Assessments of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites

Hossam Deraz
I dedicate this thesis 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 in my licentiate thesis! The research you are holding in your hand right now, and hopefully are starting to read is only the first half of the game to my Ph.D. thesis. As inspired by Jonas Rundquist, “A process like this is about keeping on the move”. After two and a half years of work, it is quite a strange feeling, and I cannot help but wonder if there is something in my thesis that I could have done better, developed further, or presented differently. Of course, yes. However, at some point, the line has to 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 may be.

I have truly enjoyed these years, even though getting my thesis in print was not easy, and sometimes in such a process the researcher is moving in the wrong direction, and he needs some people around to guide and to support him. In this regard, there are a quite few people to whom I wish to show my appreciation 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 supervisor Gabriel Awuah and my old teacher Desalegn Abraha. 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.

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

**Paper 1**


**Paper 2**


**Paper 3**

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## Abbreviations

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ads</td>
<td>Advertisements</td>
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<td>ATOA</td>
<td>Attitudes toward online advertisements</td>
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<td>BCCs</td>
<td>Brand community consumers</td>
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<td>CRE</td>
<td>Credibility value</td>
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<td>E-marketing</td>
<td>Electronic marketing</td>
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<td>ENT</td>
<td>Entertainment value</td>
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<td>E-WOM</td>
<td>Electronic word-of-mouth</td>
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<td>IDV</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
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<td>I-marketing</td>
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<td>IND</td>
<td>Indulgence versus restraints</td>
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<td>INF</td>
<td>Informativeness of the advertisement (information value)</td>
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<td>INT</td>
<td>Interactivity value</td>
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<td>IRR</td>
<td>Irritation value</td>
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<td>LTO</td>
<td>Long-term orientation</td>
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<td>MAS</td>
<td>Masculinity</td>
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<td>ONAs</td>
<td>Online advertisements</td>
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<td>OAV</td>
<td>Online ads’ value</td>
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<td>PDI</td>
<td>Power distance</td>
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<td>SNAV</td>
<td>Perceived value of SNSAs</td>
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<td>SNS</td>
<td>Social networking site</td>
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<td>SNSAs</td>
<td>Social networking site advertisements</td>
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<td>UAI</td>
<td>Uncertainty avoidance</td>
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<td>U&amp;G</td>
<td>Uses and gratification theory</td>
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Definitions of the 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 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 entertainment value: “the degree of pleasure and involvement in the interaction with the advertising as perceived by the consumer” (Hoffman & Novak, 1996:26).

Advertisement information value: “the ability to provide effectively relevant information in the advertising context as perceived by the consumers” (Blanco et al., 2010:4).

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

Consumer motives: “the personal orientation that drives the consumer behavior toward the ad (Rodgers, 2002:22) and 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 et al., 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 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” (Hansen & Christensen, 2003, Janoschka, 2004).
Sammanfattning

Forskning gällande annonsering på sociala nätverkssajter (SNSAs) anses vara ett uppmärksammat forskningsområde av ett flertal forskare. Däremot har omfattningen av de befintliga studierna varit mycket begränsad gällande konsumenternas bedömning av SNSAs. De flesta av de befintliga studierna som behandlar forskningsämnet har fokuserat på Ducoffes (1996) modell som använder sig utav tre variabler och ignorerat väsentliga variabler som trovärdighetsfaktorn och interaktionsfaktorn, vilka är mer logiskt relaterade till SNSAs än traditionell annonsering. Vidare har de flesta studierna som gjorts riktats mot yngre användare av sociala nätverkssajter och ignorerat andra åldersgrupper. Slutligen har tidigare forskning gällande användares bedömning av SNSAs varit beroende av data som samlats in från användare av populära SNS och ignorerat aktiva användare av särskilda varumärken (varumärkes-entusiaster på sociala nätverkssajter). I denna studie har tonvikten lagts på dessa tre punkter som upptäcktes som de väsentliga luckorna i teorin gällande användares bedömning av SNSA. Syftet med denna studie har varit ge en djupare förståelse av hur SNS användare bedömer SNSA. I denna studie presenteras forskningsresultat av tre publicerade forskningsartiklar med olika syften och nivåer av analyser.

Den första artikeln syftar till att utveckla Ducoffes (1996) modell som användes i tidigare forskning för bedömning av SNSAs, genom att beakta annonsernas trovärdighet och interaction utöver Ducoffes (1996) tre variabler- informationsvärde, underhållningsvärde, och irritationsvärde. En multipel regressionsanalys användes för att testa den modifierade modellen. Baserat på regressionsanalysen för de fem variabler hade modellen det bästa värdet för Determinationskoefficient (R2) när

Baserat på det oväntade resultatet för irritationsvärdet i den första artikeln, fokuserade den andra artikeln på att testa den utökade modellen av bedömningarna av SNSAs på en annan forskningspopulation, i detta fall BCCs. Baserat på regressionsanalysen för att testa de fem variabler i modellen hade Determinationskoefficient (R2) det bästa värdet som förväntat. Koefficient-analys användes för att testa den givna hypotesen och för att bestämma koefficienterna för de fem variablerna och för att bilda en konstruktionsekvation för att bedöma de SNSAs. Vidare visade denna studie fyra variabler med signifikanta positiva effekter på konsumenternas bedömning av SNSAs, vilka var informationsvärdet, underhållningsvärdet, trovärdighet och interaktionsvärdet, medan den femte dimensionen (irritationsvärdet) visades vara en signifikant negativ koefficient. Dessutom gav denna undersökning en djupare förståelse för hur BCC bedömer SNSAs, och det bidrog till att identifiera de viktigaste egenskaperna hos BCC på SNSs.

Den tredje artikeln fokuserar på att utforska effekten av den nationella kulturen på konsumenternas bedömning av SNSAs. Kulturella särdrag hos respondenterna i denna studie gav ytterligare bevis på hur en nations kultur
kan påverka konsumenternas bedömning av SNSAs. Denna studie bidrog till att identifiera hur SNS användare från Egypten, Nederländerna, och Storbritannien bedömer SNSAs. I denna studie användes ANOVA variansanalyser med post hoc-test för att jämföra bedömningar av de tre nationerna. Baserat på de empiriska resultaten i denna studie, visade de tre grupperna signifikant skillnad i F-förhållanden för deras uppfattningsomfyrav de fem variablerna för bedömning av SNSAs. De tre gruppens uppfattningar om underhållningsvärdet hade inte någon signifikant skillnad.

Det övergripande syftet med denna studie var att fördjupa förståelsen av hur SNS användare bedömer SNSAs i olika miljöer genom att undersöka SNS användare, BCC, och användare från olika nationer. Samtliga studier som presenterats här har fokuserat på variabler för bedömning av annonser i andra kontexter av forskare.

**Nyckelord:** Internet marknadsföring, annonsering, webbplatser för sociala nätverk, bedömning av annonser, nationell kultur, varumärke.
PART I
The Introductory Text
Abstract

Advertisements (ads) in social networking sites (SNSAs) have been considered by many researchers as a crucial area of research. However, the scope of the existing studies on consumers’ assessments of SNSAs has been very limited. Most of the existing studies on assessing SNSAs have focused on Ducoffe’s (1996) model with its three variables, and they have ignored other related variables like the credibility value and interactivity value of the advertisement, which are more logically related to SNSAs than the traditional ads. Moreover, most of these studies have been skewed towards younger users and have ignored the social networking site (SNS) users from other age categories. Finally, previous studies about the assessment of SNSAs have depended on data collected from users of popular SNSs and ignored active users from the brand communities (fans of brands on SNSs). In this thesis, the present author has emphasized these three points as the major gaps in the literature about assessing SNSAs. Moreover, to deepen our understanding of how SNS users assess SNSAs this study presents the research findings of three published papers with three different purposes and with different levels of analysis.

The first article aimed to extend Ducoffe’s (1996) model – which was used in the previous literature in assessing SNSAs – by considering the ads’ credibility and interactivity values in addition to Ducoffe’s (1996) three variables of information value, entertainment value, and irritation value. A multiple regression analysis was used to test the modified model, and based on the regression analysis of testing the five predictors, the model without the irritation value had the best coefficient of determination ($R^2$). Moreover, coefficient analysis to test the given hypothesis and to determine the coefficients of the predictors was used. According to this survey study, the four primary variables that predicted the consumers’ assessment of the SNSAs were the information value, entertainment value, credibility value, and interactivity value. As perceived by the SNS users, the interactivity value was the strongest among the four predictors.

Based on the unexpected result of the irritation value of the first paper, the second paper focused on testing the extended model of the assessments of
SNSAs as perceived by a different research population, in this case, brand communities’ consumers (BCCs). Based on the regression analysis of testing the five predictors, the model with the five predictors had the best coefficient of determination ($R^2$). The coefficient analysis was used to test the given hypothesis, to determine the coefficients of the five predictors, and to form a construct equation for assessing the SNSAs. Based on this survey study, the four variables with significant positive effects on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs were informativeness, entertainment value, credibility value, and interactivity value, while the fifth dimension (irritation value) had a significant negative coefficient on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. Moreover, that study provided a deeper understanding of how the BCCs assess SNSAs, and it contributed to identifying the main characteristics of the BCCs on an SNS.

The third paper focused on exploring the effect of national culture on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. The cultural features of the respondents in that study gave additional evidence about how a nation’s cultural characteristics can influence the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. This study helped to identify how SNS users from Egypt, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom assess SNSAs. In this study, one-way analysis of variance with post hoc tests was used to compare the assessments of the three nations. Based on the empirical findings of this survey study, the three groups had significant difference $F$-ratios for their perception of four of the five variables for assessing SNSAs. Their perceptions of the entertainment value did not significantly differ between the three groups while the interactivity value had the strongest $F$-ratio.

The overall purpose of this study was to deepen our understanding of how SNS users are assessing SNSAs in different settings by considering SNS users, BCCs, and others from various nations. All of the studies presented here have focused on variables for assessing the ads that have been used by other researchers in different research contexts.

**Keywords:** Internet Marketing, Advertisements, Social networking sites, Assessment of advertisements, National Culture, Brand communities.
Chapter I
Introduction
Introduction

This chapter introduces the main subjects of this dissertation. It begins by describing the background of social networking sites. It focuses on the connections between marketing innovation and social networking site and discusses the recent literature on the assessment of advertisements on social networking sites, problem discussion, and the research purpose. It ends by discussing the limitations and outlines of the thesis.

1.1 Social Networking Sites

In 1997, the first social networking site (SNS) was launched by SixDegrees.com (Boyd & Ellison, 2008:212). After adapting Web 2.0 implementations in 2000, blogging sites began to flourish, especially in 2003 after adopting XML-based data standards and contextual advertising that allowed data to be exchanged between sites (Chaffey et al., 2009:31). 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, 2008:212).

Nowadays, there are international SNSs such as Facebook, Google+, Instagram, and Twitter, and there are some domestic SNSs such as QZone in China and Vkontakte in Russia and some of its neighboring countries. In general, SNSs attract millions of users every year, and the number of users continues to rise year after year. Facebook is arguably the world’s most popular SNS, and it now has around 1.440 billion users around the world, which represents 47.8% of the total 3.010 billion active Internet users worldwide (Kemp, 2015). The number of international brands that are using Facebook as a marketing and communication platform has also continued to rise. Based on 2014 statistics, there are more than 30 million businesses, companies, and organizations that have a Facebook page as a communication platform to increase their brand awareness and to establish interactive communication with their fans. Also, around 1.5 million brands are using Facebook for paid advertising (Latka, 2014).

SNSs are new sources of online information that are created, circulated, initiated, and used by online consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). They
enable companies to communicate better with their fans and to gain extra attention to their offers with extensive targeting options, including location, demographics, education, occupation, interests, and connections (Vejacka 2012: 131). Moreover, consumer awareness of the crucial role of SNSs as a communication platform is growing year by year, and we can now find that many of the brands that have established their pages on SNSs have thousands of fans and followers. For example, within the international market, Coca-Cola has more than 94.4 million fans on Facebook, and McDonald’s has more than 60 million fans (Socialbakers.com, 2015a). Within the Swedish national market, we have G5 Entertainment Games that has 1.3 million fans, SAS with 1.12 million fans, Acne Studios with 529 thousand fans, Ikea Sverige with 451 thousand fans, and Marabou with 421 thousand fans (Socialbakers.com, 2015b). This shows the importance of the SNSs for firms to use in marketing, to identify their customers’ needs, and to advertise their new products. This helps the companies to achieve their marketing objectives, to increase awareness of their brand, and to attract more customers from the surrounding network of fans (Dann & Dann, 2011:15).

Based on the global and national reach of SNSs, advertisers and marketers have recognized the potential of SNSs as a marketing tool to reach new and existing customers. As a result, they have come up with new and innovative ways of reaching their target audiences. In a similar manner, SNSs have continued to develop their platforms to attract more business and to increase their revenues.

1.2 Innovation and Social Networking Sites

Innovation is a multi-disciplinary subject, and the process is often treated as a black box that is left to scholars from different disciplines to explore (Fagerberg, 2004:3). The function of innovation is to introduce novelty (variety) into the economic sphere (Fagerberg, 2004:20) and to create new possibilities for added value that includes marketing and organizational and resource input in addition to typical product and process innovation (Schumpeter, 1943; Martínez-Ros & Orfila-Sintes, 2009). It also includes the development of new marketing approaches (Porter 1988; Knight et al. 1995; Chen, 2006). Some examples of innovative marketing approaches are:
• Using a new marketing program or technology that allows a firm to acquire consumer information more efficiently (Chen, 2006:102)
• Using consumer-tracking technologies such as clickstream tracking, online registration, and cookies (Shapiro & Varian, 1999:36).

The main aims of using such innovation are to enhance the delivery of relevant and personalized messages to target customers (Roach, 2009:124) and to develop new trading methods that reduce consumer transaction costs (Chen, 2006:102). The novelty that contributes to processes and differentiation is a useful concept for identifying innovation, and this leads to the following question that is relevant to this thesis: What are the novelties in using SNSs to sell products or services?

Novelties in using SNSs as a marketing platform: Many scholars have investigated using SNSs as a marketing tool. Hansson, Wrangmo, and Søilen (2013:112) found that the optimal way for companies to use Facebook is not yet clear, and 52% of the companies that responded to their survey had no opinion about their attitude toward marketing on Facebook. This demonstrates how using SNSs as a marketing tool is like a black box in the innovation process, as pinpointed by Fagerberg (2004:3). The second point demonstrating the novelty of SNSs is the renewal of the marketing process. For example, in 2007 Facebook launched “Fan pages” to allow users to interact and affiliate with businesses and organizations, and 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 allows users to communicate directly with each other using email, text messaging, or a mobile app (Gabbatt & Arthur, 2012). In March 2012, Facebook announced 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 attractive and relevant ads on Facebook. These developments in Facebook can be explained with the concept of organizational innovation (Bessant et al. 2005:1366; Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook, 2009:1324).

The value of using SNSs as a marketing tool: As explained by Baregheh, Rowley and Sambrook (2009:1324), innovation is recognized as playing a central role in creating value and sustaining advantages. What are the values of using SNSs as a marketing tool?

Based on the discussions of Chaffey et al. (2009) and Dann and Dann (2011) about the benefits of e-marketing, the main added values of using SNSs as a marketing tool can be classified as follows:

a) Mass customization and global access: It is very advisable for firms to use SNSs as a marketing platform, especially sites like Facebook, which has around 1.4 billion monthly active users around the world (Facebook, 2015a). Moreover, there are more than 30 million businesses, companies, and organizations that have a Facebook page as a communication platform (Latka, 2014). With the rapid development of SNSs and the evolution of the marketing process, companies now have access to more customers all over the world. This enables businesses and firms to offer a range of products and services to their audience within the SNS platforms. Also, marketers can use SNSs to increase brand awareness by increasing their companies’ online presence and develop their brand equity (de Vries et al., 2012; Bruhn et al., 2012). Moreover, SNSs help firms to exploit new markets at the international level, and they provide firms a new way to sell their products or services in an inexpensive manner (Harris & Rae, 2013; Palmer & Koeing-Lewis, 2013). These have been considered to be the core concepts of innovation in marketing (Schumpeter, 1943; Porter, 1988; Knight et al., 1995; Chen, 2006; O'Dwyer, Gilmore & Carson, 2009).

b) Individualization: SNS consumer-tracking technologies make it possible for marketers to send the same message to all of the targeted
customers through a company’s home page or by distributing ads on fan pages or by sending different customized messages to each potential customer. An obvious example of this is the Facebook advertising system “Newsfeed ads”, which enables marketers to post an individual message on the wall of a user or on the wall of a particular Facebook Group or on Facebook Events or Facebook Notes (Facebook, 2015b). This opens up new business possibilities and makes messages more efficient.

c) **Interactivity:** SNSs help companies maintain an open communication system with their customers, which makes the communication between businesses and their customers more interactive and faster than traditional marketing channels. Jayawardena et al. (2013:211) found that firms can use SNSs to advertise their new offers or to communicate with their fans and that this often leads to successful marketing and gives them an advantage during times of intense competition. Also, SNSs create open markets where large numbers of buyers and sellers participate (Kim et al., 2011:1207), which enhances the open conversation between firms and customers. Moreover, through SNSs platforms firms can allow their customers and fans to be involved in the firms’ development processes (Sigala 2012; Hansson, Wrangmo & Søilen, 2013; Indrupati & Henari, 2012). These interactions that are facilitated by SNSs can be considered to be one of the most important mechanisms to enhance cross-border knowledge flow. Such a bilateral relationship might help companies to identify human needs, which is one of the first steps in the early stages of the public procurement innovation process (Edquist & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2012:1759).

d) **Time independence and immediacy:** Internet service providers run 24/7, and they provide an immediate interaction between an organization and its audience (Chaffey et al., 2009). This allows companies to use SNSs to maintain their online presence 24 hours a day, as noted by Baregheh, Rowley and Sambrook (2009:1332).
The above discussion reveals the importance of SNSs as advertising and communication platforms and as tools to achieve innovation in marketing and to create additional value for both firms and their audiences.

1.3 Literature review (Assessing the value of SNSAs)

The value of ads is one of the primary determinants of a brand’s success (Akin et al., 2012). This value represents a core determinant of the purchasing decisions and consumer behavior toward the ads (Ducoffe, 1995). Many scholars have explored the role of SNSs as marketing and advertising platforms (Kazienko et al., 2013; Hopkins, 2012; Park & Cho, 2012; Hansson, Wrangmo & Søilen, 2013). Researchers consider mass customization, global access, and the proliferation of SNSs to be the main advantages of exploring SNSs as advertising platforms.

Despite the growing body of literature about SNSs, there are still only a limited number of studies on consumers’ assessments of SNSAs (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Hadija, Barnes & Hair, 2012; Dar et al., 2014).

The first study was by Logan, Bright and Gangadharbatla (2012). These authors compared female students’ perceptions of the value of SNSAs to their perceptions of the value of TV 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 the young female students. According to that study, irritation as a reverse-coded variable obtained a small alpha value 0.056 in the case of assessing SNSAs. In general, Logan, Bright and Gangadharbatla (2012:172) showed that only the entertainment value and the information value had significant impacts on assessing SNSAs.

Saxena and Khanna (2012) also used the three variables of Ducoffe’s (1996) model to assess the SNSAs. 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 the
entertainment content had significant positive impacts on the value of SNSAs. They also found that the irritation value had a substantial negative impact on the assessment of SNSAs.

Further research related to SNSs was conducted by Hadija, Barnes, and Hair (2012) in their paper titled “Why we ignore social networking advertising”. The authors explored the reasons behind why SNS users ignore SNSAs. They conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 20 female college students who were using Facebook, and they used screenshots of SNSAs to gauge the interviewees’ reactions. The respondents all agreed that they do not dislike ads on Facebook, they simply ignore them. The respondents argued that the other social content on Facebook mitigate the attractiveness of SNSAs.

Finally, Dar et al. (2014) examined students’ perceptions of ads’ 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 for both Facebook ads and television ads, which supported the results of Logan, Bright & Gangadhharbatla (2012). The authors found that the entertainment value of the ads could actively predict the students’ assessment of SNSAs, while the information value had no significant effect and the irritation value had a small and unexpected positive $p$-value of 0.037 (the significance level was $p < 0.05$).

Further, a few researchers have studied the value of SNSAs and the correlations between SNSAs’ variables when assessing the consumers’ attitudes and behavior toward the SNSAs. For example, Mir (2012) explored consumer attitudes towards social media advertising (SMA) among university students in Pakistan. The author tested the prediction of the information value, entertainment value, and economy value of ads on the consumers’ attitude toward SMAs and tested the prediction of this attitude on ad clicking and the prediction of ad clicking on buying behavior. Based on the regression weights of the structural model, the author found that information value and entertainment value were strong predictors of the value of the SMA. The author also identified large positive correlations.
between information value, entertainment value, and the respondents’ economic status.

Moreover, Park and Cho (2012) hypothesized about the effect of the commitment to social media on information-seeking behavior and decision-making in clothes shopping. This quantitative study investigated the perception of 186 female college students from a large university in the mid-southern part of the US. The authors identified a positive relationship between the commitment to the online social media community and the information-seeking behavior.

This brief literature review shows that SNSAs are an overlooked research area and that the scope of the published studies on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs has been very limited. Moreover, the literature review shows that most of the existing studies on assessing SNSAs have focused on Ducoffe’s (1996) model with its three variables. Moreover, most of these studies were skewed towards younger users as the primary research sample. Based on this, it would be interesting to increase our knowledge and deepen our understanding of consumers’ assessments of SNSAs and to pinpoint additional variables that might predict the online user's assessment of SNSAs in different settings, e.g. different market segments and different nationalities or by testing the effect of culture on the consumers’ assessments of SNSAs.

1.4 Problem discussion

The literature review reveals three major gaps in the literature on assessing SNSAs as perceived by SNS users.

First of all, previous research on assessing the value of SNSAs has usually focused on Ducoffe’s (1996) model with its three variables. Researchers ignored other key predictors such as ads’ credibility and interactivity value. However, Logan, Bright and Gangadharbatla (2012) and Dar et al. (2014) showed that Ducoffe’s (1996) model does not fit for assessing SNSAs. In regard, using just Ducoffe’s (1996) three variables in assessing SNSAs might misguide the research and the subsequent knowledge about the assessment of the value of SNSAs. Also, the success of the new generation
of SNSs, mainly Facebook and Twitter, has changed the way people socialize, interact, and shop. Further, these new SNSs have brought new channels to digital marketing because these platforms bring people together for the exchange of information and interactions.

In contrast, based on the theory of the consumers’ perception toward the online ads (Brackett & Carr, 2001; Wang et al., 2002; Prendergast et al., 2009; Hernández-Méndez et al., 2013; Abdelkader, 2013; Burton & Soboleva, 2011; Yaakop et al., 2013), the first paper in this thesis aimed to extend the existing literature by introducing interactivity and credibility as additional predictors in the model of assessing SNSAs in addition to the previously measured dimensions of information value, entertainment value, and irritation value.

The second gap in the literature on assessing SNSAs is the focus on university students as the primary research sample. According to Statista (2015), the age group of 17–24 years only represents 25% of the total active users on Facebook, which means that previous studies have ignored the majority of Facebook users. Also, in only focusing on university students as the central source for the empirical data, none of the previous studies have explored the perception of active SNSs users in brand communities (fans of brands on SNSs). This might misguide the way knowledge is produced concerning the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. In this regard, the second paper of this study aimed to extend the model for assessing SNSAs from the first article by including brand communities consumers (BCCs) (i.e. fans of brands on Facebook) because they are part of the active users on SNSs, and they include users from different age groups. The results of the second paper have provided a deeper understanding and increased our knowledge of how this group of active users assesses SNSAs.

The third gap in the existing literature on assessing the SNSAs is that research samples are from different nations, which the present author argues is the main reason for variances in previous research findings. However, no one has carried out research to investigate the effect of national culture on the assessment of SNSAs. To cover this gap in the literature on the assessment the SNSAs, the third paper in this study tested how cultural background can affect the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. To achieve
this, the present author extended the lines of research on the effect of culture on the attitudes toward the online ads and the online shopping behavior of the model for assessing SNSAs that was presented in the first paper of this study.

1.5 Research Purpose

In light of the identified gaps in the earlier studies on the assessment of SNSAs, the lack of investigation in this particular research area, and the global and national reach of SNSs as marketing platforms, the overall aim of this study is to deepen our understanding of how SNS users assess SNSAs by considering new variables, BCCs, and users from various nations.

This study has sought to answer the following two research questions:

* RQ1: What are the main variables in assessing SNSAs?
* RQ2: How do SNS users assess SNSAs?

To answer the main research question and to increase our understanding of how the SNS users assess the value of SNSAs, this study had three main purposes:

1. To extend the model for assessing SNSAs by introducing the interactivity value and the ads’ credibility in addition to the previously measured dimensions of information value, irritation value, and entertainment value.
2. To test the new extended model for the first research paper with other research population – BCCs – to determine how this group assesses SNSAs.
3. To test the effect of national culture on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs.

1.6 Delimitations

This dissertation tested factors that predict the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs from three different settings. Because it is based on three different
studies, and due to the time limit in collecting the data, some definite delimitations were made.

First, the present author focused on Facebook because it is one of the most important SNSs. According to his personal experience, the ads system on Facebook is well developed in comparison to other SNSs like Twitter or LinkedIn. Also, the research samples were limited to Halmstad University students in the first paper and fans from specific brand communities on Facebook in the second and the third papers.

Moreover, based on the lack of literature in the context of assessing SNSAs, as shown from the literature review, the present author used a new developmental model as a basis for the three studies. He will attempt to explore more variables and theoretical concepts in future studies.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This dissertation includes two main parts:

I) An extended summary: This consists of four chapters. The first chapter introduces the research topic, reviews the literature for assessing the SNSAs, and presents a discussion of the research problem and the overall purpose of the study. The second chapter introduces the theoretical concepts of the study and ends with a model that presents the three papers together. The third chapter offers a reflection on the research methods of the three articles. The last chapter includes a summary of the three articles and ends with implications and future research.

II) The articles: The three full-length articles are appended, followed by the list of references.
Chapter II
Theoretical Concepts
Theoretical Concepts

In this chapter, the present author provides a general view of the important concepts related to e-marketing, which is followed by a discussion of the factors that are related to the assessment of online ads and a discussion about marketing on social media to identify the most relevant variables for assessing the value of SNSAs. Finally, the present author presents the conceptual frameworks of the three papers.

The present author developed a way to provide an overview of the structure and the topics that are dealt with in this chapter (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: The outline of Chapter II

- 2.1 The relative importance of e-marketing
- 2.2 Online ads and the assessment of the online ads
- 2.3 Social Media Marketing
- 2.4 Assessment of SNSAs
- 2.5 Conceptual frameworks
2.1 The relative importance of e-marketing

Marketers are using e-marketing to merchandise specified brands in conjunction with traditional media, to acquire new customers, and to deliver services to targeted customers (Chaffey & Smith 2008). Chaffey and Smith (2008:17) have identified the following five key advantages to using the e-marketing concepts:

1. **To Sell**: The tools of e-marketing enable companies to increase their sales by accessing more targeted audiences throughout the world.

2. **To Sizzle**: E-marketing helps a company to extend their brand online and thereby develop consumer awareness about their brand.

3. **To Save**: E-marketing tools help both the companies and the targeted customers save money. By adapting e-marketing concepts, the organization will be able to reach the targeted audiences and offer relatively lower prices by saving on distribution and other intermediate costs.

4. **To Speak**: E-marketing provides organizations with a two-way communication channel with their customers. This makes communication between the organization and its audiences more interactive and faster than in traditional marketing.

5. **To Serve**: E-marketing helps companies to offer their services to their customers around the day. These online services add to the value of the brand.

Other advantages of e-marketing as identified by Dann and Dann (2011) include:

6. **Individualization**: Online marketers can send the same message to all customers or send an individual message to each one.

7. **Time independence and immediacy**: The Internet never stops. It is always on and is always immediately available for companies and their customers.

Also, from an innovation perspective, researchers have considered e-marketing as a source of innovation in the commercialization process and as
a creator of additional value (Corrocher & Zirulia 2010; Kuusik et al. 2011; Indrupati & Henari 2012).

2.2 Online advertisements & the assessment of the online ads

2.2.1 Online ads (ONAs)

ONAs are part of online communication strategies. These use the Internet as an advertising medium where the promotional message appears on the computer screen (Vurro, 2010:5), and they are usually interactive (Chaffy & Smith 2008:29). Further, ONAs seek to increase the online traffic to the destination site of the organization (Chaffy & Smith, 2008), to build a brand name, or to develop the customers’ direction of purchasing (Lohse & Rosen, 2001).

Advantages of adopting a strategy of online advertising: The literature on ONAs describes the following benefits of ONAs over traditional ads such as TV ads, magazine ads, and newspaper ads:

- They maximize the targeting of customers (Tavor, 2011).
- They allow Internet users to make online purchases efficiently (Luk et al., 2002).
- They increase customer understanding and recollection of the products and connect the products to certain brands (Ha, 2008).
- They allow for customization, and the customers can choose the time and the place to get the information from the websites (Zhou & Bao, 2002).
- They offer more interactive methods because the Internet users can get information from the feedback of other customers and can leave their comments (Yoon & Kim, 2001).
- They facilitate direct responses because new technologies help companies to follow the traffic generated by their ads and can see customer reactions regarding their products (Chaffey et al., 2009).
- They stimulate offline sales (Abraham, 2008) and enhance dynamic updates of the ads’ contents (Tavor, 2011).
2.3.2 The assessment of the ONAs

The ad’s value is defined by Ducoffe (1995:1) as “a subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers”. Further, Ducoffe (1996) has defined an ONA’s value as “a cognitive assessment of the extent to which advertising gives consumers what they want”. He explained that the distinction between the ONA’s value and the attitude toward the ONA is based on the consumers’ responses, and that the online consumers could dislike the invaluable ads and vice versa. Ducoffe (1995) developed a framework for predicting the ad’s value and the consumer’s attitude toward the ad. He found that entertainment, informativeness, and irritation were factors that contribute to consumers’ assessment of an ad’s value and their attitudes toward the ad. Further, Ducoffe (1996) applied his model to ONAs and found that the attitude toward the ONAs directly depends on the ONAs’ value and that the value of the ONAs depends on the perceived level of entertainment, informativeness, and irritation values.

Brackett and Carr (2001) added credibility and consumer demographics in their validation of Ducoffe’s (1996) model. These authors found that credibility was directly related to both the assessment of the ONAs and the consumer attitude towards the ONAs. However, the demographic variables such as college major, age, and gender only predicted the online users’ attitudes. Wang et al. (2002) found that the interactivity value and the consumer’s motives are other factors that contribute to the attitude toward the ONAs, but the authors did not explore this further within the context of assessing the ONAs’ value.

Moreover, Wang et al. (2009) tested the five belief factors of entertainment value, information seeking, credibility, economy, and value corruption that form the basis of Chinese consumers’ attitudes towards ONAs. The authors found that information seeking, the economy, and value corruption were the significant predictors of attitudes towards ONAs. Likewise, Wang and Sun (2010a) in their comparative study of American and Romanian consumers tested the consumers’ attitudes towards ONAs found that belief factor was a statistically significant predictor, and they also found significant differences according to the cultural context; Romanian consumers had more positive
attitudes towards the ONAs and were more likely to click advertisements, whereas Americans were more likely to make a purchase online.

2.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) is the process of promoting a product or service by gaining website traffic or attention through various SNSs (Chris, 2014; Broker, 2014). This includes the use of SNSs for a variety of marketing objectives such as branding, research, customer relationship management, customer service, and sales promotions (Ashley & Tuten, 2015:15).

SNSs users have different roles in their relation to firms. According to Broker (2014), SMM activities attract the attention of users who are motivated to share content within their social network, and this might explain the paradigm shift in many companies’ marketing practices from a product-driven approach to a customer-driven marketing method (Rust et al., 2011). This shift might reflect the advantage of SNS technology that puts firms and customers together in one platform. This shift in the relationship between companies and consumers brings one of the main benefits of SMM, which is the ability to spread the marketing message of the companies from user to user. This makes the marketing message more likely to resonate with its audience because it appears to come from a trusted third-party source (Broker, 2014). Thus, SNSs tend to be perceived by the online users as a trust worthier source of information than communications transmitted via the traditional elements of marketing promotion (Foux, 2006).

It is clear that SMM is an important component of online marketing and that SMM targets a slightly different group of users than digital marketing. SMM depends on exchanging information between the companies and the online users, and it also differs on the level of trustworthiness compared to other digital marketing tools such as TV, SMS, radio, and billboards and even compared to other Internet marketing tools such as banners ads, e-mail ads, and content marketing. Thus, it is not logical to generalize the findings of the general assessment of ONAs to the assessment of SNSAs. In a similar
manner, researchers studying SMM need to use variables that relate better to the nature of SNSs and to retest the variables related to ONAs.

2.4 The Assessment of SNSAs

Regardless of the advantages of using the SNSs as a marketing and communication tool, the literature review presented above revealed few studies that have directly contributed to our understanding of how SNS users assess SNSAs. Three of these studies used Ducoffe’s (1996) model and its three primary variables of information value, entertainment value, and irritation value (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2012; Dar et al., 2014). The fourth study by Hadija, Barnes, and Hair (2012) was a qualitative study that reported the inadequacy of the literature about the assessment of SNSAs.

2.5 The Conceptual Frameworks

The information value, the entertainment value, and the irritation value of an SNSA have been identified as the main predictors for how a user will assess the ad. Based on this, the first paper in this thesis aimed to develop a model for assessing the SNSAs by exploring additional factors in addition to these three. The ad’s credibility and interactivity values were introduced to assess the SNSAs in addition to the three variables that were tested in previous studies (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2012; Dar et al., 2014), and this led to a modified model for assessing the SNSAs (Figure 2.1).

Fig. 2.1 The conceptual framework for the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs.
The information value of SNSAs

E-commerce allows consumers to seek actively out the information they desire and to ignore other information they do not need (Gordon & de Lima-Turner, 1997:366). Recent developments in e-commerce have significantly affected the information-seeking behavior of online consumers (Kulkarni et al., 2012). This demonstrates the importance of the information value of ads as one of the main driving factors for assessing the ONAs (Ducoffe, 1996; Brackett & Carr, 2001; Wang et al., 2003; Schlosser, Shavitt & Kanfer, 1999). Also, to collect information is one of the primary consumers’ interactions in an SNS brand community (due Valck et al., 2009). Thus, any post about a brand on an SNS should consider the information value and the entertainment value of the post (de Vires et al., 2012). Likewise, the information value of SNSAs has been shown to be positively correlated with the consumers’ perception of SNSAs (Saxena & Khanna, 2013; Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012). However, Dar et al. (2014) found that the information value did not significantly predict the assessment of SNSAs.

Based on the conflicting results from the role of information value in assessing SNSAs, the present author considered information value to be one of the main predictors for how SNS users will assess SNSAs.

The entertainment value of SNSAs

This represents the degree of pleasure and involvement one feels when interacting with a particular ad (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Advertisers believe that entertainment value increases the effectiveness of the ad’s message and generates a positive attitude toward the brand (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989, Shavitt et al., 1998; Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012). Also, entertainment-oriented ads aim to keep consumers occupied in a manner that is designed to encourage repeat visits to the company’s website (Dan & Dan, 2011:78). According to Ducoffe (1996), the success of ONAs depends on their level of entertainment. This is particularly noticeable with SNSAs, where researchers have identified the entertainment value as one of the primary factors in assessing SNSAs (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Dar, 2014) and in testing consumers’ attitudes toward SNSAs (Saxena & Khanna, 2012; Hadija, Barnes & Hair, 2012).
Taylor et al. (2011) found that SNS users seek to enjoy themselves, to relax, and to pass the time. These activities relate to the nature of SNSs as entertainment sites, which leads the SNS users to consume, create, or contribute to the brand content (Muntinga et al., 2011). Based on these notions, the present author has included the entertainment value of SNSAs in the three papers as a critical variable in the model for how SNS users assess SNSAs.

**The irritation value of SNSAs**

A feeling of irritation arises when the consumer experiences discomfort while watching an ONA (Saxena & Khanna 2013:19) or when they seem to be less likely to be persuaded by it. This plays a crucial role in the online consumers’ perception toward the ONAs (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). The irritation value is predicting the online users' assessment of ONAs negatively (Ducoffe, 1996). It includes descriptors such as annoying, irritating, deceptive, and confusing (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012:169), and it contributes to a loss of privacy about the SNSA (Taylor et al., 2011).

Some researchers have found that the irritation value of SNSAs does not predict the consumers’ assessment of the SNSAs (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012), while Saxena and Khanna (2012) have identified the irritation value as a significant negative predictor of the consumers’ assessment of the SNSAs. Also, Dar et al. (2014) found that the irritation value had a small and unexpected positive coefficient of 0.037 (at a significance level of $p < 0.05$) on assessing SNSAs. Thus, there are conflicting results about the role of irritation value of assessing SNSAs.

Based on the uses and gratification theory (U&G), audiences in online brand communities have empathy, trust, and feelings of safety with their brand (Brodie et al., 2013). Consumers are likely to join brand communities because they feel loyal and that they are customers of the brand (Gummerus et al., 2011). This engagement in SNSs’ brand communities has a crucial role in building brand trust (Habibi et al., 2014), which may lead to greater trust in a brand’s social media post. As a consequence, this reduces the consumers’ feeling of irritation from such posts.
Because of the inconsistency in the existing literature about the role of the irritation value in assessing SNSAs, and to test how the irritation value can predict the BCCs’ assessment of SNSAs, the present author found that it is important not to ignore the irritation value as one of the main dimensions of the extended model of assessing the SNSAs.

**The interactivity value of SNSAs**

Researchers have defined interactivity from different perspectives. The old definition of interactivity was the extent to which the consumers can participate in modifying the messages they receive from the ads (Steuer, 1992). Others defined it as an effective means of communication between individuals (Ha & James, 1998). Recently about SNSAs, it has been defined as a form of communication between online users and online brands (DeVries et al. 2012). Also, the engagement theory of online brand communities defines consumers’ engagement on SNSs to be an interactive process (Brodie et al., 2011).

Interactivities in SNSs come in different forms, and fans can interact with brand posts by “liking” a brand’s post, adding a comment on the brand’s timeline, or by forwarding the brand’s posts through their personal networks (DeVries et al., 2012). The interactivity value has been identified as a factor that can explain the value of ONAs (Brackett & Carr, 2001), and this was confirmed by Yaakop et al. (2013) who showed that the interactivity value of the SNSAs is a primary variable that predicts the consumers’ attitudes toward SNSAs. However, the attitude towards ONAs is the subject of a slightly different research context than the assessment of the SNSAs because the first is measuring how the SNS users interact with the ads while the second is measuring how consumers perceive the ads themselves.

Based on the above discussion about the role of the interactivity value in the consumers’ attitude toward the ONAs, and the findings of the first paper that confirmed the role of interactivity in assessing SNSAs, the interactivity value was considered to be one of the primary variables of the modified model in the three papers that make up this study.
The credibility value of SNSAs

The feeling of credibility about ONAs represents the degree to which the consumers perceive claims made about a brand to be believable and truthful (Prendergast et al., 2009:321). Brackett and Carr (2001) identified the credibility value of ONAs as an essential dimension for assessing ONAs and found that credibility could directly predict consumer assessment of the ONAs. Based on this finding, credibility was considered by many researchers to be a primary dimension when assessing ONAs and the consumer’s attitudes toward ONAs (Prendergast et al., 2009; Clewley et al., 2009; Sun & Wang, 2010; Breitsohl et al., 2010). However, Yaakop et al. (2013) found that the value of credibility had no effect on Malaysian university students’ perceptions toward ads on Facebook.

Moreover, none of the previous literature in the context of assessing the SNSAs has tested the relation between an SNSA’s credibility and its value. Nevertheless, regarding brand communities and cyber psychology studies, credibility is an essential dimension when assessing the online consumers’ responses to certain online brands (Lee et al., 2011; Chatterjee, 2011). This makes the online brand community, such as the fan pages on SNSs, a robust interactive engagement that leads to certain brands being recommended from one consumer to another (Brodie et al., 2013). Also, the level of participation of the users of brand communities increases their feelings of safety, trust, and gratitude with regards to the brand’s posts (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek, 2011).

In keeping with these findings of the role of the credibility value in the consumers’ attitude towards ONAs, and because of the role of credibility among BCCs, the credibility value of the SNSAs has been considered to be an essential dimension of the modified model for assessing SNSAs by both regular SNS users and BCCs.

Brand Communities in SNSs

Kozinets (1999:254) defined an online social community “as an associated group of online users that have an online interaction based on sharing knowledge of a particular consumption or related group of activities”. In
SNSs, this form of communication focuses on a particular brand (Woisetschläger et al., 2008). As a consequence of this, consumers can gather information from these communities, review the opinions of expert users, or ask for advice before making a purchasing decision (Valck et al., 2009). Moreover, users participating in these brand communities become principal authors in creating stories around the brand (Gensler et al., 2013). This highlights the importance of the interactivities on SNSs for increasing the brand’s popularity (de Vries et al., 2012). Also, participants in these brand communities might represent a good source of information about consumers for the companies themselves, this can represent an additional advantage to brands on SNSs.

The consumer’s engagement in brand communities involves particular interactive experiences between individual brands and their fans and between the community members themselves (Brodie et al., 2013). This engagement often requires the consumer’s commitment (Chan & Li, 2010), trust (Hollebeck, 2011), and satisfaction (Bowden, 2009), and it increases the power of consumers’ value (Schau et al., 2009). As a consequence, this might affect the consumers’ feelings of credibility toward the brand and decrease their feelings of irritation.

Based on the above discussion, the present author argues in the second paper that BCCs on SNSs have a different assessment of the SNSAs’ value
compared to typical SNS users. This might represent a new research setting within the literature of assessing SNSAs. In addition to the five identified variables from the first paper, the brand community is presented in the second paper as the associated groups of the SNS users that have an online interaction around certain brands on Facebook as shown in Figure 2.2.

**National culture and the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs**

![Diagram of National Culture and Perceived Value of SNSAs](image)

Figure 2.3: The conceptual framework of consumers’ assessment of SNSAs from a national culture perceptive.

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 only recently begun to examine online users’ behavior and attitudes in a national cultural context (Chau et al., 2002; Wei-Na & Sejung, 2006; Shu-Chuan & Jhih-Syuan, 2012; Brosdahl & Almousa, 2013).

Regarding consumers’ perception of electronic ads, Chia-Ling et al. (2012) investigated factors influencing the perception of mobile ads in different cultures by comparing consumer attitudes in Austria and Japan. The authors applied Ducoffe’s (1996) three variables and found that information value
and entertainment value had significant positive effects on Japanese consumers’ perception toward mobile ads while irritation value had a significant negative impact. However, the irritation value had no significant effect on a mobile ad’s value among the Austrian sample. In another cross-cultural study, Wang & Sun (2010) identified differences regarding the consumers’ beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral responses toward ONAs in the US, China, and Romania.

The effect of national culture on the assessment of SNSAs has not been explored previously, so this was considered in the third paper of this thesis. The aim of that study was to determine if Egyptian, Dutch, and British SNS users assess SNSAs differently. Thus, in addition to the five identified variables from the first article, the present author introduced the concept of national culture in the study to present the universal set that contains the variables of assessing SNSAs as shown in Figure 2.3.
Chapter III
Research Methodology
Methodology

This chapter presents the research methods used in this thesis. As inspired by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) (see figure 3.1), 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 the trustworthiness is presented to explain the present author attempts to achieve validity and reliability in this study.

3.1 The Research Paradigm

Figure 3.1: The research ‘onion’. Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009; 108)

The theoretical paradigm – or the philosophical assumptions – forms the foundation upon which the researcher constructs a scientific investigation (Krauss, 2005:760). It determines how members of research communities view the phenomena of their particular studies and the research
methodology needed to study these phenomena. 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 (2005:232), researchers have different views about the nature of knowledge and reality, which helps them to clarify their theoretical frameworks. Because the field of this study is in business, the present author positioned it based on the research paradigms that are significant for business research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

As shown in Figure 3.1, the four research philosophies in business research are positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism, and it has become very common in the scientific literature to describe a quantitative methodology as belonging to the positivist paradigm (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Tuli, 2010; Creswell, 2003).

Guided by the positivist paradigm, the present author followed an objective scientific method for collecting and interpreting the data among variables that predicting consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. That was clarified in different sections of this chapter.

3.2 The Research Approach

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009;124) showed that the deductive and the inductive are the main approaches in business research studies. Quantitative research is deductive in nature and is regarded as a prerequisite for a natural science approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007:154). Guided by the positivism paradigm, the present author used a deductive approach that is objective or detached in nature and where the value is on identifying and measuring variables by testing hypotheses that are linked to general causal explanations (Marczyk et al., 2005; Sarantakos, 2005). Thus, the extended model for assessing the SNSAs was based on the literature on assessing ONAs and the literature on consumers’ attitude toward ONAs, and it also included uses and gratification theory.
The present author followed a deductive approach by investigating the theoretical concepts related to the research questions in the three papers, and then generated hypotheses 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 main conceptual framework (see Fig. 2.2 in page 41).

### 3.3 The Research Strategy

As shown in Figure 3.1, there are seven main types of research strategies: experiment, survey, case study, action research, archival research, ethnography, and grounded theory. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009:144), the survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive research approach and tends to be used to answer who, what, where, how, and how many. Moreover, it is one of the most important strategies for the research done in the positivist spirit and is a common strategy in business research (Crotty, 1998).

Surveys were the primary strategy of this research, and these helped to answer the research questions “What are the main variables in assessing SNSAs?” and “How do SNS users assess SNSAs?” The surveys successfully identified the variables that predict the consumers’ assessment of the SNSAs for both common SNS users and BCCs. The surveys also identified the factors that are important for how SNS users assess SNSAs in different cultural contexts.

### 3.4 Sampling Strategy

#### 3.4.1 Population

A population can be defined as “the total of all the elements that share a common set of characteristics; these elements can be people, supermarkets, companies, hospitals, and so on” (Hair et al., 2010:164). Scholars described the target population as the complete group of objects or elements relevant to the research problem.
The present author developed the questionnaires used in this study for the purpose of extending the existing model for assessing SNSAs and for identifying the variables that predict the SNS users’ assessment of SNSAs in different research settings. The target populations for the three survey studies of this thesis were mainly SNS users. For the first paper, the survey population included all students in 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 that has focused mainly on university students in the context of assessing SNSAs. However, the Swedish University students were not tested before in the context of assessing SNSAs.

The purpose of the second paper was to test the extended model as well as to identify the factors that predict the BCCs’ assessment of SNSAs. Thus, the population for the second study was the BCCs, who belonged to one or more of the fan pages on Facebook. There were two main reasons for choosing this population. The first was based on the finding in the first paper that the irritation value did not predict the assessment of the SNSAs. The second reason was that no previous study has investigated BCCs’ assessment of the SNSAs even though they are a more representative sample of active SNS users regarding age, gender, and nationality.

The population in the third paper included SNS users from Egypt, the Netherlands, and the UK, who belong to one or more of the fan pages on Facebook. The choice of this research population was based mainly on the analysis of the second paper in which the respondents gave answers that could be categorized into four different groups based on their nationalities. The three different nations belong to one of the four different groups identified in the second paper. Moreover, the assessment of SNSAs has not previously been investigated regarding the national culture.

3.4.2 Sampling and Sample Size

The research sample is a set of elements selected in some way from a population, and this aims to save time and effort and to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of a population status regarding whatever is being researched (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill
(2009:213) divided the sampling techniques into two main types: probability (or representative) sampling and non-probability (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 the probability sampling. However, because of the difficulties encountered in generating a random sample, non-probability sampling techniques were used in the three papers of this thesis. For example, in the first study, there was no access to the students’ database to know who had used Facebook for at least two years. The same went for the second and the third papers because there was no way to access the data that would make it possible to generate a random sample of BCCs on Facebook. Moreover, a combination of online data collection methods was used to ensure the collection of a specified number of respondents from the Facebook fans of the shared brands and their communities.

**Sample Size:** It is widely suggested in the literature to calculate the sample size based on the population at a 95 confidence level and with a margin of error ± 5% (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 the effective size of the research sample, the present 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 first and second papers, the main aim was to determine how the five variables can predict the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. 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 for assuming a medium-sized relationship between each of the independent
variables and the dependent variable. However, the present author 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 third paper, 30:1 is the rule of thumb 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 on the third paper, we needed to have at least 150 participants. However, 278 completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed.

The Quantitative Sample:

The survey respondents:

For the first article, the questionnaires were distributed by using three different sampling techniques, as shown in Table (3.1). The author collected 214 questionnaires, but 13 were rejected because the respondents did not have Facebook accounts or they did not complete the entire questionnaire.

Table 3.1: Collected responses classified according to the sampling technique.

<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>Web link</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><strong>Total completed questionnaires</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>201</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the second article, the questionnaire was administrated online on Surveymonkey.com. The program ensured that participants could not fill out the questionnaire more than once. The questionnaire was then distributed through web distribution by uploading the questionnaire 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 consisted of people who were members of Facebook’s brand communities of the following hotels in the Red Sea region: Club Paradisio 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.

A total of 673 questionnaires were returned. After deleting the incomplete questionnaires and those of the 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’ nationalities 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%. Moreover, the genders of the sample were 51% women, and 49% men. The largest age range of 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 third 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 from the targeted population. The total sample included 111 Egyptian, 78 Dutch, and 89 British respondents.

**The 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, 2007:196). However, because a combination of methods was used in the three studies for administering the questionnaires online, it was difficult to estimate the non-responses to the distributed questionnaire
in the three studies. Moreover, the questionnaires were distributed on the on the Halmstad University page on Facebook, which made it impossible to determine the total number of the non-response questionnaires. As noted by de Vaus (2002:127), it is impossible to calculate a response rate in many online surveys because the numbers of inappropriate and unreachable responses are hidden.

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.5.1 Data Collection Methods

To answer the questions of the three papers, the author used both secondary data and the primary data collection methods. Secondary data is mainly that which is collected and archived or published by others (Given, 2008:232), and in this study, the secondary data was based on the literature regarding the value of ONAs and SNSAs, including books, journals, reports, and student theses. The secondary data were obtained from a variety of databases, including several Internet databases (Google Scholar, electronic libraries of different universities, and so on) in addition to the library of Halmstad University.

Primary Data

There are several conventional methods for collecting primary data, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, and experiments (Lars et al. 2001). The author used objective data collection techniques that focus on gathering hard data in the form of numbers that allow for quantitative analysis, as guided by the positivist paradigm and as part of the realism paradigm (Neuman, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005).

The questionnaires of the three papers were constructed based on the study’s main theoretical framework so as to achieve construct validity, as recommended by McBurney and White (2009). Moreover, the author gathered feedback from participants in pilot studies, and this confirmed the collected data from the respondents and increased the validity of the research. After performing the pilot studies for the first and second papers,
Electronic questionnaires were created in addition to the printed version. Further, the online versions were distributed through Surveymonkey.com.

3.5.2 Data Analysis

The present author used SPSS version 20 to analyze data in the three papers. This provided a clear indication of how the independent variables can predict the SNS’s users' assessment of SNSAs as guided by the positivism paradigm (Sarantakos, 2005; Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005). Using SPSS helped to answer the research questions and to test the levels of validity and reliability of the collected data. As shown by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009:374), reliability can be ensured by measuring the internal consistency of the quantitative data with Cronbach’s alpha.

The data analysis methods: The present author tried to choose proper statistical analysis methods in a step-wise process to answer the research questions. The first three steps, which were common in the three papers, were as follows:

- In the first step, the principle component analysis (PCA) method of factor extraction with varimax rotation was used to remove items that loaded heavily on more than one construct factor and to eliminate fragile items.
- In the second step, the internal consistency reliability coefficients for each group of the remaining items were tested with Cronbach’s alpha.
- In the third step, descriptive analysis was used to achieve a broader insight into the research subject, to extend the knowledge regarding the research variables, and to determine the characteristics of the research samples.

After these three steps, the following tests were carried out in the first and the second papers to test the model of factors that predict the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs:

- A multiple regression analysis was used to help in determining the factors involved in the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. The
multiple correlation coefficients \((R)\), the coefficients of
determination \((R^2)\), and the F-ratios were examined to predict the
best-fitting model for assessing the SNSAs as perceived by SNS
users.

- The coefficients of the dimensions of the best fitting model as
  identified by the multiple regression analysis were then tested to
determine the effect of these predictors on the consumers’
  assessment of SNSAs and to provide the construct equation for both
  papers.
- After that, the tolerance statistics \((TOL)\) of the predictors and the
  variance inflation factor \((VIF)\) were tested to ensure that there was
  no collinearity problem between the identified predictors as
  explained in (Menard, 1995; O’Brien, 2007).
- Finally, the hypotheses were tested based on the standardized
  coefficient of each of the identified predictors.

Because the aim of the third paper was to test how national culture
influences the consumers’ assessment of the SNSAs, the one-way analysis
of variance (ANOVA) with post-hoc tests was conducted as recommended
by some researchers (Pallant 2007; Tabanick & Fidell, 2007) as follows:

- First, 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 retained items from the three samples.
- ANOVA was then carried out to identify the power of variability of
  each of the identified variables between the three tested research
  samples.
- Based on the ANOVA test, the \(eta^2\) 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 SNSAs.
Chapter IV
Summary of the Three Articles, Implications and Future Research
Summary, Implications and Future Research

In this chapter, the three appended articles are briefly presented, and their contributions to the research process associated with the present thesis are explained. Finally, implications and future research are briefly presented.

4.1 Summary of the three articles

The work on the first article took place from 2013 to 2015. The empirical data were collected during the spring of 2013, and an abstract of the paper was presented at the Third International Conference on E-Technology and Business on the Web in Paris, France, in 2015. The final version of the manuscript was published in *The International Journal of Digital Information and Wireless Communication* (IJDIWC) in 2015. The empirical data for the second paper were collected during the spring of 2014, and the paper was published in the *International Journal of Current Research* in June of 2015. The work on the third paper took place in 2015. The empirical data were collected during the spring of 2015 in addition to part of the data.
from the second article. An abstract was presented at The Fifth International Conference on Digital Information Processing and Communications (ICDIPC2015), October 7-9, Sierre, Switzerland, and the manuscript was published in *IEEE Xplore*. 
Factors Predicting Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites.

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

Published in 2015 in the International Journal of Digital Information and Wireless Communications (IJDIWC) 5 (2), 111-123.

An early version was presented in 2015 at the Third International Conference on E-Technology and Business on the Web that was held in Paris, France.

Very few survey studies have been conducted on assessing the value of SNSAs, 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 the information value, the entertainment value, and the irritation value. The previous literature is also heavily skewed towards university students as the main sample frame. In this regard, the first article presents the results of a quantitative survey study of assessing the value of SNSAs as perceived by Swedish university students from Halmstad University who have had a Facebook account for at least two years.

The purpose of the first paper was to introduce interactivity and credibility as additional predictors for the model of assessing the SNSAs in addition to the three variables of Ducoffe’s (1996) model.
**Theoretical framework:** The study relates to three areas of research, including consumers’ attitude toward ONAs, the assessment of ONAs, and the assessment of SNSAs. The theoretical framework of the paper was not based directly on assessing the value of the SNSAs but was benchmarked from previous studies of assessing ONAs and consumers’ attitudes toward ONAs.

**Method:** The questionnaire was distributed among students of Halmstad University, primarily master’s degree students in the business program. Three survey 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 concerned 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 the principle 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 an ad’s credibility and its interactivity value are critical factors in assessing the value of SNSAs. Based on the multiple regression analysis, four extracted factors predicted the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. These factors and their coefficients are the interactivity value (0.313), the entertainment value (0.261), the credibility value (0.146), and the information value (0.139). The irritation value did not predict the consumers' assessment significantly. Finally, paired t-tests were used to compare the means of the identified factors, which helped to characterize the research sample from the Swedish university students as being highly irritated by SNSAs and feeling that they are less credible on SNSAs. Also, the students were more information-oriented when viewing the SNSAs and were less interested in interacting with them or being entertained by them. Figure 4.2 shows the findings of the first article.

Figure 4.2: Factors for assessing the value of SNSAs.
The contribution of the thesis: The first article contributes to the thesis by showing that the interactivity value and the ad’s credibility are additional factors for assessing the value of SNSAs. The results of the study also contribute by providing the first survey study of how young Swedish SNS users assess SNSAs.

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**Article No 2**

**Title:** The assessments of social networking sites’ advertisements as perceived by brand communities consumers.

**Authors:** Hossam Deraz and Gabriel Baffour Awuah.


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

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to extend the results of the first paper in assessing the value of SNSAs as perceived by a research sample other than the younger SNS users, in this case, active users from certain brand communities. Moreover, to determine the characteristics of the BCCs while assessing SNSAs.

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

**Method:**

In the second paper, the questionnaire from the first article was modified, and more items were added to the variables as recommended from the pilot studies. The survey was then administrated online through SurveyMonkey.com. The final questionnaire was distributed among a population of the BCCs’ of eight different brands on Facebook. Two online distribution techniques, including 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 registered responses.

Based on the principle component analysis, the completed questionnaires gave six main construct factors that covered the six main dimensions of the conceptual model on page 26, five of which represented the independent variables 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 on the methodology chapter.

**The Results:**

The second paper confirmed the roles of the ad’s credibility and its interactivity value as additional key factors in assessing the value of SNSAs. Based on the multiple regression analysis, the five
extracted factors (and their coefficients) that predicted the BCCs’ assessment of SNSAs were the irritation value (−0.231), the entertainment value (0.239), the interactivity value (0.184), the credibility value (0.155), and the 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 the SNSAs to be highly credible, and they felt less irritated by the SNSAs. Also, the BCCs were more information-oriented when viewing the SNSAs and were less interested in interacting with them or being entertained by them. Figure 4.3 shows the findings of the second article.

The contribution of the thesis: This article contributes to the thesis by showing that younger users are not representative of the main active users on SNSs. It confirmed the existence of the interactivity value and the ads credibility as additional factors while assessing the value of SNSAs. The results of the study also contributed the first survey data for exploring BCCs’ perceptions toward the value of SNSAs.
**Article No 3**

**Title:**
The Effect of Culture on the 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 2015 in *IEEE Xplore Digital Library* (see the link below):


An early version was presented at The Fifth International Conference on Digital Information Processing and Communications (ICDIPC2015), October 7-9, Sierre, Switzerland.

**Background:**
As noted in the literature review, few researchers have conducted cross-cultural studies to explore consumers’ perceptions toward SNSAs. 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 SNSAs.

**Purpose:**
The purpose of the third study was to gain knowledge about how the national culture of the SNS users can affect their assessments of the value of SNSAs.
**Theoretical framework:**
In addition to the three research areas from the first paper, this paper studied the contradiction of national culture on the variables of assessing the SNSAs. 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 nations. The questionnaire was distributed among the BCCs’ of the same eight brands as in the second paper. A total of 278 respondents fulfilled the study criteria out of a total of 357 registered responses.

Based on the principle component analysis, the completed questionnaires gave five main construct factors that covered the five predictors affecting the assessment of SNSAs. 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 in the third appended article, and some additional reflections are provided in the methodology chapter.

**The Results:**
The third paper confirmed that the active SNS users from different nations have different assessments of four of the main factors in assessing SNSAs. Those factors, according to the $F$-test, are the interactivity value ($335,549$), the irritation value
(69,537), the information value (54,935), and the credibility value (12,689). However, the assessments of the entertainment value as perceived by the three samples were no different significantly. The post-hoc tests described the differences between the three tested nations in the consumers’ perception of SNSAs. Regarding the assessment of the ads’ information value, the Egyptians and the British had a significant and positive difference compared to the Dutch, but there was no significant difference between the Egyptians and the British. Regarding the assessment of the credibility value, the Egyptians had the highest positive mean scores, while the British had the lowest. For the evaluation of the interactivity value, the Egyptians had the highest assessment and the Dutch had the lowest value. Finally, for the feeling of irritation, the Dutch had the highest value, then the Egyptians and the British, and the British were less irritated than the Egyptians.

The contribution of the thesis: The article contributes to the thesis by showing that national culture has an effect on the assessment of SNSAs, and it has highlighted the importance of considering more nations to gain a deeper understanding of how SNS users assess SNSAs. The results of this study also provided the first insights into how the national cultural background might affect SNS users’ perceptions of SNSAs.
4.2 Implications

4.2.1 The Theoretical Implications

The findings of the three papers have three main theoretical implications. The first concerns the model of assessing the SNSAs, the second is about identifying the active users on SNSs and determining the relevant research sample when investigating activities on SNSs, and the third is about the role of national culture in assessing the SNSAs.

Regarding the model of assessing the SNSAs, the second paper confirmed the findings of the first paper about the role of credibility and interactivity in addition to the previously identified items. However, the identified factors in conjunction with each other supported the findings of some previous studies but contradicted other findings, especially concerning the coefficients of each of the identified factors. For example, the irritation value had a significant negative effect on assessing the value of SNSAs, which is in contrast with the findings of other researchers (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla 2012; Dar et al., 2014). Also, the information value had the lowest coefficient in conjunction with the interactivity value and the credibility value, which is in contrast to the findings of Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, (2012) and Saxena and Khana (2012) who reported that the information value had the strongest effect.

Concerning active SNS users, this study supported the findings of Hampton et al. (2011) and emphasized that the younger users such as university students not be the main active users on SNSs, as has been argued elsewhere (Taylor et al. 2011; Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Saxena & Khanna 2012; Hadija, Barnes & Hair, 2012: Zernigah & Sohail 2012; Dar et al., 2014).

Finally, regarding the cross-cultural theory, the findings of the third paper provide some confirmations and some contradictions. For example, as presented in Hofstede (1980), low individualism enhances conformity to the group’s attitudes and decreases the variety of opinions. This was confirmed by the third paper because the Egyptians had the lowest individualism score.
and they were more accepting of the SNSAs and had a lower irritation value than the Dutch respondents.

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

4.2.2 The Practical Implications

This thesis 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 the interactivity value and ads’ credibility in assessing the value of SNSAs in addition to the information, entertainment, and irritation values. It also offers the first survey studies on assessing SNSAs from the following research samples: young Swedish SNS users, BCCs, and Egyptian, British, and Dutch SNS users. This can help marketers to define better those market segments and to identify their needs and to be more efficient with their use of SNSAs.

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

Furthermore, this thesis offers evidence that younger SNS users are a market segment that represents only 17–25% of the total active SNS users,
and they are not representative of the whole population of active SNS users. Advertisers also need to consider consumer culture as one of the main driving factors that predict both consumer perceptions toward SNSAs and their intention to interact with those ads.

**4.3 Future Research**

This study offers a developmental model to measure factors that predict consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, and this model can be used to measure the attitudes and the consumer intention toward SNSAs.

In conjunction with the new variables, the findings of this study had some contradictions with previous studies. Thus, to capture any changes in consumers’ assessment, researchers need to conduct more studies among consumers of 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 how they affect SNS users’ perceptions and attitudes toward SNSAs.

Moreover, due to the negative role of irritation in assessing the SNSAs, more studies are needed to investigate how to improve the trustworthiness of SNSAs and to encourage SNS users to be more interactive with them.

Finally, as presented in the second paper, to gain a deeper understanding of how SNS users assess SNSAs, researchers need to adapt other models to measure the users’ perception of SNSAs. Some suggested models are The European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI), the Extended Performance Satisfaction Index (EPSI), and the gap model (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010).
Part II
The three papers appended in full
Paper I
Factors Predicting Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites

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ABSTRACT

Marketers act on social networking sites (SNSs) in order to be more efficient in merchandising their products and/or services. Even so, the scope of the published studies regarding the assessment of advertisements on social networking sites (SNAs) is limited. Consequently, the present study aimed to consider credibility and interactivity, in addition to information, entertainment and irritation values, as main factors for consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNSs’ users.

An analysis of empirical data helped to identify four main factors for assessing SNAs. These were: information value, entertainment value, credibility value and interactivity value. Irritation value was the only factor that had no significant effect on the assessment of SNAs. Furthermore, based on the beta coefficients, the information and entertainment values of SNAs, in conjunction with credibility and interactivity values, had different outcomes from previous studies. Consequently, the interactivity value was the strongest among the four predictors for assessing SNAs.

KEYWORDS

Advertisements’ value, Online Ads Value, Social Networking Ads, Social Networking Sites.

1 INTRODUCTION

At the turn of this century, the use of electronic marketing (e-marketing) led to a revolution in business processes. It redefined the notion of consumers. The most important technology and business innovation that enabled this revolution was the extension of the Internet to the World Wide Web [1]. This increased the potential of e-marketing, creating additional value and enabling many firms to achieve their marketing objectives by using Internet media, websites (including third-party websites) and e-mail as marketing tools [2].

Recently, many firms who are under intense competition use social networking sites (SNSs) to advertise their new offers or to communicate with their fans [3]. This action creates a new form of social regulation between companies and consumers, as the SNSs offer an open market in which a large numbers of buyers and sellers can participate and interact [4]. Based on this, while browsing SNSs, there are many firms that seek to establish fans and followers, thereby helping them to develop an open-conversation platform with their consumers. This shows the crucial role of SNSs as a marketing and communication tool.

Simultaneously, the value of advertisements is one of the basic determinants of brand success [5]. It represents a core determinant in purchasing decisions and behavior towards advertisements (ads) [6]. According to this, and due to the roles of SNSs in marketing, researchers explored SNSs as marketing and advertising media [7], [8], [9], [10]. They considered mass customization, global access and proliferation as the main advantages of using SNSs as advertising platforms. For example, in the first quarter of 2015, Facebook had approximately 1.415 billion monthly active users around the world [11]. In addition, it had approximately 51,063 brands. Some of these brands had millions of fans, such as Coca-Cola, which had more than 89 million, and McDonald’s, which had more than 56 million [12].
However, there is limited scope of published studies that assess SNAs. There are a small number of studies that have directly contributed to the assessment of SNAs [13], [14], [15]. Such studies use three main factors as predictors: information value, irritation value and entertainment value. Of these, information value was the most effective predictor for assessing SNAs.

Furthermore, credibility and interactivity values have been identified as factors that predict consumers’ attitude towards online advertisements (ONAs) [16], [17], [18], [19], [20].

Based on the limited previous published studies, this paper aimed to extend the existing literature on SNAs by introducing interactivity and credibility as additional predictors for its assessment (in addition to the previously measured dimensions - information value, entertainment value and irritation value). Conditionally, the present study answered two main questions:

RQ1: What are the main factors for assessing SNAs, as perceived by SNSs’ users?
RQ2: How do the factors of SNAs, in conjunction with each other, predict consumers’ assessment of SNAs?

This paper is structured as follows: after the introduction, we present a literature review and thereafter, we discuss the theoretical concepts that led to the research hypotheses. This is followed by a methodology section, which contains descriptions of the research sample, variables and the dimensionality and reliability tests. Finally, after discussing the empirical findings, we examine the theoretical and empirical implications of this study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Online Ads Value (OAV)

ONAs have a crucial effect on consumers’ purchasing behavior. In agreement with the hierarchy-of-effects approach, ONAs function as cognitive factors in making the consumer aware of a specific product/service. They then act as affective factors by attracting and persuading consumers. Finally, they act as behavioral factors by moving consumers towards deciding to purchase [21]. This approach highlights the importance of ONAs as factors that predict consumers’ purchasing intentions and enable a deeper and more current understanding of how online consumers perceive ONAs. [6] is one of the first bodies of research that contributed to the assessment of OAV. In this study, the researcher focused on the effects of online consumers’ perceived value of ONAs. According to [6], the distinction between OAV and attitudes towards ONAs gave validity to consumers’ responses by measuring the contribution of entertainment value, information value and irritation value. The results of this study were validated by [16]. Here, the results were extended to include credibility and consumer demographics for assessing OAV. Two years later, interactivity and consumers’ motives were identified as additional dimensions that contribute to the attitudes towards ONAs [22].

2.2 The Assessment of SNAs

[13] attempted to compare the assessment of ads on SNSs and TV. The researchers of this study used the previous model [6], with its three main predictors: irritation value, entertainment value and information value. According to this study, information and entertainment values of SNAs played crucial roles in assessing SNAs, while the irritation value had no significant effect. Furthermore, [14] used the same model to assess SNAs, as perceived by Indian students. The results of this study confirmed that information and entertainment values were positively correlated to the value of SNAs, yet the irritation value had a negative effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs.

Further studies have contributed to the value of SNAs (SNAV) in assessing consumers’ attitudes towards them. [23] introduced credibility to information value, entertainment value and irritation value as the main
predictors for assessing consumers’ attitudes towards SNAs. In this study, the values of information, entertainment, irritation and credibility were the main predictors for the consumers’ attitudes towards SNAs, as perceived by South African university students.

In another study, while exploring the factors that predict consumers’ attitudes towards SNAs, [24] indicated that the values of entertainment and information of SNAs predicted consumers’ perception of the value of SNAs, from the perspectives of postgraduate management students in the USA.

Finally, while investigating Pakistani consumers’ attitudes towards SNAs, [25] confirmed that information and entertainment values had a significant effect on assessing SNAs. However, [13] observed from their analysis that the model of [6] does not provide a good fit for the assessment of SNAs. Nevertheless, most of the identified research used the same model of [6] for assessing SNAs.

Accordingly, this study aimed to extend the credibility and the interactivity of SNAs as predicting variables, in addition to the values of information, entertainment and irritation, while determining consumers’ assessment of SNAs.

3 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

In keeping with the identified literature, the topic for the assessment of SNAs was investigated, based on three main dimensions: the information value, irritation value and entertainment value. Other research investigated the values of credibility and interactivity as factors for assessing attitudes towards ONAs. Based on this, the conceptual framework of this study was structured as illustrated in Figure (1), which is developed and discussed below.

![Figure 1. The conceptual framework for the consumers’ assessment of SNAs](image)

3.1 Information Value of SNAs

E-commerce delivers primary information advantages for online consumers. It also enables them to seek information they desire and ignore those that they do not need [26]. Further developments in e-commerce are significantly affecting the information-seeking behavior of online consumers [27]. This proves the importance of the information value of ads as one of the driving factors for the assessment of OAV in general.

The information value of ONAs represents the ability to effectively provide relevant information in the advertising context, as perceived by online consumers [28]. With this regard, while they were assessing OAV, researchers revealed the importance of the information value by ascertaining consumers’ perceptions for the information value [6], [16], [22], [29], [30].

Likewise, the information value of SNAs has been identified as being positively correlated with consumers’ assessment of SNAs [14], [23], [24], [25]. In the present study, to identify how the information value can predict consumers’ assessment of SNAs, the information value of SNAs was tested, in conjunction with the values of credibility and interactivity, using the following hypothesis:

H01: Information value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.
3.2 Entertainment Value of SNAs

The entertainment value of ONAs represents a degree of pleasure and involvement during the interaction with a specific advertisement [31]. Advertisers believe that the value of entertainment on ONAs increases the effectiveness of an advertisement’s message and generates a positive attitude towards the brand [13], [32], [33]. Additionally, entertainment-oriented ads aim to keep consumers occupied in a way that is designed to encourage repeat visits [34].

Generally, OAV depends on the level of entertainment of the ONAs [6]. This is particularly noticeable with SNAs, where the entertainment value has been identified as an important factor in their assessment, as well as in the attitudes towards them [13], [14], [35]. Furthermore, SNSs’ users seek enjoyment, relaxation and to pass time. This relates to the nature of SNSs as entertaining activity sites [24]. Based on these facts, in this study, the effect of the entertainment value on consumers’ assessment of SNAs, in conjunction with credibility and interactivity values, was tested using the following hypothesis:

H02: Entertainment value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.

3.3 Irritation Value of SNAs

With regard to ONAs, consumers’ irritation value emerges when online consumers experience discomfort while watching an advertisement [14] or when they seem to be less likely to be persuaded by it. The consumers’ feelings of irritation play a crucial role in their assessment of the ONAs [36]. This was one of the primary dimensions that had a negative effect on OAV, as perceived by online users [6]. The irritation value of ONAs includes descriptions such as confusing, annoying, irritating and deceptive [13]. Moreover, with regard to SNAs, it contributes to a loss of privacy [24].

In some research, the irritation value of SNAs has an insignificant effect on the assessment of SNAs [13], [37]. Other researchers have identified that the irritation value had a high negative correlation to consumers’ perceptions of SNAV [14]. Based on this, it was important to include irritation as one of the main dimensions of assessing SNAs in the present study. The following hypothesis was used to identify the effect of the irritation value on the assessment of SNAs, in conjunction with the credibility and interactivity, as perceived by SNS’s users:

H03: Irritation value has a negative effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.

3.4 Credibility Value of SNAs

Credibility towards ads represents the degree to which consumers perceive claims that are made about a brand in a specific advertisement to be truthful and believable [17]. According to cyber psychology studies, credibility is an essential dimension in the assessment of consumers’ responses towards a specific online brand community [38], [39]. According to [16], credibility directly correlates to consumers’ assessment of OAV. Based on this, many researchers have considered advertisement credibility to be a principal factor in assessing consumers’ perceptions of OAV and their attitudes towards ONAs [17], [18], [20], [30].

The credibility value had no effect on consumers’ assessment of Facebook ads, as perceived by Malaysian university students [15]. However, other researchers identified that credibility had a strong effect on consumers’ assessment of ONAs [30], [37]. In keeping with these findings, in the present study, the credibility value of SNAs was considered as one of the main dimensions in the assessment of SNAs by testing the following hypothesis:

H04: Credibility value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.
3.5 Interactivity Value of SNAs

From various perspectives, researchers have defined interactivity as the extent to which users can participate in modifying the messages they receive via ads [40] or as a means for individuals to effectively communicate with each other [41]. It shifts the ways in which online users perceive ONAs [42] and increases the opportunities to use SNSs to generate viral marketing [43]. In addition, the capacity of SNSs to manifest a new form of social regulation in the relationship between firms and consumers forms an open market in which a large number of buyers and sellers participate and interact [4]. This highlights the crucial role of the value of interactivity in the assessment of SNAs.

According to [16], the interactivity of ONAs predicted the consumers’ assessment of OAV. This was confirmed by [15], in which the authors identified the interactivity value as a factor that can predict consumers’ attitudes towards SNAs. Based on these facts, the interactivity value of SNAs was considered in this research to be one of the main factors for the assessment of SNAs by testing the following hypothesis:

H05: Interactivity value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.

4 RESEARCH METHODS

In keeping with the purpose of this study, a quantitative approach was regarded as being the most appropriate one. It was guided by the functional or positivist paradigm [44]. To achieve validity of the collected data, the questionnaire was constructed based on the conceptual framework of the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by Facebook users, to measure what was supposed to be tested as recommended by [45].

Moreover, the present authors carried out a pilot study by distributing the questionnaire to 10 different students of master level at the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department of Halmstad University, to solicit their feedback. Based on their feedback, the questionnaire was refined. According to [46], pilot testing should take place before using a questionnaire to collect data. In this case, this enabled the researcher to refine the questionnaire so that respondents had no difficulties answering the questions. This enabled the researchers to assess the questions’ validity and the reliability of the collected data.

The data were collected by distributing the questionnaire to relevant Facebook users at Halmstad University. Although this sample was not representative of the Swedish consumer, students at a Swedish university were chosen as the research sample for two main reasons. It was the first time that young Swedish consumers’ perceptions of SNAs had been researched - previous studies considered university students in the US, Pakistan and South Africa as the research samples. Furthermore, university students represent the most active users of SNSs: 72% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 years who are online use SNSs, making them the most frequent users [13].

The questionnaires were distributed using three different sampling techniques, as shown in Table (1). The main targets for the research were university students who had been using Facebook for at least two years. Of the 214 questionnaires that were collected, 13 were ignored. This was either because the respondents did not have Facebook accounts or they did not complete the questionnaire.

The following table represents the completed surveys that were collected and classified, according to the used sampling techniques.

Table 1. Collected surveys classified according to the used sampling techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Technique</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Distribution Channel</th>
<th>Collected Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Face-to-Face distribution</td>
<td>Halmstad University</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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>Web-link</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>Through friends and colleagues</td>
<td>Halmstad University</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Completed Surveys collected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Measures

The respondents provided answers regarding their perceptions of the variables for the assessment of SNAs, according to a 5-point Likert scale, as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4 and Strongly Agree = 5. The sources of the items of the six main dimensions of the conceptual framework of the study were based on their utility in previous research, as follows:

- Information value of SNSAs: items were borrowed and modified from the scales that were developed by [13], [24].
- Entertainment value: items were borrowed and modified from the scales that were developed by [13], [24].
- Irritation value: items were borrowed and modified from the scales that were developed by [13], [24].
- Credibility value: items were borrowed and modified from the scales that were developed by [15], [19], [22].
- Interactivity value: items were borrowed and modified from the scales that were developed by [22].
- SNSAV: items were borrowed and modified from the scales that were developed by [13].

Table 2. Dimensionality Test, Reliability Test and Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotated Component Matrix</th>
<th>VAL</th>
<th>INF</th>
<th>ENT</th>
<th>IRR</th>
<th>CRE</th>
<th>INT</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VAL01- Is Useful</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.368</td>
<td>0.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAL02- Is Valuable</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.418</td>
<td>0.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF01- Offers valuable information</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.791</td>
<td>0.978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF02- Offers timely information</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.055</td>
<td>0.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF03- Offers updated information</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.299</td>
<td>1.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT01- Entertains me</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.478</td>
<td>1.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT02- Is enjoyable for me</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.824</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.413</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT03- Excites me</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.164</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT04- Pleases me</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.134</td>
<td>0.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE01- Is trustworthy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.875</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.353</td>
<td>0.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE02- Is credible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.408</td>
<td>0.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE03- Is believable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.481</td>
<td>0.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT01- Has a cognitive value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.388</td>
<td>0.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT02- Facilitates two-way communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.689</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.682</td>
<td>1.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT03- Offers a vivid communication experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.667</td>
<td>0.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR01- Deceives me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.055</td>
<td>0.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR02- Confuses me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.901</td>
<td>1.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR03- Irritates me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.368</td>
<td>1.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR04- Annoys me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.780</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.264</td>
<td>1.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α – Chronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of customers’ assessments of the dimensions</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Regression Analysis

The five identified predictors were used in a multiple regression analysis to identify the factors behind the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. In addition, the multiple correlation coefficients (R), coefficients of determinations (R²) and F-ration were examined to predict the goodness-of-fit for the following regression model:

\[ Y_a = \beta^0 + \beta^1 X^1 + \beta^2 X^2 + \beta^3 X^3 + \beta^4 X^4 + \beta^5 X^5 \]  

where \( Y_a \) was the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, \( \beta^0 \) the constant value, \( X^1 \) the information value, \( X^2 \) the entertainment value, \( X^3 \) the interactivity value, \( X^4 \) the credibility value, \( X^5 \) the irritation value and \( \beta^1 \) \ldots\ \( \beta^5 \) = the regression coefficients of factors 1-5.

Based on the regression analysis of testing the five main dimensions of assessing SNAs, the model without the irritation value provided the best regression model for the assessment of SNAs. The coefficients of determination (R²) of the four independent variables on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs was 0.481 at significant change \( p < 0.001 \), suggesting that approximately 48.1% of the variations in the respondents assessments on SNAs could be explained by the four extracted factors (information value, entertainment value, credibility value and interactivity value), as shown in Table (3). Meanwhile, the fifth model with irritation value was not significant as it had a high probability distributions value, \( p = 0.527 \) (high probability of error).

The value of F-ratio was 623.538 (significant = 0.000), which means that the results of the regression model by the four independent variables were not occurred by chance.

According to this result, the coefficients of the four-dimension model were tested to identify the effect of these predictors on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as shown in Table (3).

### Table 3. Results of the regression analysis of consumers’ assessment of SNAs based on the perceived factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goodness of fit</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
<th>TOL</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>0.693a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>0.6011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F value</td>
<td>623.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant F</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coefficients**

| Constant        | 0.277 |      |      |                         |     |     |
| Entertaiment    | 0.261 | 0.000 | 0.577 | 1.732                   |     |     |
| Credibility     | 0.146 | 0.018 | 0.708 | 1.412                   |     |     |
| Interactivity   | 0.313 | 0.000 | 0.510 | 1.962                   |     |     |
| Information     | 0.139 | 0.038 | 0.598 | 1.672                   |     |     |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Irritation, Credibility, Interactivity, Entertainment, Information value.
b. Dependent Variable: SNAV

From the standard coefficients beta in Table (3), the four variables, after deleting the irritation value of SNAs, had positive significant coefficients with SNAs. The most coefficient predictor was the interactivity value, as its beta value was 0.313. At the second level, it was the entertainment value, with a beta value of 0.261. At the third level, it was the credibility value at 0.146 and finally, the information value, which was 0.139.

Moreover, the tolerance statistics of the predictors ranged between 0.510 and 0.708. According to [47], the tolerance statistics should be more than 0.2 to avoid high multicollinearity. In addition, the variance inflation factor (VIF) of the predictors ranged between 1.412 and 1.962. To avoid any collinearity problems, this should be less than 10 [48]. Based on model four, the line regression of the research model for assessing the SNAs is in best fit, when x=0 at constant level 0.277 and to have the following construct equation (2):

\[ \text{SNAs} = 0.277 + 0.133 \text{INF} + 0.251 \text{ENT} + 0.141 \text{CRE} + 0.309 \text{INT} \]  

(2)


5.2 Hypotheses Text

According to the standardized coefficient from Table (3), the information value of SNAs, as perceived by the respondents, had the lowest beta coefficient on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. The beta coefficient of information value was 0.139 at a significant change p < 0.05. This suggests that approximately 13.9% of the variations on SNAs were counted by variations of the information value of SNAs. However, this significant coefficient result could reject the null hypothesis, H0: Information value does not affect the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. This supports the first hypothesis:

H01: Information value has a positive effect on consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. (Supported).

The entertainment value, as shown in Table (3), had the second highest positive coefficient on the assessment of SNAs. The beta coefficient of the entertainment value was 0.261 at a significant change p < 0.001, which suggests that approximately 26.1% of the variations on SNAs were counted by variations of the entertainment value. This result rejects the null hypothesis, H0: Entertainment value does not affect the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. This result could support the second hypothesis:

H02: Entertainment value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. (Supported).

From the stepwise regression analysis, the irritation value, in conjunction with the information value, as well as the entertainment, interactivity and credibility values, was not significant to the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. This was because the model with irritation had a significant change 0.001, with a high probability error (p = 0.527). This result might lead to a rejection of the third hypothesis:

H03: Irritation value has a negative effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. (Rejected).

From Table (3), the credibility value had a beta coefficient of 0.146 on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs at a significant change p < 0.02. This result suggests that approximately 14.6% of the variations on SNAs were counted by variations on credibility value. This result might reject the null hypothesis, H0: Credibility value does not affect the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. This could support the fourth hypothesis: H04: Credibility value has a positive effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. (Supported).

Finally, the beta value of the interactivity value had the highest coefficient on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. The interactivity value had a Beta coefficient 0.313 on assessing SNAs. This result suggests that approximately 31.3% of the variations on the assessment of SNAs were counted by the variations on the interactivity value. This result might reject the null hypothesis, H0: The interactivity does not affect the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. This result could support the fifth hypothesis:

H05: Interactivity value has a positive effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. (Supported).

6 DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

To develop knowledge and gain a better understanding of the dimensions that impact consumers’ assessment of SNAs, in this study, the credibility value and interactivity value of SNAs were introduced as additional variables to those that were previously tested [13], [14], [15]. This helped to create a new model with four main dimensions that predicted the consumers’ assessment of
SNAs: information value, entertainment value, credibility value and interactivity value. Moreover, based on the stepwise regression analysis, the irritation value of SNAs had no significant effect on the consumer assessment of SNAs. However, the following discussion reflected the main findings of this paper.

In this study, the first predicted dimension was the information value of SNAs. The indicators that were used to measure the information value had an average mean of 3.05 from the five-scale score. After irritation, this result was the second-highest mean. However, according to the effective size criteria [49], the information value of SNAs in this study had a medium effect. Furthermore, the lowest coefficient on the assessment of SNAs as its beta coefficient was 0.139. In previous studies, the information value had the highest coefficient for assessing SNAs [13], [14].

The second predicted dimension was the entertainment value of SNAs. The indicators that were used to measure the entertainment value had an average mean of 2.3 from the five-scale score, which was less than the middle score. This shows that the respondents perceived it as a low factor that needs more progress to develop. This result can confirm that SNAs can entertain and bring enjoyment to users of SNSs, but not to please and dazzle them, as indicated by [13], [30]. However, according to the effective size criteria [49], the entertainment value in this study had a strong effect on the assessment SNAs as its coefficient was 0.261. Its coefficient had the second highest effect on assessing SNAs, as perceived by the respondents.

The third predicted dimension was the irritation value of SNSAs. In this study, the irritation value of SNAs had the highest mean of 3.15 among other predictors. This was confirmed by a paired t-test, as the irritation value had a p value of 0.000 when compared to the other four variables. In previous studies, the irritation value had the highest mean among the information value and entertainment values. Furthermore, [13] argued that this situation occurred when the consumers seemed less likely to be persuaded by the ONAs. This feeling of irritation might be the reason behind the lower value of other categories of SNAs variables, as perceived by the respondents. However, in this study, the irritation value had no significant coefficient effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. This result might confirm the result of [13], as we identified that irritation had no significant coefficient with consumers’ assessment of SNAs. This result contradicted [14], as the irritation value in that study was the highest negative predictor on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs.

The fourth predicted dimension was the credibility value. According to the collected data, the credibility value had an average mean of 2.42 from the five points. This might prove that the research sample of this study might have less experience with SNAs. According to [20], credibility is positively related to Internet users’ experience, as well as their ability to collect information and to interact with the ONAs. In this study, the credibility value of SNAs had a moderately significant effect on the assessment of SNAs with a coefficient of 0.146, which was higher than the coefficient of information value. This result supports the fourth hypothesis and introduces the credibility value as a crucial variable in the assessment of SNAs. This contrasts what was identified by [16] - that credibility does not predict the consumers’ assessment of SNAs.

In this study, the final predicted dimension was the interactivity value. From Table (2), the average mean of the interactivity indicators was 2.58, which shows that the respondents were more counted to interact with SNAs than to use it as a source of entertainment. This result was also confirmed by the paired t-test between the interactivity and the entertainment values, as p value = 0.000. According to Table (3), the interactivity value had the highest significant effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, with a coefficient beta 0.313. This result
supports the fifth hypothesis and presents interactivity as an important dimension for assessing SNAs.

7 CONCLUSION

An analysis of the empirical data of this study helped to identify four main dimensions for assessing SNAs. These dimensions had positive effects on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. According to the strengths of their beta coefficient, these four dimensions are arranged in descending order, as follows: interactivity value (0.313), entertainment value (0.261), credibility value (0.146) and information value (0.139), as shown in Figure (2). According to the regression analysis, together, these four variables had the best R² (0.481) at a significant change = 0.000. Nearly 48.1% of the variations in SNAs were explained by this model.

As summarized in Figure (2), the findings of this study support the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: Information value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.
H₀₂: Entertainment value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.
H₀₄: Credibility value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.
H₀₅: Interactivity value has a positive effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.

However, the findings of this study could not support the third hypothesis:

H₀₃: Irritation value has a strong negative effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users. (Rejected).

Finally, according to the hypotheses paired t-test of the empirical findings, based on the average means of the five predictors, the research sample of Swedish university students can be characterized as follows:

- The Swedish university students were more irritated by SNAs as they find such ads less credible.
- The Swedish university students were more information-oriented than interaction-oriented, and used SNAs less as an entertainment factor.

8 IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study support some of the findings from previous research on the assessment of SNAs. However, some of the previous findings are not supported. This study supports the findings of [13] - that irritation value has no significant effect on assessing SNAs. Conversely, it does not support the view of [14], which argued that the irritation value of SNAs have a significant negative effect on consumers’ assessment of SNAs.

With regard to the information value of SNAs, the previous studies [13], [14] found that it had the highest positive effect on assessing SNAs. However, the result of this study does not support such a finding, as the information value had the lowest positive coefficient, in conjunction with the credibility and the interactivity values. Moreover, the results of this study do not support the finding that the credibility value of SNAs, as perceived by the university students, does not affect the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as identified by [15].
Finally, this study succeeds in introducing ads’ credibility and interactivity as crucial variables for the assessment of SNAs. It offers a new construct model for assessing SNAs, based on four main dimensions: information value, entertainment value, credibility value and entertainment value. Even in conjunction with credibility and interactivity, this study confirms the finding of [13] - that the irritation value of SNAs does not predict consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as perceived by SNS’s users.

8.2 Practical Implications

The research findings provide important evidence for online advertisers on SNS. Based on the research sample of Swedish university students, the findings of this study have to be considered when promoting or seeking to interact with this market segment. The online advertisers have to consider the fact that this market segment is more information-oriented than used for interaction and entertainment. In addition, this market segment is highly irritated by SNAs as they feel that SNAs are less credible.

The advertisers on SNSs need to identify the reasons behind the negative perceptions of the credibility value of SNAs. They also need to investigate how to increase the trustworthiness of SNAs and decrease their irritation value. At the same time, SNSs’ systems need to have more effective procedures to control fake ads to encourage SNSs’ users to interact more effectively with the SNAs.

8.3 Future Research

The results of this study and those of previous studies [13], [14], [15] have some differences. Although they all assessed the perceptions of university students, the differences in their culture and experiences may have affected their results. Accordingly, more studies need to be conducted with participants from different cultural backgrounds and market segments from time to time to capture any change in the consumers’ assessment of SNAs.

Additional studies may be geared towards confirming the correlations between the identified dimensions of this study and the attitudes towards SNAs. Moreover, as most of the identified studies regarding consumers’ assessment of SNAs utilized quantitative approaches, qualitative studies may be needed to gain a deeper understanding of how SNSs’ users interact with SNAs.

As identified by [50], the credibility value of ONAs was positively correlated to the Internet users’ experience and their ability to collect information and interact with ads. Accordingly, more research is needed to identify how to improve the trustworthiness of SNAs and how to increase consumers’ interactions with SNAs.

REFERENCES


[38] J. Lee, D. Park & I. Han, "The different effects of online consumer reviews on consumers' purchase intentions depending on trust in online shopping malls: An advertising perspective". *Internet Research*, 21, pp.187-206. 2011


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).

**Gender:** □ Female □ Male  
**Age:** □ 18-24 □ 25-45 □ Over 45

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers should be given according to a five-point scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td><strong>How do you perceive the value of advertisements on Facebook?</strong></td>
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<td>7. Entertains me</td>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>5</th>
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**How do you perceive the value of interactive advertisements on Facebook?**

14. Has an interactive cognitive value
   - [ ]

15. Facilitates the two-way communication
   - [ ]

16. Offers a vivid communication experience
   - [ ]

**How do you perceive your feelings of irritation against the advertisements on the Facebook?**

17. It deceives me
   - [ ]

18. It confuses me
   - [ ]

19. It irrates me
   - [ ]

20. It annoys me
   - [ ]

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**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.

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**Your Comment:**

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*Thank you for your kind participation**
Paper 2
THE ASSESSMENTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ADVERTISEMENTS; AS PERCEIVED BY BRAND COMMUNITIES CONSUMERS

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Despite the extensive research in the context of brand communities on social networking sites (SNSs), the theoretical foundations underlying consumers’ assessment of advertisements on SNSs’ brand communities was not yet explored. The present study consequently aimed to explore how SNSs’ brand communities’ consumers assess social networks’ advertisements (SNAs). Regression analysis was used to identify the best fit model, and the most effective predictors on the assessment of SNAs. From the collected data, four dimensions had positive significant effects on the consumers’ assessment (informativeness, entertainment value, credibility value and interactivity value), while the fifth dimension (irritation value) had a significant negative effect. The results of this study had some contradictions with some results on previous studies, and confirmed other results. Moreover, the researchers used the descriptive analysis to gain deeper understanding of how the brand communities’ consumers (BCCs) on SNSs assess SNAs, and to identify the main characteristics of the BCCs on SNSs.

INTRODUCTION

The brand community is a special form of consumer community (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2011), that has a specific brand in its center (Woisetschläger et al., 2008). It enables many-to-many communication, which can be regarded as precursors of today’s online social networking sites (SNSs) (Hanna et al., 2011). On SNSs, the brand community has a positive effect on value creation practices, which enhances brand’s loyalty (Laroche et al., 2012). It represents a core determinant of the purchasing decisions and behavior toward the advertisements (Ducotté, 1995). Based on that and due to the role of SNSs in marketing, many researchers have explored SNSs as a marketing and advertising media (Kazieneko et al., 2013, Hopkins, 2012, Park and Cho, 2012, Hansson et al., 2013). Researchers consider mass customization, global access and proliferation of SNSs as main advantages to explore SNSs as advertising platforms. For example, Face book on the fourth quarter of 2014 had about 1.35 Billion monthly active users and 510 63 registered brands around the world (statista.com, 2015).

Despite a growing body of research knowledge on SNSs as a marketing tools and its value for marketing, few researchers have contributed directly to the consumers’ assessment of SNAs (Logan et al., 2012, Saxena & Khanna, 2013, Yakoop et al., 2013, Deraz et al., 2015). Moreover, the theoretical foundations underlying the assessments of SNAs, as perceived by brand communities’ consumers (BBCs) were not yet explored. As identified from the empirical findings of this study, most of the previous studies on the assessments of SNAs skewed younger SNSs’ users from university students as a main research sample. Consequently, the present paper aimed to extend the literatures on the assessments of SNAs to identify how BCCs on SNSs may assess SNAs. This paper introduced in formativeness of advertisements, irritation value, entertainment value, credibility value and interactivity value as main predictors to assess SNAs.

RQ1: What are the main dimensions for the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs?

RQ2: How do those dimensions predict the BCCs’ assessments of SNAs, in conjunction with each other?

This paper is structured as follows: following the introduction is a literature review, which is followed by the theoretical
concepts that led to explore the main dimensions for assessing SNAs. This is followed by a methodology that contains descriptions of the research sample, variables, and the dimensionality and the reliability tests. Finally, there is discussion about the theoretical and the empirical implications of the study.

2. Literature review

2.1 Brand communities on SNs

Researchers about brand communities on SNSs had three main research streams. The first stream relates to the conceptual aspects and structures of the brand communities on SNSs (Brogli, 2014; Chen et al., 2011; Zaglia 2013). In this stream, researchers connected between brand communities and SNSs by identifying; definitions, benefits and structure of each of them. The second stream relates to the consumer behavior within the brand communities on SNSs (Brodie et al. 2011; de Vries et al. 2012; Gensler et al. 2013; Guumerus et al. 2012; Li & Li 2014; Smith et al. 2012). In this stream, researchers have more intention on structure of SNSs’ consumers’ engagement on the brand communities. Finally, the third stream focused on the outcomes of brand communities, for both consumers and the brand itself. The impact of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is the most investigated outcome (Brown et al., 2007; Hung & Li, 2007; Royo-Vela & Casamassima, 2010). Trust, commitment, satisfaction and consumers’ loyalty are other explored outcomes within the context of SNSs’ brand communities (Habibi et al., 2014; Jung et al., 2014; Laroche et al., 2012; Lyu, 2012). Customers’ equity is other identified outcome of the marketing activities on SNSs’ brand communities (Kim & Ko, 2011). From the reviewed literature, none of the previous studies on SNSs’ brand communities had explored the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs, which can be seen as a clear gap in the literature of SNSs’ brand communities and literature of the assessment of SNAs.

2.2 Online Ads Value (OAV)

Online advertisements (ONAs) have a critical effect on the consumers’ purchasing behavior. According to the Hierarchy-of-Effects approach, the ONAs function as a cognition factor in making the online consumers aware of a specific product or service, and then as an affecting factor by attracting and persuading the targeted consumers and, finally as a behavioral factor by moving these consumers toward the decision of purchasing (Schuman and Thorson, 2007). This approach highlighted the importance of the ONA as a predicting factor on the consumers’ purchasing intention, and to gain current understanding of how the online consumers perceive the ONAs. Ducoffe’s (1995) identified study is one of the first bodies of research that have contributed to the assessment of the OAV. Ducoffe’s (1995) focused on the effects of the perceived value of the online consumers’ on the attitude towards ONAs. According to that study, the distinction between OAV and attitudes toward online advertisements gives validity to consumers’ responses by measuring the contribution of entertainment, in formativeness and irritation values. Brackett and Carr (2001) validated Ducoffe’s model by extending it to include credibility and consumer demographics. Two years later, Wang et al. (2003) identified interactivity and consumer motives as additional dimensions that contribute to the attitudes toward the ONA, as perceived by online users.

2.3 Assessment of Social Network Sites’ Ads (SNAs)

Logan et al. (2012) measured the assessment of advertisements on SNs and TV. The researchers used Ducoffe’s (1995) model with its three main variables (irritation, entertainment and informativeness values). According to Logan et al. (2012), information and entertainment values predicted strongly the assessment of SNAs, while irritation value did not predict the assessment of SNAs. Saxena and Khanna (2012) used the same model to assess SNAs, as perceived by Indian students. The results of that study have confirmed that, the information and the entertainment values are predicting positively the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, while irritation value had a negative significant effect. Advertisements’ credibility and interactivity have been introduced by Deraz et al. (2015), to confirm that information, entertainment, credibility and interactivity values are the main variables of the assessment of SNAs. According to Swedish university students’ perception, that study confirmed the finding of Logan et al. (2012) that irritation value did not have a significant effect on the assessment of SNAs.

More studies have contributed to the value of SNAs while they are assessing consumers’ attitudes toward SNAs. Van der Waldt et al. (2009) introduced credibility to the informativeness, entertainment and irritation values depending on Brackett and Carr (2001) model. According to the perception of South African young people, that research identified informativeness, entertainment, irritation and credibility values of SNAs as the main variables that predict the consumer attitudes toward SNAs. Taylor et al. (2011) explored factors that predict consumers’ attitudes toward SNAs. The researchers identified that entertainment value and informativeness of advertisement predict the value of SNAs, as perceived by postgraduate management students in the USA. Finally, the study of Mir (2012) confirmed that information and entertainment values of SNAs were significant correlated to the attitude toward SNAs, as perceived by Pakistani consumers on SNSs.

A clear gap was identified by Logan et al. (2012), as the researchers have observed from their analysis that Ducoffe’s model is not providing a good fit to assess the SNAs. Even, advertisements’ credibility and interactivity have been introduced as additional variables for the assessment of SNAs (Deraz et al., 2015) but those variables need to be confirmed by additional studies. Moreover, all the identified research about the assessment of SNAs depended on the younger users of SNSs from different universities as main research samples, no study about the assessment of BCCs. Based on the above; this study aimed to explore how BCCs assess SNAs.

3. Theoretical Concepts

In keeping with the identified literature, the topic of SNAs had been investigated mainly based on five main dimensions
engagements on the brand communities will affect their level of perception of credibility among the brand, and empowerments (Schau et al., 2010), and satisfactions (Bowden, 2009), commitment (Chan & Li, 2010), and contests (Hollebeck, 2011), satisfaction (Bowden, 2009), commitment (Chan & Li, 2010), and empowering values (Schau et al., 2009). In consequence, that may affect the consumers’ feelings of credibility among the brand, and decrease their feeling of irritation. Based on the pervious discussion, the present authors argued that the consumers’ engagements on the brand communities will affect their level of assessment toward SNAs. For that, it is important to explore how the BCCs assess SNAs.

3.2 Informativeness of SNAs

E-commerce provides significant advantages for consumers to seek information they desire or to ignore other information they do not need (Gordon and De Lima-Turner, 1997: 366). Further developments in the e-commerce are significantly affecting the information seeking behavior of the online consumers (Kulkami et al., 2012). This proves the importance of informativeness of ads as one of the main driving factors on the assessment of SNAs. Informativeness of the ONAs is defined as the ability to effectively provide relevant information in the advertising context, as perceived by the online consumers (Blanco et al., 2010:4). In this regard, researchers reveal the importance of informativeness by ascertaining the consumers’ perception towards the information value while they were assessing the OAV (Ducoffe 1995, Schlosser et al. 1999, Brackett and Carr 2001, Wang et al. 2003, Wang and Sun, 2009). On SNAs’ brand communities, to collect information is one of the main customer interaction characteristics (de Valck et al., 2009), as well as information and entertainment are considering from the main aims of any brand post on SNSs (de Vries et al., 2012). Furthermore, the informativeness of SNAs has been identified as being positively correlated to the consumers’ perception toward SNAs (Taylor et al., 2011, Saxena and Khanna, 2012, Van der Waldt et al., 2009, Mir, 2012). In this study, the following hypothesis was used to identify how informativeness predicts the BCCs’ assessment of the SNAs.

H0: Informativeness of SNAs predicts the consumers’ assessment of SNAs.

3.3 Entertainment Value of SNAs

The entertainment value of the ads represents the degree of pleasure and involvement during the interaction with a specific advertisement (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Advertisers believe that, entertainment increases the effectiveness of the advertisements’ message, and generates a positive attitude toward the brand (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989, Shavitt et al., 1998, Logan et al., 2012). The entertainment oriented advertisements aim to keep consumers occupied in a manner which is designed to encourage repeat visit (Dan & Dan, 2011:78). According to Ducoffe’s (1995) OAV depends on the levels of entertainment of the online advertisement. This is particularly noticeable with SNAs, where entertainment value was identified as a main factor on the assessment of SNAs and the attitudes towards SNAs (Hadija et al., 2012, Logan et al., 2012, Saxena and Khanna, 2012). Moreover, Taylor et al. (2011) identified that SNAs’ users seek enjoyment, relaxation and to pass time which relates to the nature of SNAs as an entertaining activity sites. That leads the BCCs’ to consume, create or contribute to the brand content online (Muntina et al., 2011). As concluded by de Vries et al. (2012) if a brand post is entertaining, the BCCs’ motivations to participate or to consume the content are met, and the brand posts become more popular. Based on these facts, this study included entertainment value of SNAs as a vital variable in the

![Figure 1. The conceptual framework for the BCCs’ assessment of the SNAs](image_url)
assessment of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs. That was tested by the following hypothesis.

H2g: Entertainment value of SNAs is predicting the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

3.4 Credibility Value of SNAs

Credibility toward the ONAs represents the degree to which the consumers perceive claims made about a brand in a specific advertisement to be truthful and believable (Prendergast et al., 2009:321). Back to Brackett and Carr (2001), credibility value of ONAs was an essential dimension of the assessment of OAV, the authors identified that credibility was directly predicting the consumer assessment of the OAV. Based on this finding, many researchers have considered the ads credibility as a premier dimension while collecting the consumers’ assessment of OAV, and their attitudes toward the ONA(Prendergast et al., 2009, Clewley et al., 2009, Sun and Wang, 2010, Breitsohl et al., 2010). Yaakop et al. (2013) found that credibility of ads had no effect on the consumers’ perceptions towards Facebook ads, as perceived by Malaysians’ university students, but Wang et al. (2009) found credibility of ONAs as a predicting factor. In keeping with that, Zernigah and Sohail (2012) found that credibility value was the most powerful predictor on the consumers’ perceptions toward SNAs.

Moreover, according to the Cyber-psychology studies, credibility is an essential dimension on the assessment of consumers’ responses toward a specific online brand community (Lee et al., 2011, Chatterjee, 2011). That makes a virtual brand community a powerful interactive engagement platform for consumer-to-consumer recommendations (Brodie et al., 2013). In return, the level of engagement on the brand communities increases the consumers’ feeling of safe, gratitude and trust among brand posts (Hollebeek, 2011; Brodie et al., 2013). In keeping with these findings, the credibility value of SNAs was considered by the present authors as one of the main predictors of the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs, which was tested by the following hypothesis.

H4g: Credibility value of SNAs is predicting the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

3.5 Irritation Value of SNAs

Consumers’ irritation value with regard to the ONAs arises when the consumers experience discomfort while watching these ads (Saxena and Khanna 2013:19), or when they seem to be less likely to be persuaded by them. The consumers’ feeling of irritation plays a crucial role in their perception toward the ONAs (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). It is one of the primary dimensions that had a negative contribution to the OAV, as perceived by online users (Ducoffe, 1995). Irritation value of the ONAs includes descriptors such as confusing, annoying, irritating and deceptive (Logan et al. 2012:169). Moreover, it contributes to a loss of privacy in regards to SNAs (Taylor et al., 2011). In some research, the irritation value of SNAs does not predict the consumers’ assessment (Deraz et al., 2015; Logan et al., 2012; Zernigah & Sohail, 2012). Other study identified that irritation value is a high negative prediction on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs (Saxena & Khanna, 2012).

According to the uses and gratification (U&G) theory, participants on brand communities feel empathy, trust and safe (Brodie et al., 2013). Consumers are likely to join brand communities as they feel loyal and being customers of the brand (Gunnmerus et al., 2011). This engagement on SNSs’ brand communities has a crucial role in building brand trust (Habibi et al., 2014). Trust on brand may lead to trust on brand posts and in consequence will reduce feelings of irritation from these posts such as Ads. Based on this discussion, it is important to include irritation value as one of the main dimensions of the assessment of SNAs on SNSs’ brand communities. This was tested, in this study by the following hypothesis.

H3g: Irritation value of SNAs has a strong negative effect on the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs.

3.6 Interactivity Value of SNAs

Researchers defined interactivity from various perspectives, as the extent to which users can participate in modifying the messages they receive through ads (Steuer 1992), or as a means for the individuals to effectively communicate with each other (Ha & James, 1998) or to communicate with the brand (de Vries et al., 2012). On SNSs, interactivities have additional reactions; fans can interact with brand posts by liking or commenting on the ads, or by forwarding the brand posts through their networks (de Vries et al., 2012). However, according to Brackett and Carr (2001), the interactivity value predicted the consumers’ assessment of the ONAs. This was confirmed by Yaakop et al. (2013), as that study identified interactivity value of SNAs as a variable that predicts the consumers’ attitudes toward SNAs. In a same direction, Deraz et al. (2015) confirmed that interactivity value has the highest significant effect among other variables of the assessment of SNAs.

Regarding the engagement theory on virtual brand communities, the consumer engagement is an interactive process (Brodie et al., 2011), that was perceived by BCCs as one of the main factors that drives brand post popularity (de Vries et al., 2012). Moreover, as the objective of the brand posts on SNSs to motivate BCCs to react by clicking like or add comment, or share the post with others (de Vries et al., 2012), we expect that higher degree of the interactivity value will predict positively the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs. In this study, this was tested by the following hypothesis.

H5g: Interactivity value of SNAs is predicting positively the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

4.1 Subjects and procedures

In keeping with the purpose of this study, a quantitative approach was regarded as being the most appropriate approach. It was guided by the functional or positivist paradigm (Cassell and Symon, 1994). To achieve the construct
validity of the collected data, the questionnaire was constructed based on the research’s conceptual framework of the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs, to measure what is supposed to be tested as recommended by McBurney and White (2009). Moreover, the authors carried out a pilot study by distributing the questionnaire to two groups of people; the first group was five participants from the surrounding community of Halmstad University-Sweden, and the second group was five researchers from the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Helwan University-Egypt. Based on the two pilot groups’ feedback, the questionnaire was refined. This enabled the researchers to gain some assessment of the question’s validity and reliability of the collected data (Saunders et al., 2009). The questionnaire was administered online on SurveyMonkey.com. The program enabled us not to allow participants to fill out the questionnaire more than once. After that, the questionnaire was distributed by using two different sampling techniques; web distribution by uploading the questionnaire directly from the administrative web site to eight brand communities on Facebook. The second used distribution technique was a convenience distribution by sending personal invitations to active participants on those brand communities. The target population consisted of people who were members on Facebook’s brand communities of eight different hotels in Red-Sea region. These hotels are; Club Paradisio Hotel El Gouna, Dawar el Omda Boutique Hotel - El Gouna, Grand Plaza Hotel & Resort, Mirage New Hawaii, Panama Resort, Sea Star Beau Rivage, The Three Corners Royal Star, and Three Corners Ocean View. These hotels had around 17500 BCCs on Facebook.

673 questionnaires were obtained. After deleting those uncompleted questionnaires and those from the respondents who answered all the questions with the same value, we had 590 completed questionnaires. The sample covered BCCs’ from 18 different nationalities from the targeted population. The respondents nationalities are; Germany 17.1%, Netherlands 10%, 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%, United State 1.8%, Georgia 1.8% and Denmark 1.3%. The genders of the sample was 51% women, and 49% men. The largest age range of the sample was 35-44 (28.4%), followed by 45-54 (26%), 20.5% were from age range 25-34, 12.9% were from the age range 17-24, 11.6% were from the age 55-64, and 0.6% over 64 years old.

4.2 Measures

The survey respondents provided answers of their assessments towards variables of SNAs according to a 5-points Likert scale as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5. The sources of the items of the six main dimensions of the research conceptual framework were based on their utility in previous research as follows:

- Informativeness (INF) of SNAs. Items were borrowed and modified from scales developed by Logan et al. (2012) and Taylor et al. (2011).
- Entertainment value (ENT). Items were borrowed and modified from scales developed by Logan et al. (2012), Taylor et al. (2011) and Hoffman and Novak (1996).
- Irritation value (IRR). Items were borrowed and modified from scales developed by Logan et al. (2012) and Taylor et al. (2011).
- Credibility value (CRE). Items were borrowed and modified from scales developed by Sun and Wang (2010), Wang et al. (2009) and Yaakop (2013).
- Interactivity value (INT). Items were borrowed and modified from scales developed by Wang et al. (2002).
- SNAs’ value (VAL). Items were borrowed and modified from scales developed by Logan et al. (2012).

The principle component analysis (PCA) method of factor extraction with varimax rotation was used, to remove items that load heavily on more than one construct factor or weak items. Just one item of the BCCs’ perceptions of SNAs’ value was deleted. This item had code (VAL03), to perceive the SNAs’ as important. This item did not have strong loading with other items of the same construct factor that represents SNAV. From table (1) six latent constructs were extracted with almost a strong factor loading over 0.65. As claimed by Kline (2014) “it is usual to regard factor loadings as high if they are greater than 0.6”. The remaining items are averaged to obtain each variable score. Moreover, the internal consistency reliability coefficients of each group of the remained items are tested by using Cronbach’s Alpha statistical method. A summary of these tests as well as descriptive analyses for the six used variables are found in table (1).

4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Regression Analysis

The five identified predictors were used in a multiple regression analysis to identify the factors behind the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs. In addition, the multiple correlation coefficients (R), coefficients of determinations (R^2), and F-ratio were examined to predict the goodness-of-fit for the following regression model:

\[ Y_a = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 \]  

where \( Y_a \) is the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs, \( \beta_0 \) the constant value, \( X_1 \) the informativeness, \( X_2 \) the entertainment value, \( X_3 \) the interactivity value, \( X_4 \) the credibility value, \( X_5 \) the irritation value and \( \beta_i ...... \beta_5 \) = the regression coefficients of factors 1-5.

The correlation coefficients of the five independent variables on the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs was 0.591, suggesting approximately 59.1% of the variations in the respondents assessments of SNAs could be explained by the five extracted factors (informativeness, entertainment, credibility, interactivity, and irritation values) as shown in table (2). The value of F-ratio was 623.538 (significant = 0.000), which means that the results of the regression model by the five independent variables did not occur by chance. From the beta coefficients, the entertainment value had the highest weight (beta value = 0.239, significant = 0.000), followed by irritation value (beta value = -0.231, significant = 0.000), than the credibility value (beta value = 0.184, significant = 0.000), interactivity value (beta value = 0.155, significant = 0.000), and the last factor was the informativeness (beta value = 0.125, significant = 0.000).
Moreover, the tolerance statistics (Tol.) of the predictors ranged between 0.303 and 0.636. As explained by Menard (1995), the tolerance statistics should be more than 0.2 to avoid high multi-collinearity. In addition, the variance inflation factor (VIF) of the predictors ranged between 1.27 and 3.305 and it should be less than 10 to avoid any collinearity problem (O’Brien, 2007). Based on the coefficients analysis, the line regression of the research model of the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs was in best fit, when x=0 at constant level (1.131), to have the following construct equation:

\[
\text{SNAs} = 1.131 + 0.125 \text{INF} + 0.239 \text{ENT} + 0.184 \text{INT} + 0.155 \text{CRE} - 0.231 \text{IRR} \]

**4.3.2 Hypotheses text**

Based on the standardized coefficients from table 2, as perceived by BCCs:

The informativeness of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs’ had the lowest positive coefficient on the assessment of SNAs in conjunction with the other four variables, as 12.5 % of the variations on SNAs were counted by variations of the informativeness. However, this significant coefficient result can reject the null hypothesis, \( H_0: \) Informativeness of SNAs does not affect the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs. This result could support the first hypothesis, \( H_1: \) Informativeness of SNAs predicts the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

The entertainment value of SNAs had the highest positive coefficient on the assessment of SNAs, as 23.9% of the variations on SNAs were counted by variations on the entertainment value. This result rejected the null hypothesis,
The highest average mean (3.77) from Likert’s five scales. From the data analysis, the first predicted dimension of the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs is in conjunction with each other?

RQ1: What are the main dimensions for the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs?

RQ2: How do those dimensions predict the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs in conjunction with each other?

From the data analysis, the first predicted dimension of the assessment of SNAs was the informativeness of SNAs. The indicators used to measure the informativeness of SNAs had the highest average mean (3.77) from Likert’s five scales. However, in conjunction with other predictors, the informativeness of SNAs had the lowest beta coefficient on the assessment of SNAs (0.125). In previous studies, the informativeness of SNAs had the highest beta coefficient (Logan et al., 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2012; Deraz et al., 2015). The second predicted dimension was the entertainment value. The indicators used to measure the entertainment value of SNAs had an average mean 3.425 from the five-score scales. This result could confirm that SNAs can highly entertain and enjoy the BCCs more than as identified from previous studies (Taylor et al., 2011; Wang & Sun, 2010, Deraz et al., 2015). According to its coefficient (0.239), the entertainment value had the highest positive beta value on the assessment of SNAs. The third predicted dimension was the irritation value of SNAs. The irritation value of SNAs in this study had the lowest average mean (2.480) among the other predictors, this is confirmed by the paired t-test as the irritation value has p value = 0.000. In previous studies, the irritation value of SNAs had the highest mean among the informativeness and the entertainment value (Logan et al., 2012; Deraz et al., 2015).

Moreover, according to the coefficients analysis, the irritation value of SNAs had the highest negative beta value (-0.231). This result confirmed the result of Saxena and Khanna (2012), and contradicted with the findings of Logan et al. (2012) and Deraz et al. (2015) that irritation had no effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs. The fourth predicted dimension was the credibility value of SNAs. According to the collected data, the credibility value of SNAs had an average mean (3.098) from the five-score scales. That might prove, that the research sample from BCC’s had more experience with SNAs, as identified by Morimoto and Chang (2006) that credibility was positively correlated to the internet users’ experience, and their ability to collect information, and to interact with the online ads. However, the credibility value of SNAs in this study had a positive beta coefficient (0.155). This result contradicted the results of Yakoop et al. (2013) that credibility had no effect on the consumers’ perception toward SNAs.

The last predicted dimension in this study was the interactivity value of SNAs. From table (1), the interactivity indicators had the second highest average mean (3.673), which shows that the BCCs were more counted to collect information and to interact than to use the SNAs as source of entertainment. This result is also confirmed by paired t-test between interactivity and entertainment and the p value = 0.000. Based on the coefficients analysis, the interactivity value of SNAs had the second highest positive beta value (0.184) on the BCC’s assessments toward the SNAs. This result could support the fifth hypothesis, and confirmed that the interactivity value of SNAs is an important dimension of the assessment of SNAs.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study focused on exploring BCCs’ assessment of SNAs, by answering the following questions:

H01: The entertainment value of SNAs does not affect the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs. This could support the second hypothesis,

H02: Entertainment value of SNAs predicts the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

The credibility value of SNAs had a coefficient of 0.155 on the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs. This result gave a regression value of 15.5%, at which variations on the assessment of SNAs were counted by variations on credibility value. This result could reject the null hypothesis,

H03: The credibility value of SNAs does not affect the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs. This result could support the third hypothesis,

H04: Credibility value of SNAs predicts positively the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

The irritation value of SNAs in conjunction with informativeness, entertainments, interactivity and credibility values had the highest negative coefficient on the assessment of SNAs. 23.1% of the variations on SNAs were counted by variations of the irritation value (significant = 0.000). This result could reject the null hypothesis,

H05: The irritation value of SNAs does not affect the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs. This could support the fourth hypothesis,

H06: Irritation value of SNAs has a strong negative effect on the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

Finally, the beta value of the interactivity value of SNAs had 0.184 coefficients on the assessment of SNAs. As around 18.4% of the variations on SNAs were counted by variations of the interactivity value at a significant = 0.000. This result could reject the null hypothesis,

H07: Interactivity value of SNAs does not affect the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs. This could support the fifth hypothesis:

H08: Interactivity value of SNAs is predicting positively the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

6. Conclusion

The demographic characteristics of the respondents of this study, gave additional evidences about the characteristics of the active users on SNSs. The respondents were from 18 different nationalities. In addition, they were distributed through six different age groups from 17 to over 65 years old.
According to the collected data, just 12.9% were younger SNSs’ users from the age range 17-24. That could prove that, within the brand communities on SNSs, the university students and younger users were not the main active users as argued in previous studies (Taylor et al., 2011; Logan et al., 2012; Saxena & Khanna 2012; Hadija et al., 2012; Zernigh & Sohail 2012; Deraz et al., 2015). The regression analysis in this study, helped to identify five main factors for the assessment of SNAs, as perceived by BCCs. Four of these dimensions had positive effects on the BCCs’ assessment about SNAs. The fifth dimension was the irritation value, which had strong negative effect (-0.231) on the BCCs’ assessments. The positive four factors according to their coefficient strength were: the entertainment value (0.239), the interactivity value (0.184), the credibility value (0.155) and the informativeness value (0.125). According to the regression analysis, those five variables together had the best R² (0.591) at a significant change = 0.000. Nearly 59.1% of the variation on SNAs was explained by that model. The findings of this study supported the following hypotheses:

H01: Informativeness of SNAs predicts the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.
H02: Entertainment value of SNAs predicts the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.
H03: Credibility value of SNAs predicts positively the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.
H04: Irritation value of SNAs has a strong negative effect on the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.
H05: Interactivity value of SNAs is predicting positively the BCCs’ assessment of SNAs.

Finally, according to the hypotheses paired t-test of the empirical findings, the BCCs’ on SNSs were:

- Less irritated by the SNAs as they find those ads more credible.
- More information and interactive oriented than to see the SNAs as an entertainment factor.

7. Implications and Future Research

7.1 The Theoretical Implications

Our findings supported some of the findings from previous studies on the assessment of SNAs, and it contradicted with other findings. It contradicted with the findings of Logan et al. (2012) and Deraz et al. (2015), that irritation value had no effect on the assessment of SNAs. Also, it contradicted with the findings of the previous studies, that the informativeness value of SNAs had the highest positive effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs (Logan et al., 2012; Saxena & Khanna, 2012). In this study, informativeness had the lowest effect in conjunction with the entertainment, interactive, credibility and irritation values. Also, we found that irritation value had a high negative effect on the assessment of SNAs. Moreover, our findings contradicted with the finding of Yaakop et al. (2013) as credibility of SNAs did not affect the consumers’ assessment of SNAs, as perceived by university students. In this study, the credibility value of SNAs had a positive significant effect on the assessment of SNAs. Finally, this study confirmed the findings of Deraz et al. (2015), that credibility and interactivity have crucial roles while assessing SNAs.

7.2 Practical Implications

The research findings provided important evidence for the online advertisers about the characteristics and needs of the BCCs on SNSs. These findings have to be taken into consideration, while promoting or seeking to interact with this market segment. Online advertisers have to consider that, the BCCs are more information and interactive oriented than to use the SNAs as an entertainment tool. Also, they have to consider the age ranges of the more active users. Moreover, as the irritation value was highly predicting the consumers’ assessments of SNAs, marketers have to consider it, and to explore how to improve the credibility value of SNAs. As the brand communities in this study were hotels and resorts; hotel marketers, have to improve the entertainment value of SNAs, to increase the BCCs’ interaction with their advertisements.

7.3 Future Research

Previous studies on the assessment of SNAs had skewed younger users on SNSs as a main research sample. However, they had contradicted results. This study was first to go beyond that, by exploring the assessments of BCCs with different age ranges. It also contradicted with some results from the previous studies and confirmed others. The differences in culture and experiences may affect the consumers’ assessments. Accordingly, more studies are needed to identify the effect of culture on the consumers’ assessments of SNAs. Morimoto and Chang (2006) identified that credibility value of ONAs is positively related to the internet users’ experience, their ability to collect information, and to increase their interaction with the ads. Accordingly, more studies are needed to investigate the relation between the credibility value and users acceptance of the SNAs on the online brand communities. Most of the previous studies about the assessments of SNAs used Ducoffe’s (1995) model, or based on that model. For this reason the present authors argue that, for researchers to gain a deeper understanding of how SNSs’ users perceive SNAs, other models can be used to measure the consumers’ perception of SNAs, such as, the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECXI) / the Extended Performance Satisfaction Index (EPSI) or the gap model (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010).

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******
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

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| **How do you perceive the information value of advertisements on Facebook?** |  |  |  |  |  |
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| 5. Offers valuable information |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Offers timely information |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Offers updated information |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. It a good source of information |  |  |  |  |  |

<p>| <strong>How do you perceive the entertainment value of advertisements on Facebook?</strong> |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9. Entertains me |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. Is enjoyable to me |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. Pleases me |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. Is amusing |  |  |  |  |  |</p>
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<td><strong>How do you perceive the credibility value of advertisements on Facebook?</strong></td>
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<td>13. Is trustworthy</td>
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<td>15. Is believable</td>
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<td>16. Is accurate</td>
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<td><strong>How do you perceive the value of interactive advertisement on Facebook?</strong></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><strong>How do you perceive your feelings of irritation against advertisements on Facebook?</strong></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 once. 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*
Paper 3
The Effect of Culture on the Consumers’ Assessment of Advertisements on Social Networking Sites; Cross-cultural analysis

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ABSTRACT - Do consumers of the same brand from different culture have the same perceptions while assessing the advertisements on Social Networking Sites’ (SNSAs)? To answer this question, the data for this study were collected from brand communities’ consumers (BCCs) on SNSs, 278 respondents from three different cultural backgrounds (Egyptians, Dutch and British) answered the questionnaires. Five main variables to collect the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs were tested (information value, entertainment value, credibility value, interactivity value, and irritation value). Based on the empirical findings, the three groups perceived five of the six variables with significant difference F ratios. Consequently, their perception of the entertainment value of SNSAs has no significant differences between the three groups. Based on the cross-cultural theory, the findings of this study have some agreements and some contradictions, especially the influences of power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Moreover, the researchers used the One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Post Hoc tests to compare between the assessments of the three groups.

Keywords—component; Cross-cultural, Advertisements, Social Networking Sites, Assessment of advertisements

I. INTRODUCTION

As quoted by [1] national culture is defined as the values, beliefs and assumptions learned in early childhood that distinguish people in one nation from those in another [2], [3], [4]. Attempts were done to measure the impact of national culture since the 1960s, specifically, research that focuses on the impact of national culture on Business practices were put into focus since the 1990s, such as [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11]. Despite a growing body of research knowledge on Social Networking Sites (SNSs) as a marketing and communication platform, and those sites value for marketers, few researchers have contributed to the cross-cultural studies to study SNSs users’ attitudes toward advertisements on SNSs, as identified from the empirical findings of this study. Consequently, the present paper aims to extend the literatures on the assessment of advertisemnets (Ads) on SNSs to identify the effect of culture on the consumer assessment of these Ads. Moreover, to reduce the effect of the brand on the consumers’ assessment, SNSs’ users within the same brand communities were included in this study. Based on the above discussion, the present study answered two main questions:

RQ1: Do consumers from different nations perceive Ads on SNSs with the same perception level?

RQ2: How do SNSs’ users from Egypt, Netherland and United Kingdom differ in their perception to the Ads on SNSs?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Online Consumers’ Perceptions in Cross cultural studies

[12] examined the effect of culture on the risk perception and internet shopping. These authors specifically investigated what consumers’ from both Saudi Arabia and the United States (U.S.) perceive about using technology for online shopping as well as their perceptions of risk. Likewise, [13] studied cultural differences in the online behavior of consumers by comparing the reaction of online consumers in the United States and Hong Kong to websites of several global automobile. In that study, [13] examined cultural differences in the online behavior of consumers with the belief that understanding how different cultures use the net, as well as, perceive the same websites - can translate to truly global e-commerce. That study focused on attitudinal differences.

[14] examined consumers’ corporate social responsibility (CSR) perception from a cultural perspective. With the help of survey data from the U.S. and China, the authors found that the cultural value had a crucial role in perception and behavior toward (CSR).

[15] tested Triantis’ horizontal and vertical individualism, and collectivism typology for its ability to detect differences in Web users’ cultural users’ orientation. They specifically examined the role of these cultural orientations on consumers’ media use, Web skills and challenges, and attitudes toward Web advertising. They found out that the four cultural orientations (horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism, and vertical collectivism) had significant overall differences in the online users’ perception of the online Ads entertainment value, information value, and general attitudes toward the online Ads.

[16] investigated factors influencing the perception of mobile Ads in different cultures by comparing consumer perceptions towards mobile advertising in Austrian and Japan.
In [16], the authors applied the three Ducoffe’s (1995) variables; information value, entertainment value, and irritation value. They found out that the perception of the Japanese consumers, information and entertainment value had positive significant effects on their perception toward the mobile Ads, while irritation value had a significant negative effect. In the perception of the Austrian sample, irritation value had no significant effect on mobile Ads value. In other cross-cultural study, [17] compared between; beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral responses toward the online Ads in three countries (U.S., China and Romania). [17] identified differences regarding the consumers’ perception of the online ads from the three nations.

On focus to SNSs, [18] examined the role and effect of national culture on SNSs. The authors considered use and access across countries by comparing secondary data collected from 26 countries. The authors used Hofstede’s multidimensional framework that includes; Power Distance (PDI), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), Individualism-collectivism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), and Long-term orientation (LTO), controlling for socioeconomic factors such as networked readiness, level of education and mobile penetration.

Likewise, in another cross-cultural study [19] examined the impact of national culture on national averages of time spent (ATS) on SNSs. The authors applied Hofstede’s four original culture dimensions; PDI, UAI, IDV, and MAS together with three of Schwartz’ cultural dimensions; mastery, intellectual autonomy, and egalitarianism. The authors found that IDV and MAS only influence ATS on friendship-oriented SNSs. Additionally, UAI and intellectual autonomy only influence ATS on professional-oriented SNSs.

B. Assessment of SNSAs

[20] compared the assessment of Ads on SNSs and TV. The researchers used [21] model with its three main variables (irritation, entertainment and information value). According to [20], information and entertainment values had strong predictions on the assessment of the social networking site advertisements (SNSAs), while irritation value did not predict the assessment of SNSAs. [22] used the same model to assess SNSAs, as perceived by Indian students. The results of that study confirmed that, the information and the entertainment values are predicting positively the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, while irritation value had a significant negative effect. Ads’ credibility and interactivity introduced by [23], to confirm that; information, entertainment, credibility and interactivity values are the main variables for assessing SNSAs. According to the Swedish university students’ perception, [23] confirmed the finding of [20] that irritation value did not have a significant effect on the assessment of SNSAs. More recently, [24] identified that in addition to the four previous dimensions, irritation was significantly affecting the assessment of Ads on the Facebook as perceived by the brand communities’ consumers (BCCs) from 18 different nationalities.

More studies contributed to the value of SNSAs while assessing the consumers’ attitudes toward SNSAs. [25] introduced credibility to the informativeness, entertainment and irritation values depending on [26]. According to the perception of South African young people, the research identified informativeness, entertainment, irritation and credibility values of SNSAs as the main variables that predict the consumers’ attitudes toward SNSAs. [27] explored factors that predict consumers’ attitudes toward SNSAs. The researchers identified that entertainment value and the value of information as perceived by SNSs’ users predict the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, as perceived by postgraduate management students in the USA. Finally, [28] confirmed that information and entertainment values of SNSAs are significantly correlated to the attitude toward SNSAs, as perceived by Pakistani consumers on SNSs.

There is no doubt that SNSs are international platforms which are meant to, and which are at the same time accessed by business organizations and customers in the international market. These cultural differences between the business organizations and their customers do have an impact or effect on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. Against this background, i.e., the short literature review presented a clear gap in the cross-cultural studies while assessing the value of SNSAs as perceived by SNSs’ users.

Extending the lines of research on the effect of culture on the attitudes toward the online Ads, the online shopping behavior, and literatures on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, this study investigated how the cultural background can affect the SNSs users’ assessment of SNSAs, and explored how the Egyptians, Dutch, and the British differ in their assessments of the SNSAs.

III. THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

In keeping with the identified literature and based on our previous researches [23], [24], the topic of SNSAs in this study had been investigated mainly based on six main dimensions (Value of SNSAs, information value, irritation, entertainment, interactivity, and credibility values). In addition, we have the culture as the surrounding atmosphere that may have an impact on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. As seen in Fig. 1.
The differences in the cultural dimensions of these three research samples may influence the consumers’ assessment of the value of SNSAs. As identified by [13] the online consumers from different cultural backgrounds have different impressions of the same websites.

B. Variables of assessing SNSAs

1) Information value of SNAs

The information value of the online Ads is the ability to effectively provide relevant information in the advertising context, as perceived by the online consumers [30]. In this regard, researcher reveals its importance by ascertaining the consumers’ perception towards the information value while they were assessing the online Ads [21], [31], [26], [32], [17]. On SNSs’ brand communities, to collect information is one of the main customer interaction characteristics [33], as well as information and entertainment values considered from the main aims of any brand post on SNSs [34]. Furthermore, the information value of SNSAs has been identified as being positively correlated with the consumers’ perception toward SNSAs on our previous studies [13], [24]. Based on these facts, information value is considered as one of the main variables of the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs.

2) Entertainment Value of SNSAs

The entertainment value of the ads represents the degree of pleasure and involvement during the interaction with a specific advertisement [35]. It is particularly noticeable with the assessment of SNSAs; it was identified as a main factor in the assessment of SNSAs and the attitudes towards SNAs [36], [20], [22], [23], [24]. Moreover, [27] identified that SNSs’ users seek enjoyment, relaxation and to pass the time, which relates to the nature of SNSs as an entertaining activity website. Based on these facts, this study included entertainment value of SNSAs as a vital variable in the assessment of SNSAs, as perceived by SNSs’ users while exploring the national cultural influences on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs.

3) Credibility Value of SNSAs

The credibility value toward the online Ads represents the degree to which the consumers perceive claims made about a brand in a specific advertisement to be truthful and believable [37], [26] found that the credibility value of the online Ads as an essential dimension of the assessment of the online Ads, the authors identified that credibility was directly predicting the consumer assessment of the online Ads. Based on this finding, many researchers considered the Ads credibility as a premier dimension while assessing online Ads, and the consumers’ attitudes toward the online Ads [37], [38], [17], [39]. In regard to the assessment of SNSAs, [40] found that credibility value of the SNSAs had no effect on the consumers’ assessment of the Facebook Ads, as perceived by Malaysians’ university students, but [17], [23], [24], [41] found it as a more powerful predictor on the consumers’ assessment toward SNSAs. In keeping with these findings, the credibility value of SNSAs as considered by the present authors as one of the main variables in assessing SNSAs.

4) Interactivity Value of SNSAs

Researchers defined interactivity from various perspectives, as the extent to which users can participate in modifying the messages they receive through ads [42], or as a means for the individuals to effectively communicate with each other [43] or to communicate with the brand [34]. However, according to [26] the interactivity value predicted the consumers’ assessment of the online Ads. This was confirmed by [40], that the interactivity value of SNSAs as a variable that predicts the consumers’ attitudes toward SNAs. In a same direction, [23], [24] confirmed that interactivity value has the highest significant effect among other variables of the assessment of SNSAs. Based on these findings, the interactivity value of SNSAs is considered in this study as one of the main variables in assessing the value of SNSAs.

5) Irritation Value of SNSAs

Consumers’ irritation value with regard to the online Ads arises when the consumers experience discomfort while watching these ads [22], or when they seem to be less likely to be persuaded by them. The consumers’ feeling of irritation is one of the primary dimensions that had a negative contribution to the online Ads [21]. The irritation value of the online Ads includes descriptors such as confusing, annoying, irritating and deceptive [20]. In some research, the irritation value did not predict the consumers’ assessment of the SNSAs [23], [20], [41]. Other studies identified that irritation value is a high negative prediction on the consumers’ assessment of SNAs [22], [24]. Based on this discussion, it is important to include irritation value as one of the main dimensions of the assessment of SNSAs.

IV. MATERIALS & METHODS

A. Subjects and procedures

In keeping with the purpose of this study, a quantitative approach was regarded as being the most appropriate approach. It was guided by the functional or positivist paradigm [44]. To achieve the construct validity of the collected data, the questionnaire was constructed based on the research’s conceptual framework of the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs.
from the cross-cultural perceptive, as recommended by [45], to measure what is supposed to be tested.

The questionnaire was administrated online on SurveyMonkey.com. The program enabled us not to allow participants to fill out the questionnaire more than once. After that, the questionnaire was distributed in two stages; the first stage during the period from the first of April to the first of September 2014, and the second stage during the period between the first of April and the first of August 2015. During the first stage two different sampling techniques were used; web distribution by uploading the questionnaire directly from the administrative website to the homepages of eight different brand communities on Facebook. The second used distribution technique was a convenience distribution by sending personal invitations to active participants on those brand communities. During the second stage a convenience distribution method was used by targeting brand communities’ consumers from three different nationalities; Egyptians, Dutch and British.

The targeted population consisted of people who were members of Facebook’s brand communities of eight different hotels in Red-Sea region. These hotels were; Club Paradisio Hotel El Gouna, Dawar El Omda Boutique Hotel - El Gouna, Grand Plaza Hotel & Resort, Mirage New Hawai, Panorama Resort, Sea Star Beau Rivage, The Three Corners Royal Star, and Three Corners Ocean View. These hotels had around 29400 Fans on Facebook in 2015.

From the two stages, 357 questionnaires were obtained. After deleting those uncompleted questionnaires and those of the respondents who answered all the questions with the same value, we had 278 completed questionnaires. The Egyptians; 77.9% were males, and 22.1% were females, according to the following age groups; 17.6% of the age range 17-24, 54.1% of the age range 25-34, 23.5% of the age range 35-44, and 4.8% of the age range 45-54.

- The Dutch; 37.9% were males, and 62.1% were females, according to the following age groups; 11.2% of the age range 17-24, 8.4% of the age range 25-34, 24.3% of the age range 35-44, 49.5% of the age range 45-54, and 6.5% of the age group 55-64.

- The British; 47.8% were males, and 52.2% were females, according to the following age groups; 1.2% of the age range 17-24, 17% of the age range 25-34, 23.1% of the age range 35-44, 34.8% of the age range 45-54, and 23.9% of the age group 55-64.

### B. Measures

To measure the consumers’ assessment of SNAVs, a 20 item scale was adapted from previous studies on OAV and SNAV [20], [23], [24], [27], [32], [35], [40]. The scale consisted of items pulled from different dimensions of the assessment of online Ads including information value (e.g. SNSAs offer valuable information), entertainment value (e.g. SNSAs entertain me), interactivity value (e.g. SNSAs are trustworthy), interactivity value (e.g. SNSAs facilitate two-way communication), and irritation value (e.g. SNSAs confuse me). Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5.

The reliability text and the descriptive statistics of the used items for assessing SNAV are presented in Table (II). Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method of factor extraction with varimax rotation was conducted to examine the underlying structure of those 20 items. The varimax rotation was used to remove items which load heavily on more than one construct factor. The rules of minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 and at least four loadings per factor were referenced for the extracting factors. The retained five extracted factors explained about 82.69%, 83.27% and 80.71% of the total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE II. THE RELIABILITY (CRONBACH’S a) AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SNSs' users perceived SNAs as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF01-Offers valuable information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF02- Offers timely information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF03-Offers updated information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF04-Good source for information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT01-Entertains me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT02-Is enjoyable for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT03-Entertain me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT04-Entertain me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE01-Is trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE02-Is credible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE03-Is believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE04-Is accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT01-Facilitates two-way communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT02-Is a fast communication tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT03-Is an easy way to interact with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT04-Provides a smooth interactive experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT001-Confuses me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT002-Irritates me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT003-Annoys me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT004-Deceives me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INF: Information value, ENT: entertainment value, CRE: Credibility value, INT: Interactivity value, IRR: Irritation value, AV: averages of means, M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation
The items of each of these five constructs were averaged to obtain the means’ average of each variable. Moreover, the internal consistency reliability coefficients of each group of the remained items were tested by using Cronbach’s Alpha statistical method. A summary of these tests and as well as descriptive analyses of the five used variables are found in Table (II). Based on Table (II) and Table (III):

• **Factor 1**, The information value (INF) (Egyptians; eigenvalue = 1.633, \( \alpha = 0.85 \), means’ average = 3.55, Dutch; eigenvalue = 2.795, \( \alpha = 0.90 \), means’ average = 2.97, British; eigenvalue = 1.491, \( \alpha = 0.93 \), means’ average = 3.65). INF considered of four items, and reflected consumers’ assessments of the informational value of SNSAs as perceived by the three research samples.

• **Factor 2**, The entertainment value (ENT) (Egyptians; eigenvalue = 2.111, \( \alpha = 0.83 \), means’ average =3.21, Dutch; eigenvalue = 2.043, \( \alpha = 0.87 \), means’ average =3.41, British; eigenvalue = 3.158, \( \alpha = 0.91 \), means’ average = 2.85). This factor considered of four items, and reflected consumers’ assessments of the entertainment value of SNSAs as perceived by the three research samples.

• **Factor 3**, The credibility value (CRE) (Egyptians; eigenvalue = 0.997, \( \alpha = 0.87 \), means’ average = 3.46, Dutch; eigenvalue = 0.775, \( \alpha = 0.88 \), means’ average = 2.48, British; eigenvalue = 8.759, \( \alpha = 0.85 \), means’ average = 2.85). CRE considered of four items, and reflected consumers’ assessments of the credibility value of SNSAs as perceived by the three research samples.

• **Factor 4**, The interactivity value (INT) (Egyptians; eigenvalue = 8.746, \( \alpha = 0.86 \), means’ average = 4.01, Dutch; eigenvalue = 1.578, \( \alpha = 0.85 \), means’ average = 3.36, British; eigenvalue = 1.797, \( \alpha = 0.88 \), means’ average = 3.70). INT factor considered of four items, and reflected consumers’ assessments of the interactivity value of SNAs as perceived by the three research samples.

• **Factor 5**, The irritation value (IRR) (Egyptians; eigenvalue = 3.194, \( \alpha = 0.90 \), means’ average = 2.74, Dutch; eigenvalue = 9.463, \( \alpha = 0.92 \), means’ average = 3.49, British; eigenvalue = 0.795, \( \alpha = 0.87 \), means’ average = 2.54). IRR considered of four items, and reflected consumers’ feelings of irritation from the SNSAs as perceived by the three research samples.

Based on Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) text and Bartlett’s test of sphericity, the three research samples had the following results; The Egyptians sample had KMO value 0.837 and Bartlett’s test was significant (p = 0.000), the Dutchs sample had KMO 0.859 and Bartlett’s test was significant (p=0. 000), and the British sample had KMO 0.858 and Bartlett’s test was also significant (p = 0.000). These results addressed the strength of the interrelations among the used items, and addressed the factorability of the collected data as recommended by [46].

### Table III. SNAs’ assessment items after PCA and correlation between the factors for each sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Egyptians</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INF01</td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>0.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF02</td>
<td>0.830</td>
<td>0.861</td>
<td>0.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF03</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>0.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF04</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>0.798</td>
<td>0.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT01</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>0.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT02</td>
<td>0.914</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>0.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT03</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT04</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>0.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE01</td>
<td>0.715</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>0.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE02</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td>0.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE03</td>
<td>0.815</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>0.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE04</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT01</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>0.672</td>
<td>0.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT02</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>0.654</td>
<td>0.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT03</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td>0.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT04</td>
<td>0.868</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>0.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR01</td>
<td>-0.874</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR02</td>
<td>-0.892</td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td>0.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR03</td>
<td>-0.919</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR04</td>
<td>-0.885</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td>0.564</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

The table shows the correlation between the factors for each sample. The items that were retained in the three samples were tested by using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) on a cutoff criteria > 0.6, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity at a significant level (p < 0.05) to address the strength of the interrelations among the used items and to assess the factorability of the collected data [46]. Factor loading (PCA) is presented in Table (III). From Table (III) five latent constructs were extracted with almost a strong factor loading over 0.564. As claimed by [47] “it is usual to regard factor loadings as high if they are greater than 0.6”.

variance for the Egyptians, Dutch and British samples respectively.
C. Data Analysis

1) Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Post-hoc tests was conducted in this study to explore the influence of culture on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, as perceived by the three national groups of the respondents. (The Egyptian, Dutch and British). In which, The independent variable (factor) in the ANOVA test was the Nationality of the respondents, and the dependent variables were; the respondents’ assessments of the information, entertainment, credibility, interactivity and irritation values of the SNSAs. That helped to compare between the assessment of SNSAs as perceived by each of three groups according to their nationality. The power of the $F$ test of the ANOVA is important in evaluating the sensitivity of the test and also in determining sample size needed to attain a given value of the power, a large $F$ ratio indicates that there is more variability between the three groups [48]. Moreover, the eta squared ($n^2$) were calculated to determine the effect size of the dependent variable based on the following equation (1):

$$
\eta^2 = \frac{SS_{between}}{SS_{total}} \tag{1}
$$

were, $n^2$ is the eta squared size (% of variance explained), $SS_{between}$ is the sum of squares between groups, and $SS_{total}$ is the sum of squares.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted in this study to explore the influence of culture on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, as perceived by the three national groups of the respondents. (The Egyptian, Dutch and British). In which, The independent variable (factor) in the ANOVA test was the Nationality of the respondents, and the dependent variables were; the respondents’ assessments of the information, entertainment, credibility, interactivity and irritation values of the SNSAs. That helped to compare between the assessment of SNSAs as perceived by each of three groups according to their nationality. The power of the $F$ test of the ANOVA is important in evaluating the sensitivity of the test and also in determining sample size needed to attain a given value of the power, a large $F$ ratio indicates that there is more variability between the three groups [48]. Moreover, the eta squared ($n^2$) were calculated to determine the effect size of the dependent variable based on the following equation (1):

$$
\eta^2 = \frac{SS_{between}}{SS_{total}} \tag{1}
$$

where $n^2$ is the eta squared size (% of variance explained), $SS_{between}$ is the sum of squares between groups, and $SS_{total}$ is the sum of squares.

TABLE IV. ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Between Groups</th>
<th>Within Groups</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>63,586</td>
<td>482,085</td>
<td>545,670</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>54,935</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT</td>
<td>2,001</td>
<td>465,002</td>
<td>467,004</td>
<td>0.558</td>
<td>1,793</td>
<td>0.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE</td>
<td>16,954</td>
<td>556,493</td>
<td>573,447</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>12,689</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>330,808</td>
<td>410,615</td>
<td>741,422</td>
<td>0.493</td>
<td>335,549</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR</td>
<td>115,766</td>
<td>693,400</td>
<td>809,166</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>69,537</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table (IV), the resulting eta values on this study were; Information value (INF = 0.117), entertainment value (ENT = 0.004), Credibility value (CRE = 0.030), Intercativity value (INT = 0.446), and Irritation value (IRR = 0.143). Based on Cohen’s (1988:284-7) 0.01 is a small effect, 0.06 is a medium effect, and 0.14 is a large effect.

Post-hoc comparisons were conducted to find out how the consumers’ assessments of the three groups are different from each other, as shown in Table (V).

V. DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

This study focused on exploring the influence of national culture in the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, by answering the following questions:

$\textbf{RQ1:}$ Do consumers from different nations perceive Ads of the same brand on SNSs with the same perception level?

$\textbf{RQ2:}$ How do SNSs’ users from Egypt, Netherland and United Kingdom differ in their perceptions to the Ads on SNSs?

Based on the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) see Table (IV), there are statistically differ in the three groups’ assessments of SNSAs regarding four of the dependent variables of assessing SNSAs at the $p < 0.05$;

- $\text{INF:}$ $F (2,833) = 54,935$ at $p = 0.00$ with a medium to large eta value (0.117);
- $\text{CRE:}$ $F (2,833) = 12,689$ at $p = 0.00$ with a small to medium eta value (0.030);
- $\text{INT:}$ $F (2,833) = 335,549$ at $p = 0.00$ with a large eta value (0.446).

### Table V. Post Hoc Tests to Compare Between the Three Groups with Tukey’s Honestly Significant Different Test (HSD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>(I) Nationality</th>
<th>(J) Nationality</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>0.581</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>-0.106</td>
<td>0.204</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>-0.581</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>-0.688</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENT</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>0.512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.818</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>-0.113</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>0.818</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>-0.096</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Dutch</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>-0.239</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>1.533</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>-1.533</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>-1.225</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>-0.308</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dutch</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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</tr>
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<td>IRR</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>-0.753</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British</td>
<td>0.950</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>-0.197</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>-0.950</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*
• **IRR**: \( F(2,833) = 69.537 \) at \( p = 0.00 \) with a large eta value (0.143).

Contrary, based on Table (IV), the means of the Entertainment (ENT) variable as perceived by the three groups are statistically not significant different as \( F(2, 833) = 1.001 \) at \( p = 0.167 \) \((p > 0.05)\) with \( \eta^2 \) (0.004). These results show that, National culture could have an influence on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, even within the same brand community.

Based on the Post Hoc Tests (see Table (V)), the differences between the three nations regarding the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs can be classified as follows:

- The Egyptians; reported more positive perception regarding CRE, and INT if compare to the perceptions of the British and Dutch, and lower irritation value than the Dutch. The low individualism (IDV) of the Egyptian culture may enhance conformity to group attitudes and lessen variety of opinions as described in [49]. Moreover, the High power distance of the Egyptian culture made them easier to persuade by the marketing communication message as explained by [50], as a result, the Egyptians perceived SNSAs as more believable and credible.

- The Dutch; reported more negative perception regarding INF, CRE, INT, and the highest irritation value if compare to the perception of the Egyptians and British. Based on Table (I), the Dutch had lower Power Distance in comparison to the Egyptian, according to [50]; people with less power distance are more analytical and critical. In addition, as identified by [51], The Dutch are more annoyed from the online Ads as they are more sensitive to invasions of privacy. That can give a clear explanation why the Dutch are, the less credible on SNSAs than the Egyptian and British. This result confirmed the findings of [51], that the Dutch perceived SNSSs, to be less informative, less credible and less entertaining than advertising on classic websites.

- The British; reported more positive perception regarding the INF, and they show less irritation value than the Egyptian and Dutch. The British as seen in Table (I) have the lowest Power Distance and the lowest Uncertainty Avoidance Index in comparing to the Egyptian and Dutch. Low Uncertainty Avoidance in British culture could explain why the British are willing to take risks and open to variety and novelty behaviors as clarified in [53], so they are more willing to interact with SNSAs with law feeling of irritation.

The findings of this study contradicted with some of the Cross-cultural theory. For example; according to [53] cultures with low uncertainty avoidance exhibit greater tolerance for risk and people are willing to try new things, that was not clear in this study as we can see the Egyptian with high uncertainty avoidance were more willing to interact and less irritate than the Dutch who have lower levels of the uncertainty avoidance. That contradicted as well with the findings of [16], that the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance has negative impact on the consumers’ assessment of the credibility of Ads. In this study, we can see the Egyptians with high uncertainty avoidance are more credible to SNSAs than the Dutch and British. We can argue this result due to the distinction between the culture dimensions as discussed by [53].

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This exploration of the influences of culture on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs responds to [19] to consider cultural aspects in SNS-based marketing efforts. The cultural characteristics of the respondents in this study, gave additional evidences about how culture can influence the consumers’ on SNSs. The respondents were from three different nations that have different characteristic cultural dimensions based on [29]. According to the collected data, within the same brand communities on SNSs, consumers’ from different cultural backgrounds had different perception levels while assessing the value of SNSAs.

The ANOVA test in this study, helped to identify four main dimensions that were significantly different when assessing SNSAs in the cross-cultural concept. These dimensions based on the \( F \) ratio are; the interactivity value (INT), the irritation value (IRR), the information value (INF), and finally the credibility value. Contrarily, the entertainment value (ENT) had a low \( F \) ratio with \( p = 0.167 \), this result shows that SNSs’ users from different cultural perspectives have a lower perception of the entertainment value of SNSAs. This, also, can reflect the importance of the Ads entertainment value on SNSs from different cultural perspectives.

Based on the Post Hoc test to compare between the three groups in this study; the Egyptians that have a high UAI were more credible and less irritated than the Dutch, that have higher UAI. This result contradicted with the Cross-cultural theory (Hofstede, 1980; Liu et al. 2012). However, the British reported the lowest irritation value, and they showed more willing to interact than the Dutch. We argue that to the cross-cultural theory as the British culture has the lowest UAI than the Egyptians and Dutch, based on [53], people from the low UAI culture are more willing to take risks and more open to variety and novelty behaviors.

VII. IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

A. The Theoretical Implications

Our findings have two main theoretical implications; the first is regarding the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs theory and the second regarding the cross-cultural theory.

Regarding the assessment of SNSAs’ theory, this study presents how the Egyptians, Dutch and British perceives SNSAs, previous studies were more focus on the American and Asian consumers’ assessments [20], [17], [22], [23], [40]. Based on the influences of culture on the assessment of SNSAs, it is important to explore how consumers’ from different national culture perceive SNSAs.
Regarding the cross-cultural theory, the findings of this study have some agreements and some contradictions, especially with the influences of UAI and PDI on the assessment of SNSAs. The present authors argue that due to the distinction between the culture dimensions as discussed in [53].

B. Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide important evidence for the online advertisers about the influences of culture on the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs. These findings have to be taken into consideration, while promoting or seeking to interact with consumers from different cultural concepts. Online advertisers have to consider, that consumers’ from the same brand communities on SNSs have different perception level, based on their cultural backgrounds. For example the Egyptians and the British are more interactive and Information oriented, while the Dutch are more entertainment oriented. From the findings, we can confirm that the level of irritation and sensitivity to invasions of privacy can influence negatively the consumers’ assessment of SNSAs, as identified from the Dutch consumers’ assessment. Based on the differences in the cultural perspectives and the influences of culture on the assessment of SNSAs, marketers on SNSs may have an effective message if they can consider that while interacting with consumers from different cultural backgrounds.

C. Future Research

This study stresses the need of considering the cultural aspects while exploring SNSs as a marketing platform, and to duplicate this study with different cultural backgrounds to have a deeper understanding of how consumers’ on SNSs from different culture perceive and interact with the different marketing efforts. In addition the empirical data of this study show the negative influences of the consumers’ feeling of irritation, and their sensitivity to invasions of privacy in their assessment of SNSAs. In consequence, further researches to investigate how to reduce those negative aspects are needed for the cross cultural concept.

Based on the phenomenal increase in marketing activities on SNSs, researchers have to consider more in the communication theories, and explore more variables while investigating different marketing activities on SNSs.

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