

BOONCHAI HONGCHARU

National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand

A MODEL OF SOCIAL INTERACTIVITY THROUGH INTERNET-BASED TECHNOLOGIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**Abstract:**

The emergence and the rapid adoption of social media in recent years have led to the political, economic and social changes. The recent political upheavals in several countries from the Middle East, Eastern Europe to Southeast Asia have sparked an interest for the participants to use internet-based technologies for instantaneous communications among themselves. News, rumors and various messages can spread swiftly without frontiers and obstruction from the opponents. The new communications technologies themselves cannot be censored or limited any longer. Facebook, twitters, instagrams, you tube, blogs etc. have been effective tools to link the messages among the participants. This up-to-date information can be beneficial to understand what happens in social interactivity using social media. Moreover, in an anonymous environment of the Internet, participants speak out more loudly than ever before. Instead of focusing on the interactions between the company and its customers, this study intends to explore significant factors in the society which leads to social interactivity in the Internet-based technologies. The model will help us learn more about the processes of how the Internet-based technologies function in the society and will be applied for the marketing activities using the social media. The implications for integrated marketing communications would help us understand more deeply how the social interactivity can be applied for the brand building and relationships among communications participants.

Keywords:

Social interactivity, Interactive media, Internet marketing, marketing communications, social media

JEL Classification: M49, M31, O39

Introduction

The Internet-based technologies have entered the new phases or Internet 2.0 which focuses on the user generated content. At present, it is clearly witnessed that users have more control over their messages in the cyberspace while sellers or senders act to facilitate the interactions among the participants or listen and act according to the needs of the participants. Increasingly, the significance of user's voices and interactions will shape the directions of the individuals, communities, businesses and society.

While previous research focuses mostly on the interactions between individuals and the company and attempts to explain the ways business and their customers interact in the social media settings, few research has been done to explore the social interactivity among the people in the society when they are using the internet-based technologies.

The Needs for Understating Social Interactivity

As the Internet technologies evolve, we have witnessed the increasing connectivity among participants in the society. The number of users of these social media websites exploded after initial launch. For instance, after 12 months of operations, Youtube had 17 million users and had been only seconded to Pinterest which reached the number in only 9 months (Miles, 2014). Moreover, the application of Global Positioning System (GPS) to the mobile technology has made it more convenient for users to find out the business premises and they are now added with reviews from other participants (Hopkins & Turner, 2012). These have changed the ways companies connect with their customers. Moreover, the companies' marketing communications are not restricted to the target customers but expand to cover the non-customers also. This is because the social connectivity can be done between customers and their friends or relatives, groups, blogs, community and others.

When this happens, it is essential to investigate the rationale and social processes that would explain the social interactivity via the Internet-based technologies.

Interactions among people in a society are common as they need to fulfill their social needs (Fiske, 1992). Even before the social needs are met, people are in contact to fulfill their physiological and safety needs (Maslow, 1943). Communication is the tool to transfer the meaning and oneness of thoughts and ideas. Generally, the participants start with the basic two-way, face-to-face communication with the most perfect transfer of meaning via verbal and non-verbal languages.

Even though the two-way face-to-face communication is the perfect form of communication, it reaches a limited number of communication participants and both parties need to be at the same place and the same time. Therefore, interactions are restricted to people in the same society shaping by similar culture and norm. Since

traveling are difficult in the old days, communication participants are often restricted by geographical distance.

As communications technologies developed, telegraph and telephone allowed people to do a two-way communication without seeing each other's faces, eliminating the non-verbal components of personal communication. However, it permitted participants to communicate from farther geographical locations, while the number of participants was still restricted to only two at a time.

Mass communication flourished later as communications technologies opened new ways for one party to connect with several at one time. Although it is one-way and non-personal communication, mass communication connects a large number of people in the same society with the same message and channel.

The Internet technologies open the new opportunities for the receivers of one-way mass media like television, radio, magazines and newspapers to interact with the sender and other receivers. Therefore, the websites are an important element for all the mass media operators. As the Internet becomes more powerful with faster connectivity, the two-way communication becomes faster and can almost replace two-way face-to-face ones. Moreover, the Internet allows people to connect with different social networks and across geographical boundaries, while the participants can make a decision to remain anonymous.

Characteristics of Internet-based Technologies Promoting Social Interactivity

Social interactivity in the Internet is different from the two-way face-to face communication. These characteristics of the Internet will be discussed to understand more how it enhances the user's social interactivity.

1. Anonymity. The users of the Internet can decide to keep their identity anonymous making it possible for them to disguise themselves and avoid any responsibility of the message. Moreover, the users also have a right to choose the level of anonymity. Some may show their faces or voices in Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, etc. Others may conceal their identity in the blogs to express their opinions freely especially on political or social controversy issues. In many websites and blogs, participants use inappropriate words and harmful messages to talk to one another in the ways we normally cannot find in any face-to-face encounters. For buying experiences, customers in the Internet may take time to seek or browse the items repeatedly without any selling pressure from the sellers.

Even though anonymity promotes the use of the Internet for more social interactivity, it is one of the serious weaknesses of the Internet where we do not know the persons who we are interacting with. It is also very difficult for the

seller to know their target market and thus making it much more difficult to understand them well and satisfy their needs.

2. **Instantaneity.** The Internet can link the sender and the receiver so instantaneously that there is almost no time gap in between. It is almost synchronous. Liu & Shrum (2005) defined synchronicity as the degree that the sender sends the message to the receiver and receives a response simultaneously. Although instantaneous communication may not be new as telephone can provide the non-personal two-way communication, the Internet technology has improved so much that we can now connect instantaneously with motion picture. Therefore, communicating between groups and parties through social media can be as instant as a face to face one. Unlike telegraph, the need for the messages to be mediated by another party disappeared as users can send and receive the messages by themselves instantly. (Murphy, 2013). The instantaneity is the general characteristics of social media such as Twitter, Foursquared, Facebook, Line, Tango, etc. These new social media allow small groups to chat and update their information in every place around the globe. They also start to replace long distance telephone, SMS, and emails.
3. **Social Network.** Social network is a social structure in which the participants connect with one another. A society comprises of several small social networks connected to one another with shared needs and shared values. Through the Internet, social networks flourish as it connects and facilitates people with shared needs and interests to connect with one another through small social groups. These groups may start from dyadic ties to multiple ties, as we have witnessed in Line groups, Facebook, Twitter, etc. People are invited to join the group to form a social network. When time passes, people in the social network get bonded more through frequent connections. Several stories, factual or fictitious, happy or sad, are shared through the social networks in which the sender decides whether the message fits the shared needs and interests of the group. Thus, the Internet facilitates and strengthens the formation and ties of social networks.
4. **Uncontrolled Messages.** Communication participants in the Internet enjoy unregulated messages. Even though there are attempts to regulate, censor or block messages in the Internet, it is virtually impossible to control a large flow of information connected through a sophisticated networks of computers. The recent attempt for the Turkish government to block the use of social media was unfruitful and impossible. Because of this nature of the Internet, the social media have been used for political propaganda and connections. (<http://thenextweb.com/twitter/2014/03/22/turkey-blocks-google-dns-attempt-censor-twitter>, 2014). Through the social networks, people are able to gather participants with the shared interests and arrange a mass rally to

oust the government. This can be easily seen in Thailand, Ukraine, the Middle East, etc.

5. Standardization of systems. The Internet technologies have allowed the connections from several different systems of software. The Internet helps people who use different systems to connect and thereby increasing the numbers of participants. The integration of multiple systems through the Internet has boosted the popularity of the media through several platforms of digital technologies from telephone, television and computers, increasing the number of users around the world tremendously.
6. Self-transaction Processing. The Internet-based technology permits participants to do transactions by themselves without the needs for intermediaries. Therefore, in the E-commerce websites, participants make the transaction processing by themselves. The Internet has made their life easier and faster. There were many industries benefiting from this development especially the service industries including governments, airline, banking, securities, insurance and information-related industries e.g. software, books, music, etc. As consumers find it more convenient, more transactions and connections increase. Moreover, sellers also save costs as buyers complete their own transactions. They save labor costs as there is no need to hire more employees to help the customers. Furthermore, there is no need for the sellers to search for a place to display their products, thereby saving costs hiring the intermediaries. The Internet technology has helped the manufacturers gain more bargaining power as they can connect directly with the end users. More and more, we start to see the company trying to complete their transactions in the Internet, saving paperwork costs as much as possible. Through smart phones, companies are trying to make use of the self transactions by customers and complete the transactions using the Internet instead of having the customers traveling to the company, saving the customers' and the service providers' time and energy.
7. Delivery Ability. Some products and services can be delivered by the Internet without dependence on logistics companies such as information-based products such as computer software, music, electronics books, motion pictures, translation works, tax filing, consulting, auditing, etc. (Post & Anderson, 2006). This helps save delivery costs on the manufacturing side and it also gives instant gratification for the buyers as they receive the product or service instantaneously. Companies can save their transportation and delivery costs through Internet delivery. Service companies save postal expenses by delivering their financial statements, receipts via the Internet.

The convenience and efficiency that the Internet-based technologies provided have sparked the interest for the companies to further explore how they can

exploit the Internet technologies to provide more cost saving and convenience for the customers as the Internet is more attached to each individual's daily life in the form of smart phones. With the emergence of smart phone technologies, companies also segment their target audience into smaller segments to satisfy their needs even more precisely while the consumer media activity has shifted toward the smart phones. (Sharm,Herzog & Melfi, 2008).

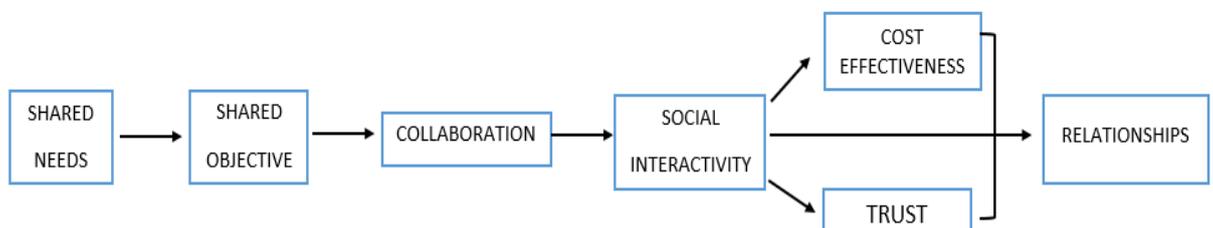
Moreover, several companies are investing in data mining so they can constantly be in touch with the customers in the right social networks. All these changes have affected the ways people live in the society and change their social interactivity as a result.

A Model of Social Interactivity through the Internet-based Technologies

The emergence of Internet technologies has brought strong impacts on the ways people interact in a society and its impact has largely affected across geographical boundaries. This study intends to come up with a model depicting the processes toward social interactivity through the Internet Technologies.

To take advantage of the two-way communications technologies, the Internet has not focused on the person-to-person communication such as email. However, the technologies have been exploited through a network of computers comprising millions of users. The technology has formed social networks and encouraged interactions among these millions of users. Some of these were contributions from people all around the world to solve problems of others such as Wikipedia, Wikitravel, Tripadvisor, WebMD, etc.

Figure 1: A Model of Social Interactivity through Internet-Based Technologies



The model of social interactivity starts from shared needs then lead to shared objectives then the collaboration which will result in trust and credibility. After that the participants will evaluate the fact, if they are found to be credible they will become the loyal users of the technology. Below are the factors of the model of social interactivity through the Internet-based technologies.

1. **Shared Needs or Shared Pressures.** When a person seeks to interact with another, he or she has certain needs or pressures. These needs and pressures are shared by others in a society. For instance, it can be easily noticed that if a person finds out he or she has a terminal disease, there is a strong need or pressure which will force that person to seek for more information from experts or people who are having the same problem. McCann (1983) mentioned “problem setting legitimizes the claims of stakeholders by building social recognition of the problem’s existence and provides opportunities for them to communicate with each other about their shared situations” (p.179). Gray (1985) supported this notion that problem setting helps communication parties to identify issues and “appreciate the interdependence which exists among themselves” (p,197). This has led to social interactivity. Shared needs were called shared interests by Fisher and Ury (1981) who mentioned that “shared interests are opportunities, not godsend. To be sure, you need to make something out of them. It helps to make a shared interest explicit and to formulate it as a shared goal. In other words, make it concrete and future oriented” (p. 75). Thus it can be noted that Fisher and Ury (1981) proposed that shared needs lead to shared objectives.

Problems normally generate a lot of frustration and they are waiting for the disruption to happen. Several websites and social media sites were created because of the needs shared by a lot of participants. For instance, LYFT, a San-Francisco-based ridesharing mobile phone application, allows people who need a ride to call for a car to contact another person who can offer the ride to pick them up in a car with pink-mustache attached on the front of the car. The driver earns the money through donations. (<http://www.lyft.com>). This happens because people have a shared need which is not fulfilled by taxi and the driver and the rider have a common need to travel from one point to another. Social interactivity through the Internet match the shared needs and objectives of both sides. Moreover, many illegitimate websites that sell prescription drugs exist to replace the traditional drug stores that require people to have a prescription for the drugs they normally take throughout their life, eliminating the complex procedures required to get a prescribed medicine. All these have resolved many problems and frustrations for users while it creates convenience for the ones who use them.

2. **Shared Objectives.** Fry and Ury (1981) stated that shared needs lead to shared objectives and Neirenborg (1986) also agreed that by exploring shared needs, we can understand shared objectives. Fiske (1992) explained that this is because people need to mingle socially and they form groups with the goal to create social relations. Sherif (1962) found that when

people are in the state of frustration and they find the common goals to cooperate they are likely to work towards the common goals.

As we can see in many difficult situations, the difficulty that people are facing calls for shared actions or cooperation from participants and this leads to increase social interaction among people in the social networks. People who use LYFT find out that there is a more convenience and more cost-effective way to call for the ride which guarantees safety and convenience for them to travel from one point to the other, while the people who provide the service can also use the Internet to ensure safety and convenience for the riders. These shared objectives are met through the use of the Internet-based technologies, thus bypassing the traditional taxi.

Shared needs and shared objectives are explored throughout people's daily life. In the industry where there are difficulties and frustration, shared needs for resolving all these problems exist. The Internet technologies have become one of the alternatives to solve the problems. The service industries have benefited from this because they do not need the intermediaries to handle the service any longer. These include insurance, banking, government, travel, health care, etc. At present, the Internet has bypassed the traditional contacting points people have in these industries, solving slow processes generally required in these industries as people share a common goal to eliminate these problems through the use of the Internet.

3. Collaboration. It is not surprising that when people have shared objectives, they will seek for ways to collaborate. Clear shared objectives are very significant to bring collaboration as witnessed in the Obama Campaign in 2008 where voters utilized social media to achieve the common objective, "Change" (Bradley & McDonald, 2011). The collaboration provides ways for people in the society to interact so they can achieve the common objectives. From the ancient time, people in the primitive society collaborate to seek for food and shelter, they need to work together and communicate to reach their shared objectives. Moreover, the anonymity and instantaneity of the Internet also encourages people to collaborate more as they can connect anonymously and instantly. At present, communication participants engage in the social media websites which are "mass collaboration-enabling technologies. These technologies comprise an array of group communication, authoring and organizational tools that make it possible for large groups of people to collaborate- including such technologies as wikis, blogs, microblogs, social networking, social bookmarking, tagging and tag clouds, social feedback, discussion forums, idea engines, answer marketplaces, prediction markets and virtual worlds" (Bradley & McDonald, 2011, p.11).

4. **Social Interactivity.** We can notice that these activities do not involve the buyer and seller relationships. Instead, in the user-generated era, communication parties connect with one another in small networks and increase their social interactivity to reach their shared objectives. As communications technologies improve, two-way interactions with motion pictures and voices make communication between any party so instantaneous that they are interact in person, making it easier for participants to share ideas and collaborate (Evans, 2010). The social interactivity has great supports both rationally and emotionally. For rational support, it is more cost-effective for the Internet technology to replace the traditional one. For emotional support, the Internet interactions provide trust for the communication parties.

5. **Rational Support: Cost effectiveness.** The Internet enables users to do self transaction processing and it has delivery ability which can reduce the users' costs. Cost effectiveness is often a strong rationale for communication participants to engage in the interactions and it contributes to the success of social media and general websites. People gather together and form new types of connectivity and disregard the traditional one mainly because the new forms are more cost effective. This can be witnessed through the success of Line, Tango, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. For the mobile marketing, Hopkins and Turner (2012) reported it is more cost effective than the traditional methods and it is much easier for the target audience to respond. This can be witnessed in the case of LYFT where the suggested donations for the driver through the contact via the mobile application would be about 30% lower than the traditional taxi rides. (Gannes, 2012).

The social media connects people in a form of small social networks. The participants in the networks communicate so frequently and instantaneously because the communication costs are considerably lower than the traditional telephones, emails, SMS, etc. It is wondered that the traditional forms will be replaced forever.

Cost effectiveness is also a main reason for many businesses to start communicating with the customers or potential customers through the Internet. Since the beginning of the Internet, Dell computer has shifted its direct marketing media from catalogs, direct mail and telemarketing to the Internet, enabling the company to connect directly with customers in a more efficient way and around the globe.

6. **Emotional Support: Trust.** On the emotional side, trust is one of the core reasons people form social network because they can trust the people inside who they have strong ties and the participants give them the permission to contact them (Adams, 2012). In fact, the environment of the

social media networks is different from the face to face one, as it encourages people to speak up, so it is easier to express one's opinions and ideas than the face-to-face one. For instance, Miles (2013) stated that the information in Pinterest is shared with the participant's friends and trusted resources instead of the impersonal search engines. Zimride, the predecessor of LYFT, the ridesharing mobile application also generate a list of trusted drivers through facebook for people in the community to choose from. Trust is built through social media such as facebook from referral of many users. (Boyd Myers, 2012). Moreover, participants can take time to check the accuracy and reliability of the messages. Moreover, participants can contact the others as long as they have the media with them. Nowadays, people carry their smart phones everywhere so they are basically connected at all time.

7. Relationships. As trust and cost effectiveness increase, participants would be willing to strengthen the relationships because it is more reliable and cheaper to connect via any other method. Social interactivity creates a social network for the participants to engage with people who have similar interests or needs. The social interactivity includes the way individuals establish their own identity in the networks, lead social behaviors and interacting with other people with many levels of relationships like family, private, public, etc.(LaMendola 2010).

In marketing, relationships can contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage of the company in the long run (Storbacka & Lehtinen, 2001). The relationships can be classified into two types. Both types are supported by social interactivity through the Internet-based technologies.

- A. Relationship between the company and customers. The relationship between the company and customers happen because the company participates in the social media and forms a society where the participants can interact with the company to form the relationships which can be fostered in the future. For instance, American Airlines creates a program called American Airlines' AAdvantage Passport Challenge. From 21 March 2014 to 23 May 2014, American Airlines promotes its frequent flyer program and partners by allowing participants to play trivia, answer questions in facebook to earn bonus miles in its AAdvantage program, plus the bonus for flying afterwards. The promotion through facebook creates relationships with customers and enhances knowledge of the frequent flyer programs and its partners. Besides, it also promotes the purchase activities for the airlines and other partners like hotel, car rental, credit cards, shopping, dining, etc. (<http://www.aa.com/viewPromotionDetails.do?fN=aad-air-passport-offer.xml>, 2014)

- B. Relationship among communication parties. One of the unique features of social media marketing is that it can be shared with other communication parties. At present, the ability for the customers to share the information is the strength that helps the company increase cost efficiency and trust. It benefits from cost-saving especially on advertising which has production and media costs. The communication parties can share the message in the same social media groups. Moreover, the messages are more trustable than the company' own messages. Therefore, companies should plan how to stimulate more social interactions among the communication parties. For instance, in the AAdvantage Passport Challenge, participants are encouraged to invite their friends to play, follow the company on twitter, instagram, share the videos, share what the participants like in facebook, etc. All these activities earn bonus miles. Some of these activities cannot be done or it is very difficult to do by the company e.g. invite their friends for the activities. The communication parties will only invite those who are interested in frequent travel programs and travel. However, for the messages that the participants would share with other friends, it is designed by the company to be broad and general so it suits everyone.

Discussion and Implications of Social Interactivity through the Internet and Marketing Communications.

The social interactivity we experience in the Internet can benefit the company as it creates trust, saves cost effectiveness and builds relationships. There are implications through the use of social media to benefit the marketing communications and other marketing activities of the firm as follows

1. Two-way Interactions. The instantaneous two-way communications between the company and the customers and among the communication parties have changed the way companies spend their integrated marketing communication budget. Companies start to see the potential they can communicate more conveniently and economically with their customers. Instead of spending a lot of one-way, traditional media advertising, an increasing number of companies have instead chosen to use social interactive media such as FaceBook, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram, Foursquared, etc. Some of these like facebook, allow the company to communicate directly with the customers or prospects. The ability to specify target market saves companies tremendously. Furthermore, the company also benefits from the feedback it receives from whomever it contacts with. With the convenience of sharing with other customers, information that fits the needs of the appropriate target groups can spread much more quickly through the social media.

2. Database. The company benefits from a lot of data they can potentially receive from using the social media. Through communications among the participants, the company knows what the customers like or dislike about their products or service. The company also learns what features or characteristics of the products that need improvement. Moreover, they can collect the purchase information of the customers. This helps the company if they decide to communicate with these customers for repurchase. Since the information in the social media is very broad, some companies depend on data mining software to investigate the trends of their customers. The investigation of customer information that the companies have, such as the search of important key words and the conversations within the social networks on the related topic of our products or services, can identify whether the social media content and the choices of words in the search engine optimization that we use fit the marketing mix (Odden, 2012).
3. Consumer Behavior Analysis. A model of social interactivity helps us understand more about the customer's behavior when they are in the social network. It makes us realize where the customers have shared needs or pressures since there will be disturbance and this will lead to innovation to solve the customer's problem. For instance, marketers can explore the problem of their customers in more details through their opinions and comments. Customers often propose certain types of solutions which may be beyond the marketer's imagination. These ideas can be used to develop new products or new markets. These ideas are often shared among participants in the social media. The ideas are often not communicated with the company. Some of these shared needs lead to new product development such as LYFT or Crowdfunding, which is a website gathering financial resource for new ventures mostly through the collaborative contribution of people from the website (the crowd) (<http://www.crowdfunding.com>). The crowdfunding also functions as an alternative for venture capital through traditional outlets such as banks or finance companies, where people can choose to invest in the most plausible new ventures. An increasing number of websites support the actual purchase or transactions by the end users, especially the service industries and the government sectors. This was because of the frustration people encounter in the daily contacts as there are long lines and bureaucratic processes. These include the banking, insurance, securities, mutual fund industries where participants find it much easier and more convenient to do the transactions in the websites and smartphones. The government sector is also gradually moved their operations to the Internet for tax and fines, filing and payment, submission and delivery information, etc. For post purchase evaluation, social interactivity in the Internet provides almost instant reviews of products and services. Participants in FaceBook, Twitter, YouTubes, Foursquared, Tripadvisor, WebMD, etc. benefit from the experiential information from other customers. Companies benefit from the comments and reviews from the actual use of their

customers. The information is typically spread out very fast and recorded for a long period of time.

All the activities during the consumer decision process can help marketers plan the marketing mix strategies to cope with the changes of their target groups. Marketers can design the integrated marketing communications to the appropriate target market and respond to their needs instantly.

4. User generated messages. One of the unique characteristics of the Internet based technologies is user generated messages. The users not only are able to create the message but they can also choose to spread the messages to other parties (Evans, 2010). This feature is significant for integrated marketing communications as the messages are no longer in the control of the company but they are in the hands of customers. Integrated marketing communications has depended on database to understand the need of the target market. From the beginning of IMC, we can see database is a part of the IMC model (Schultz, 1994). This is because marketers need customer information to design the campaign including the selection of messages and media. The Internet has equipped the users with the power to generate the messages to spread to others freely and without the control from the company. It is the decentralization of communication power to the receivers or customers. One of the most vivid advantages of user generated messages is that the messages are viewed as less biased than the ones generated by the company. Users are likely to believe in the messages from the ones who have experienced with the products or services. While there is almost impossible to censor the content in the Internet and the characteristics of the Internet allows anonymity and instantaneity, social interactivity through the Internet has gained popularity. On the other side, if the messages are negative for the products or services, it is more difficult for the company to defend themselves as it spreads out more rapidly. It is highly recommended the company closely monitor the movement of messages generated by their users in the websites related to the company's product or services especially when the company's brand is at risk. Communication with customers and prospects is crucial during that stage.
5. Integrator of Communication Mix Elements. Integrators are communication mix elements that assist marketers to integrate the traditional communication mix elements. They are two way communication mix elements and can be used together with other communication mix. Integrators include word of mouth, event marketing and interactive media. Social media function as integrators as they are two way communication mix element and can be integrated with the traditional communication mix elements such as advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling to achieve maximum communication impact or to synergize the effects of integrated marketing communication campaign.

Social media are an integrator because they link the experiences target market have with traditional media such as advertising and public relations which typically generate brand awareness and knowledge and spread it into the target market's social networks. We can see that this is a part of two-step flow communication (Katz & Lazerfeld, 1955) where the messages are being transmitted by the people using the social media to others. Social media also allows the company to connect instantaneously with customers.

Nowadays, customers expect the companies to react swiftly in times of crisis (Capozzi & Rucci, 2013). Recently, there were a lot of cases which demanded the company to in close contact with customers. For instance, the recall of Toyota in the United States, the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines 370, the crash of Asiana Airlines at San Francisco International Airport which was the first case in history that the airlines was fined because it did not contact the passenger's relatives within the timely manner (Nakaso, 2014). As these cases shown, it is very crucial for the company to be in direct contact with customers to inform them the fact and build credibility. As communication technologies advance, the expectation of customers in terms of relationships and contacts increases. Public relation is done through social media, so the public can fully understand what the companies want to communicate with them. Moreover, companies can collect the data from these social networks to analyze their customer's behaviors (Plummer, Rappaport, Hall & Barocci, 2007). The database is useful in direct marketing activities if the company decides to contact the customers via emails or social media. Moreover, social interactivity can be utilized to promote purchase and other participations by integrating it with sale promotion activities. Several companies have created contests, sweepstakes, games, discounts, coupons by engaging people to participate in their social media tools such as facebook, twitter, etc. Participants are usually asked to share the information with their friends or persuade them to participate in the activities in order to spread the information to more groups of audience. Recently, American Airlines, the New York Times, Slate magazines, have been using the social media to increase their online activities. Social interactivity increases as a result. For personal selling, social media can assist the sales force efforts to communicate with their individual customers. It is often found that salespersons engage in Line or Tango groups with their clients. In the beginning, these tools can save long distance call costs. However, with increased social interactivity between them, the relationship between the two parties is also strengthened, creating a good shield to protect the customers from the competitors and fostering a possible long-term sales relation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Social interactivity through the Internet has become a strong driving force with big impacts on political revolutions e.g. Ukraine, Turkey, Thailand, etc. as it allows social

networks to participate freely and anonymously. For business, the impact on marketing is more gradual but significant as participants who are facing with frustration bring new products and services through social media such as LYFT, Crowdfunding, etc. Other areas such as education have also been affected with new services such as Coursera, which is an open online course offered, opening up opportunities for people to take university courses through the Internet ([Http://www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)). The model of social interactivity depicts the factors which increase social interactions. Marketers should look for an area where the customers are facing with shared needs or shared pressures which can lead to shared objectives. The social media often functions as the collaborative mechanisms which bring participants together to fulfill their shared objectives. With increased trust and cost effectiveness, it is highly likely that the participants will engage in the social interactivity via the Internet and build their long-term relationships with the company or with other participants. Therefore, marketers are encouraged to explore the social media to analyze what the customer needs and how to build a relationship with them. Marketers are the one who should proactively engage and interact with their customers (Shiffman, 2008). They can also exploit a large pool of data in these social media websites to assess their products or services. Integrated Marketing Communications activities can be developed and integrated in the social media through the customer database which will enhance understanding and help build customer relationships in the long run.

REFERENCES

- Adams, P. (2012). *Grouped: How Small Group of Friends are the Key to Influence on the Social Web*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.
- Boyd Myers, C. (2012, June 16). "2012: The Summer of Ridesharing with Zimride, Ridejoy, Carpooling and more". <http://thenextweb.com/insider/2012/06/16/2012-the-summer-of-ridesharing-with-zimride-ridejoy-carpooling-and-more/>.
- Bradley, A.J. & McDonald, M.P. (2011). *The Social Organization*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Capozzi, L. & Rucci, S.R. (2013). *Crisis Management in the Age of Social Media*. New York: Business Expert Press.
- Evans, D. (2010). *Social Media Marketing: The Next Generation of Business Engagement*. Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing.
- Fisher, R. & Ury, W. (1981). *Getting to Yes: Negotiation Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Penguin.
- Fiske, A.P. (1992). The four elementary forms of sociality: Framework for a unified theory of social relations. *Psychological Review*, 99(4), 683-723.

- Gannes, L. (2012, May 22). "Zimride Turns Regular Cars Into Taxis With New Ride-Sharing App, Lyft". <http://allthingsd.com/20120522/zimride-turns-regular-cars-into-taxis-with-new-ride-sharing-app-lyft/>.
- Gray, B. (1985). Conditions facilitating interorganizational collaboration. *Human Relations*, 38, 911-36.
- Hopkins, J. & Turner, J. (2012). *Go Mobile: Location-based Marketing, Apps, Mobile Optimized Ad Campaigns, 2D Codes, and Other Mobile Strategies to Grow Your Business*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- <http://www.aa.com/viewPromotionDetails.do?fN=aad-air-passport-offer.xml>, 2014
- <http://www.coursera.org>
- <http://www.crowdfunding.com>
- <http://www.lyft.com>
- <http://thenextweb.com/twitter/2014/03/22/turkey-blocks-google-dns-attempt-censor-twitter>, 2014
- Katz, E & Lazarsfeld, P.F. (1955). *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- LaMendola, W. (2010). Social work and social presence in an online world. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 28, 108-119.
- Liu, Y. & Shrum, L.J. (2005). Rethinking interactivity: What it means and why it may not always be beneficial, In M. Stafford & R. Faber (Eds.). *Advertising, Promotion and New Media* (pp.103-124). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-96.
- McCann, J.E. (1983). Design guidelines for social problem-solving interventions. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 19, 2, 177-89.
- Miles, J.G. (2013). *Pinterest Power*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Miles, J.G. (2014). *YouTube Marketing Power*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Murphy, D. (2013). *Twitter*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Murphy, J., Hill, C.A. & Dean, E. (2014). Social media, sociality and survey research. In C.A. Hill, E. Dean & J. Murphy (Eds.). *Social Media, Sociality and Survey Research*. (pp.1-28) Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Nakaso, Dan (2014, February 25). "Asiana Airlines hit with unprecedented fine in response to fatal SFO crash".

http://www.mercurynews.com/business/ci_25227481/asiana-airlines-hit-unprecedented-fine-response-fatal-sfo.

- Neirenberg, G.I. (1986). *The Complete Negotiator*. New York: Nierenberg and Zeif Publishers.
- Odden, L. (2012). *Optimize: How to Attract and Engage More Customers by Integrating SEO, Social Media, and Content Marketing*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Plummer, J. Rappaport, S., Hall, T & Barocci, R. (2007). *The Online Advertising Playbook*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Post, G. & Anderson, D. (2006). *Management Information System: Solving Business Problems with Information Technology*. (4th ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- Schultz, D.E., Tannenbaum, S. & Lauterborn, R.F. (1994). *Integrated Marketing Communications*. Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Business Books
- Sharma, C., Herzog, J., & Melfi, V. (2008). *Mobile Advertising: Supercharge Your Brand in the Exploding Wireless Market*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sherif, M. (1962). *Intergroup Relations and Leadership: Approaches and Research in Industrial, Ethics, Cultural, and Political Area*. New York: Wiley.
- Shiffman, D. (2008). *The Age of Engage: Reinventing Marketing for Today's Connected, Collaborative and Hyperinteractive Culture*. Ladera Ranch, CA: Hunt Street Press.
- Storbacka, K. & Lentinen, J.R. (2001). *Customer Relationship Management: Creating Competitive Advantage through Win-Win Relationship Strategies*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Education (Asia).