

# INFLUENCE OF SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL BELIEF FACTORS ON USERS' ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARD MARKETING COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

## UTICAJ SOCIOPSIHOLOŠKIH FAKTORA UVJERENJA NA STAVOVE KORISNIKA I NJIHOVO PONAŠANJE PREMA MARKETINŠKIM KOMUNIKACIJAMA NA DRUŠTVENIM MREŽAMA

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this article is to research the impact of social networks users' beliefs on their attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks. The results show, that users' beliefs about factors »information«, »hedonic pleasure »good for individual« and »good for economy« have positive influence on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks, while users' beliefs about factors »materialism«, »falsity/nonsense« and »value corruption« have negative impact on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks.*

**Key words:** *Social networks, Marketing communication, Beliefs, Attitudes, Behaviour*

**Sadržaj:** *Svrha ovog članka je istražiti uticaj verovanja korisnika društvenih mreža na njihove stavove i ponašanje prema marketinškim komunikacijama na društvenim mrežama. Rezultati pokazuju, da verovanja korisnika o faktorima »informacije«, »hedonističko zadovoljstvo«, »dobro za pojedinca« i »dobro za ekonomiju« imaju pozitivan uticaj na njihove stavove prema marketinškim komunikacijama na društvenim mrežama, a njihova verovanja oko faktora »materijalizam«, »neistina/besmislica« i »kvarenje vrednosti« imaju negativan uticaj na stavove korisnika prema marketinškim komunikacijama na društvenim mrežama.*

**Ključne reči:** *Društvene mreže, Marketinške komunikacije, Uverenje, Stavovi, Ponašanje*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Authors in this study deal with users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks. Previous studies on the users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour are offering models for evaluating the structure of users' beliefs and attitudes. However, most of those studies have examined the users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour only toward advertising, as one of the marketing communication tools [1] or have examined the users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward internet advertising [2], [3], [4]. Recently some authors [5], [6], [7] also started to explore the users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward

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marketing communication on social networks. However those studies of users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks do not take into account some specifics of marketing communication on social networks, such as the possibility of utilization of marketing communication on social networks for the benefit of the individual, by increasing his social inclusion. The term social networks is closely connected with the concept of social inclusion/exclusion, which is defined as the individual ability to access resources and institutions in the decision-making environment, or as a result of an individual effort by his invests in various forms of human and social capital [8, p. 1136 - 1139]. Therefore in our model authors included new variable »good for individual«. The purpose of this research is to bridge the deficiencies of existing studies by researching the impact of social networks users' beliefs about individual and social factors on their attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks and build a generally applicable model that explains the users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks.

## 2. THEORY BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

There still exists confusion about which web pages should be included in the term social networks. The use of the terms such as »social networks«, »social media«, »social networking sites«, »web 2.0«, »social web«, »user generated content« etc. is heterogeneous and inconsistent. Following the logic of diverse references [9, p. 232], [10, p. 211–216], [11, p. 79–83], [12], [13] and definitions of individual concepts [14], [15], [16], [17] some of respected concepts can be briefly defined as follows:

- »Web 2.0« are network platforms, on which the contents is generated by users.
- »Social Networks, Social Network Sites, Social Networks« are web pages based on web 2.0, enabling the generation and exchange of contents among their users. Since the co-creators of these pages are their users, these pages belong to everybody that uses them or in other words to the society.
- »Social Networking Sites« are web pages based on web 2.0 the purpose of which is web networking or socialising through the establishment of connections among web users.
- »Social Networking« is the exchange of contents, interaction and the development of groups having certain interes via social networks.



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According to numerous authors [18], [19, p. 62–64], [20, p. 4], [21, p. 167, p. 264] social networks could be divided into seven groups:

- social networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.),
- blogs,
- mikroblogs (Twitter),
- forums,
- collaborative projects (wikis and social bookmarking websites),
- content communities (YouTube, Flickr etc.),
- virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds.

It is worth exposing that boundaries among these groups are becoming more and more fuzzy, thus it is often impossible to clearly classify emerging social networks as belonging to one of these groups.

First authors, who were researching users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward advertising are Bauer, Greyser, Kanter and Weilbacher [22]. Their two-factor model was, according to Pollay and Mittal [1] inappropriate because it excludes beliefs about some personal factors, such as »product information« and »hedonic pleasure«. Therefore seven factor model was proposed by Pollay and Mittal [1], which they tested on two different samples (students and householders). These seven belief factors they divided into two groups:

- personal factors (product information, social role/image and hedonic pleasure);
- social economic factors (good for economy, materialism, value corruption and falsity/nonsense).

Later on Wolin et al. [2] upgraded the Pollay and Mittal [1] model and adapt it for the use in internet advertising. The results of their study show that users' beliefs about factors »product information«, »hedonic pleasure« and »social role/image« have positive impact on their attitudes about internet advertising, while users' beliefs about factors »materialism«, »falsity/nonsense« and »value corruption« has negative impact on their attitudes about internet advertising. Users' attitudes about internet advertising have impact on their behaviour regarding to internet advertising [2].



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Similarly, in 2009, Wang et al. [3], explore the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of Chinese users toward internet advertising and connection between their attitudes and behaviour toward internet advertising. The results of their research show that users' beliefs about factors

»information seeking« and »economy« are positive predictors of their attitudes toward internet advertising, while users' beliefs about factor »value corruption« are negative predictors of their attitudes toward internet advertising. The study has also shown that users' attitudes toward internet advertising are significant positive predictor of ad clicking and online shopping frequency [3].

Lately some researchers also focused on users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks. Thus, Mir [5] conducted his study on a sample of South Asian students. Users' beliefs about social networks advertising Mir [5] measured by the following factors: »information«, »entertainment«, »good for economy« and »value corruption«. This study found only belief factors »information« and »good for economy« as the significant predictors of users' attitudes toward advertising in social networks [5]. The study also show, that favorable attitudes toward social networks advertising influences users' ad clicking behaviour or in other words it affects their online buying behaviour [5].

Kamal and Chu [6] studied the differences in beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of more frequent and less frequent users of social networks toward advertising in social network. Younger social networks users were included in the study. They adapt the belief factors from Pollay and Mittal and Wolin, Korgaonkar & Lund. Users who spent more time on social networks have more favorable beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour toward advertising messages on these sites. Results show significant positive relationship between users' beliefs and attitudes toward social networks advertising and users' attitudes and behaviour toward social networks advertising [6].

Accordingly, authors formulate the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis H1:** Users' beliefs about personal and social economic factors (product information, social role/image, entertainment, good for individual, good for economy, materialism, value corruption and falsity/nonsense) have influence on their attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks.

**Hypothesis H2:** Users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks have influence on their behaviour toward marketing communication on those networks.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Based on previous research that were examining users' attitudes toward advertising [1] and toward advertising on the internet [2], [4] authors designed a questionnaire. All questions were adapted for social networks and new belief factor »good for individual«, which in previous studies was not included in the model, was added in the model.

The following statistical methods were used in the study:

- Simple linear regression for testing the influence of users' beliefs about individual factors on their attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks, for testing the influence of users' attitudes on their behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks and for testing the influence of individual social economic factors on users' behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks;
- Multivariate analysis (multiple regression) for testing the model of users' belief factors influence on their attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks.

#### 4. RESULTS

In table 1 the results of testing the influence of individual belief factors (the independent variables) on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks (the dependent variable) are presented.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
PRODUCT INFORMATION	,442	,033	,593	13,244	,000
HEDONIC PLEASURE	,419	,027	,649	15,344	,000
SOCIAL ROLE / IMAGE	,291	,028	,496	10,253	,000
GOOD FOR INDIVIDUAL	,356	,030	,553	11,934	,000
GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY	,409	,032	,584	12,938	,000
MATERIALISM	,024	,040	,033	,584	,559
FALSITY / NONSENSE	-,350	,030	-,540	-11,524	,000
VALUE CORRUPTION	,035	,042	,046	,820	,413

a. Dependent Variable: ATTITUDE

**Table 1: The influence of users' individual belief factors on their attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks**

Source: Research results

Authors rejected the hypothesis H1. Users' beliefs about factors "materialism" and "value corruption" are not statistically significant ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ).

Authors accepted the hypothesis H2. Users' beliefs have positive influence on their attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks ( $B = 0.334$ ,  $p\text{-value} \approx 0.000$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The results are shown in Table 2.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,315	0,089		14,772	,000
	BE	0,334	0,03	0,527	11,136	,000

a. Dependent Variable: BEHAVIOUR

**Table 2: The influence of users' attitudes on their behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks**

Source: Research results

The fact that social networks users' beliefs have positive influence on their attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks it is not surprising, since many previous studies showed similar results [2], [5], [6], etc. To develop a model of users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks authors used multivariate analysis to test influence of all belief factors together (as a model) on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,921	0,217		8,848	,000
	PRODUCT INFORMATION	0,180	0,032	0,210	6,444	,000
	HEDONIC PLEASURE	0,235	0,036	0,315	2,952	,003
	SOCIAL ROLE / IMAGE	0,008	0,030	0,012	0,271	,787
	GOOD FOR INDIVIDUAL	0,100	0,033	0,132	3,055	,002
	GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY	0,120	0,038	0,148	3,138	,002
	MATERIALISM	-0,096	0,029	-0,112	-3,255	,001
	FALSITY / NONSENSE	-0,101	0,032	-0,129	3,154	,002
	VALUE CORRUPTION	-0,096	0,031	-0,107	-3,141	,002

a. Dependent Variable: ATTITUDES

**Table 3: Influence of all belief factors together (model) on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks**

Source: Research results

As can be seen in Table 3, all verified variables in the model, except the belief factor »social role/image« (p-value = 0.787,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ), have statistically significant influence on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks. Authors tested the model again without the belief factor »social role/image«.

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,937	0,209		9,279	,000
	PRODUCT INFORMATION	0,180	0,032	0,210	5,657	,000
	HEDONIC PLEASURE	0,238	0,035	0,320	6,852	,000
	GOOD FOR INDIVIDUAL	0,102	0,033	0,134	3,126	,002
	GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY	0,121	0,038	0,149	3,172	,002
	MATERIALISM	-0,095	0,029	-0,111	-3,247	,001
	FALSITY / NONSENSE	-0,104	0,030	-0,133	-3,467	,001
	VALUE CORRUPTION	-0,097	0,031	-0,107	-3,165	,002

a. Dependent Variable: ATTITUDES

**Table 4: Influence of all belief factors together (except the belief factor social role/image) on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks**

**Source: Research results**

All tested variables in the model have statistically significant influence on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks (p-value <0.05,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Based on the results, which confirm the model of users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks, the model is shown in Figure 1.

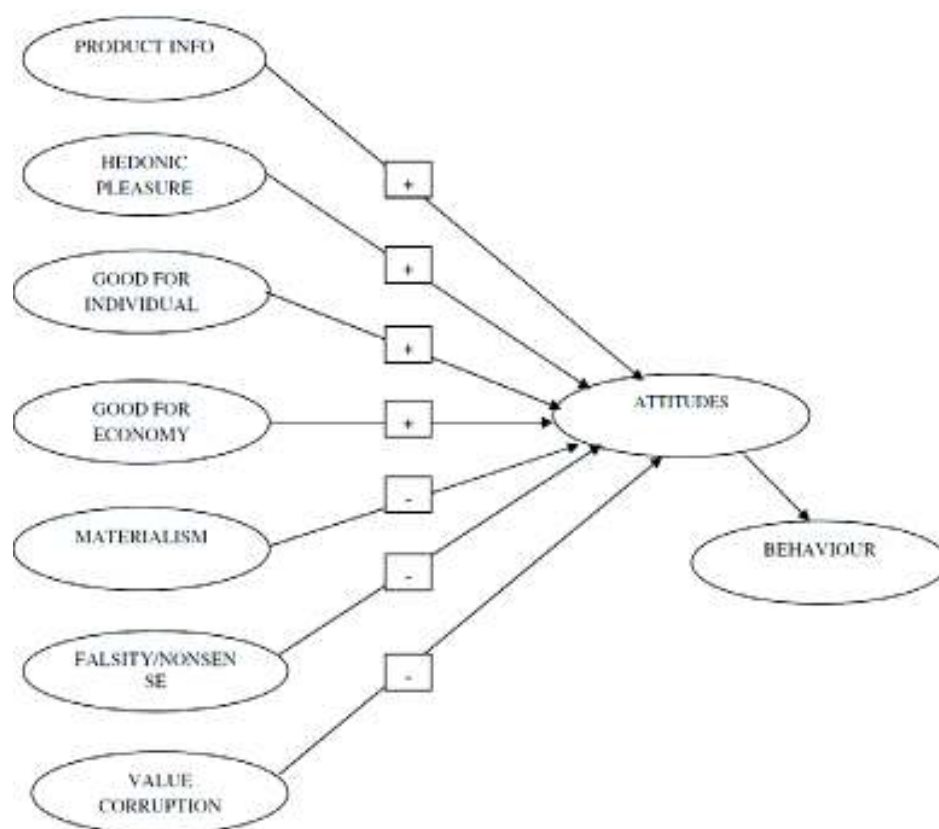


Figure 1: Model of users' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks

Source: Research results

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The results of author's research show that individual belief factors »product information«, »hedonic pleasure«, »social role/image«, »good for individual« and »good for economy« have positive influence on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks, while users' beliefs about factor »falsity/nonsense« have negative impact on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks. In the model of influence of all belief factors on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks the results show, that all belief factors, except he belief factor »social role/image«, have statistically significant influence on users' attitudes toward marketing communication on social networks.

Professionals in companies who are responsible for marketing communication on social networks should create messages containing useful information, with entertaining content, in which users will find personal benefit and recognize the benefits for economy or society in general. On the other hand professionals responsible for marketing communication on social networks should take care, that their messages do not encourage materialism, be misleading or value corruptive.

The proposed model explains users' beliefs attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks quite well, but there is still space for improvement since social networks are constantly evolving and updating. Therefore authors recommend that in



the future researchers should test some new variables that might have influence on either users' attitudes or behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks. Users' gender, education and age also might have influence on their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour toward marketing communication on social networks, therefore authors recommend that in the future influence of those variables should also be tested.

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