

Social Value and Content Value in Social Media: Two Ways to Flow

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Abstract—The universal popularity of social media enable consumers to experience their customer value in this new media. Hence, it is necessary for marketing researchers to investigate the antecedents and consequences of customer value in social media. However, it appears that no study is conducted on this topic. In order to fill this void, we constructed a research model that incorporated flow experience as the endogenous variable, interdependence self-construal and independent self-construal as exogenous variables, as well as social value and content value as mediating variables. Based upon the data from a sample of 437 social media consumers collected through an online survey and through the analysis of the data with the help of structural equation modeling, we found that consumers' interdependent self-construal has a positive effect on their social value while consumers' independent self-construal has a positive effect on their content value, that both social value and content value can enhance consumers' flow experience respectively.

Index Terms—social media, self-construal, customer value, flow

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of information technology and large quantities of the usage of social media applications enable more and more consumers to experience their customer value in social media, thus they are very active in presenting various types of behavior in social media. The main types of consumers' active behavior in social media include consuming content, participating in discussions, sharing information with others, and creating content, etc. A larger part of these types of behavior are related to the products or services of companies. Considering this, it is necessary for marketing researchers to investigate the antecedents and consequences of customer value in social media so that marketers can understand the consumer behavior much deeper and

much more thoroughly and make corresponding marketing strategies. However, it appears that no study is conducted on this topic. In order to fill this void, we firstly situate a research model of hypothetical relationships among self-construal (interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal), customer value (social value and content value) and flow experience. Then, we test the research model and hypotheses quantitatively by estimating a structural equation model using online survey data from a sample of 437 respondents who usually consume a certain products or services through social media. We develop, compile and validate the scales to measure all the related constructs of our research model in the context of social media, which may be useful and helpful in conducting future survey-based social media consumer behavior studies. The remainder of this article is structured as follows. In the second section we have a brief review of the theoretical background of important concepts such as social media, customer value and self-construal. In the third section we develop our research model and hypotheses. In the fourth section we present our research methodology, followed by the fifth section examining the research model, testing the hypotheses and reporting the results. We conclude our study with a discussion of theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and avenues for future research.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Social Media

Social media has become ubiquitous in many commerce circles and a global phenomenon the past several years [1] and it has influenced various aspects of both individuals' lives and society as a whole. Social media has enabled customers to express their feelings regarding a product or service they have purchased [1]. The unique characteristics of social media and its

immense popularity have made marketing practices changed greatly [2]. Therefore it is necessary and important for researchers to urge themselves to treat social media as a distinct research area [3].

Social media is a very popular phrase emerging in recent years, which is often the substitute of another fashionable phrase, Web 2.0. Researchers usually adopt the definition made by Kaplan and Haenlein [4] who define social media as a group of Internet-based applications which are built upon the bases of web2.0 conception and technology, permitting users to create and exchange their generated contents. O'Reilly [5] formally created the phrase Web 2.0 and describes it as a newly cooperative network based on internet that can utilize the collective wisdom. Constantinides and Fountain [6] define Web 2.0 as a set of open source, interaction and online applications controlled by users. Web 2.0 applications support the establishment of informal users' network, promoting the flow of ideas and knowledge by generating, absorbing, sharing, compiling and refining the information content effectively and efficiently [6]. Dykeman [7] argues that social media can enable people to have the following activities: publishing digitally creative contents, providing and acquiring real-time feedbacks by online discussions and reviews, adjusting and correcting digital contents. According to the definition of Strauss and Frost, social media is a network tool and platform, where users can jointly investigate network contents, share their opinions and experiences, and build up relations for commercial activities or amusement activities [8]. Based on these definitions, social media has the characteristics of information openness, participation, interaction, sharing, connectedness, creativity, autonomy, collaboration and reciprocity [4][5][6][8], containing a broad array of Internet-based applications that enable users to create and exchange their generated contents.

Corporations in different industries have brought social media into the focus of their marketing practices because social media has the advantages of directly connecting businesses to consumers in a timely manner and at a low cost [4], of affecting customer perception and behavior [9], and of bringing together different users who have common opinions and interests [10]. More and more companies and industries try to use social media to develop their strategies in order to benefit from social media usage [11]. Industry leaders declare that corporations must prompt themselves to be involved in social media so as to win competitive advantage under online circumstances as social media is much more efficient than other traditional communication channels [4].

B. Customer Value

Creating superior customer value is a critical strategic marketing issue and a key success factor for companies in today's highly competitive environment. A strong competitive advantage can be gained through consistently providing superior customer value [12]. And so customer value has gained traction in numerous streams of marketing literature in recent years [13]. Vantrappen [14] argues that creating customer value means that firms

meet customers' quality, delivery and cost expectations. Christopher [15] holds the opinion that customer value is created when the perceptions of benefits received from the transaction exceed the costs of ownership.

Weinstein, Johnson and Barrett [16] also hold the same opinion and explain that customer value is the trade-off between the benefits gained from the product versus the sacrifices required to obtain it. Creating customer value is a company's main source of value creation [15], and the principle source of competitive advantage for companies is to compose an offer that provides customers with a perceived value higher than that of the competition [17]. So deciding how to compete on what customers value now and in the future raises difficult questions [18].

However, fewer researchers have investigated the concept, construct and operationalization of customer value in the social media settings. Because social media is a platform in which users are able to create and exchange their generated contents [4], value creation will exist not only between customers and companies but also exist between customers and customers themselves. Thus in the context of social media, customers are regarded not as mere recipients of the products and value of the firm but as co-creators of value, competitive strategy and the firm's innovation processes [19]. As social media has the characteristics of information openness, participation, interaction, sharing, connectedness, creativity, autonomy, collaboration and reciprocity [4][5][6][8], users of social media will surely feel united, close to each other and motivated to enhance collaborative value creation.

Due to the characteristics of social media [4][5][6][8], we hereby classify customer value in social media into social value and content value. On the one hand, users can fulfill their social value by satisfying their need for belongingness and their need for cognition with those who have shared norms, values and interests [20]. On the other hand, in joining social media, users can fulfil their content value by contributing, creating, consuming and exchanging their generated contents [4][5][6][8]. Therefore, social value and content value are concepts that should be explored together when studying social media.

C. Self-Construct

Self-construct can be termed how consumers perceive themselves in relation to other members [21]. Markus and Kitayama [21] identify two aspects of self-construct: independent self-construct and interdependent self-construct, these two aspects of self-construct coexist among individuals. Individuals with independent self-construct are likely to value their individual uniqueness and autonomy because they primarily view themselves as an independent individual entity, as distinct from the group. Individuals with independent self-construct are likely to pursue their own goals of expressing individuality regardless of any social context [22]-[23]. On the contrary, individuals with interdependent self-construct are likely to value connectedness and group harmony because they predominantly view themselves as part of a larger group. Individuals with interdependent self-construct tend to seek to achieve their goals of social

cohesion in particular social contexts [23][24]. The opinion of Trafimow, Triandis and Goto [23], as well as Ybarra and Trafimow [24] is also supported by Singelis [25] who suggest that individuals with an interdependent view of the self will define themselves in terms of relationships and connections, and regulate their behavior to fit in with others, while those with an independent view of the self will emphasize boundaries from social settings, internal states and goals, and uniqueness. As such, differences in self-construal have distinctive relevance to the self-related processes of how individuals think, feel, and behave regarding their social relationship to others [22].

There is now an extensive marketing literature illustrating that consumers' self-construal has influences on social consequences. Han and Shavitt [26] showed that consumers who have interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal responded differently to the advertisements with individualistic versus collectivistic appeals. Zhang and Shrum [27] certified that consumers with independent self-construal engaged in more impulsive consumption than ones with interdependent self-construal.

Comparatively speaking, there are rare researchers studying the effects of consumers' self-construal on social consequences in the social media contexts. Lee, Kim and Kim's research found in the social media contexts that consumers' relational view became salient when the consumers' self-construal was primed to be interdependent rather than independent, and that such interdependent self-construal positively influenced consumers' eWOM behavioral intentions through their community engagement self-efficacy and their social outcome expectations [22]. In social media settings, Hoffman, Novak, and Randy Stein [28] verified that people with an interdependent self-construal achieve group identification to connect with others, while people with an independent self-construal achieve group identification to interact with interest-relevant content. The purpose of our research is to study the impacts of self-construal on flow experience through the mediation roles of customer value.

III. RESEARCH MODEL AND THE HYPOTHESES

The research model is constructed on the basis of the existing literature. As depicted in Fig. 1, there exists two ways to flow experience. When having higher interdependent self-construal, consumers can enjoy more flow experience by getting more social value; when having higher independent self-construal, consumers can experience more flow experience by getting more content value.

A. The Impacts of Self-Construal on Customer Value

We hereby define self-construal as how consumers perceive themselves in relation to other members when using social media. And here we also classify self-construal into independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal based on Markus and Kitayama [21]. As mentioned in theoretical background,

we hereby define customer value as consumers' perceptions of benefits received from the social media activities exceed the costs of attending these activities [15]. And we classify customer value in social media into social value and content value due to the characteristics of social media [4][5][6][8].

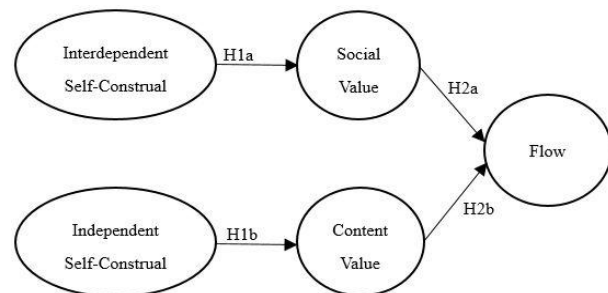


Figure 1. Research model.

In the contexts of social media, consumers with interdependent self-construal are likely to value connectedness and group harmony [23] to enhance their social value because they predominantly view themselves as part of a larger group. Hoffman, Novak, and Randy Stein [28] verified that consumers with interdependent self-construal tend to achieve their connection goals in the social media contexts.

Whereas consumers with independent self-construal devote themselves into contributing, creating, consuming and exchanging their generated contents [4][5][6][8] to increase their content value because they primarily view themselves as an independent individual entity, as distinct from the group [22][24]. Hoffman, Novak, and Randy Stein [28] verified that individuals with independent self-construal tend to achieve their content goals in the social media contexts. Hence, in the contexts of social media, we can propose the following hypotheses:

H1a: Consumers' interdependent self-construal positively influences their social value.

H1b: Consumers' independent self-construal positively influences their content value.

B. The Impacts of Customer Value on Flow

Flow is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity [29]. An individual can enter a flow state while he is performing any activity, although the flow state is most likely to occur when the individual is wholeheartedly performing a task or activity for intrinsic purposes [30].

Clear goals, immediate feedback, and a balance between opportunity and capacity will make an individual achieve a flow state [29]. Snyder and Lopez [30] demonstrated that need for achievement fosters flow experiences. Nielsen and Cleal [31] found that activities such as planning, problem solving, and evaluation predicted transient flow states, whereas activities such as role clarity, influence, and cognitive demands predicted stable flow states. Kowal and Fortier's [32] research indicated that perceptions of autonomy, competence, and

relatedness were positively related to flow. Yan, Davison and Moa [33] also found that value-creation activities such as both knowledge seeking and knowledge contributing can lead to a state of flow in the social media contexts.

Therefore in light of these arguments, we can give the hypotheses in the social media contexts as follows:

H2a: Consumers' social value positively influences their flow experience.

H2b: Consumers' content value positively influences their flow experience.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

We test our research model in the contexts of social media, so the target population is locked into all the consumers who registered in social media sites in China. We first made a pilot survey on 18 graduate students majoring in marketing in a famous university in East China. The 18 graduate students are all social media consumers who often deal with the problems of services and products they buy through their social media tools or platforms. Several ambiguous and unintelligible words were recognized by them during the course of answering the questionnaire. We modified and adjusted wordings in several items of the questionnaire over and over again according to the 18 graduate students' feedback and then we conducted a large scale formal survey. The final formal questionnaire was distributed through social media tools or platforms in China such as QQ, Renren Network, Zhidao.Baidu, and Sina Microblog, which lasted for some 25 days. The method of data collection we adopted in this study is consistent with previous online studies (e.g., Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Steenkamp and Geyskens, 2006; Jiao et al., 2012, 2013). The respondents were mainly from the university students, white collars in companies, public servants, staff in hospitals, staff in educational organizations, and scientific researchers. Altogether 800 questionnaires were sent and 455 ones were collected, thus the collection rate is 56.9%. Then according to consistency test, 18 invalid questionnaires were deleted, and so the valid ones are 437, the response rate is 54.6%.

With regard to the gender, the male occupy 52.4%, and the female occupy 47.6%, showing that the percentage of the male and the female who adopt social media are almost the same. As far as the age is concerned, the persons from 18 to 45 years of age occupy 76.0%, demonstrating that the persons who use social media are mainly from the young and middle-aged people. As for the marital status, the respondents who are married occupy 51.5% and those who are single occupy 48.5%, meaning that the percentage of the married and the single who adopt social media are almost equal to each other. So far as the occupation is concerned, the respondents who are university students occupy 22.4%, and those from white collars in companies, from public services, from hospitals, and from the educational and research departments are 77.6%, illustrating that the persons who

use social media are mainly from the people who represent a further degree of knowledge. With regard to monthly income, the respondents whose monthly income are between 2001 and 7000RMB occupy 87.2%, indicating that the persons who use social media are mainly from those with a certain amount of income. As to educational background, the persons who have the junior college level or above are 86.3%, signifying that the persons who use social media are mainly from those who received a good education. In terms of the social media type, the users of blogs, wikis, tribunes, social networking sites, podcasts, instant messengers, and content communities are 74.4%, 44.6%, 51.5%, 88.1%, 43.9%, 93.8%, and 80.5% separately, testifying that social media adopters prefer to use instant messengers, social networking sites, content communities, and blogs to communicate with and exchange with one another. The statistics fully reflect the sample characteristics of our research model.

B. Operational Variable Measurement and Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed in the light of Likert 7-point Scale, which ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". All constructs were measured with multiple item-scales. Some items were from the existing studies which had been proved to have good validity and reliability, other items were compiled by ourselves according to the definitions of the existing literature. The scales were all originally created in English. They were translated into Chinese and then back-translated into English by two bilingual persons to assure comparability. Specifically, the scales of interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal were derived from the research by Singelis [25] and consisted of five and four items respectively; the scales of social value and content value were compiled on the basis of the research by Hoffman, Novak, and Randy Stein [28] and were composed of four and five items separately; and a four-item scale that measured flow experience was developed according to the study by Lee and Tsai [34].

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

We employed the Structural equation modeling with the AMOS7.0 graphical software program and the SPSS15.0 software program to assess the research model shown in Fig. 1. The test of the research model consisted of two parts: measurement model validation and structural model examination. We assessed the quality of the measurement model by means of reliability and validity test, and then we assessed the structural model and the hypotheses through the standardized path coefficient and a set of other independent parameters analysis.

A. Measurement Model Test

1) Reliability examination of the measurement model

We adopted Cronbach's Alpha and the Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC) to test the reliability of the

measurement model because they are both the most often used two indicators when assessing the reliability of the measurement model. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated by running SPSS15.0, while SMC was figured out by running AMOS7.0. The general accepted standard value of Cronbach's Alpha is that it has to meet the minimum of 0.70, and the value of Cronbach's Alpha exceeding 0.80 suggests a higher degree of reliability for all the reflective

latent variables. An SMC greater than 0.50 is considered to support the good reliability of the measurement model. As is demonstrated in Table I, the values of Cronbach's Alphas in all the reflective latent variables are greater than 0.70 and nearly up to or above 0.80, and the values of SMCs in all the reflective items are equal to or above 0.5, so all the values of Cronbach's Alphas and SMCs indicate the good reliability of the measurement model.

TABLE I. TEST OF MEASUREMENT MODEL

Latent Variables	Items	SMC	SFL	Cronbach's Alpha	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	CFI
Interdependent Self-Construct (ITDSC)	ITDSC1	.557	.662	.824	.989	.991	.023	.008	.991
	ITDSC2	.528	.521						
	ITDSC3	.574	.519						
	ITDSC4	.651	.718						
	ITDSC5	.673	.724						
Independent Self-Construct (IDSC)	IDSC1	.609	.669	.768	.978	.987	.015	.008	.982
	IDSC2	.598	.612						
	IDSC3	.595	.673						
	IDSC4	.641	.594						
Social Value (SV)	SV1	.669	.707	.826	.976	.954	.017	.007	.972
	SV2	.571	.748						
	SV3	.572	.517						
	SV4	.529	.508						
Content Value (CV)	CV1	.593	.558	.845	.943	.946	.014	.005	.948
	CV2	.658	.672						
	CV3	.557	.709						
	CV4	.590	.551						
	CV5	.681	.663						
Flow Experience (FE)	FE1	.609	.726	.847	.991	.968	.017	.009	.969
	FE2	.586	.561						
	FE3	.639	.538						
	FE4	.715	.713						

Note: Standardized Factor Loading is significant at the level of $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.001$.

2) Validity examination of the measurement model

We adopted SFL (Standardized Factor Loading), and the fit indices like GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index), AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index), RMR (Root Mean Square Residual), RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) and CFI (Comparative Fit Index) to test the validity of the measurement model by running AMOS7.0. We can assess the convergent validity of the reflective items and variables in the measurement model judging from the value of SFL. The recommended value of SFL is usually 0.50, the minimum acceptable value of SFL is 0.35. The value of SFL exceeding 0.70 suggests that the reflective items and variables in the measurement model have an excellent level of validity. Judging from Table I, the values of all the SFLs are greater than 0.5 at the significance level of $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.001$, indicating that good convergent validity of the reflective items and variables in the measurement model is supported. The values of GFI, AGFI and CFI exceeding 0.90 separately suggest that the model has a good fit. The value of RMR is usually between 0 and 1, the more extent to which the value of RMR is up to 0, the higher goodness of fit the model has. The value of RMSEA below 0.10 shows a good fit model, while the value of RMSEA below 0.05 indicates that the model fits extremely well. Table I demonstrates that the fit indices of all the reflective latent variables in the measurement model are above the acceptable level, showing a satisfying goodness of fit and

construct validity of all the reflective latent variables in the measurement model.

B. Structural Model and Hypotheses Test

1) Structural model fit estimate

The overall structural model with estimated results is presented in Table II. The value of CMIN/DF (Normed Chi-square, Minimum Discrepancy/Degree of Freedom) is 2.013, up to the general accepted level of being above 2.0 and below 5.0. The values of GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI (Normed Fit Index) and IFI (Incremental Fit Index) are 0.967, 0.957, 0.988, 0.906 and 0.920 each, reaching to the acceptable level of near to or above 0.90. The value of RMR is 0.112, meeting the required level of being between 0 and 1. The value of RMSEA is 0.053, up to the level of being extremely well. The estimated results of Table II demonstrate that the overall structural model fits very well.

TABLE II. TEST OF STRUCTURAL MODEL

Index	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI
Result	2.013	.967	.957	.988
Index	NFI	IFI	RMR	RMSEA
Result	.906	.920	.112	.053

2) Hypotheses test

The path relationship is used to test the hypotheses in the structural model. The path relationship is often represented by the standardized path coefficient, and the greater the standardized path coefficient is, the more

significant the path relationship is. Fig. 2 and Table III show that all the hypotheses in the research model are supported and significant at the level of $\rho \leq 0.001$, $\rho \leq 0.01$ or $\rho \leq 0.05$.

We found strong support for the positive effect of interdependent self-construal on social value and the positive effect of independent self-construal on content value respectively (H1a, H1b). The β (the standardized path coefficient) values of H1a and H1b are 0.487 and 0.459 respectively. Both of the two relationships are significant at the 0.001 level, providing support for H1a and H1b.

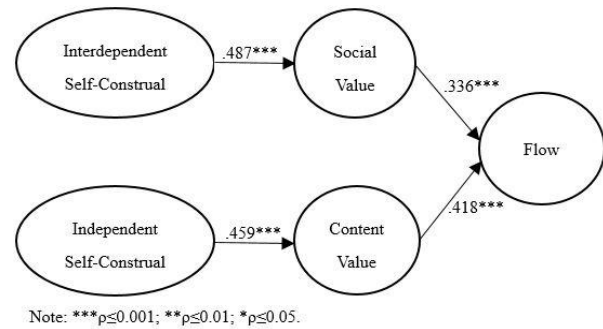


Figure 2. Path relationship analysis of research model.

TABLE III. HYPOTHESIS TEST RESULTS OF OVERALL STRUCTURAL MODEL

Hypothesis	Content	Standardized path coefficient (β)	Significance level (p)	Result
H1a	Consumers' interdependent self-construal positively influences their social value	0.487	***	Supported
H1b	Consumers' independent self-construal positively influences their content value	0.459	***	Supported
H2a	Consumers' social value positively influences their flow experience	0.336	***	Supported
H2b	Consumers' content value positively influences their flow experience	0.418	***	Supported

Note: *** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$.

As expected, the positive influences of social value and content value on flow experience respectively were also strongly supported (H2a, H2b). The β values of H2a and H2b are 0.336 and 0.418 respectively. Both of these two relationships are significant at the 0.001 level, providing support for H2a and H2b.

VI. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Our research focused on the effect of consumers' interdependent self-construal on their social value, the effect of consumers' independent self-construal on their content value, as well as the influences of consumers' social value and content value on their flow experience in the contexts of social media. Drawing upon the literature on social media, customer value, self-construal and flow, we proposed a research model that incorporated flow experience as the endogenous variable, interdependence self-construal and independent self-construal as exogenous variables, as well as social value and content value as mediating variables. Using SPSS15.0 and AMOS7.0, we found support not only for the research model but also for all our hypotheses, which is completely congruent with our expectations. We found that consumers' interdependent self-construal has a positive effect on their social value while consumers' independent self-construal has a positive effect on their content value, that both social value and content value can enhance consumers' flow experience respectively.

Our research contributes to the existing social media marketing in several ways and has theoretical implications. First, we classified customer value in social media into social value and content value. Consumers can fulfill their social value by being socially connected to others [4], by satisfying their need for belongingness and their need for cognition with those who have shared

norms, values and interests [20]. In addition, in joining social media, consumers can fulfil their content value by contributing, creating, consuming and exchanging their generated contents [4] [5] [6] [8]. Thus, social value and content value are concepts that should be explored together when studying social media marketing. Second, we incorporated the concepts of interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal into our research model and documented that consumers' interdependent self-construal has a positive effect on their social value while consumers' independent self-construal has a positive effect on their content value. Third, we developed and tested a research model quantitatively that shows how self-construal (interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal) affects customer value (social value and content value), and how customer value (social value and content value) influences flow experience in the contexts of social media, upon which previous researchers have not touched yet. And so our research should lay a solid foundation for further studies on the consumer behavior in social media. Fourth, we created, developed, compiled and validated the scales to measure all the related constructs of our research model in the context of social media, which is much conducive to the future survey-based social media consumer behavior studies to be conducted by other researchers.

Our research also has important practical implications for marketing managers. Marketing managers have been taking advantage of the low cost, rapid spread, vast reach, effective interaction and universal popularity of social media in order to keep in touch with consumers closely. However, marketing managers just almost blindly want to be connected to consumers, and they haven't realized yet what kind of customer value that consumers really want and what effect customer value has on consumers' flow experience. Our findings help them have more insights

into consumer behavior in social media. First, our research shows that consumers' self-construal in social media consists of two aspects: interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal, which is the same as in the real world. When they have higher interdependent self-construal, consumers tend to participate in the activities which can enhance their social value; when they have higher independent self-construal, consumers tend to participate in the activities which can enhance their content value. Thus marketing managers must have deep insight into consumers' self-construal so that they can identify what aspect of consumers' self-construal (interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal) is and provide corresponding customer value (social value and content value) to related consumers. Second, our findings show that if marketing managers wish to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, they have to explore every avenue to raise consumers' flow experience. Consumers' flow experience can be gained and enhanced by providing them with superior customer value (social value and content value). Marketing managers should provide convenience for consumers when they have higher interdependent self-construal in order to attract and encourage them to attend social media activities that emphasize sharing and connecting each other, thus creating superior customer social value. In the meantime, marketing managers should also provide convenience for consumers when they have higher independent self-construal in order to attract and encourage them to participate in social media activities that underline interacting with interest-relevant content, thus creating superior customer content value. If they can gain and improve their superior customer social value and content value, consumers will obtain and enhance their flow experience, and further acquire and enhance their satisfaction with and loyalty to the social media service provided by the companies.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the contributions our research has made to the existing social media marketing, we have to acknowledge that there exists some limitations in this paper, and meanwhile we also propose some new avenues for future research accordingly. First, our findings demonstrated that self-construal has a positive impact on customer value (i.e., interdependent self-construal has a positive influence on customer social value while independent self-construal has a positive impact on customer content value) in the contexts of social media. With regard to the antecedents of customer value, we only concentrated on the concept of self-construal. However, other concepts such as psychological contracts [35], relational efficacy [36], etc. may also be considered as the antecedents of customer value in the social media contexts. Researchers may consider variables of psychological contracts, relational efficacy, etc. as the antecedents of customer value to produce deeper investigations into the customer value in social media in future directions. Second, we neglected the impact of social media characteristics on customer value. As we discussed in the preceding

paragraphs, the characteristics of information openness, participation, interaction, sharing, connectedness, creativity, autonomy, collaboration and reciprocity [4] [5] [6] [8] of social media enable consumers to produce their social value and content value. However, we didn't testify the influence of these social media characteristics on customer value, future researchers may focus on this direction. Third, prior empirical research has identified customer value as a major determinant of customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty in service settings [37] [38]. However, we found that there is no research conducting the influence of customer value, i.e., customer social value and content value, on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty in the social media contexts. So we suggest that one of the interesting avenues for future research is to investigate the impact of customer value, i.e., customer social value and content value, on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty in the social media settings.

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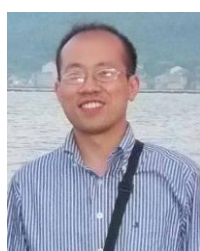
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