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Student Involvement with Online Forum and Its Effects on Intention to Seek and Intention to Share: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Online forum is a popular approach for sharing of ideas and problem resolution. It is a very useful tool for education where students and lecturers can communicate with each other without time and space constraints. This paper presents an exploratory study to investigate students' involvement with online forum, which in turn may affect their intention to seek answers and share ideas. The Social Exchange Theory is one of the theoretical backgrounds to explain online participation as a reciprocal exchange of information. Benefit and cost of online forum are two independent variables. Intention to seek answer and intention to share idea are two dependent variables. Involvement and attitude play as mediating variables. Eight hypotheses were proposed, and all of them were confirmed by the data. One finding reveals that the effects of involvement on intention to share ideas and on intention to seek answers are partially mediated by the respective attitudes. Empirical and practical contributions are discussed at the end of this paper

Keywords: online forum, intention to seek, intention to share, involvement, reciprocal transaction exploratory study

1. Introduction

Nowadays, various types of interpersonal communication are conducted through the Internet. The use of electronic mail, bulletin boards, electronic forums, online chats, and teleconferencing are now common. The growth of these interpersonal communication means is stimulated by both job and non-job related requirements (Nickerson 1994). Electronic forum (online forum) becomes a very useful tool for education. For example, it allows students and teachers to communicate asynchronously (Rosman 1999). It allows users, in general, to post a message, as comments or questions, for others to read, and to which others can respond and answer questions compulsorily or voluntarily (Weisskirch and Milburn 2003; Mazzolini and Maddison 2003). Due to the unstructured nature of the online forum, anybody could initiate the discussion. The asynchronous mode of communication allows all parties to carefully review the posted information before responding since there is no time limit to respond (Pena-Shaff and Nicholls 2004). Further, parties can participate as many times as they want.

Online forum liberates computer users to speak freely, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, race, physical appearance, and social status (Johnson-Eilola and Selber 1996). It also provides users with concrete information, actionable suggestions, emotional support (Suzuki and Calzo 2004), concerns and experiences (Bishop et al. 2005). It also has the potential to encourage more deliberate articulation of ideas and strengthen writing skills (Pena-Shaff and Nicholls 2004). However, because online forum is anonymous, it is very hard, or even impossible, to confirm the ages of individual posters (Suzuki and Calzo 2004) as well as their true identity. Thus, their comments are often characterized as less by rational deliberation and more by impoliteness. The sense of shouting, outburst and emotional venting intent are sometimes obvious (McKee 2002).

Weisskirch and Milburn (2003), and Mazzolini and Maddison (2003) stated that, in general, there are two reasons why individuals are involved in an online forum. The first reason is to seek answers for their problems or just to browse information available in the forum. The second reason is to share idea by voluntarily answering the posted questions. The purpose of this paper is to study whether individuals has the same intention to seek answers and intention to share ideas given the same benefit and cost of participating in online forum.

The rest of this paper is divided into several sections. Following this introduction, the theoretical background and research model is presented, followed by the methodology. The subsequent section discusses the data analysis, followed by the discussion of the result. This paper ends with the conclusion in which empirical and practical contributions are discussed.

2. Theoretical Background and Research Model

2.1 The Social Exchange Theory

Online forum is one kind of computer-mediated communication (Mantovani 1996). Online forum allows individuals to communicate with others by posting written messages to exchange ideas. It uses asynchronous type of communication. As such, this paper proposes the Social Exchange Theory, or SET, (Molm 1997) to be one of the theoretical backgrounds.

SET posits “individuals evaluate alternative courses of action so that they get best value at lowest cost from any transaction completed” (Hall 2001, p. 2). It is a social application of rational choice theory (RCT) where people calculate the likely benefit and cost before they commit any action (Scott, 2000). It assumes that the individuals’ willingness to participate in an exchange relationship is to satisfy their needs (Bagozzi 1975). In social model, exchange takes place on the basis of the symbolic value attached to things (Ekeh 1974). These valued items could be material, informational, symbolic, etc. (Cook and Whitmeyer 1992).

SET comprises a set of analytical concepts and its corresponding assumptions that are common to various forms of exchange (Molm 1997). These serve as the building blocks of social exchange: actors, resources, structures, and processes. According to SET, the exchange activities in online forum can be viewed as a reciprocal transaction. One user initiates the transaction (i.e. discussion) by posting a message without prior knowledge whether other parties will reciprocate (Cook et al. 1993). This is what asynchronous communication is about.

2.2. The Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action, or TRA, (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) specifies two conceptual independent determinants of intention. The first one is personal in nature, and the second one reflecting social influence. The personal factor is an individual’s positive or

negative evaluation of performing the behavior; this factor is termed attitude toward the behavior. It simply refers to the person's judgment that performing the behavior is good or bad. Then, he will be in or not in favor of performing the behavior.

An attitude develops on the basis of evaluative responding on an affective, cognitive, or behavioral basis, and it is not directly observable but can be inferred from observable responses. Thus, evaluative responses are those that express approval or disapproval, favor or disfavor, liking or disliking, approach or avoidance, attraction or aversion, or similar reactions (Eagly and Chaiken 1993).

Kappelman (1995) distinguished attitude toward things from attitude toward behavior. According to TRA, attitude is formed on the basis of beliefs. A user who holds the belief that participating in an online forum is both relevant and personally important (i.e. the user is highly involved) is more likely to develop a positive attitude toward online participation.

2.3 User Involvement

User involvement is defined as a psychological state of a person in terms of the importance that the person attaches to a system, e.g. an online forum (Barki and Hartwick, 1989). User involvement is based on inherent needs, values and interests that motivate one toward online forum participation (Zaichkowsky 1985). According to Hartwick and Barki (1994), user involvement is a belief that "represents the information he has about the object ... belief links an object to some attributes" (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, p. 12). As such, user involvement with online forum refers to the extent to which a person believes that the online forum possesses two characteristics, importance and personal relevance (Hartwick and Barki 1994).

Muncy and Hunt (1984) discussed several concepts that have been labeled as involvement, including communication involvement. Communication involvement refers to the type of involvement that occurs during the course of a communication. It happens in a specific time, making it transitory and situationally specific. It does not happen before the communication starts and it ends when the communication stops. With this unique conceptual definition, communication involvement is relevant to the study of online forum. Communication involvement has also been related to the amount and nature of attitude change, in which different levels of involvement would have different impacts on individuals' processing of communication, e.g. information search (Krugman 1965).

In an attempt to differentiate involvement from attitude, Laurent and Kapferer (1985) employed four constructs, in which two of them are pleasure and importance. Pleasure reflects an affect that is a traditional measure of attitude (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). On the other hand, importance corresponds to the traditional measures of involvement (Barki and Hartwick 1989). These two constructs load distinctly differently (Laurent and Kapferer 1985). This is to show that involvement and attitude are two different concepts, although they are significantly related (Barki and Hartwick 1989). Barki and Hartwick (1994) stated that, "a system may be seen to be useful, but not necessarily important or personally relevant" (p. 62). As such, they suggested that in order to measure involvement, the evaluative part (i.e. attitude) should be excluded.

It has been mentioned that involvement is a belief (Hartwick and Barki 1994). The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991) posit that a belief is said to be the antecedent of attitude. Several empirical studies have

demonstrated that involvement has several consequences on attitude (e.g. Andrews and Shimp 1990; Petty et al. 1983).

2.4 Benefit and Cost of Online Forum

In SET the predicted behavior can be expressed as a resultant of rewards (or benefit) of interaction and cost of interaction. Based on interpersonal communication, both parties involved in an exchange transaction are bounded by cost-benefit analysis (Gatignon and Robertson 1986).

Several benefits and costs of online forum can be identified and derived from the advantages and disadvantages of using online forum, e.g. Johnson-Eilola and Selber (1996), Suzuki and Calzo (2004), Bishop et al. (2005), McKee (2002), and Rosman (1999). In addition, the posters may experience both information and cognitive overload (e.g. Meyer 1998; Conklin 1992).

Online forum is about sharing information. Individuals are hoping that when they visit an online forum, they can get valuable information, i.e. important and personally important. This may help individuals to cope with decision anxiety (Gatignon and Robertson 1986). However, due to information overload (Meyer 1998) and cognitive overload (Conklin 1992), individuals may have a hard time to decide whether the information presented to them is valuable.

Gatignon and Robertson (1986) also stated that information quality (positive vs. negative), consistency with other information, and credibility of source are very important factors to sustain interpersonal communication. They also mentioned that poor information is one cause of interpersonal communication breakdown. As such, we argue that individual involvement with online forum will be influenced by the benefit and cost of the online forum. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are stated, and pictorially shown in Figure 1.

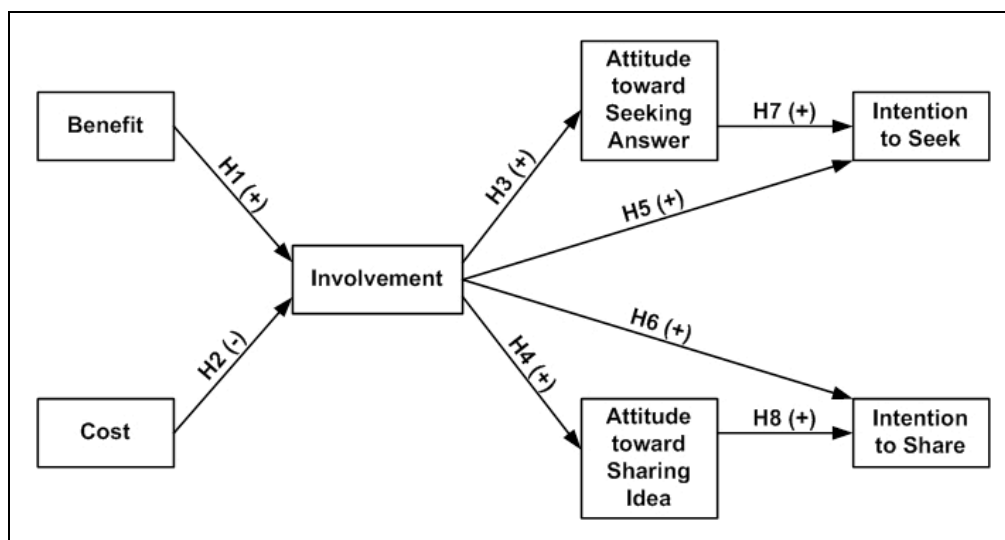


Figure 1. The research model.

- H1** Benefit of participating in an online forum would have a positive effect on involvement with the online forum.
- H2** Cost of participating in an online forum would have a negative effect on involvement with the online forum.

- H3** *Involvement with an online forum would have a positive effect on attitude toward seeking answers in the online forum.*
- H4** *Involvement with an online forum would have a positive effect on attitude toward sharing ideas in the online forum.*
- H5** *Involvement with an online forum would have a direct positive impact on intention to seek answers in the online forum.*
- H6** *Involvement with an online forum would have a direct positive impact on intention to share ideas in the online forum.*
- H7** *Attitude toward seeking answers from an online forum would have a positive impact on intention to seek answers from the online forum.*
- H8** *Attitude toward sharing ideas in an online forum would have a positive impact on intention to share ideas in the online forum.*

3. Methodology

3.1 Operationalization

Figure 1 shows the seven constructs in this study, i.e. benefit (of online forum), cost (of online forum), involvement, attitude toward seeking answer, attitude toward sharing idea, intention to seek, and intention to share. For the purpose of this study, the above constructs are operationalized as follow:

- Benefit is the perceived benefit of participating in an online forum. The items to measure **Benefit** were derived from the advantages of online forum participation (Johnson-Eilola and Selber 1996; Suzuki and Calzo 2004; Bishop et al. 2005; and Rosman 1999). Items were measured using 7-point Likert scale, in which “1” and “7” mean “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”, respectively.
- Cost is the perceived benefit of participating in an online forum. The items to measure **Cost** were derived from the disadvantages of online forum participation (McKee 2002; Rosman 1999; Meyer 1998; and Conklin 1992). Items were measured using 7-point Likert scale, in which “1” and “7” mean “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”, respectively.
- Involvement is defined as the degree to which users feel that participating in an online forum is both important and personally relevant (Barki and Hartwick, 1989). **Involvement** was measured using eight 7-point semantic differential items, in which “1” and “7” point to the extreme different sides of the measurement, e.g. extremely fundamental and extremely trivial. Items were adopted from Barki and Hartwick (1994).
- Attitude toward Seeking Answer (**ASeek**) and Attitude toward Sharing Idea (**AShare**) are defined as complex mental states involving beliefs, feelings, values, and dispositions to participate in online forum to seek answers and share ideas, respectively. Attitude was measured using seven 7-point semantic differential items, in which “1” and “7” mean the extreme different sides of the measurement, e.g. extremely foolish and extremely wise. Items were adopted from Barki and Hartwick (1994).
- Intention to Seek (**ISseek**) and Intention to Share (**ISshare**) are defined as the degrees to which a user is inclined to participate in an online forum to seek answers and to share ideas, respectively (modified from Heijden et al. 2001). Items for this variable were adopted and modified from Song and Zahedi (2001). Items were measured using 7-point Likert scale, in which “1” and “7” mean “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”, respectively. The complete list of items is presented in Appendix B.

3.2 Online Survey

An online survey was conducted with undergraduate students, from a big university in Singapore, who used online forum as part of one course activity to exchange ideas among

themselves. They were sent an email inviting them to participate in this online survey. In total, 189 students participated voluntarily on this online survey. However, 28 responses were incomplete. As such, 161 responses were used in the analysis.

4. Data Analysis

After the data was collected, factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha test were conducted to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. At first, Benefit, Cost, Involvement, ASeek, AShare, ISeek and IShare consist of 6, 6, 8, 5, 5, 4 and 4 items, respectively. The factorial analysis reveals that the 6 items for Benefit load into two different factors. As such, the first two items were dropped in the subsequent analysis. All other items are grouped nicely into their intended respective variables. Appendix A presents the result of factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha test.

PLS-Graph version 3.0, was used to test the hypothesized relationships. PLS was used for data analysis for two reasons, PLS does not require data to follow a strict normal distribution (Fornell and Cha 1994). Thus, normality test is not urgent. Second, it combines factorial analysis and hypothesis test in a single run. Furthermore, PLS-Graph version 3.0 provides all the necessary scores, i.e. item's reliability, internal consistency, path coefficient, Average Variance Extracted, as well as R^2 , except cross loading. Thus, to check the cross loading, we need to use SPSS.

Before the data was fed to PLS-Graph, score for Involvement and AShare were reversed. Data analysis using PLS proceeds in two steps: the assessment of the measurement model, and the assessment of the structural model (the hypothesized relationships) (Barclay et al. 1995). The assessment of the measurement model comprises convergent validity (item's reliability and internal consistency/construct reliability) and discriminant validity (cross loading and the Average Variance Extracted).

Table 1 presents the result of convergent validity test in which all items, except Benefit6 and Cost4, have their loading scores of greater than 0.707. Although Benefit6 and Cost4 have their loading scores less than 0.707, these two items were kept because there are other indicators in the same block for comparison basis (Chin 1998). Internal consistency for all variables is also satisfactory. In fact, internal consistency for each latent variable is higher than its respective Cronbach's alpha score (see Appendix A). This is consistent with Carmines and Zeller (1979) in which the reliability score could never be lower than Cronbach's alpha, that is "alpha provides a conservative estimate of a measure's reliability" (p.45). However, their interpretations are similar.

At the indicator level, discriminant validity is assessed by items' cross loading. Items are supposed to load higher to the corresponding latent variable than to other latent variables. Table 1 shows that this requirement is reached. At the construct level, discriminant validity is assessed by comparing the square-rooted Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of one latent variable with its correlation to the other latent variables. Table 2 shows that square-rooted AVE (the diagonal elements) of every latent variable is greater than its correlation with the other latent variables. As such, discriminant validity is satisfactory.

After confirming that the measurement model is satisfactory, the assessment of the structural model proceeds. Table 3 presents the path coefficients for all the hypothesized relationship, while Table 4 presents the R^2 for all endogenous variables. Figure 2 depicts the results.

Table 1. The result of convergent validity test and cross loading.

	Benefit	Cost	Involvement	ASeek	ISeek	AShare	IShare
Benefit3	0.708	0.415	0.057	0.244	0.220	0.059	0.137
Benefit4	0.750	0.489	0.068	0.237	0.245	0.038	0.215
Benefit5	0.960	0.279	0.260	0.415	0.356	0.172	0.318
Benefit6	0.685	0.405	0.018	0.234	0.220	0.057	0.298
Cost1	0.430	0.745	-0.116	0.194	0.155	0.005	0.039
Cost2	0.301	0.791	-0.171	0.095	0.042	-0.096	-0.122
Cost3	0.303	0.868	-0.165	0.137	0.136	-0.183	0.004
Cost4	0.240	0.691	-0.085	0.106	0.151	-0.127	0.033
Cost5	0.210	0.737	-0.057	0.118	0.085	-0.094	-0.006
Cost6	0.227	0.722	-0.070	0.079	0.087	-0.092	0.054
Invol1	0.212	-0.185	0.894	0.415	0.486	0.366	0.438
Invol2	0.179	-0.185	0.858	0.397	0.512	0.355	0.385
Invol3	0.199	-0.122	0.896	0.474	0.534	0.343	0.462
Invol4	0.214	-0.075	0.930	0.477	0.522	0.348	0.507
Invol5	0.169	-0.140	0.830	0.424	0.450	0.323	0.458
Invol6	0.188	-0.159	0.848	0.435	0.478	0.379	0.472
Invol7	0.149	-0.154	0.862	0.365	0.458	0.288	0.427
Invol8	0.186	-0.145	0.865	0.367	0.398	0.340	0.471
ASeek1	0.376	0.166	0.402	0.820	0.615	0.331	0.484
ASeek2	0.303	0.074	0.372	0.817	0.524	0.342	0.493
ASeek3	0.363	0.165	0.411	0.905	0.620	0.277	0.570
ASeek4	0.403	0.159	0.453	0.894	0.597	0.353	0.556
ASeek5	0.278	0.116	0.430	0.857	0.586	0.299	0.557
ISeek1	0.315	0.153	0.474	0.575	0.857	0.246	0.503
ISeek2	0.297	0.141	0.499	0.624	0.930	0.251	0.620
ISeek3	0.270	0.097	0.493	0.588	0.905	0.308	0.633
ISeek4	0.388	0.106	0.508	0.668	0.895	0.381	0.726
AShare1	0.129	-0.106	0.290	0.295	0.279	0.881	0.328
AShare2	0.190	-0.106	0.332	0.341	0.297	0.913	0.317
AShare3	0.151	-0.140	0.377	0.357	0.302	0.940	0.355
AShare4	0.108	-0.122	0.405	0.337	0.304	0.903	0.389
AShare5	0.092	-0.125	0.368	0.356	0.328	0.906	0.338
IShare5	0.298	0.010	0.500	0.558	0.652	0.304	0.901
IShare6	0.259	-0.037	0.481	0.561	0.618	0.360	0.945
IShare7	0.269	-0.057	0.466	0.594	0.648	0.335	0.936
IShare8	0.331	0.013	0.474	0.582	0.656	0.412	0.920
Internal Consistency	0.862	0.909	0.971	0.934	0.943	0.960	0.960

5. Result

In total, there are eight relationships hypothesized in this study, and all of them are supported by the data. Table 4 and Figure 2 show that the model explains about 31% of the total variability of intention to share, and 53% of the total variability of intention to seek.

Table 2. Square-rooted AVE and correlation among variables

	Benefit	Cost	Involvement	ASeek	ISeek	AShare	IShare
Benefit	0.783						
Cost	0.387	0.764					
Involvement	0.215	-0.166	0.872				
ASeek	0.402	0.160	0.482	0.859			
ISeek	0.355	0.138	0.551	0.686	0.897		
AShare	0.146	-0.133	0.393	0.372	0.333	0.909	
IShare	0.313	-0.019	0.519	0.620	0.696	0.382	0.926

Table 3. Path coefficients for all the hypothesized relationships.

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coef. (β)	t-value	Sign. Level (2-tailed)	Outcome
H1	Benefit → Invol	0.328	2.152	p < 0.05	Supported
H2	Cost → Invol	-0.293	-2.443	p < 0.05	Supported
H3	Invol → ASeek	0.482	6.850	p < 0.001	Supported
H4	Invol → AShare	0.393	5.235	p < 0.001	Supported
H5	Invol → ISeek	0.287	4.435	p < 0.001	Supported
H6	Invol → IShare	0.436	6.515	p < 0.001	Supported
H7	ASeek → ISeek	0.548	8.446	p < 0.001	Supported
H8	AShare → IShare	0.211	2.279	p < 0.05	Supported

Table 4. R² for all endogenous variables.

	Involvement	ASeek	ISeek	AShare	IShare
R ²	0.119	0.232	0.534	0.155	0.307

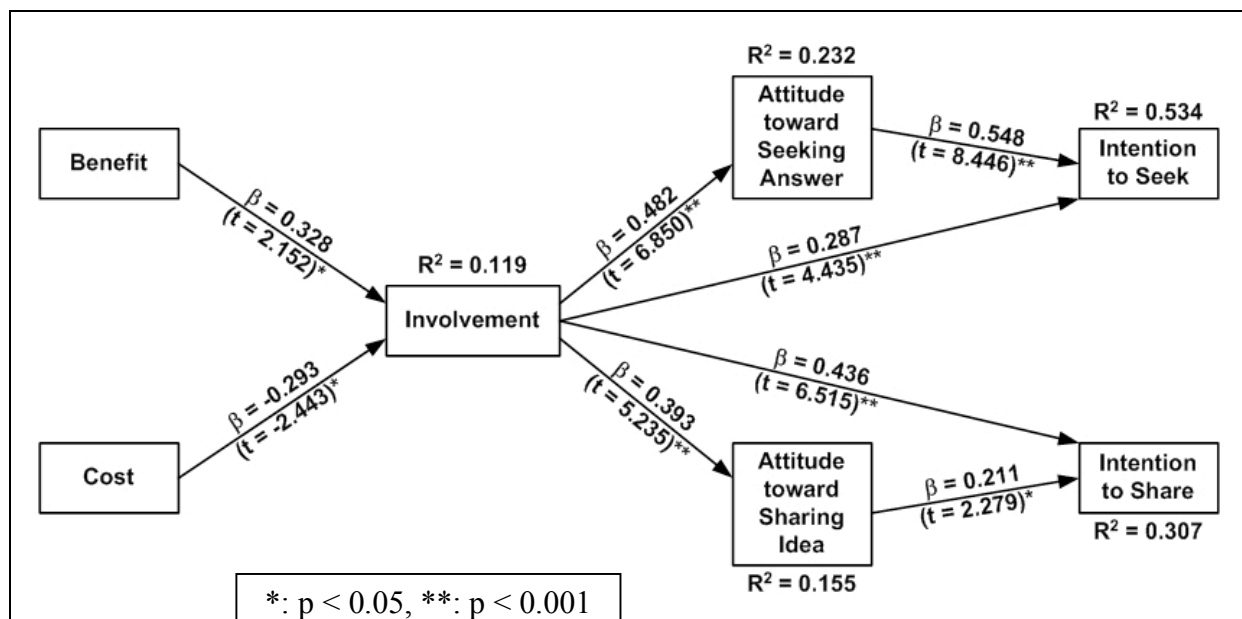


Figure 2. The structural model estimation.

The direct effect of involvement on intention to seek ($\beta = 0.287$, $t = 4.435$, $p < 0.001$) is weaker than the direct effect of involvement on intention to share ($\beta = 0.436$, $t = 6.515$, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, the effect of involvement on attitude to seek ($\beta = 0.482$, $t = 6.850$, $p < 0.001$) is stronger than the effect of involvement on attitude to share ($\beta = 0.393$, $t = 5.235$, $p < 0.001$). This result in the situation where the indirect effect of involvement on intention to seek (involvement \rightarrow attitude \rightarrow intention) is stronger than the indirect effect of involvement on intention to share. Table 5 presents the total effect of involvement on intention in which the total effect of involvement on intention to seek is slightly higher than the total effect of involvement on intention to share.

Table 5. Total Effect of Involvement on Intention

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Involvement \rightarrow ISeek	0.287	0.264	0.551
Involvement \rightarrow IShare	0.436	0.083	0.519

As hypothesized, benefit has a positive effect on involvement ($\beta = 0.328$, $t = 2.152$, $p < 0.05$), and cost has a negative effect on involvement ($\beta = -0.293$, $t = -2.443$, $p < 0.05$). The positive effect of benefit on involvement suggests that involvement with online forum increase when posters perceive more benefit from online forum participation. The negative effect of cost on involvement suggests that involvement with online forum decrease when posters perceive more incurred cost from online forum participation.

6. Conclusion

This study presents a result of online survey to investigate the effect of user involvement on their intention to share idea and intention to seek information in an online forum. The total of eight relationships are hypothesized and all of them are confirmed by the data. The fact that involvement affects attitude positively is consistent with, e.g., Andrews and Shimp (1990), and Petty et al. (1983). Another important finding shows that the direct effect of involvement on intention to seek is weaker than the direct effect of involvement on intention to share. However, their total effects are roughly the same.

SET provides an excellent theoretical basis for studying online forum usage. Although in this study we assumed that online forum usage is a two-way reciprocal transaction between seekers (those who seek answers) and contributors (those who share ideas), but in reality, the reciprocal transaction between seekers and contributors is more complex. For example, more than one contributor may answer one posted question, and one contributor may answer more than one posted question.

There are eight items to measure involvement, and they can be divided into two groups. The first five items of involvement measures the importance part of involvement, and the rest measures the personal relevance part of involvement. This study provides an empirical test of this measurement that has been proposed by Hartwick and Barki (1994). The result of this study confirms that the usage of the items provides excellent result to predict attitude as well as intention.

Practical contribution can be inferred from the confirmed positive relationship between benefit of participating online forum with involvement, and the negative relationship between cost of participating online forum with involvement. Forum providers should give serious

considerations to the benefits and costs. For example, they can keep out bad posters and bad languages, so as to prevent others from being offended. They can also encourage users to rate postings, so as to highlight benefits for other users.

Two limitations of this study are worth mentioning. First, this study covers only one online forum attached to one course module, and students' participations were compulsory. Second, benefits and costs of online forum were derived from the advantages and disadvantages of online forum participation. To address the first limitation, the future study should be directed to compare whether compulsory and voluntary participations give the same result with this study, as well as to address the same online forum for different modules. To address the second limitation, the future study should be directed to identify more benefits as well as costs of online participation. This may include online forums that are available on the Internet.

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Appendix A. The result of factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha test.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8	Cronbach's Alpha
Benefit1								0.799	Dropped
Benefit2								0.635	
Benefit3						0.826			0.848
Benefit4						0.827			
Benefit5						0.735			
Benefit6						0.719			
Cost1					0.581				0.858
Cost2					0.616				
Cost3					0.770				
Cost4					0.646				
Cost5					0.882				
Cost6					0.864				
Invol1	0.842								0.955
Invol2	0.810								
Invol3	0.836								
Invol4	0.878								
Invol5	0.774								
Invol6	0.781								
Invol7	0.842								
Invol8	0.846								
ASeek1				0.684					0.911
ASeek2				0.765					
ASeek3				0.808					
ASeek4				0.770					
ASeek5				0.755					
AShare1		0.871							0.947
AShare2		0.893							
AShare3		0.901							
AShare4		0.838							
AShare5		0.857							
ISeek1							0.714		0.911
ISeek2							0.683		
ISeek3							0.631		
ISeek4							0.547		
IShare1			0.770						0.944
IShare2			0.829						
IShare3			0.806						
IShare4			0.768						

Appendix B. List of The Original Items

Benefit (7-point Likert scale, 1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree)	
Benefit1	The ethnic background, gender, age or physical ability of people online is much less obvious and so I can say whatever I want to say
Benefit2	I can link up with users and other local, national and international groups with similar interests, whether they are voluntary, statutory or private
Benefit3	I can ask a question to a lot of people at once
Benefit4	I can have many opinions from different users
Benefit5	I can acquire new knowledge from the others' discussions
Benefit6	I can post my question publicly and other people can publicly or privately comment on them
Cost (7-point Likert scale, 1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree)	
Cost1	I may receive answers that are against my own beliefs
Cost2	My question may never get any answer
Cost3	I may get answers that are not trustworthy
Cost4	I may get information overload due to the overwhelming responses to my question/contribution
Cost5	I may get offending responses
Cost6	I may get irresponsible answers/comments
Involvement (7-point semantic differential scale) Use the followings word to complete the following sentence: <i>My using online forum (is)</i>	
Invol1	essential / non essential
Invol2	fundamental / trivial
Invol3	significant / insignificant
Invol4	important / unimportant
Invol5	needed / not needed
Invol6	relevant / irrelevant
Invol7	means a lot to me / means nothing to me
Invol8	of concern to me / of no concern to me
Attitude toward Seeking Answer (7-point semantic differential scale) Use the followings word to complete the following sentence: <i>The use of online forum to get answer for my doubts is</i>	
ASeek1	foolish / wise
ASeek2	harmful / beneficial
ASeek3	negative / positive
ASeek4	bad idea / excellent idea
ASeek5	terrible / terrific
Attitude toward Seeking Answer (7-point semantic differential scale) Use the followings word to complete the following sentence: <i>The use of online forum to share my idea is</i>	
AShare1	wise / foolish
AShare2	beneficial / harmful
AShare3	positive / negative
AShare4	excellent idea / bad idea
AShare5	terrific / terrible
Intention (7-point Likert scale, 1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree)	
ISseek1	The probability of me using an online forum to get an answer for my doubts would be high
ISseek2	The likelihood that I would use an online forum to get an answer for my doubts would be high
ISseek3	My willingness to use an online forum to get an answer for my doubts would be high
ISseek4	The probability that I would consider using online forum to get an answer for my doubts would be high
ISshare1	The probability of me using an online forum to share my idea would be high
ISshare2	The likelihood that I would use an online forum to share my idea would be high
ISshare3	My willingness to use an online forum to share my idea would be high
ISshare4	The probability that I would consider using online forum to share my idea would be high