

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Feelings and functionality in social networking communities: A regulatory focus perspective

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Abstract

A sense of community is vital to the sustainability of both face-to-face and virtual communities. In this study, we use a mixed methods design to study the motivations that lead to satisfaction in a social media network. In Study 1, we semantically analyze the qualitative comments from a survey regarding the reasons for using social networks ($n = 237$). Consistent with the literature, the results identify two categories of underlying motivations—hedonic (feelings) and utilitarian (functionality). With these results, we apply regulatory focus theory in Study 2 to propose a structural equation model ($n = 622$). This model differentiates between the experiences of promotion- and prevention-focused individuals with social networking based on the core elements of feelings versus functionality. Our findings indicate that a sense of belonging and emotional connection are key hedonic elements and are more relevant for promotion-focused individuals. For prevention-focused individuals, the utilitarian and functional aspects of interactivity (influence) and innovativeness (risk) are more important in influencing satisfaction with a social network. Overall, positive and innovative user experience with a social media network requires the creation of an emotional connection, the existence of interactivity between members, and the cultivation of a sense of belonging.

KEYWORDS

hedonic and utilitarian elements, regulatory focus, sense of virtual community, social network satisfaction, social networking

1 | INTRODUCTION

Belonging to a club or a school, having season tickets for a football team or the symphony, supporting a political candidate, and participating in social media networking are all examples of group experiences that shape our daily lives. A sense of community is vital to the success of both face-to-face and virtual groups. A sense of community means the development of feelings or affective connections that turn a group into a community, whether a physical neighborhood or an online platform (Badrinarayanan, Sierra, & Taute, 2014). Beyond building a sense of community, organizations can

aspire to create and nurture brand tribalism that motivates consumption more by its potential for social connection than by utilitarian or hedonic value (Cova & Cova, 2002). Brand tribalism allows marketers to more effectively develop and nurture long-term relationships with their customers through framed communications (Badrinarayanan & Sierra, 2018; Krishen, Raschke, Kachroo, Mejza, & Khan, 2014). Building a sense of community is essentially an antecedent to forming brand tribalism (along with defense of the tribe, social structure, and segmentary lineage; Taute & Sierra, 2014). Without a sense of community, the benefits that brand tribalism offers may never be realized.

With the internet influencing nearly every aspect of our lives, a sense of virtual community has become a new focal point for

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research. Because a sense of virtual community is not a guaranteed outcome of membership in a virtual group, additional studies investigating the establishment and nurturing of communities is needed (Blanchard & Markus, 2004). A greater understanding of the connection between individual self-perceptions and motivational factors for using social media networks and various aspects of online community involvement is therefore vital.

A multitude of interdisciplinary studies finds that the constructs of influence, membership, and integration as well as a shared emotional connection affect the development of a sense of community—in actual group settings and more recently, in virtual ones as well (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). However, some differences do indeed exist between traditional and virtual groups regarding various antecedents of a sense of community. Additionally, individuals have unique perspectives and thus may be motivated to use the same social networks for a variety of different reasons (Oh, Ozkaya, & LaRose, 2014; J.-L. Wang, Gaskin, Wang, & Liu, 2016). Such differences result in a mix of both individual characteristics and situational settings that play an important role in the complete experience of a social media network (Totterdell, Holman, & Hukin, 2008).

A regulatory focus orientation is an individual difference variable that influences a member's perceptions of the group experience (Pfattheicher, 2015). Individuals can either have a prevention or promotion focus that affects the framing of each member's individual group experience. Therefore, perceived satisfaction and sense of community in face-to-face and online communities may be different and depend on the regulatory focus orientation of the group or community members (Arnold, Reynolds, Jones, Tugut, & Gabler, 2014). Krishen, Trembath, and Muthaly (2015) find that interactivity, emotional connection, and a sense of belonging are all base expectations for an affinity with social media that then influences satisfaction. These four factors (i.e., affinity, interactivity, sense of belonging, and emotional connection) directly overlay with the McMillan and Chavis' (1986) four aspects of a sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. To further understand a sense of virtual community, this study begins with a qualitative exploration of the self-reported reasons for using social media networking (Study 1). Building from the key concepts derived from the participants' responses, Study 2 proposes that the constructs of interactivity, emotional connection, belonging, satisfaction, and innovativeness are all components of building a positive attitude toward social networking and thereby a sense of virtual community. Lastly, we hypothesize that regulatory focus orientation, prevention versus promotion, will differentially affect how individuals experience a sense of virtual community and the strength of the relationships between these key factors.

2 | RESEARCH METHOD

This study proposes a mixed methods approach to understanding the relevant drivers for building a virtual sense of community in social

networks. To do so, we conduct a sequentially phased qualitative study of open-ended responses followed by a quantitative model. As noted by Harrison and Reilly (2011), the study follows an exploratory mixed methodology wherein the open-ended responses allow for the development of the model and instrument design for the second study. A mixed methods approach garners more credibility, context, and discovery of main themes (Harrison, 2013) as well as greater generalization and accuracy (Woodside, 2010).

3 | STUDY 1 (QUALITATIVE)

3.1 | Subjects and procedure

The first study consists of understanding the qualitative comments of 237 respondents of an online snowball quota convenience sample. The subject's ages ranged from 18 to 60 years (mean of 29) and consisted of 52% females. In addition to basic demographics and filler questions, the respondents answered the question: "Why do you spend time on social networking sites such as Facebook?" The survey was limited to only participants who used one or more social networking applications (e.g., Facebook or LinkedIn). The research also uses open-ended responses or online comments as a first step to identifying the motivations behind technology usage (e.g., Dinsmore, Swani, & Dugan, 2017; Jia, Wang, Ge, Shi, & Yao, 2012). Leximancer (www.leximancer.com) is a semantic analysis tool that provides an unguided method to uncover relevant concepts and themes from the verbal data (Smith, 2007). It was used for this portion of the analysis. Many studies apply automated semantic analyses via Leximancer for various purposes, such as investigating word of mouth (Buzova, Sanz-Blas, & Cervera-Taulet, 2016), gathering initial consumer ideas (Krishen, Agarwal, & Kachroo, 2016), and examining the semantic connections between concepts and definitions (Petrescu & Kachen, 2019). In the semantic analysis, concepts are represented by smaller shaded circles or nodes (inside of larger shaded bubbles) and are labeled in Figure 1. As depicted by the overlapping themes in the picture, several of the comments cross over from one theme to another; the semantic analysis provides a guide from which to interpret the most prominent themes and concepts that emerge for each comment.

3.2 | Analysis and interpretation

The more prominent the concepts are, the larger the nodes. The concepts derived in order of relevance are: *people, friends, media, connected, time, stay, networking, sites, live, touch, events, world, contact, communicate, current news, information, share, things, and sense*. Themes are higher order clusters that show the semantically connected groups of concepts. In the diagram, there are five large circles, each one of them reflects an important theme (or similarity of meaning) in the data; the five themes in order of prominence are *people, friends, world, information, and contact*. Semantically related themes are indicated by overlapping circles, such as in Figure 1 where each theme overlaps with at least one other theme. A cursory review of comments represented by each concept indicates that the themes can be categorized into more hedonic and utilitarian aspects

"It is beneficial to get faster information on things."

"Information is easily spread and can be accessed by multiple people."

3.2.5 | Theme: Contact

Contact is the least prominent theme in the study and only has one concept within it, also called *contact*. This concept is only directly linked to *networking* from the overlapping theme *people*. As some of the sample comments show, this theme seems to indicate more of the hedonic benefits of social media networking:

"To keep in contact with friends and family."

"Allows me to stay in contact."

"Keep in contact with friends/family."

"To find people you've lost contact with."

3.3 | Discussion

The analysis of the five themes from Study 1 (*people, friends, world, information, and contact*) indicates that motivations and attitudes toward social networking fall into the main categories of hedonic and utilitarian benefits. Research indicates that the value of hedonic versus utilitarian benefits differs for individuals when they are primed with promotion- versus prevention-focused messages (Chowdhury, Micu, Ratneshwar, & Kim, 2015). In the realm of online shopping, Ashraf, Razzaque, and Thongpapanl (2016) find that the purchase intention for hedonic (utilitarian) experiences is greater when individuals are promotion (prevention)-focused. Therefore, building on Study 1 findings, Study 2 takes a regulatory focus perspective to examine the relationships between these benefits and prevention versus promotion-focused orientation in a social networking context.

4 | STUDY 2 (QUANTITATIVE)–THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

4.1 | Sense of virtual community

The groups that we belong to influence nearly every aspect of our lives, from our neighborhoods and offices to our choice of social media platforms. The underlying question then is, how can these groups develop and nurture a sense of community wherein members do not merely exist also help and support others to increase affective attachment? (Blanchard & Markus, 2004). Early research on the sense of community used a variety of perspectives, each contributing to the understanding of a community member's experience and their

resulting behavior. A common thread in the recent literature is that a sense of community consists of four main aspects: membership (sense of relatedness or belonging), influence (sense of making a difference), integration and fulfillment of needs (sense that being a member will result in needs being met or satisfied), and shared emotional connection (sense that members share the experience; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These aspects exist both face-to-face and virtually. Despite the similarities between a traditional sense of community and a sense of virtual community, there may also be differences between the two (Blanchard, 2007). Koh, Kim, and Kim (2003) emphasize the importance of influence in virtual communities. Blanchard and Markus (2004) indicate that beyond the traditional aspects, relationships and identities are also important in cultivating a sense of virtual community. Overall, the four aspects of a sense of community discussed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) remain consistent across community types, both face-to-face and virtual. The research regarding social media networking demonstrates the importance of a sense of belonging, interactivity, affinity, and innovativeness through the lens of self-determination theory (Berezan, Krishen, Agarwal, & Kachroo, 2018; Krishen, Berezan, Agarwal & Kachroo, 2016). Our research, therefore, builds on the sense of community framework that is contextualized in a social media network. Therefore, we present the following hypotheses:

- H1:** Interactivity (influence) has a positive effect on emotional connection (shared emotional connection).
- H2:** Interactivity (influence) has a positive effect on sense of belonging (membership).
- H3:** Interactivity (influence) has a positive effect on satisfaction with a social network (integration).
- H4:** Emotional connection (shared emotional connection) has a positive effect on satisfaction with a social network (integration).

Krishen et al. (2015) find that having a sense of belonging during the social media experience is critical to motivating the use of social media and providing a satisfying experience. Furthermore belonging, interactivity, and innovativeness are all base expectations for the use of social media that depends on the generational cohort (Krishen, Berezan, Agarwal & Kachroo, 2016). In their study of tourists' intention to visit and shop, Lo and Qu (2015) advance the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intention by showing that it is mediated by the attitude toward the behavior. The current research thus proposes:

- H5:** A sense of belonging (membership) has a positive effect on satisfaction with a social network (integration).
- H6:** Innovativeness has a positive effect on satisfaction with a social network (integration).
- H7:** Satisfaction with a social network (integration) has a positive effect on the attitude toward social networks.

4.2 | Regulatory focus and social networking

Self-discrepancy theory describes the ways in which individuals balance motivations between three types of self-presentations: actual, ideal, and ought (Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986). Specifically, Higgins and colleagues argue that individuals strive to reach their ideal state rather than stay in their actual state to reduce the discrepancy between the two and to reduce their motivational tension. Further, research shows that not all individuals strive to reach their ideal self, some are motivated instead to reach their ought self. Regulatory focus theory identifies these two distinct self-regulatory motivational strategies as promotion versus prevention orientations (Higgins, 1997). Individuals with a promotion focus orientation strive to reach their ideal self by approaching positive outcomes while those with a prevention focus orientation aim for their ought self by avoiding negative outcomes (Chang, 2010). In addition to having different end goals, individuals with these two distinct types of motivations also view end-states in different ways. Promotion-focused individuals see advancement away from the status quo as an end-state to achieve and will want to avoid staying with the status quo. Conversely, prevention-focused individuals will want to stay with the status quo and will want to avoid falling below it (Higgins & Cornwell, 2016).

One pragmatic aspect of social networking is the number of connections and the nature of those connections to the other members in the network. As such, Zou, Ingram, and Higgins (2015) show that regulatory focus orientation plays a key role in determining life satisfaction via the concept of network density, or not just the number of contacts in a social network but the strength of those relationships. Their findings indicate that higher (lower) density networks lead to higher satisfaction with life for prevention (promotion)-oriented individuals. In particular, these individuals perceive dense social networks as providing higher stability and safety, which matters more to them than to promotion-focused individuals (Brodscholl, Kober, & Higgins, 2007). When consumers perceive a social networking site to be highly interactive, they believe that they can exert a stronger influence on their networks; this influence can then lead to stronger emotional ties and a stronger sense of belonging.

Fang (2017) finds that fear is a primary driver for prevention-focused social networking (to foster feelings of safety), whereas guilt is a primary driver for promotion-focused individuals (to share knowledge). These findings link regulatory focus orientation with emotional drivers for social networking. Therefore, in combination with the network density research of Zou et al. (2015), we can surmise that the ability to use meaningful influence (interactivity) to generate an emotional connection in a social networking environment should be more salient for prevention-oriented individuals than for promotion-oriented ones. As network density should be higher for prevention-oriented individuals, each connection itself should be stronger, and as such should require more interaction. We also expect that interactivity should have a stronger relationship with social network satisfaction for prevention-oriented than promotion-oriented individuals. In this

study, the concept of reputation is represented by the interactivity construct (influence in the sense of community framework), and research shows that the functionality of preventing a negative reputation is more important for prevention than for promotion-oriented individuals (Hashimoto, Li, & Yamagishi, 2011). In contrast, both types of individuals should use interactivity to increase their sense of belonging to the social networking environment, as that behavior will sustain their membership. As such, we do not expect to find differences between promotion- and prevention-oriented individuals regarding the relationship between interactivity and sense of belonging. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

- H8:** The relationship between interactivity (influence) and emotional connection (shared emotional connection) is stronger for participants who are prevention-oriented than for those who are promotion-oriented.
- H9:** The relationship between interactivity (influence) and sense of belonging (membership) is strong for both prevention- and promotion-oriented individuals.
- H10:** The relationship between interactivity (influence) and social network satisfaction is stronger for participants who are prevention-oriented than for those who are promotion-oriented.

In the context of social mindfulness, Doesum, Lange, and Lange (2013) differentiate between promotion- and prevention-oriented individuals and find that promotion-focused ones are the most likely to display such behavior to gain positive self-approval or reward. These findings in a social networking setting may show that making emotional connections and fostering a stronger sense of belonging should be more important for promotion-oriented individuals than for prevention-oriented ones. In both self-discrepancy theory and regulatory focus theory, the individual self-concept is at the core of the motivational system that drives the subsequent intention or behavior. Connecting regulatory focus orientation (promotion vs. prevention) with emotion, Shah and Higgins (2001) show that in contrast to promotion-focused individuals who evaluate decisions based on feeling happy versus sad, prevention-focused ones do so based on feeling relaxed versus tense. Specifically, both emotional connections and a sense of belonging should foster a stronger sense of feelings than their more rational counterparts of interactivity and innovativeness. Baek and Reid (2013) find that happy people are more responsive to promotion-focused advertisements for child sponsorship compared with those who are feeling sad. Conversely, these authors argue that prevention-focused messaging weakens the effect of the advertisement regardless of an individual's mood. In our model, whereas happiness is not a directly tested emotion, we can surmise that it would be connected with higher emotional connectivity and a stronger sense of belonging. Thus, we expect that emotional connection and a sense of belonging should exert a greater influence on social network satisfaction for promotion-oriented than prevention-oriented individuals. Research of e-tailing

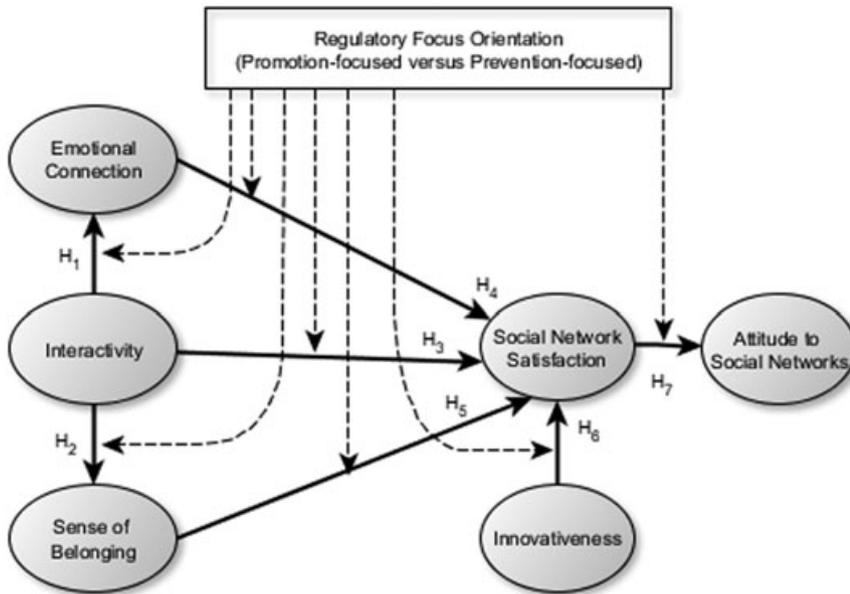


FIGURE 2 Study 2: Conceptual model

shows that regulatory focus orientation affects an individual's purchase intention and likelihood of using word of mouth among other differences (Das, 2016). Jia et al. (2012) evaluate the perceived desirability and feasibility of self-service technologies for prevention- versus promotion-focused individuals when considering a hedonic or utilitarian value offer and suggest framing the messaging differently for each group. In the current study, the concepts of emotional connection and a sense of belonging are more tied to hedonic experiences, or ones that lead to higher feelings and emotions, than they are to more utilitarian experiences, that is, ones that offer more utility and satisfy needs. In our model, interactivity (ability to influence) and innovativeness are more tied to the usefulness of a social networking site, or the basic utilitarian aspects of it. As such, we expect that emotional connection and sense of belonging should have a stronger relationship with social networking satisfaction for promotion-oriented individuals due to their hedonic nature. In contrast, interactivity and innovativeness should have a stronger relationship with this satisfaction for prevention-oriented individuals due to the utilitarian nature of these aspects. Although the importance of relations between each aspect of a sense of community is different between promotion- and prevention-oriented people, we expect that both of these groups will develop a positive attitude toward social networking when they are satisfied. We thus propose the following hypotheses:

- H11:** The relationship between emotional connection (shared emotional connection) and social network satisfaction (integration) is stronger for individuals who are promotion-oriented than for those who are prevention-oriented.
- H12:** The relationship between a sense of belonging (membership) and social network satisfaction is stronger for individuals who are promotion-oriented than for those who are prevention-oriented.

H13: The relationship between innovativeness and social network satisfaction (integration) is stronger for individuals who are prevention-oriented than for those who are promotion-oriented.

H14: The relation between satisfaction with a social network and the attitude toward it is strong for both prevention- and promotion-focused individuals.

Our proposed model differentiates individuals who are promotion- versus prevention-focused in terms of their social media networking experiences based on the core idea of *feelings* versus *functionality*. We identify a sense of belonging and emotional connection as key hedonic elements of social media networking and expect those to be more relevant for promotion-oriented individuals. For prevention-oriented individuals, the utilitarian and functional aspects of interactivity (influence) and innovativeness (risk) should be more important in generating social network satisfaction and improving the virtual experience. The current research, therefore, tests the conceptual model shown in Figure 2.

5 | STUDY 2: METHOD

5.1 | Participants, procedure, and measures

This study uses online snowball quota convenience sampling technique to collect descriptive survey data (e.g., Krishen, Raschke, Kachroo, LaTour, & Verma, 2014). When the sample size is appropriate, research indicates that this technique does not introduce estimation issues or biases (Chen, Chen, & Xiao, 2013). In total, 622 respondents completed the study. Their ages ranged from 20 to 89 years (mean of 38) and 55.7% of the sample was female. Regulatory focus orientation was measured using a previously validated 18-item 9-point scale (cf., Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda, 2002). The regulatory focus orientation measurement was

TABLE 1 Study 2: Measurement items and loadings

Constructs (references)	Items	Item loading
Emotional connection (EC; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; CR = 0.86; AVE = 0.61)	1. I feel I am well understood by other members on <...>	0.54
	2. I have the feeling of closeness on <...>	0.73
	3. I get along well with other members on <...>	0.92
	4. I feel other members on <...> are friendly to me	0.88
Interactivity (INT; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; CR = 0.84; AVE = 0.63)	1. Members on <...> influence my thoughts and activities	0.85
	2. I am able to influence the actions and feelings of other members on <...>	0.86
	3. I care about what other members think of my actions on <...>	0.66
Sense of belonging (SB; Lin, 2008; CR = 0.95; AVE = 0.85)	1. I am proud to be a member of <...>	0.94
	2. I enjoy being a member of <...>	0.90
	3. I feel a strong sense of belonging to the <...> community	0.93
Innovativeness (INN; Donthu & Gilliland, 1996; CR = 0.82; AVE = 0.70)	1. I like to take chances	0.90
	2. I like to experiment with new ways of doing things	0.77
Social network satisfaction (SNS; Kri shen et al., 2015; Lin, 2008; CR = 0.85; AVE = 0.65)	1. Using the online community helps to satisfy my information needs	0.77
	2. Overall, I am satisfied with the online community	0.85
	3. Using the online community helps to satisfy my social needs	0.80
Attitude to social networks (ASN; Lord, Lee, & Sauer, 1994; CR = 0.95; AVE = 0.85)	1. Bad ... Good	0.89
	2. Dislike ... Like	0.94
	3. Unfavorable ... Favorable	0.95

Note. AVE: average variance extracted; CR: composite reliability.

reliable at $\alpha = 0.89$. To test subjects based on their regulatory focus, the sample was split, resulting in 305 prevention-oriented individuals and 317 promotion-oriented ones. All constructs used Likert scales anchored by 1 = *strongly disagree* and 9 = *strongly agree*. Specific items are provided in Table 1.

Common method bias was mitigated in this study through careful design steps which included reverse coded items, multiple types of scaling, filler items in the questionnaire, and control of item-priming effects through placement of behavioral variables at the end of the survey (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). In addition, Harman's single factor analysis for all observed measures with a varimax rotation shows that a multiple-factor solution and a first-factor variance provide a value of 33.32%. As this is below the 50% suggested by the literature, common method bias is not a problem (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001).

5.2 | Results

5.2.1 | Structural model

Table 1 provides the loadings per item and the average variance extracted (AVE) per construct. The loadings for all items are 0.4 or higher with significance levels of 0.05 or lower, which indicates convergent validity (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Reliability is displayed for all constructs and is between 0.82 and 0.95 (Nunnally, 1978). AVE values determine the convergent validity of each construct and should be 0.50 or higher (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The values range from 0.61 to 0.85 that make the cutoff value acceptable for all six constructs.

Table 2 contains the cross factor loadings for the construct items. The discriminant validity of the model is verified as the items load higher on their respective constructs (shown in bold) than on the other ones. Table 3 contains the mean, standard deviation, and correlations with the square root of AVE values in diagonal positions. Because the diagonal values are greater than their corresponding nondiagonal ones, the model has discriminant validity.

AMOS 23.0.0 was used to test the full structural model, which displays acceptable fit of $\chi^2 = 1,629.47$, a root mean square error of approximation = 0.066, a normed fit index = 0.904, a comparative index fit = 0.917, and a Tucker-Lewis index = 0.890 (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Figures 3 and 4 display the complete final model.

5.2.2 | Hypothesis testing

Hypotheses 1–7 are all confirmed in the final path model (Table 4). Interactivity predicts emotional commitment ($\beta = 0.31$) and satisfaction with a social network ($\beta = 0.23$), and strongly predicts a sense of belonging ($\beta = 0.77$). Emotional commitment ($\beta = 0.18$), sense of belonging ($\beta = 0.26$), and innovativeness ($\beta = 0.19$) predict satisfaction with a social network. Finally, satisfaction with a social network predicts the attitude toward it ($\beta = 0.23$).

The results from the multigroup difference test (Table 5 and Figure 4) also confirm H8, with the relation between interactive and emotional connection being stronger for prevention-oriented

TABLE 2 Study 2: Cross factor loadings

	Emotional connection	Interactivity	Sense of belonging	Social network satisfaction	Innovativeness	Attitude to social networks
EC1	0.732**	0.324**	0.400**	0.295**	0.187**	0.308**
EC2	0.849**	0.573**	0.697**	0.568**	0.163**	0.503**
EC3	0.882**	0.433**	0.623**	0.444**	0.191**	0.451**
EC4	0.871**	0.383**	0.572**	0.405**	0.202**	0.413**
INT1	0.466**	0.911**	0.629**	0.543**	0.177**	0.473**
INT2	0.562**	0.890**	0.645**	0.541**	0.277**	0.438**
INT3	0.422**	0.843**	0.484**	0.435**	0.143**	0.359**
SB1	0.649**	0.582**	0.957**	0.548**	0.141**	0.668**
SB2	0.659**	0.570**	0.951**	0.548**	0.188**	0.645**
SB3	0.689**	0.649**	0.943**	0.591**	0.179**	0.648**
SNS1	0.409**	0.455**	0.445**	0.875**	0.320**	0.296**
SNS2	0.526**	0.447**	0.590**	0.886**	0.274**	0.492**
SNS3	0.447**	0.522**	0.543**	0.889**	0.231**	0.447**
INN1	0.200**	0.177**	0.149**	0.291**	0.923**	0.076
INN2	0.208**	0.205**	0.185**	0.280**	0.918**	0.120**
ASN1	0.488**	0.436**	0.647**	0.435**	0.102*	0.960**
ASN2	0.487**	0.438**	0.666**	0.457**	0.102*	0.976**
ASN3	0.499**	0.435**	0.672**	0.464**	0.106**	0.978**

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

**Significant at $p < 0.005$ (two-tailed).

participants ($\beta = 0.42$) than promotion-oriented participants ($\beta = 0.22$). As expected, the relation between interactivity and a sense of belonging is strong for both prevention- and promotion-oriented individuals that confirm H9. However, there is no significant difference between the groups for the relation between interactivity and satisfaction with a social network. Therefore, H10 is not supported. Hypothesis 11 is also not supported with no significant difference resulting between groups for the relation between emotional connection and satisfaction with a social network. The relation between a sense of belonging and satisfaction with a social network is stronger for promotion-oriented participants ($\beta = 0.36$) than prevention-oriented participants ($\beta = 0.18$), thereby confirming H12. Conversely, the relation between innovativeness and satisfaction with a social network is stronger for the prevention-oriented group ($\beta = 0.37$) than the promotion-oriented

group ($\beta = 0.08$) that confirms H13. Finally, as expected, both prevention- and promotion-oriented groups display a strong relation between the satisfaction and attitude toward a social network that confirms H14.

5.3 | Discussion and implications

To identify circumstances that maximize the experiences of social network members, this study builds on components identified in research on social networking (Koh et al., 2003; Krishen, Berezan, Agarwal & Kachroo, 2016). This study examines the effect of a sense of virtual community on the satisfaction with a social network and subsequently on the attitude toward it. Most interesting to managers is the fact that the sense of belonging construct has the strongest effect on satisfaction with a social network that indicates managers should especially foster membership pride to elevate network satisfaction. These findings are consistent with research on social networking that identifies these three constructs as foundations for using social media networking that affects satisfaction (e.g., Krishen et al., 2015).

Furthermore, this study proposes that innovativeness (risk attitude) has a significant effect on satisfaction with a social network that in turn, significantly and positively effects the attitude toward it. In addition, this study contributes to theory and practice by using the regulatory focus theory (J. Wang & Lee, 2006) to test the motivational orientations of prevention versus promotion. This is of

TABLE 3 Study 2: Mean, standard deviation (SD), correlations, and square root of average variance extracted (diagonal elements)

Variables	Mean	SD	EC	INT	SB	SNS	INN	ASN
EC	5.97	1.80	0.78					
INT	4.93	2.26	0.52	0.79				
SB	5.98	2.22	0.69	0.63	0.92			
SNS	5.57	1.97	0.52	0.54	0.60	0.78		
INN	6.53	1.78	0.22	0.21	0.18	0.31	0.83	
ASN	6.12	2.21	0.51	0.45	0.68	0.47	0.11	0.94

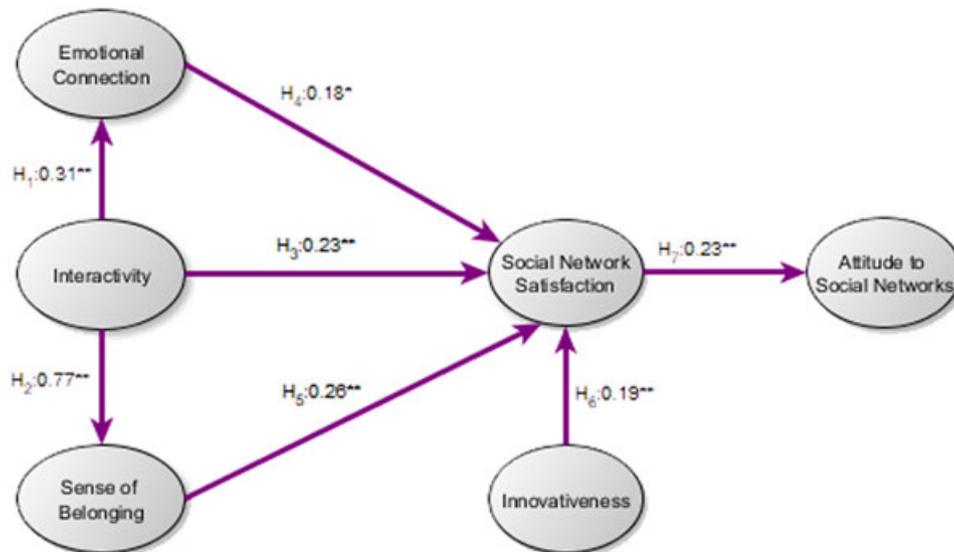


FIGURE 3 Study 2: Final model Hypotheses 1-7. *Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed), **significant at $p < 0.005$ (two-tailed) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

importance because consumers are more responsive and motivated when they encounter strategies that fit their particular regulatory focus (J. Wang & Lee, 2006). The present study shows that the relation between interactivity and emotional connection is stronger for prevention-oriented participants (i.e., those seeking safety and security), which concurs with previous research (Fang, 2017; Zou et al., 2015). Prevention-focused individuals may go out of their way

to avoid negative situations and are generally more concerned about consequences than experiences, which has implications for how they will interact within a community setting (Pfattheicher, 2015). In contrast, we find that the relation between interactivity and a sense of belonging is strong for both promotion- and prevention-focused individuals, which indicates that both groups use interactivity to sustain their membership. This finding indicates managers should

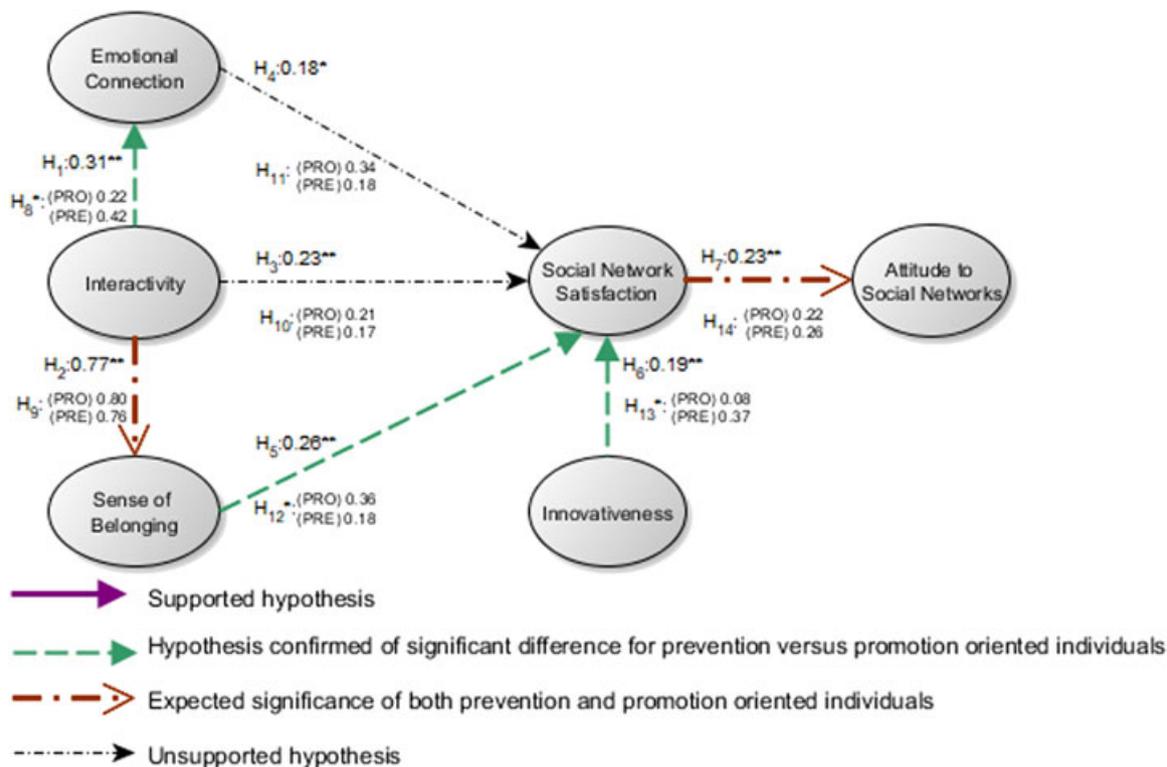


FIGURE 4 Study 2: Final model Hypotheses 1-14. PRO: promotion focus orientation, PRE: prevention focus orientation. *Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed), **significant at $p < 0.005$ (two-tailed) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 4 Study 2: AMOS path model results

Structural paths	β	t-Value	Hypothesis
INT → EC	0.31	10.90**	H1, supported
INT → SB	0.77	19.55**	H2, supported
INT → SNS	0.23	3.96**	H3, supported
EC → SNS	0.18	2.35*	H4, supported
SB → SNS	0.26	5.37**	H5, supported
INN → SNS	0.19	4.66**	H6, supported
SNS → ASN	0.23	5.01**	H7, supported

Note. β is a standardized coefficient.

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

**Significant at $p < 0.005$ (two-tailed).

focus on both orientations to create network satisfaction and thereby positive attitudes. The relation between innovativeness and satisfaction with a social network is stronger for the prevention-oriented group, which agrees with Ashraf and Thongpapanl (2015). Even though this result is somewhat surprising, it is consistent with the idea that, in this study, innovativeness is tied to the usefulness of a social networking site, such as a self-preservation strategy when engaging in social media. For instance, social media networks enable individuals to communicate during life-threatening crises such as natural disasters, which highlights their innovative functionality and satisfies prevention-oriented individuals.

Whereas the usefulness aspect of social media networks is the focus of satisfaction for prevention-oriented individuals in this study, promotion-oriented individuals have a stronger association with the relation between a sense of belonging and satisfaction with a social network. This result is consistent with expectations, as promotion-oriented individuals generally focus more on the hedonic aspects of the social network experience, such as positive signals and information. Therefore, they will be satisfied if their social network community provides them such an environment. Furthermore, as expected, the relation between the satisfaction with a social network and the attitude toward it is significant in this study for both prevention- and promotion-oriented groups. When community members have attained satisfaction with their social networks, they inevitably also develop positive attitudes regardless of their

individual characteristics. Managers, therefore, need to focus on creating satisfaction in their members first if they wish to promote positive attitudes toward their social networks.

6 | CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the literature in many ways. Following the “third wave” of research also known as Pragmatism, we use sequential mixed methods to inductively discover patterns (Study 1) and to test theory (Study 2; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Woodside, 2010). The findings of this study show that hedonic and utilitarian values produce both satisfaction and positive attitudes toward social networks. Furthermore, we show that the social aspect of members' values plays the greatest role in building satisfaction, which is consistent with the research on brand tribalism (Badrinarayanan & Sierra, 2018). This study also contributes to the literature by incorporating regulatory focus theory to test how individual differences moderate motivational orientations. Future research can augment our findings related to social networking experiences and regulatory focus, including: (a) cross-cultural differences related to social capital and electronic word of mouth (e.g., Krishen & Hu, 2018; Krishen, Leenders, Muthaly, Ziolkowska, & LaTour, 2018), (b) loneliness and social exclusion (e.g., Berezan, Krishen, & Jenveja, 2019; Dennis, Alamanos, Papagiannidis, & Bourlakis, 2016), and (c) privacy and risk aversion (e.g., Park, Shin, & Ju, 2015).

Regulatory focus has been explored in many realms; however, our study is unique in that it explores the social media experiences of promotion- versus prevention-oriented users according to their perceived levels of hedonic versus functional utility. Our results indicate that sense of belonging has more impact on social media network satisfaction for promotion-oriented participants than prevention-focused users whereas innovativeness has a greater influence on the virtual networking experience for prevention-oriented individuals than on promotion-oriented ones. Overall, our findings confirm that when individuals are satisfied with their social media experience, they will develop positive attitudes toward the social networks regardless of their regulatory focus orientation. In general, fostering a positive experience would, therefore, require the creation

TABLE 5 Study 2: Multigroup difference test results with z-score

	Promotion orientation		Prevention orientation		z-score	Hypothesis
	Estimate	p	Estimate	p		
INT → EC	0.22	0.00	0.42	0.00	-3.57**	H8, supported
INT → SB	0.80	0.00	0.76	0.00	0.51	H9, supported
INT → SNS	0.21	0.02	0.17	0.03	0.29	H10, unsupported
EC → SNS	0.34	0.04	0.18	0.02	0.87	H11, unsupported
SB → SNS	0.36	0.00	0.18	0.01	1.88*	H12, supported
INN → SNS	0.08	0.26	0.37	0.00	-3.28**	H13, supported
SNS → ASN	0.22	0.00	0.26	0.00	-0.36	H14, supported

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

**Significant at $p < 0.005$ (two-tailed).

of an emotional connection to the social network, the existence of interactivity between members, and a sense of belonging to the network. Consistent with the research on the customer value of social media networks, we find that the social aspect of member values (as opposed to information value) plays an important role in building satisfaction (Hu, Kettinger, & Poston, 2015). Lastly, a key contribution centers on the important role of regulatory focus orientation and the finding that social media networks should nurture an emotional connection and sense of belonging for the promotion-oriented members and provide an innovative and interactive experience for prevention-oriented members to generate satisfaction with a network.

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