.

In conjunction with the new variables, the findings of this study had some contradictions with previous studies. Thus, to capture any changes in SNSs users’ assessment, researchers need to conduct more studies among consumers from different cultures and different market segments from time to time. Also, it would be interesting to gain a deeper understanding of the subject by including more demographic variables and measuring their effects on consumers’ assessment and attitudes toward ads on SNSs.

Moreover, due to the negative role of irritation in assessing the value of ads on SNSs, more studies are needed to investigate how to improve the trustworthiness of these ads and to encourage SNS users to be more interactive with them. Also, as presented in the second paper, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how SNS users assess ad value on SNSs, researchers need to adapt other models of understanding so they can understand to what extent those users are satisfied with similar ads. Some suggested models are the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI), the
Extended Performance Satisfaction Index (EPSI), and the gap model (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010).

Finally, concerning consumer response to ads on SNSs, we have a long way to go to create further knowledge. Researchers should keep exploring new constructs, but a lot of these constructs just been tested only once, while others show adverse effects. We need to keep our focus on these constructs in order to confirm their effects on SNS users’ responses and to gain more insights about the rejected ones. For example, celebrity endorsement has a positive influence on online users’ impressions of ads on SNSs (Hadija, Barnes & Hair, 2012; Li, Lee & Lien, 2012; Li, Lin & Chiu, 2014). However, when it moderates the effect of sponsored Facebook ads on users’ persuasion knowledge, it causes SNS users to develop beliefs of distrust toward the post, which in turn decreases their intention to engage in electronic word-of-mouth (Boerman, Willemsen and Van Der Aa, 2017). As a research community, we need a better understanding of the reasons behind those different effects of celebrity endorsement. Does it increase the credibility of ads or develop detrimental beliefs?
References


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Appendix
Appendix I

Dear Sir,

If you have a Facebook account for at least two years, and you use to look at advertisements on your page, please answer the questions below. This questionnaire aims to identify and measure the factors influence the assessments of advertisements on Social Networking Sites (SNSs).

Your response will be very helpful to identify your needs. (Data will be treated confidentially and just for study purpose).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender: □ Female □ Male</th>
<th>Age: □ 18-24 □ 25-45 □ Over 45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers should be given according to a five-point scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How do you perceive the value of advertisements on Facebook?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Useful</td>
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<td>2. Valuable</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Important</td>
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</table>

**How do you perceive the information value of advertisements on Facebook?**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Offers valuable information</td>
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<td>5. Offers timely information</td>
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<td>6. Offers updated information</td>
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**How do you perceive the entertainment value of advertisements on Facebook?**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Entertains me</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8. Is enjoyable</td>
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<td>9. Excites me</td>
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<td>10. Pleases me</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**How do you perceive the credibility value of advertisements on Facebook?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Is trustworthy</td>
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<td>12. Is credible</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Is believable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answers should be given according to a five-point scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.</td>
<td><strong>Strongly Disagree</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Strongly Agree</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>How do you perceive the value of interactive advertisements on Facebook?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Has an interactive cognitive value</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Facilitates the two-way communication</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Offers a vivid communication experience</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you perceive your feelings of irritation against the advertisements on the Facebook?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. It deceives me</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. It confuses me</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. It irritates me</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. It annoys me</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** the respondent has to choose just one way to answer this survey, through this paper, through the web link on SurveyMonkey as distributed on the Facebook, or by direct e-mail.

**Your Comment:**

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
*Thank you for your kind participation**
# Appendix II

*Paper 2 & 3 – Survey instrument*

Dear Sir

If you have a Facebook account for at least two years, you are a fan to a certain hotel brand and belong to its community on the Facebook.

Can you spare a few moments to take out our survey? This questionnaire aims to identify how the Fans of particular brands on Facebook perceive the advertisements and communication messages from their brands.

(Data will be treated confidentially and just for study purposes).

**OBS:** Please write age and nationality

**Gender:** □ Female □ Male

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age: ( )</th>
<th>Nationality: ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Answers should be given according to a five-point scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly Disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>2</strong></th>
<th><strong>3</strong></th>
<th><strong>4</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly Agree</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you perceive the value of advertisements on Facebook?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Is useful</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is valuable</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is important</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is interesting</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How do you perceive the information value of advertisements on Facebook?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Offers valuable information</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>6. Offers timely information</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>7. Offers updated information</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>8. It a good source of information</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How do you perceive the entertainment value of advertisements on Facebook?</strong></td>
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<td>9. Entertains me</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Is enjoyable to me</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>11. Pleases me</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>12. Is amusing</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>Answers should be given according to a five-point scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you perceive the credibility value of advertisements on Facebook?</td>
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<td>13. Is trustworthy</td>
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<td>14. Is credible</td>
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<td>15. Is believable</td>
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<td>16. Is accurate</td>
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<td>How do you perceive the value of interactive of advertisement on Facebook?</td>
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<td>17. It facilitates the communication with the company</td>
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<td>18. Is a fast communication tool</td>
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<td>19. Is an easy way to interact with others</td>
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<td>20. Provides a smooth interactive experience</td>
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<td>How do you perceive your feelings of irritation against advertisement on Facebook?</td>
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<td>21. It confuses me</td>
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<td>22. It irritates me</td>
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<td>23. It annoys me</td>
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<td>24. It deceives me</td>
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Note: the respondent has to answer this questionnaire just ones, be sure that you did not respond to this questionnaire before. Also, every IP address is allowed to respond to the questionnaire one time on *SurveyMonkey*.

Your Comment: ..................................................................................................................
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*Thank you for your kind participation* **
Appendix III

Focus Group Invitation Letter

Dear

I would like to invite you to take part in a focus group (small discussion group) about factors predicting the users’ assessment of advertisements (ads) on social networking sites — SNSs (e.g., Facebook) as part of my Ph.D. study. The focus group should last no longer than one and a half hours. We need three different groups from three different cultural backgrounds as part of this study, each group no more than 10 participants.

The focus group will provide an opportunity for you to develop your understanding of how the SNSs’ users assess the ads’ value on SNSs which is one of the emerged marketing tools. Also, that will help to develop the undergraduate students to gain more knowledge about how to design and justify the qualitative research method. In particular, we would like to know:

1. What are the main factors affecting the consumer’s assessment of ads on SNSs?
2. How could each of these factors predict the assessment of ads as perceived by SNSs’ users?
3. How these factors are related to the assessments of ads’ value, and to what extent they are related to each other’s?

More background information will be sent to those confirming attendance before the focus group by sending an e-mail to the most relevant audiences.

Your views especially for those studying marketing will be used to help us to develop our knowledge and will be part of developing a new conceptual model for assessing ads’ value on SNSs.

If you would like to take part in this focus group, please let us know by contacting me at hossam.derez@hh.se or by emailing Kalyani Pillalamarri: kalyani.pillalamarri@hh.se

Yours faithfully
Ph.D. Candidate

Hossam Deraz [hosder]
hossam.derez@hh.se
+46 70 212 01 32
Appendix IV

The research purpose

To develop our understanding of how users of social networking sites assess the value of advertisements (ads) on SNSs.

The research questions are:

1. What are the main factors affecting consumers’ assessment of ads on an SNS (Facebook)?

2. How could each of these factors predict the assessment of ads as perceived by SNS users?

Interview guide

Each focus group will start with the next open question to find out which factors each group mostly agree with in terms of the main factors that predict their assessment of ad value on Facebook.

1. Which factors do you think can affect your assessment of ads on your Facebook homepage or on other SNSs you use? (5 minute discussion among group members)

Suggested factors for each group

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
A Questioning Route

1. How do you feel about ads on Facebook?
2. How can an ad get your attention? Could you explain further?
3. What is particularly helpful about ads on Facebook?
4. What is particularly frustrating about those ads? Could you say more?
5. How do you evaluate ads on Facebook? Please describe what you mean.
6. When you see an ad on Facebook, what means that this ad offers valuable information? Can you clarify that? How do you think companies can improve that?
7. Think back to when you see an ad on Facebook: what makes you say this is an interesting and amazing ad? Can you give an example? How can this ad give you a bad impression? Explain?
8. When you see an ad on Facebook, what makes you say this is an accurate and believable ad? Would you explain further? How do you think companies can improve that?
9. What makes you feel deceived and annoyed when watching an ad on Facebook? Could you say more? Do you have any examples? Any further explanations? How do you think companies can reduce that?
10. Think back when you see an ad on Facebook: what makes you say this ad facilitates communication with the company? If you feel interested in an ad, what are your reactions? How can companies improve their communication with SNS users?
11. When you see an ad on Facebook, what makes you say this ad is useful and risk-free? How can that contribute to your evaluation of that ad? How about if the ad is from unrecognized resources? Could you say more?
12. If you are looking to buy a new product or service, how can ads on Facebook help you? What makes you say this ad offers information that is helpful to my purchasing decision? Can you give an example? How can that contribute to your assessment of those ads? Can you clarify your statement?
13. When a friend or one of your Facebook community members forwards an ad to you, can that affect your impression of that ad? If yes, how? How can your friends’ comments on ads on Facebook influence you? What are your friends’ actions in your comments about an ad on Facebook? Can you give an example?

14. Is there anything that we missed about the assessment of ads on Facebook? Is there anything you wanted to say that you did not get a chance to say?

Thank you for sharing your opinion with us.

Best Regards