WANT-TO VS. HAVE-TO SOCIALIZATIONS IN SOCIAL NETWORK SITES: FEAR OF ISOLATION, JEALOUSY, AND TIE STRENGTHS

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Abstract

*As social network sites (SNS) expand the boundaries of one's social life, we often observe encounters between two different types of motivations for socialization - I **want-to** socialize vs. I **have-to** socialize. SNS at present are considered commodities. People do not always start using SNS because they want to, but often because everyone else is using it; people do not wish to be isolated from social circles. This study aims to examine different types of user motivations in SNS and observe how these lead to actual socialization behaviours with different progress dynamics. We apply constraint- and dedication- based relationship framework to distinguish motivations and identify constructs for each motivation. We plan to collect data from one of the major SNS to validate how their socialization intentions are differently realized into actual behaviours. We develop a two-staged research model and this research-in-progress presents the result of the pilot study conducted for the first stage. We also discuss how the second stage of the study will be executed, and how it will benefit the related literature when the project is successfully completed.*

Keywords: SNS, SNS motivation, Fear of isolation, Jealousy, Tie strength

1   INTRODUCTION

The Social Network Sites (SNS) have attracted a large amount of users in an extremely short time and has become one of the major influences on people's daily lives (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Socializing is one of the innate desires of human beings, and SNS such as Facebook provide convenient avenues that fully support people to socialize with friends and families. The functions provided by SNS help users develop social relationships and feel accepted and respected by others, thus satisfy one of the most fundamental aspirations of the human being, i.e., relatedness needs. It is one of the three basic human needs suggested by existence, relatedness, growth (ERG) theory (Alderfer 1969). However, as SNS expand the boundaries of one's social life, we often observe encounters between two different types of motivations for socialization, namely, I *want-to* socialize and I *have-to* socialize. During the introduction of SNS, most relationships are initiated based on the users' own desires. People became SNS friends only when they wanted to be friends. As people use SNS more deeply, however, many of them became to feel more stressed and anxious and even consider stopping using it (Bevan et al. 2014): as SNS became a social commodity, people use SNS not always because they wanted to, but often because they feel the pressures of using SNS for various external reasons such as peer pressure and fear of isolation (Peluchette et al. 2013).

Examining the different types of motivations for SNS use for socialization is important for SNS based businesses in terms of fulfilling their users' subjective well-being. From the perspective of subjective well-being, *want-to-use* may enhance it by fulfilling the users' social needs but *have-to-use* may increase stress in life as the users feel compelled to socialize against their needs. As the level of stress from the use of SNS increases, the level of subjective well-being may decrease and more people may attempt to quit using it. Furthermore, considering the significance of SNS as platforms for consumer marketing and a database for future business practices, understanding different user motivations and subsequent behaviours are essential (Kim et al. 2012).

Despite its importance, there is a lack of understanding about the different types of motivations for socialization in the use of SNS. Prior research on the motivations of SNS use has mainly addressed them from the want-to desire perspective, such as perceived benefits (i.e., usefulness and enjoyment) (e.g., Cheung et al. 2011; Lin and Lu 2011) and communication with peer group (e.g., Barker 2009; Cheung et al. 2011). The missing piece in the literature is an explanation of the have-to motivations and the differences with the want-to motivations.

This study therefore aims to examine various user motivations in SNS in terms of want-to and have-to perspectives and observe how these lead to actual socialization behaviours with different progress dynamics. For this purpose, we apply constraint- and dedication-based relationship framework (Bendapudi and Berry 1997) to distinguish between have-to and want-to motivations, identify corresponding motivation factors, and collect data from one of the major SNS to examine how they lead to socialization intention, and how this intention is realized into actual socialization behaviours. This study contributes to not only the communication research but also e-business literature by advancing the theoretical understanding of the different motivations in SNS use and their following behaviours.

This research-in-progress paper is organized as follows: first, we introduce the concept of dedication-vs. constraint-based relationships in SNS and identify key constructs for each relationship. Then we develop a two-staged research model to explain how these constructs differently function to form different types of socialization intention and the behaviours themselves. The constraint-based part of the first stage of the research model is tested via a pilot study of 60 undergraduate students. Then, we explain how future study will identify the remaining building blocks of SNS motivations. Finally, we discuss how this study will benefit the related literature upon successful completion.

2 THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

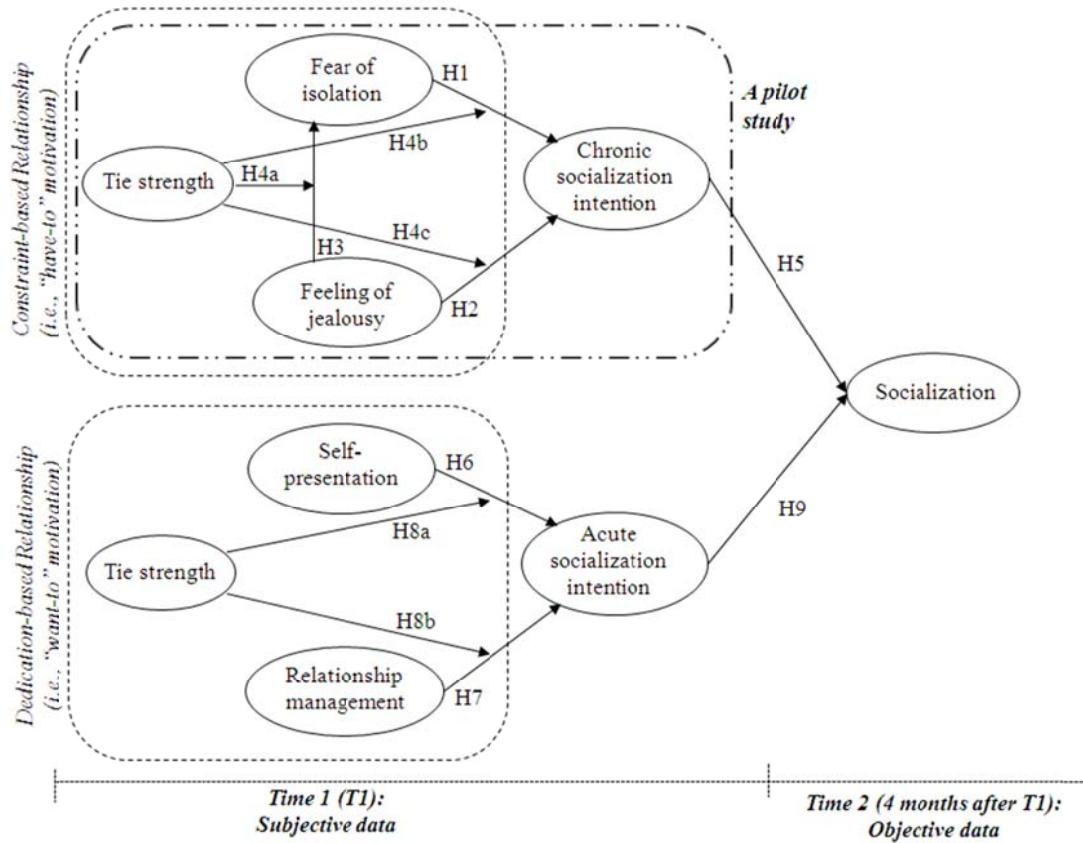### 2.1 Dedication-based vs. Constraint-based Relationships in SNS

Figure 1. *Two-staged Research Model*

When the SNS were first introduced, it soon became a communication tool for personal purposes (Correa et al. 2010). The SNS connect distant friends and family members, establish friendships and may occasionally help people find their lifetime partners. SNS have also provided venues through which people can coordinate meetings and promote social events. SNS relationships are mostly built with such positive motivations and are filled with personal and private elements.

However, as more people use SNS, some of the relationships created are not solely initiated by positive motivation such as love and friendship, but also by negative motivations such as fear of isolation, or jealousy for others. For example, people occasionally accept SNS friend requests from superiors at work, not because of the desire to establish a connection through SNS but because of the organisational hierarchy that hinders a subordinate to reject the request (Peluchette et al. 2013). People also have concerns that not being an active user of SNS may isolate them from social circles created through this channel. People now use SNS not only because they want to, but sometimes because they feel that they have to.

To capture these changing motivations in using SNS, we introduce the dedication- and constraint-based relationship framework. This framework was originally proposed by Bendapudi and Berry (1997) to explain the relationship between customers and suppliers. According to this framework, customers associate with a service provider either because of constraint (i.e., "have-to" stay in the relationship because of high switching cost) or because of dedication (i.e., "want-to" stay in the relationship because of the benefits and incentives).

The SNS also exhibit similar characteristics in distinguishing relationships created by people who desire to socialize and by those who at times experience the external pressure to establish friendships. These similarities rationalize the contextual adequacy of the framework for application in SNS, as will be discussed in the succeeding sections. We further propose that the constraint-based motivations are slow and steady and the dedication-based motivations are fast and drastic in the realisation of the actual behaviour and name them chronic socialization and acute socialization respectively (Figure 1).

2.2   Chronic Socialization Motivation for Constraint-based Relationships

Social isolation is defined as the level of non-integration of individuals into groups in the social environment (Victor et al. 2005). According to Noelle-Neumann (1984), people in a society imitate others because of the fear of isolation. Regardless of one's personality, whether an introvert or an extrovert, no one desires to be isolated from the society (Shoemaker et al. 2000). Social integration as a reverted concept of the isolation is an important social resource that must be carefully and properly managed (Victor et al. 2005).

Meanwhile, SNS were developed to connect with people, lessen loneliness and eliminate the feeling of isolation (Sanders et al. 2000). Thus, SNS are especially popular among the young generation who experience passive isolation such as peer rejection, integration difficulties and negative social self-perception, which can eventually lead to depression and loneliness (Rubin & Mills 1988). Clearly, the main reason of people in socializing is to not be isolated from the society. Therefore, we have the following hypothesis.

H1 –Fear of isolation has a positive effect on chronic socialization intention.

Feeling of jealousy is defined as an emotional reaction to a threat to a relationship (Pfeiffer & Wong 1989) and one of the most prevalent but potentially destructive emotions in relationships (Buunk & Bringle 1987). White (1981) describes jealousy as a "complex of thoughts, feelings and actions which follow threats to self-esteem and/or threats to the existence or quality of the relationship".

The environment that SNS provide is more than adequate for jealousy to emerge because all interactions are broadcasted and observable to participants in the social network. Seeing somebody posting personal and intimate messages to the wall of one's girlfriend or boyfriend is one of common triggers of jealousy and conflict in SNS (Muise et al. 2009; Persch 2007). Personal characteristics, such as strong desires for beauty and popularity, also intensify the jealous emotion (Utz & Beukeboom 2011). The increasing jealousy motivates people to be more active in SNS and to be protective of existing relationships, which eventually increase the socialisation intention. From these ideas, we have the following hypothesis.

H2 – The feeling of jealousy has a positive effect on chronic socialization intention.

Uncertainty in a relationship reinforces jealousy. When a person is insecure about his/her relationship with his/her friends and partner, the feeling of jealousy intensifies (Theiss & Solomon 2006). This uncertainty leads to the fear for a possible future in which he/she is alone and isolated. If one is certain about the depth and the strength of the relationship and believes that it will endure, the feeling of jealousy will hardly grow. Jealousy in some aspect reveals the extent of fear for the future in which he/she may be alone and lonely (Pfeiffer & Wong 1989). From this, we have the following hypothesis.

H3 – The feeling of jealousy has a positive effect on the fear of isolation.

From the perspective of ties, the fear of isolation can be also described as a feeling that other ties will be strengthened while his/her personal ties will be weakened. Jealousy is an increasing uncertainty regarding one's ties. Changes in tie strengths are particularly significant in SNS because all ties in SNS are broadcasted and observable to many. The SNS users are not only concerned of their own ties, but also those of others. People by nature are more satisfied when their ties are strengthened, while others are not. The previously described relationship and level of commitment have been shown to contribute to increased jealousy and fear of isolation. In general, people in committed relationships

experience less jealousy compared with those in new and casual relationships (Utz and Beukeboom 2011). From this perspective, we have the following hypothesis.

H4 –Tie strength (i.e., relationship closeness) moderates the relationship between the feeling of jealousy and the fear of isolation (H4a), the relationship between the fear of isolation and chronic socialization intention (H4b), and the relationship between the feeling of jealousy and chronic socialization intention (H4c).

The socialization intention formed based on negative emotional foundations, such as fear of isolation and jealousy, is different from that formed by pure desire of the people. The former is similar to the relationship formed based on obligation. That is, the socialization intention is based not because the individuals want to but because they have to for avoidance of isolation or to compete with others (i.e., jealousy). The feeling of compulsory socialization is slow in the realization of the actual behaviour because of internal reluctance. From this, we have the following hypothesis.

H5 –Chronic socialization intention has a positive effect on socialization.

2.3 Acute Socialization Motivation for Dedication-based Relationship

Self-presentation is defined as an action of conveying one's image or personal details to others (Baumeister et al. 1987). Self-presentation is a human nature that is not only motivated by the intention to show oneself to others but also to satisfy oneself. The SNS, in this sense, is an impeccable platform to fulfil the self-presentation desire because of various features that include posting of status updates and photographs and participation in situational activities such as chatting (Hogan 2010). Through SNS, one can control the manner of self-presentation (Ellison et al. 2007). From these concepts, we have a following hypothesis.

H6 – Self-presentation has a positive effect on acute socialization intention.

The nomological network between the motivation of relationship management and socialization through SNS is well established as those two are the very purposes of their foundation. It is well known that, for examples, people socialize through SNS looking for social interaction (Smock et al. 2011), expansion of social capital (Ellison et al. 2007), and social connections (Sheldon et al. 2011). Building on this prior work, we therefore propose the following hypothesis.

H7 –Relationship management has a positive effect on acute socialization intention.

The SNS usage starts with making friend relationships and these relationships are often established from the users' offline social surroundings. Thus, some of the relationships in SNS are stronger than the others and have higher chance of future face-to-face interaction. When future face-to-face interactions are expected, people recognize the risks of misrepresenting their selves and put great efforts to making their self-presentation credible while interacting with others through SNS (Ellison et al. 2006). Lin et al. (2011) also argue that network externalities are effective when the possible connections in a social network are with people in the users' surrounding social environment rather than random people. Therefore, we hypothesize as following.

H8 –Tie strength (i.e., relationship closeness) moderates the relationship between self-presentation and acute socialization intention (H8a) and the relationship between relationship management and acute socialization intention (H8b).

The socialization intention formed based on the dedication-based motivations leads people to use SNS without any hesitation. When people aim for relationship management and self-presentation, they have no reason to disregard or hesitate in using the SNS to socialize. Their intention quickly forms into the behaviour. From this perspective, we have the following hypothesis.

H9 –Acute socialization intention has a positive effect on socialization.

3   PILOT STUDY FOR THE HAVE-TO MOTIVATION MODEL: TESTING H1–H4

3.1   Survey Design and Item Development

Prior to the main study, we conducted a pilot study to test the have-to motivation model. For the measurement instrument development, we developed 3-4 scales for fear of isolation, jealousy, and socialization intention by adapting them from previous research (Buunk & Bringle 1987; Shoemaker et al. 2000; Victor et al. 2005). They are carefully modified to be adequate for SNS context (Survey items are available upon request). To test for moderating effect of tie strength (H4), we create three cases (A, B and C) with different tie strengths. Various dimensions of tie such as intimacy and emotional support have been discussed in prior studies (Gilbert & Karahalios 2009), but this study simplifies the concept of tie to 'the perceived closeness between two people' (questionnaires available upon request).

For the experiment, we first ask respondents to imagine a situation when he/she observes a SNS interaction among friends, namely, John and Jack. Case A is when respondents, John, and Jack are close with one another. Case B is when the respondent is close with John but not with Jack. However, John and Jack are close. Case C is when the respondent is close with both John and Jack, but they are not close with each other. Respondents were then asked to respectively indicate their perceived fear, jealousy and socialization intention of the three different cases in the order of A-B-C. By observing the changing marginal effects of fear of isolation and jealousy across cases, we test for the moderating effects of tie strength.

3.2   Descriptive Study

A survey is conducted among undergraduate students attending a university in an Asian country. Sixty-five students participated and 60 of them are used for analysis. About 38% of them are male and 95% of them are between 17 and 22 years old (Table 1).

Gender		Age		SNS Use		SNS Use/day	
Male	23 (38%)	17-19	31 (52%)	2-4 yrs	13 (22%)	0-1 hrs	29 (48%)
Female	37 (62%)	20-22	26 (43%)	5-6 yrs	36 (60%)	1-2 hrs	18 (30%)
Total	60 (100%)	Over 22	3 (5%)	7-9 yrs	11 (18%)	2-6 hrs	13 (22%)
		Total	60 (100%)	Total	60 (100%)	Total	60 (100%)

Table 1.   Respondent Demographics

3.3   Measurement Model

	CaseA			CaseB			CaseC		
	Fear	Socialize	Jealous	Fear	Socialize	Jealous	Fear	Socialize	Jealous
Fear1	**.839**	.122	.091	**.793**	.089	.292	**.919**	.051	.055
Fear2	**.894**	.047	-.068	**.921**	.175	.112	**.901**	.060	.153
Fear3	**.779**	.144	.174	**.828**	.162	.302	**.756**	.086	.461
Fear4	**.661**	.134	.371	**.800**	.176	.242	**.695**	.193	.457
Jeal1	.008	-.060	**.878**	.256	.025	**.870**	.148	-.020	**.907**
Jeal2	.261	-.087	**.743**	.336	.117	**.817**	.280	.000	**.833**
Inte1	.060	**.933**	-.066	.165	**.904**	.111	.200	**.890**	.068
Inte2	.200	**.886**	-.091	.155	**.943**	.033	.039	**.958**	-.022
Inte3	.109	**.932**	.002	.138	**.945**	.044	.017	**.926**	-.010
Alpha	*0.83*	*0.92*	*0.59*	*0.90*	*0.94*	*0.76*	*0.90*	*0.92*	*0.78*

Table 2.   Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Test

We performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to ensure the unidimensionality (i.e., convergent and discriminant validities) of the scales. EFA is useful as a preliminary analysis when the theoretical foundation is relatively new and not often validated. Table 2 shows that two items of jealousy were dropped due to their low factor loading values; all of the remaining items presented loading values higher than 0.6 satisfying the required level (Bagozzi & Yi 1988). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha (Table 2), and all constructs show a value higher than a minimum threshold alpha value of 0.6 (Nunnally 1994). Lastly, all the constructs in Table 3 show correlation coefficients less than 0.7, which indicates that multicollinearity is not a potentially serious problem in our dataset (detailed measurement model test result available upon request).

	Case A			Case B			Case C		
	Fear	Jealous	Socialize	Fear	Jealous	Socialize	Fear	Jealous	Socialize
Fear	1			1			1		
Jealousy	.264[*]	1		.554[**]	1		.463[**]	1	
Socialize	.218	-.095	1	.425[**]	.226	1	.297[*]	.073	1
*:<0.05; **<0.01									

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

3.4   Structural Model: H1 – H4 Test

We conducted a structural model analysis to test H1, H2, H3 and H4. A summary of the analysis is shown in Table 4. The statistics in the three groups indicated high levels of model fit, which support the overall adequacy of the models.

Model	χ^2	DF	P-value	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	AGFI	NFI	Nrmd χ^2	CFI
Case A	30.51	24	0.1684	0.90	0.068	0.057	0.81	0.89	1.27	0.97
Case B	23.88	24	0.4684	0.92	0.000	0.043	0.85	0.95	1	0.99
Case C	37.95	24	0.0351	0.87	0.099	0.071	0.77	0.91	1.58	0.96

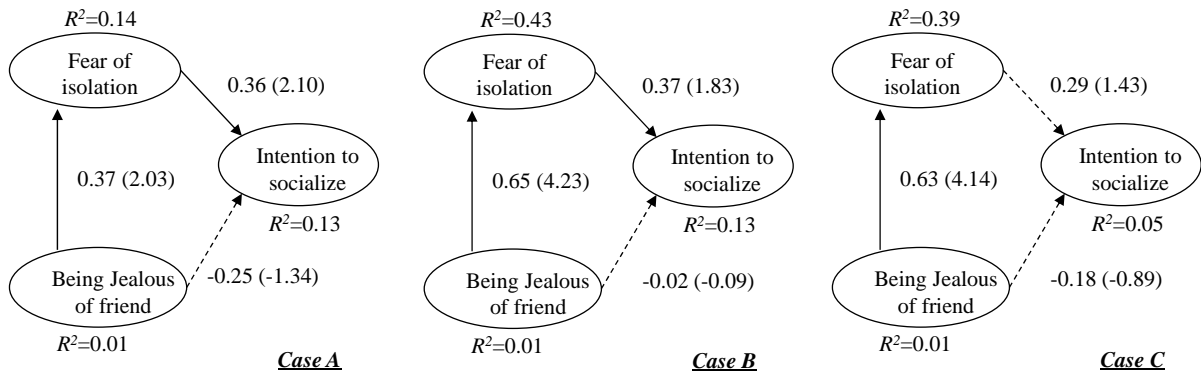*Table 4.   Structural Model Fit Indexes*

Figure 2.   Hypotheses Test Result

The path coefficients in the three groups were then examined. Figure 2 shows that the path from fear to intention (H1) is significant in case A and B, but not in C. H1 is partially supported. The path from jealousy to intention (H2) is not significant in all three cases. Thus, H2 is not supported. The path from jealousy to fear (H3) is significant in all three cases. Thus, H3 is fully supported. H4 is tested by comparing paths across cases. The path from jealousy to fear increases as the relationship becomes asymmetric (i.e., one of the party is not close with the subject). Furthermore, the path from fear to socialization intention becomes insignificant when the observed relationship does not seem close (i.e., when the socializing two subjects are not close with each other. χ^2 test results for path difference are available upon request). A summary of the hypotheses test results is presented in Table 5.

H	Case A	Case B	Case C	Total	H	Case A vs. B	Case A vs. C	Case B vs. C	Total
H1	S	S	NS	PS	**H4a**	S	S	NS	PS
H2	NS	NS	NS	NS	**H4b**	NS	S	S	PS
H3	S	S	S	S	**H4c**	NS	NS	NS	NS
S: supported; NS: not supported; PS: partially supported									

Table 5.   Hypotheses Test Result Summary

The findings from the pilot study can be summarized as follows. First, jealousy is not a direct motivation for socialization, but has an indirect effect through the fear of isolation. Fear of isolation is found to be a more direct and significant motivation for socialization. This result is interesting because jealousy has been discussed as one of the strongest stimuli for offline and online human action (Buunk & Bringle 1987; Muise et al. 2009). However, the result of our pilot study shows that at least in SNS, jealousy is not a direct, strong motivation for socialization, but initially increases the fear of isolation and then secondarily leads people to socialize more.

Second, the impact of jealousy on fear of isolation becomes more significant when the relationship structure is asymmetric. (i.e., the path coefficient of jealousy is stronger in Case B and C than in Case A). This is also an interesting result because it directly supports the fundamental assumption used in this study that people deeply care about the ties of others as well as their owns. When mutuality breaks, jealousy becomes an important source of fear of isolation.

4   FUTURE RESEARCH PLAN

The pilot study was conducted first to a small group of people to refine items for jealousy and fear of isolation in SNS. The result indicates that some of the items for jealousy are not adequate in SNS context and needs more refinement. The research model also needs to be refined further. To differentiate between the acute and chronic socialization intentions, more subtle and careful design for executions with clear time sequences is required. Full understanding and agreement from the respondents are necessary to observe actual socialization behavior. According to the current research model, a respondent will participate in surveys twice and their actual socialization behaviours in SNS such as Facebook will be observed. The expected sample size is 400–500, which will be selected from active SNS users.

5   EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION

This study expects following academic contribution and practical implications. First, it will contrast two different aspects of relationships in SNS by applying dedication- and constraint-based relationship framework. This framework has often been used in business relationship situation to distinguish the cases when a customer is locked-in to a certain supplier due to high switching cost from when a customer stays due to his/her willingness (Bendapudi and Berry 1997). This is similar to the recent SNS usage pattern that recently SNS are not only considered as personal communication tools, but also widely used for business and professional purposes. This framework is also suitable to highlight the importance of the relatedness needs in human life in a way that is not applied in prior SNS studies. People start feeling that they are being pressured to use it. Such changing patterns in its use make this study more timely and meaningful (Tsai and Bagozzi 2014).

Secondly, this study plans a longitudinal approach to show how behavioural intention is realized to actual behaviours with different time sequences based on relationship types. Most of prior studies measured behavioural intention and assume that it will naturally and steadily develop to behaviour without differentiating the relationship types (Lee & Lee 2015). However, the present study argues that the probability of such behavioural realization will be faster when the relationship is based on willingness rather than on constraints. It adds additional value to literature that equates behavioural intentions to actual behaviours without considering the differences in realization.

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