FACTORS PREDICTING DONORS' INTENTION TO GIVE: MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

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ABSTRACT

With their growing popularity, social media platforms are becoming valuable applications for online donations. This paper drew from the theory of planned behavior (TPB) three major components (attitude toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms), to explore the use of social media presence in philanthropy donations. Although, several prior studies have focused on the impact of TPB's factors on intention to donate more, there is limited empirical research that simultaneously studied the mediating role of social media presence on the relationship between the TPB three major components and intention to donate more. A proposed research model will be tested using survey data already collected from donors to local charities. The collected data will be processed using partial least square (PLS). The results should indicate that social media presence partially or fully mediates the relationship between attitude toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms and intention to donate more. The implications of the research will be discussed.

Keywords: Attitude Toward Behavior, Perceived Behavioral Control, Subjective Norms, and Social Media Presence

INTRODUCTION

The increasing importance of social media has created new challenges and unlimited possibilities in our society (Wagner, Baccarella, & Voigt, 2017). For instance, social media has been used to track geographical locations (Lozano, Schreiber, & Brynielsson, 2017; Dokuz & Celik, 2017), in politics (Colliander, Marder, Falkman, Madestam, Modig, & Sagfossen, 2017), education (Chu, Capio, van Aalst, & Cheng, 2017; Ho, Chen, & Ng, 2017), tourism (Shao, Zhang, & Li, 2017), etc. In the same vein, the rapid diffusion of social media applications (Guillamón, Ríos, Gesuele, & Metallo, 2016) is ushering in new ways for charitable organizations to communicate and engage with their donors. That means, with the extensive use of social media platforms, new possibilities still remain for social media to stimulate donations. Clearly, this research expands the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to understand how the use of social media platforms should affect donors' intention to donate more through the published content of donation experiences and virtual interactions with charitable organizations.

Different characteristics of social media exist and the interrelationships among those social media characteristics or subsystems (technical, informational, social) contribute to a diversity of relationships among users (Wakefield & Wakefield, 2016). These characteristics are incorporated into the structure of popular forms of social media and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc (Wakefield & Wakefield, 2016; Wagner, Baccarella, & Voigt, 2017). Facebook alone, probably the most popular social media site, had (as of 2015) over 1.5 billion active users (Wakefield & Wakefield, 2016; Wagner, Baccarella, & Voigt, 2017). However, it remains unclear how donor behavior, as reflected on social media, can be examined to predict or understand donations.

Donors can have accounts on social media, or visit the sites more frequently, and therefore can perceive the social media presence of charitable organizations. We posit in this study that both donors and charitable organizations have social media-presence.

Very few authors like Wan, Lu, Wang, & Zhao (2016) have tried to address the issue of stimulation donations using social media. Unfortunately these authors have limited their study to donations to content creators which are profit

organizations. These authors have used donations as a way to charge or ask social media platforms users to pay before managing user-generated content. This strategy is contrary to and goes against the fundamental opportunities provided to users for using social media platforms. In this paper, we emphasize charitable donations or altruism which are associated with helping charitable organizations to accomplish their cause. The donors might give more if they perceive that the recipient organization uses social media. The social media presence can impact the donors' behavior. For instance, the donors would donate to organizations which post, announce, and advertise their donation on social media. But by publishing donors' information on social media platforms, donor assets could become exposed to frauds making their accounts vulnerable to predators. Finally, TPB suggests that the attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control should determine intention to perform behavior (Oni, Oni, Mbarika, & Ayo, 2017). In this paper, the TPB is used to predict the intention of donors and the resulting impact of social media on donations.

The objective of this study is to examine the mediating role of social media presence on the relationship between TPB factors and donors' intention to give more. A research model was developed using the TPB determinants of intention to give such as attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Social media presence plays the mediating role between the TPB determinants and intention to donate more in the research model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media refers to a collection of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Guillamón, Ríos, Gesuele, & Metallo, 2016). Social media presence encompasses online venues that facilitate the sharing of content among users, the creation of social relationships and interactivity, the user accessibility to social media and the user participation in social media (Kim & Johnson, 2016). Furthermore, social media presence includes media content created by members of the general public and any form of online content created, initiated, circulated, and consumed by users or organizations (Kim & Johnson, 2016). For instance, creating video content is the informational characteristic of social media presence (Wakefield & Wakefield, 2016).

Much of social media presence has shifted away from real-life encounters to the virtual domain, and within that domain interaction takes place more and more on social media platforms (Wagner, Baccarella, & Voigt, 2017). The concept of social media presence is becoming a notable characteristic of social media platforms (Wakefield & Wakefield, 2016; Kim & Kim, 2017) because it allows individuals to exchange valuable ideas and experiences, influence opinions, negotiate potential collaborations, and create communities (Herrero, San Martín, & Salmones, 2017). In addition, it allows individuals to interact with various people who share their interests and activities across political, socio-economic, and geographical barriers (Kim & Kim, 2017). For example, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter may lead to more interactivity among social media users (Kim & Kim, 2017). According to Herrero, San Martín, & Salmones (2017), social media platforms generate new communication dynamics that influence individuals' decision-making processes.

Many authors have conducted empirical and non-empirical studies on social media presence and social media platforms (Longstreet & Brooks, 2017; Choi, Lee, & Metzgar, 2017; Orben & Dunbar, 2017). Some of those studies include the one of Longstreet & Brooks (2017) who found that life satisfaction has significant effects on both generalized Internet addiction and the specific addiction to social media. Orben & Dunbar (2017) found that social media users can read online 'posts' (self-disclosures) of their friends without interacting with those friends and that high intimacy posts, or negative posts, decreased the social attractiveness of the self-discloser. Choi, Lee, & Metzgar, (2017) found the presence of two sub-dimensions of news sharing on social media: news externalizing or news posting and news internalizing or news seeking. They also found that both dimensions do not have a similar impact on user participation in social media, with news externalizing affecting user participation directly and news internalizing affecting user participation indirectly through news externalizing. Wakefield & Wakefield (2016) found that excitement may not be sufficient to motivate content creation and sharing activities in social media; but excitement interacts with user passion to facilitate social media use. From a sample of 537 tourists, Herrero, San Martín, & Salmones (2017) found that there are three main drivers of users' intentions to use social network sites to publish content about their experiences: performance expectancy, hedonic motivation, and habit. They also found

that facilitating conditions, social influence, and privacy concerns do not have any influence on the intention to use social network sites to share content.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

TPB and Intention to Donate More

Behavioral intention is a measure of the strength of one's willingness to exert effort while performing certain behaviors (Lee, 2009). Behavioral intention is the ultimate goal of the TPB's determinants: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Each of them is defined as fellows.

Attitude toward behavior reflects the individual's positive or negative appraisal of a behavioral option (López-Mosquera, García, & Barrena, 2014). That is a person's favorable or unfavorable assessment regarding the behavior in question (Lee, 2009).

Subjective norms are the social pressure from reference group members to enact the behavior (López-Mosquera, García, & Barrena, 2014). In other word, subjective norms are relative to normative beliefs about the expectations of other persons (Wu & Chen, 2005).

Perceived behavioral control refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (López-Mosquera, García, & Barrena, 2014). It concerns the beliefs about presence of control factors that may facilitate or hinder to perform the behavior (Wu & Chen, 2005). Zhang & Gupta (2016) characterized perceived behavioral control in three parts: behavioral, decisional and cognitive. First, the behavioral characteristic refers to users' tendency to adapt according to circumstance. Second, the decisional characteristic refers to ability of the user to successfully obtain the desired outcome out of circumstances based on his/her actions and conclusion. Third, the cognitive characteristic notifies whether or not the user is able to understand the circumstances.

Smith & McSweeney (2007) used a revised TPB model to determine the influence of attitudes, norms (injunctive, descriptive, and moral norms), perceived behavioral control, and past behavior on intentions to donate money to charitable organizations. They found that attitudes, perceived behavioral control, injunctive norms, moral norms, and past behavior all predicted charitable giving intentions; however, descriptive norms did not predict donating intentions. The study of Smith & McSweeney (2007) demonstrated how TPB refers to attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms to predict user's behavioral intention (Oni, Oni, Mbarika, & Ayo, 2017). Following those authors, our study highlights the following propositions:

P1: The more positive attitude toward behavior, the more intention to donate.

P2: The more positive perceived behavioral control, the more intention to donate.

P3: The more positive subjective norms, the more intention to donate.

TPB and Social Media Presence

Other authors have extended the TPB to study social media presence. Among those authors, Cheung & To (2016) included perceived usefulness as a key antecedent of consumer attitudes toward co-creation in social media. Kim, Lee, Sung, & Choi (2016), investigated the antecedents of selfie-posting behavior on social networking sites by applying and extending the TPB. Alzahrani, Mahmud, Ramayah, Alfarraj, & Alalwan (2017) extended TPB to examine the determinants of actual use of online game playing on social media. They found that perceived enjoyment has the strongest influence on actual use. In addition, they found other variables to influence actual usage include the level of perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, attitude, and flow experience. Brännback, Nikou, & Bouwman (2017) examined how value systems impact the digital natives' interactive behavior with social media. They found that attitude positively mediates the effect of domain-specific values and global values on interactive behavior with social media. Consequently our study presents the following propositions:

P4: Social media presence mediates the relationships between attitude toward behavior and intention to donate more.

P5: Social media presence mediates the relationships between perceived behavioral control and intention to donate more.

P6: Social media presence mediates the relationships between subjective norms and intention to donate more.

Research Model

Figure 1 shows the research model of this study. The objective of which is to investigate the mediating role of social media presence on the relationship between TPB's determinants and intention to donate more. Attitude toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms are the independent variables. Social media presence is the mediating variable. The dependent variable is intention to donate more. In our study, the mediating effects of social media presence are represented by the propositions P4, P5, and P6.
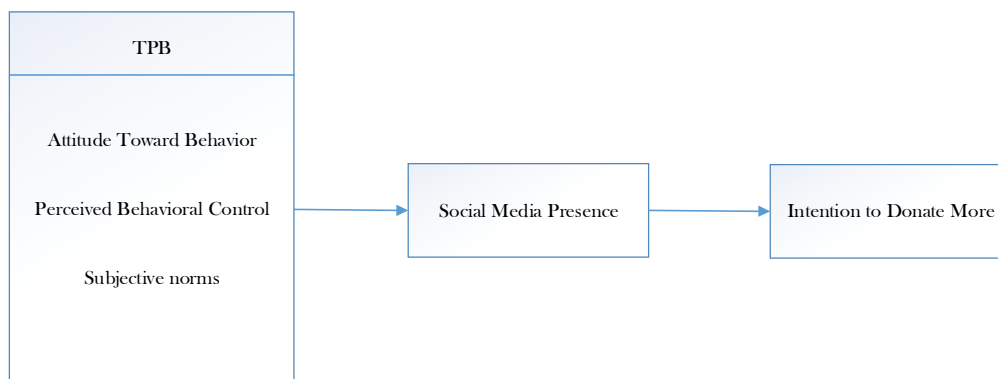

Figure 1. Research model

METHODOLOGY

Many researchers have developed and validated measurement instruments for TPB's factors affecting the intention and use of information technology. These existing measurement instruments will be adopted to assess attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intention to donate more. Based on the literature in social media, items will be identified to measure the mediating factor: social media presence. Depending on our findings in the literature about the measurement instruments, the entire measurement may be subjected to a factor analysis to examine its factor structure (Lawson-Body, 2003). A web page devoted to the survey was set up using the Qualtrics platform. All responses will be entirely anonymous. All respondents will be notified that their participation is voluntary. The survey contains three parts. The first part consists of demographic questions designed to collect data about the profile of the donors. The second part outlines questions about the TPB' factors. The third part of the survey deals with questions measuring the social media presence. The survey will be sent electronically to the donors by the charitable organizations. Partial least square (PLS) method and software will be used to find simultaneously the theoretical relations between latent factors and to measure the relations between latent factors and their indicators or items (Lawson-Body, 2003).

PLS will be used to test the mediating effects demonstrating that social media presence partially, or fully, mediates the relationship between TPB's variables (attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) and intention to donate. Finally, PLS will be used to test hypotheses.

CONCLUSION

This paper drew from the TPB three major components, to explore the integration of social media presence to philanthropy donations. Although several prior studies have focused on the impact of TPB's factors on intention to donate more, there is a limited empirical research that simultaneously studied the mediating role of social media

presence on the relationship between attitude toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms and intention to donate more. Data will be electronically collected from donors to local charities and processed with PLS. The results should indicate that social media presence partially, or fully, mediates the relationship between attitude toward donation and intention to donate more. Also, social media presence should partially, or fully, mediate the relationship between perceived behavioral control and intention to donate more. Finally, social media presence should partially, or fully, mediate the relationship between subjective norms and intention to donate more.

In this research, the authors try to demonstrate a variety of social media applications which present opportunities for charitable organizations, their leaders, and their donors. The social media platforms have created novel communication mechanisms which favor local philanthropy and reciprocal interpersonal communication. However, those opportunities do not guarantee the protection of the donors' financial assets. This study reveals that with the explosion of frauds and identity theft on social media platforms, charitable organizations and donors must understand and abide with online countersecurity measures. Those security safeguards become more important than ever for donation activities which involve transfer of financial and valuable objects from the donors toward the charitable organizations.

In terms of the theoretical contribution, this study provides a theoretical research model to examine the mediating role of social media presence on the relationship between the components of TPB and donors' intention to give more. The theoretical research model postulates that a donor's intention to donate more is determined by the mediation between the social media presence and the three components of TPB which are: attitude toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. Also, the theoretical contribution of this study will be to provide empirical evidence on the mediating role of social media presence in donors' behavior. In general terms, a mediator is a qualitative or quantitative variable that affects the relationship between an independent, or predictor, variable and a dependent, or criterion, variable. In this study, the mediator is a quantitative variable. Finally, this study will build on the findings of other donation studies and extend the TPB. Our principal argument is that TPB will be extended to interact with the social media presence as a source of understanding donors' intention to give more.

Concerning the practical contributions of this study, the findings of this research should help charitable organizations to use secure social media presence to solicit donations. Those organizations should use this study to identify which TPB components they should emphasize when secure social media websites are used to ask for donations. The results of this study should help charitable organizations and donors to better understand the trends, attitudes, and practices of philanthropy in their areas. The results of this study should provide valuable information and intelligence about local philanthropy to help the decision-making process of the charitable organizations and donors. The results of this study contribute to studies on social media and donations, in that charitable organizations can take advantage of online data to better design and deliver their messages and causes to donors.

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