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A Research Model on Social Media-Enabled Public Value: A Refinement Using an Online Focus Group

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Full research paper

Abstract

Government agencies, including municipalities around the globe, have started using various social media applications to provide useful and even innovative services to citizens through fostering an improved engagement with them. The government agencies' success in creating and delivering innovative services is often interpreted using the public value lens. Despite a growth in the scholarly literature on social media and public value, scant attention has been paid so far by information systems (IS) and e-government scholars to explain how citizens and government officials alike perceive public value social media applications create. Thus, we report on the development of an initial research model to explain public value creation using social media applications. We further refine the model using an online focus group (OFG) comprising eight participants from three groups: academics, government officials, and citizen representatives.

Keywords Social Media, E-government, Public Value, Municipality, Online Focus Group.

1   Introduction

Social media applications now are used increasingly as a communication tool for individuals around the world. Recognizing the enormous potential benefits of using social media, government agencies too have started using a range of social media applications (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Tweeter, YouTube) for engaging with their constituents, creating an awareness on public safety (Mergel 2013) and delivering public services (Merickova et al. 2016b). For the local government context, social media is important to facilitate engagement between government officials and citizens to deliver innovative public services. Enabling more public engagement and the delivery of public services is critical in obtaining public value, such as fairness, trust, transparency, and integrity. Although current literature reported in the information systems (IS) and e-government disciplines has discussed some potential benefits government agencies can gain from using social media applications, little studies have considered the concept of 'public value' involving the social media applications for the local government context. We argue that understanding public value through social media requires a richer understanding of several important factors (e.g., social media capability of councils and trust of citizens in using social media with government agencies) that have not yet been considered adequately. In particular, limited research attention has been paid to understand how different factors, such as social media capability, trust in social media, public engagement, and public service innovation, are interlinked, thus resulting in public value creation for the local government context. Several scholars have therefore called for the IS community to consider taking an initiative for investigating these aspects (Jain and Kesar 2011; Johannessen et al. 2016; Medaglia and Zheng 2016; Omar et al. 2013). Therefore, we address the research question: *How does the use of social media applications by local government agencies help create public value?*

During the past twenty years, the concept of 'public value' (PV) has been considered one of the key discussed topics in the discipline of Public Administration (PA) (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007). Christensen et al. (2011) define PV as "context-specific preferences of individuals on the rights, obligations, and benefits to which citizens are entitled as well as the obligations of citizens and their designated representatives." The discussion on the topic of PV for the e-government context including social media is divided into two major streams based on its increased research applications in recent times. The first stream is based on understanding the PV creation process. Precisely, studies focused on topics such as improved organizational learning (Liang et al. 2019), public services/innovation (Church and Moloney 2012; Halmos et al. 2019), public engagement (Aladalah et al. 2015; Aladalah et al. 2018), and meeting multiple stakeholders' expectations (Cook and Harrison 2015; Harrison et al. 2012). The second stream is based on understanding the PV evaluation in terms of overlapping values (Bannister and Connolly 2014), operational and strategic value measurements (Grimsley and Meehan 2007; Grimsley and Meehan 2008; Grimsley et al. 2006; Liang et al. 2019; Savoldelli et al. 2013), and critical success factors (Karunasena and Deng 2012; Karunasena et al. 2011). This stream of literature focused on the concept of evaluating the PV created when e-government systems are used within government agencies. However, such studies provide limited insights into the political and social effects of creating PV. Public value may be better conceptualized with the help of social media springing from Moore's (1995a) strategic triangle, which is an empirical device for public officials' use. Past research thus far has not evaluated whether such values could be realized at an aggregate level and whether the PV tools could impact the public managers' thoughts and actions.

Therefore, in this paper, we present a conceptual model to address the research question, and then report a refinement of that model by drawing on an empirical approach involving an online focus group discussion. As a result, we provide a description on how the merits of social media can be exploited within the local government context to create PV. The paper is organized as follows: First, the related background literature is reviewed along with the development of the research model and its theoretical foundation and propositions development. Then, we present an evaluation with a discussion using an online focus group (OFG), and finally, some conclusions are drawn.

2   Background literature and research model development

This section presents four major themes that have been identified from a critical review of the relevant literature sources to address the research question. Following Webster and Watson's (2002) approach, a systematic literature review was performed using Monash library databases including EBSCHOST, PROQEST, and SPRINGER. Various combinations of search terms, such as social media use, government, local government, municipality, Gov2.0, and social network (among others), were used to identify the relevant academic papers on public sector agencies' social media use. From the review, we identified 71 papers. As a result, several themes emerged related to our research: social media capability,

trust in social media (IS perspective), public engagement, public service innovation and public value (PA perspective). These concepts are described individually below the identified themes are briefly discussed, and from which, an initial research model is derived that is later presented to an online focus group for further refinement.

Theme 1 (Social media capability): This refers to an organization's ability to use the key functionalities (e.g., information sharing, visibility, and editability) of social media applications to perform business activities. Having the skills and abilities to perform certain tasks, such as creating hashtags, information sharing through different applications, etc., can assist organizations to run mass collaboration between government officials and citizens. The local government agencies' skills in sharing, co-creating, discussing, and modifying user-generated content facilitates information sharing, interaction, and connection with citizens (Linders 2012). As a result, citizen participation and interrelatedness can be improved. Moreover, providing a useful and easy way to access information through social media influences the public to interact with others and return to the organizations' social media applications and websites (Kane 2015; Malsbender et al. 2014). Social media capability is used to engage with citizens to develop service innovations. These capabilities can be utilized successfully to support public engagement at various levels. Therefore, the following proposition has been proposed:

P1: Social media capability is related to social media-enabled public engagement.

Theme 2 (Trust in social media technology): Citizens' trust in government social media is important to increase public engagement with citizens. The public's degree of trust in the government measures the extent to which the government achieves its goals. The relationship between trust in social media applications and public engagement has also been reported in recent studies (Park et al. 2015; Warren et al. 2014). Aladalah et al. (2016) argued that using social media applications encourages a feeling of belonging, boosts government legitimacy, and increases trust in government; therefore, more engagement is to occur. Likewise, Parker and Bozeman (2018) reported a number of factors related to social media use affecting the level of confidence between government and citizens. Warren et al. (2014) noted that trust in using social media applications influences the public's propensity to engage with government officials. Similarly, concluded that the direct involvement of a government's leading officer increased because of the public's trust in using social media applications. Thus, the following proposition has been derive:

P2: Trust in social media technology is related to social media enabled public engagement.

Theme 3 (Social media-enabled public engagement): This theme relates to the delivery of public services in innovative ways through public engagement. Public engagement between citizens and government officials in the development and subsequent implementation of innovations in public services is important in terms of the success of the public service innovation process (Merickova et al. 2016a). This is because citizens receive the public service. Many factors challenge the delivery of public services, such as social needs, ageing societies, digitally informed populations, economic pressure, and an low level of satisfaction within and across countries (Bertot et al. 2016). To overcome such challenges, innovation could create and sustain relationships between government agencies and citizens to participate in the provision, implementation, and consumption of public services delivery, bringing them even closer to the consumers. This requires digital intermediate channels such as social media to produce innovation in public services. In general, Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in the production of innovation in services for the public sector has received less attention in the broader IS literature. However, several authors have addressed the potential of social media for innovating public sector organizations (Criado et al. 2013). Most of these studies have focused on the technological aspects of social media, while other aspects have not received equal attention. Some have argued that the engagement between citizens and government officials in the process of public services delivery could bring innovative ideas (Linders 2012). Further, some have suggested that the innovation in public services is not limited to the use of social media applications, but compared with other ICT applications, public engagement is observable publicly (Mergel 2012).

P3: Social media-enabled public engagement is positively related to social media enabled public service innovation.

Theme 4 (public value): This theme is social media-enabled PV after delivery and/or innovation in public services. Emerging alternative approaches to public service delivery and changing social expectations make social media use at the local level a prerequisite. Today, public service innovation constitutes a vital part of countries' administrative reforms as governments question the traditional concept of public service delivery in the context of new public management (NPM) (Moore 1995b). NPM value is business oriented, that is, interest is in the organization, not the citizens (e.g., efficiency and effectiveness of the business processes). Therefore, alternative approaches have been introduced by

facilitating innovation in public services and allowing citizens to be part of the process of designing, planning, and implementing innovation (Brown and Osborne 2012). Alongside this, the PV Moore (1995) introduced could go hand in hand with innovation in public services. Today, citizens expect public institutions to provide public services in not only an efficient way, but also a participatory and accountable way. Citizens' involvement through social media applications in every stage of public service design and delivery, as an innovative approach, is believed to be a way to help improve public services through a better understanding of citizens' changing priorities and through the accumulation of citizens' information and ideas (Linders 2012). In return, PV can be maximized.

P4: Social media-enabled public service innovation is positively related to social media-enabled public value.

Drawing on the discussion on the above-mentioned themes, an initial research model is now derived (shown in Figure 1) and a set of propositions (P1 to P4) is interrelated. However, this model has been further refined using a qualitative research approach as described in Section 3.4.
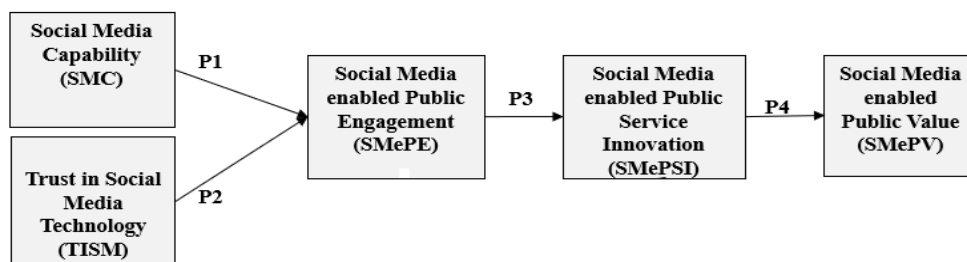

Figure 1. Initial research model (SMePV)

3   Research Methodology

Focus groups represent a popularly known data collection method for qualitative research. They are used widely in the IS discipline (Duggleby 2005). Focus groups are useful because: 1) they can provide innovative results because the debate takes place at one location with subject matter experts, and 2) they can be conducted at a very minimum economic cost in terms of time and effort (Duggleby 2005). Focus groups entail in forming discussion groups with experts from a given discipline. The group should ideally consist of 6 to 10 members who are invited to express and exchange their insightful views about a particular issue in which they have expertise. Using focus group is considered appropriate for social studies when the aim is to find, through discussion, what members think about an experience, using technology to produce certain events (Teixeira et al. 2018). According to Stewart and Shamdasani (2017), focus groups can be used to research to evaluate and generate hypotheses based on the opinions the members of a focus group expresses.

When taking into consideration the interference of technology on all existing research methodologies, particularly the Internet, researchers can think of focus groups' virtual applicability, referred to as an online focus group (OFG). Conducting an OFG is convenient for the participant members as they can be at a different location when discussions take place (Stewart and Williams 2005). Using OFGs can be attractive for participants who are uncomfortable with face-to-face interviews. An OFG further allows the professionals, who have less free time, to participate in research. The interaction performed via the use of online tools can reduce participants' anxiety and also provide no strict schedule for members for discussion (Schröeder and Klerin 2009). From this perspective, using the OFG is considered appropriate for this research to provide an empirical assessment of the research model proposed earlier.

Conducting an OFG is to synthesise a variety of inputs the panel members express about an issue of research interest (Slocum 2005). For this paper, an OFG was particularly useful for effectively collating expert opinions on the ideas of using social media applications for municipal matters. The output of the OFG includes a report that provides confirmation or refutation of four research propositions (P1 to P4), as introduced in Section 4, and/or recommendations for future research into the use of social media for government agencies involving multiple stakeholders.

The OFG for this research consisted of eight participating members: a) four academics from Australia and Saudi Arabia whose area of research interests include social media use and e-government, b) two government officials from Saudi Arabian municipalities who are responsible for policy formulation of social media use, and c) two citizen representatives who extensively use social media within the Saudi Arabian local government context and communicate issues citizens raise to local government councils. The participants' role was to provide a critical reflection on the refined research model (SMePV) as well

as express their insightful opinions about any potential issues that emerged from what they believed were important for consideration.

An online panel platform was formed by using WordPress for the participating focus group members. The blog represents open-source and can be used for basic content management. The platform consisted of three pages. The first page was the "home page" that included introductory information about this study. The second page was titled "about research" and provided an overview about the research aim and questions. The third page was titled "about the model" and provided information about the research model, its constructs, and the relationship among constructs. The participants were requested to present their comments in response to the following questions located at the end of each page.

- How does local government agencies' use of social media applications create public value?
- How do the viewpoints of public value creation differ between key stakeholders?

4 Findings and Discussion

The comments received from the participating OFG members about the research model (SMePV) are now described from the perspective of three groups of participants: academics, government officials, and citizen representatives.

4.1 Participant Group One: The Academics

Most academics acknowledged the importance of conducting such research using PV as a theoretical lens. Academic One (MP1) from an Australian university expressed concerns on how the constructs were interrelated. She questioned the relationship between social media-enabled public engagement and social media enabled-public innovation. According to her:

"In general, the model seems fine. However, it is difficult to comment on the completeness and the relationships without knowing the underlying theories… The link between engagement and innovation could be revisited. It is not clear how engagement leads to innovation without any theoretical explanation. However, if you can justify that relationship based on the literature or a specific theory, it would be good" (MP1: Academic One).

After further discussion with Academic One (MP1) on the blog, the researcher provided evidence of the relationship between the two concepts (social media-enabled public engagement and social media-enabled public service innovation). This in turn further removed her confusion and she agreed that providing innovative public services through collaborative cooperation between government officials, the private sector, other government agencies, and citizens would result in creating PV. She commented:

"Using public value as a theoretical lens is an interesting approach, the study will contribute to the IS literature by borrowing an interesting theory from public administration discipline, the relationship between public service innovation and public value does exist based on the provided sources" (MP1: Academic One).

This expert's reflection indicates that the overall propositions in the research model (SMePV) are supported. This includes the relationship between social media-enabled public engagement and social media-enabled public service innovation. The expert confirmed the derived relationship from relevant literature where, for example, Lee and Kwak (2012) have linked the use of social media application with opportunities to innovate in public services.

Academic Two (MP2) from another Australian university pointed out that the model could be based on UATUT theory; however, this doctoral research model (SMePV) did not consider that theory whatsoever. He commented:

"I believe you have done a work on building your model. From your model, it looks like you will use UATUT theory to test your hypothesis using PLS_SEM modelling" (MP2: Academic Two).

This expert indicated that the research model (SMePV) should quantitatively be tested. He suggested that dimensions could be borrowed from UATUT theory and we could perform PLS_SEM statistical modelling. UATUT theory has been widely used in the IS literature (Williams et al. 2015). It has been known for using quantitative type methods. Because the current study is not claiming statistical generalisability, his suggestion will be considered for future research. The overall comments this expert made supported the research model (SMePV).

Academic Two (MP2) further suggested that government agencies were using multiple accounts on different social media applications to serve government officials to deliver public services. He commented:

"I feel you might need to consider that a government usually will have various social media accounts for its agencies and is not represented by a single agency, also each agency may have accounts on each of the social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, and I am not sure how these variances will be reflected in your study and questions" (MP2: Academic Two).

This expert expressed a very true concern. His comment is in line with previous literature where different media types do play a role in engagement between citizens and government officials (Bonsón et al. 2015). The municipalities use various social media applications to engage with citizens and therefore deliver public services. Different types of social media serve to post different types of media, for example, if the municipalities want to release a new regulation about certain services, an infographic with full information would be considered appropriate. Social media applications can be used as a fit for purpose. Other municipalities have multiple accounts on the same social media application. For example, on Twitter, municipalities have multiple accounts, one for announcements and news, the other for receiving feedback and complaints. Hence, the responses obtained from this OFG member will be fed into the next stage of ongoing doctoral research.

Academic Three (MP3) from a Saudi Arabian university pointed out that citizens' everyday use should be emphasized more. His suggestion could be covered in the concept of trust in social media. According to him:

"I believe you have covered a wide range of factors that will contribute to public value enabled by social media. In my opinion, value from a citizen's perspective will be very dependent on how well the social media platform is considered useful and can be easily incorporated into citizens' everyday use. I think these are covered in [the concept of] Trust but may need to be better emphasized" (MP3: Academic Three).

Academic Three (MP3) indicated that the identified factors in the research model (SMePV) were appropriate. Hence, the derived propositions were making sense. However, this academic seemed to understand that social media use was only covered in the Trust concept, while social media use was considered as the research model (SMePV) as a whole. Furthermore, the academic seemed to understand fully that the concept of trust is borrowed from IS literature to study people's behaviour when using the technology. This is in line with the argument that social media trust, which includes a set of dimensions described in the above section of trust in social media, are leading toward have better engagement between government officials and citizens.

Academic Four (MP4) commented on the role of government policies toward pushing or holding decision makers to innovate in public services using social media applications. Government policies are important tools for developing a common understanding between decision makers and all operational government officials regarding organizational strategic decisions. In the context of organizational decision making, policy has been associated with day-to-day practical guidance. This affects the capacity of using social media technology to push government agencies for innovation and then create value for the organization as well as for citizens. This view is supported when Academic Four (MP4) made the following statement:

"The model looks fine. My only concern is about factors that might have an impact on innovation. I think there are other factors, for example, government policies and support could pressure government organizations to be more innovative" (P4: Academic Four).

Due to the nature of social media applications that enable open government, government agencies are encouraged to formulate policies that enable social media users to provide suggestions for innovations in public services. Public managers in charge of social media accounts therefore are exposed to the platforms' constant changes and at the same time have to deal with emergent citizen and higher government authorities' changes to policies (Mergel and Bretschneider 2013).

4.2 Participant Group Two: The Government Officials

Two government officials pointed out the importance of studying the role of social media for municipality matters. This is because: a) social media involves services that are important to the citizens and communities, and b) social media is currently an important technology the municipalities use to interact with citizens. According to Government Official One (MP5):

"The topic of the research is very excellent, and the work done by the researcher should be appreciated. Especially the issues related to the community and improving public services provided through technology; social media applications are one of the most important technical applications used in this area, so it is a topic worthy of research and we can benefit from its outputs" (MP5: Government Official One).

Government Official One indicated that our argument for the relationship between public engagement and public service is true. He confirmed that social media can be used to deliver public services and therefore enhance the quality of life for communities. This in turn is in line with previous studies such as Gao and Lee (2017) and Khan and Khan (2019).

According to Government Official (MP5), the research model (SMePV) was logical and made sense from the look of it. This sentiment was reflected as follows:

"As an employee [government official] with experience [who] lasted for more than 15 years in local governments, I can say that the proposed model is very logical and understandable from just looking at it" (MP5: Government Official One).

Along the same line, Government Official Two (MP6) confirmed the research model's (SMePV) validity by stating that most aspects of PV he/she can think of were covered.

Government Official One (MP5) further pointed out that the municipality's organizational capacity could be understood for both at the organizational level and at an individual level. This should be considered in the research model. He commented:

"Organizational capability of the municipality as a whole or in terms of the capability of dealing with social media, my understanding is for the organization as a whole" (MP5: Government Official One).

The indicated finding about 'organizational capability' Government Official One made can be considered as a new concept enabling public service innovation to create PV. The effect of social media use on the organizational capability has been widely discussed by business-related scholars and to the best of our knowledge, little have been discussed for the public sector, particularly for the local government context (Szymaniec-Mlicka 2014). The organizational capability has a negative influence on social media-enabled engagement. Social media has enabled mass communication with citizens. This in turn has increased the number of requests for services. It may be hard to handle such a large number of requests in a very short period of time by few staff members dealing with social media applications (Omar et al. 2013). Therefore, citizens will seek other channels to communicate with municipalities if they feel they do not receive any responses through social media.

Government Official Two (MP6) suggested that social media applications can be used to collaborate with other stakeholders to create PV. He commented that social media applications can be used to:

"[Build] partnerships with relevant stakeholders to support and participate in promoting public values" (MP6: Government Official Two).

Another issue identified was the stakeholders who were either influencing or influenced by using social media applications for PV creation. When services are requested or suggested, other government agencies might be involved in the process of design and/or delivery of public services. Hence, the comment Government Official Two (MP6) expressed confirms other stakeholders' influence when social media is used for delivering and creating public services. As a result, a PV could be then generated due to the delivery of public services through the involvement of multiple parties to ensure the quality of the public services provided to citizens. This argument is in line with the existing literature (Hui and Hayllar 2010). A Public-Private-Citizen Collaboration (PC2) framework has been developed, which reflects the collaborative interactions through which public and private stakeholders can exchange and process information with citizens. If social media is used appropriately to have effective participation between multiple stakeholders, such tools may very well be able to help governments access much-needed information to both better visualize and actualize public value.

Government Official Two (MP6) further suggested to add one function as an indicator for the social media capability. This function is 'Auto Reply' on social media applications. This function, according to him, is used on social media and lessened the pressure on the social media team in terms of responding to a large number of service requests on social media. According to him:

"Utilizing the modern tools of 'Auto Reply' to engage with the community … Since a big number of services requests are similar, the auto reply function is helping us to comment on citizens requests to make them feel that their requests have been responded to, also it will make our social media staff focused on other important aspects" (MP6: Government Official 2).

4.3 Participant Group Three: The Citizen Representatives

This section discusses feedback on the research model (SMePV) received by two citizens representatives. Those citizens representatives worked closely with both government officials at the municipality as well as with ordinary citizens. Citizen representatives act as an important link between ordinary citizens and government officials. Hence, their feedback reflects and represents citizens' opinions. Two citizen representatives agreed to take part in the online discussion. Both citizen representatives commented on the overall research model (SMePV) and answered the questions posted on the website page as the model was making sense. For example, Citizen Representative Two (MP7) commented:

"I think the area of research is very good, and it corresponds to the current requirements at this point of time of the country development in terms of enabling the citizens to engage with their local governments and therefore participate in delivering and innovating in public services" (MP7: Citizen Representative Two).

Citizen Representative Two (MP8) stressed the importance of having government policy for using social media use. He also pointed out the use of social media could result in changing government policies for public services delivery. He commented:

"Social media should explain the electronic work procedures [government policy] ...Social media must reflect the credibility in the work procedures, to explain what is being said on social media has to be consistent with performance and behaviour... The work procedures should address the problems of providing the service and its complexity" (MP8: Citizen Representative One).

Citizen Representative Two (MP8) further pointed out several effects when governing polices for social media use at the municipalities are absent. These include a) reducing corruption, b) providing solutions about legal matters, c) providing transparent information, and d) helping citizens reduce costs when reporting for issues about public services. He commented:

"Social media provide solutions to the problems of dealing with legal procedures...work procedures for providing services to reduce corruption...the work procedures should address the problems of providing the service and its complexity to achieve a false income of the service provider...If electronic procedures do not achieve value and help citizens reduce costs, they are a just new type of unfair processes" (MP8: Citizen Representative One).

4.4   A Comparison Views Participants and Refined Model

The viewpoints OFG participants expressed are summarized in Table 1. The academics provided full support for the initial propositions (P1 and P4). The overall feedback about propositions P2 and P3 were mixed as some academics were questioning the relationship or seeking clarifications as reported in Section 4.1. However, based on the discussion on the online website, the participants' views resulted in new suggestions as summarized in Table 2. The government officials seemed to support fully the model with suggestions for including additional factors as indicated in Table 2. The least feedback was received from the citizen representatives' groups. However, they made useful comments about propositions P3 and P4 with also reinforcing suggestions other participants made.

Propositions	OFG Groups		
	Academics	Government Officials	Citizen Representative
P1	Full Support	Full Support	No Comments
P2	Mixed Support	Full Support	No Comments
P3	Mixed Support	Full Support	Full Support
P4	Full Support	Full Support	Mixed support

Table 1: A high level summary of viewpoints the three groups of OFG members expressed.

Drawing on the views captured through the OFG discussion, a set of four suggestions for including new factors emerged. Three suggestions (i.e., media type, organizational capability, and other stakeholders) were found to influence the research model (SMePV) by having a direct relationship with social media-enabled public engagement. The fourth suggestion (i.e., government policy) influenced the research model (SMePV) by having a direct relationship to social media-enabled public service innovation. These suggestions were received from different participants as shown in Table 2.

New suggestions	OFG Groups		
	Academics	**Government Officials**	**Citizen Representatives**
Media type	✔	N/A	N/A
Other media stakeholders	N/A	✔	N/A
Organisational capability	N/A	✔	N/A
Government policy	✔	N/A	✔

Table 2: A list of new suggestions identified by three groups of the OFG members.

Drawing on the OFG participants' viewpoints was insightful and helpful to further refine the research model (SMePV) and present four new propositions as follows:

P5: Different media types have a direct influence on public engagement.
P6: Other stakeholders have a direct influence on social media-enabled public engagement.
P7: Organizational capability has a direct influence on social media-enabled public engagement.
P8: Government policies have a direct influence on social media-enabled public services innovation.

5   Conclusion

In this study, we have presented an initial theory-driven research model (SMePV) that was derived from a careful analysis of social media studies reported in IS and e-government literature streams. The model explains how public value is generated and realized using social media applications. The model is then further refined by drawing on insightful feedback received from an online focus group (OFG) that comprised eight participants (e.g., academics, government officials, and citizen representatives). The overall viewpoints the participants expressed render a good support to the research model (SMePV) and the proposed propositions. In addition, four constructs and new propositions (P5 to P8) were derived.

There are two main limitations of this study, which call for further research. First, the citizen representative group did not provide much feedback. Future studies are needed to include a broad range of citizen representatives. Second, the choice of the five constructs included in the initial model (Figure 1) has been previously reported in our earlier publication (citation withheld), and hence the derivation of these constructs is not provided in this paper.

The next phase of this research would involve evaluating the refined model through qualitative in-depth interviews with government officials and citizen representatives. The findings will be reported in future publications. The refined model, when fully validated, is expected to make contributions to theory and practice alike. The model would provide a richer understanding of how public value is produced through social media applications and are perceived by multiple stakeholders in the context of local government. The future research will also help public managers to formulate suitable policies and appropriate strategies on how best to use social media applications for promoting engagement while delivering public services and therefore realize public value.

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