

IMPACTS OF BLOGGING MOTIVATION AND FLOW ON BLOGGING BEHAVIOR

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With the development of free and easy-to-use software programs, blogging has helped turn Web consumers into Web content providers. Blogging provides distinctive insight into comprehending e-consumer behavior explicitly with respect to social networking and information searching behaviors while facilitating a state of flow. The objectives of this study are to identify determinant dimensions of blogging motivations and flow, and to investigate the hypothesized relationships of the motivational blogging behavior.

Analyzing data ($n = 432$) from a southwestern university, results reveal the critical dimensions of motivations, behaviors, and flow in blogging. Upon extending Hoffman and Novak's (1996) flow model, 14 out of 26 hypotheses were confirmed regarding the significant impacts of blogging motivations and flow on blogging behaviors. The findings revealed that the desire for information, enjoyment, and loyalty are the primary drivers for experiential blogging behavior. Specifically, information-seeking is the decisive motivation to urge experiential and e-shopping behavior concurrently. This study shows that indulgence and telepresence in flow might play pivotal mediating roles to promote the goal-oriented e-shopping behavior resulting enjoyment and loyalty-seeking motivations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Making every endeavor to enhance understanding of multifaceted e-consumer behavior, researchers have begun to examine various strands of literature. Several studies with respect to e-shopping behavior include looking at the conversion of Web surfers to Web consumers (Berthon, Pitt, & Watson, 1996), studying consumer information acquisition and online purchase decision (Alba, Lynch, Weitz, Janiszewski, Lutz, Sawyer, & Wood, 1997), and determining the reasons for not shopping online (Peterson, Balasubramanian, & Bronnenberg, 1997). Other researchers have also attempted to investigate e-shopping behavior by drawing on the technology acceptance model (TAM) from the information systems literature (Leder, Maupin, Sena, & Zhuang, 2000; Moon & Kim, 2001; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Consumer satisfaction has also received attention (Jayawardhena & Foley, 2000; Szymanski & Hise, 2000) as well as examining e-consumer shopping motivations (Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson, 2001; Doherty & Ellis-Chadwick, 2003; Garbarino & Strahilevitz, 2002).

Some theoretical contributions discuss e-consumers' articulations in the context of online communities where consumers come together in an online environment for the purpose of interacting with others who share their interests (Granitz & Ward, 1996). Studies on online communities typically focus on either the managerial aspects of such communities (Armstrong & Hagel, 1996), or on the sociopsychological aspects of the formation and existence of online communities (e.g., Fischer, Bristor, & Gainer, 1996; Granitz & Ward, 1996). Balasubramanian and Mahajan (2001) developed a conceptual

framework for the economic leverage of online communities that integrates economic and social activity.

Research into e-consumer behavior initially focused on the nature and consequence of e-information search behavior known as “Web navigation” (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). As an increasing number of people have engaged in various online activities, Web navigation, as an independent information resource, has become indispensable to many daily activities (Hoffman, Novak, & Venkatesh, 2004). Recent advances in information technology have led to the development of Web media as an efficient information searching tool. These advances enable consumers to get useful information from the Internet rather than offline. With needs relating to product knowledge as the primary motivator for information search in an online context (Grant, Clarke, & Kyriazis, 2007), consumers willingly go online to acquire information needed since the Internet has been well adopted as a channel of information distribution. Reflecting this trend, e-consumers are spending more time looking for product and service information (Joines, Scherer, & Scheufele, 2003). CyberAtlas (2000a, b) reports that 58% of households who use the Internet spend time online searching for information on products and services. Another study conducted by e-marketers (2000) finds that 23.7% of Internet users’ spend their total online activities learning about products and services.

There are several reasons why e-consumers regard information search on the Web as advantageous. Several researchers (Bakos, 1997; Burke, 1997; Hoffman & Novak, 1997) indicate that markets on the Internet are superior to traditional markets in providing information at a low search cost for the consumer, while other researchers

insist that e-consumers are willing to share their knowledge for various reasons (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Hennig-Thureau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). However, other researchers argue that it can be problematic for e-consumers to find the information needed on the Web because of the sometimes poor organization of the large amounts of information provided (Alba et al., 1997). Still other researchers (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001) find that some consumers think that one advantage to the Internet is the absence of the sales pressure that can be experienced when visiting physical stores (Jepsen, 2007).

In the early 1990s, Internet innovators created the Web-based social networking system, blogs, with links to new items on the Web where blog users could leave remarks concerning the items mentioned. A limited number of pioneer blog users utilized hypertext markup language (HTML) to hand-code their Weblogs in blogging's youth. However, blog creation flourished in late 1999 and in 2000 on account of the development of blog software that enabled Internet users without programming experience to generate their own blogs (Blood, 2004).

Blogs are miniature Websites containing entries in reverse chronological order. They are often updated daily or weekly and frequently taking the form of a personal diary (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004), a specialized information resource (e.g., theshiftedlibrarian.com) or a political commentary (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Blogs contain information that can be of value such as public opinion insights (Gruhl, Guha, Kumar, Novak, & Tomkins, 2005). On account of blog software that is extensively available and often accessed for free (Nelson, 2006), blogging has helped

realize an initial goal of the Web: to turn Web consumers (i.e., end users) into Web content producers (Karger & Quan, 2004).

While the conventional communication tools such as the newspaper, radio, and television medium are still primary sources of information for the majority of the American public (Saad, 2005), there seems to be a considerable number of blogs in existence worldwide. Pew Research Center (2005) reports that 32 million American adult Internet users read blogs, and 11 million American adult Internet users have created blogs. A blog search engine company called Technorati reports that a new blog is created every second on average and that the blogosphere is now more than 60 times bigger than it was three years ago (Rickman & Cosenza, 2006). Technorati is currently tracking more than 47 million blogs, a number that doubles approximately every six months, and if it continues growing at the same rate, all 6.7 billion people in the world could have a blog by April 2009 (Nelson, 2006). According to ComScore Media Matrix, MySpace boasts more than 100 million member profiles, the site registers 13 million hits per day, and more than 3 million artists and bands use it to promote albums and engage fans. Google Inc. recently agreed to provide at least \$900 million in advertising revenue over 3.5 years to New Corp. for the right to broker advertising that appears on MySpace and other sites (Vara, 2006).

As many have become unsatisfied with what they read and saw in the mainstream media, the growing power of blogs has hardly gone unnoticed. A convergence of cultural, political, and technological circumstances has set the stage for the rise of the alternative press, and blogs are expected to profoundly change the world of mass media (Baker & Green, 2005). On blogs, individuals provide commentary on

their lived experiences, values, and attitudes that often contain pictures (photoblogs) and video (vlogs) (Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008). The network of interconnected blogs is performing a pivotal role in creating trends, sharing news and opinion, and spreading information. It manifests itself when an event of interest takes place, such as the launching of a new product. Blog posts inundate the Web, and the ongoing communication processes that follow are derived from blog entries that comment on other blog posts (Karger & Quan, 2004).

When a sufficient number of Internet users conduct computer-mediated, nonprivate discussions for a sufficient amount of time, with adequate human feelings involved, developing what are considered “social relationships” with other participants, online communities form (Rheingold, 1993). Blog users are leading to the establishment of a variety of online communities centering on interests and advocate causes within the blogosphere (Pack, 2004). These communities are flexible, and may be based on a wide range of cultural interests and social affiliations.

E-marketers can increase their business profitability by utilizing blogs as transaction platforms or as mediums of communication with a diverse e-consumer population. The advertising industry has already recognized the potential of blogs and other “consumer-generated media” (CGM) to give insights into consumer opinions (Pikas, 2005) as Nielsen BuzzMetrics’ BrandPulse and IBM and Microsoft (Gamon, Aue, Corston-Oliver, & Ringger, 2005; Gruhl et al., 2004) do.

Traditionally, consumer decision process (CDP) has captured the activities that occur when decisions are made in a schematic format and shows how different internal and external forces interact to affect how consumers think, evaluate, and behave

(Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2006). The CDP model has been applied to a variety of products and services marketing strategies in predicting consumer behavior patterns, and has proven to seize the essence of consumer behavior that encompasses a range of different perspectives in the buying process (i.e., need recognition, information search, pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives, consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment). Decades of theoretical and empirical research in social and cognitive psychology provide strong evidence that consumers process information in two distinctly and qualitatively different ways: goal-directed and experiential (Epstein, 1994; Hogarth, 2005; Kahneman & Frederick, 2002, Kahneman, 2003; Sloman, 1996; Smith & DeCoster, 2000; Stanovich & West, 1998, 2000; and Strack & Deutsch, 2004).

While goal-directed behaviors including conventional consumer shopping behavior can be analyzed with the CDP model to a great extent, when it comes to blogging, there is a vacuum between the CDP-oriented prediction and the unprecedented blog phenomenon that can systematically answer why consumers search for information online, how they engage in blogging, and to what extent e-consumers with different information search motivations are different. This void is fundamentally attributable to blogging's hedonic value-oriented aspect. Blogging involves not only basic information search utility but the activity itself grants intrinsic gratification to e-consumers; hence, favorable attitudes towards the blogging activity do not necessarily translate into purchase behavior even after adequate amount of information search in an online context has been conducted. Instead, some get carried away in the hypnotic blogging experience, thereby not pursuing further stages in the consumer decision-making process.

Contrasted to traditional consumer decisional process perspectives which were unable to provide a sufficient explanation for the unique aspect of e-consumer information search behavior via blogging activity, a more recent approach, the flow concept, provides a relevant conceptual platform to examine the blogging activity that results from flow experience. Flow has been described as optimal experiences in people's lives when they experience deep joy and satisfaction or when people experience a "state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake" (Csikzentmihalyi, 1977). This indicates that people should be able to remember such optimal experiences for an extended period of time after they occur.

Flow is also depicted as being a sacred property, one capable of self-transcendence (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989). It is a process by which a person loses track of self-consciousness and time (Csikzentmihalyi, 1997), becomes spellbound and addicted, and the voice within has been silenced (Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993). The flow concept entails that the challenge and skill associated with blogging activity will evoke a state of mind that affects experiential outcomes (Mathwick & Ridgon, 2004). Flow occurs when blogging challenges an e-consumer to an extent sufficient to encourage playful, exploratory behavior, but without exceeding the e-consumer's ability to control the blogging environment (Huang, 2006).

Furthermore, and consistent with Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Zaichkowsky (1985), flow is a motivational construct, hence a developing cognitive process. Flow is conceptualized as the presence of intrinsic motivation or enjoyment in an activity that can be activated through focusing attention on the activity and the perception of being in

control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Among various commotions that transpire on the Web (e.g., human-computer interaction, computer-mediated communication, electronic word-of-mouth diffusion), blogging activity provides a distinctive observable fact in comprehending e-consumer behavior explicitly with respect to social networking and information searching behaviors while facilitating a state of flow. E-consumers blog with various motivations; as a consequence, they exhibit a variety of blogging behavior.

Through the incorporation of flow constructs in identifying the blogging motivation, the experiential outcomes of blogging can be systematically analyzed. Huang (2006) analyzes the flow concept with its characteristics of control, enjoyment, attention focus, and interest qualities in the Web environment. In addition to the four components of flow from Huang's (2006) investigation, Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) recognize telepresence and time distortion as essential antecedents of flow that are necessary to create a truly compelling online customer experience. Based on the components of flow revealed in these explorations, flow provides a theoretical foundation to investigate the blogging experience that is derived from flow.

Although the role of company-oriented marketing approaches in the consumer decision process in commercial online environments has been the subject of considerable research in the last few years (Adeline, 2008; Agarwal & Venkatesh, 2002), as well as the nature of consumer experience in newly-emerged online settings (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Krug, 2000; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Malhotra, 2002), very little is known about the factors that make blogging an optimal experience for its users, and of the key consumer behavior outcomes of the flow experience. To gain insights into the transition of Web navigation

towards the blogging phenomenon, this study unveils blogging experiences by investigating the flow state and blogging motivations at an individual level. Two objectives were explored in this study: (1) to identify determinant dimensions of blogging motivations and flow, and (2) to investigate the hypothesized relationships between blogging motivations, blogging behaviors, and flow. Given the exponential growth of blogging phenomenon, comprehending the dynamics influencing e-consumer blogging behavior in an online context can empower e-marketers and researchers to enhance the understanding of e-information processes and devise effective e-marketing strategies.

Purpose of Study

Given the social networking disposition creating an affect-oriented experience, blogging wields great influence on embodying the opinions of e-consumers, their brand loyalty, and purchase decisions. Upon seeking a proactive approach to the blogging phenomenon, little research has examined this experience analytically focusing on individual differences.

Based on an extensive review of literature, the purpose of this study was to explicate blogging experience highlighting blogging motivations and blogging behaviors with facilitation of the flow concept, which is an emerging skeleton in computer-mediated environments. Two specific objectives were to: (1) to identify determinant dimensions of blogging motivations and flow and (2) to investigate the hypothesized relationships between blogging motivations, blogging behaviors and flow. This approach allows e-service providers' and researchers' efforts to be more effective and

approachable in comprehending the phenomenon through the application of the appropriate theoretical platform.

In the following, this study first presents the literature related to the blogging motivations and behaviors incorporating the mediating role of flow. A research model that consists of 26 hypotheses is presented next, followed by the report of an empirical study based on a survey to test the research model. This study then concludes by discussing the implications as well as future research directions of the study.

Assumptions

I assumed that that the respondents would answer truthfully, and that the sample set consisted of consumers who had some experience in blog environments.

Operational Definitions

Blog: Blogs are interactive websites that allow blog users to publish ideas and information. Blogs are web pages that are dynamically created from a database, and can be customized from an end user's perspective (Lu & Hsiao, 2007).

Blog user: According to Pew Research center's finding (2006), blog users can be defined as a subset of Internet users who create or work on their own blogs. Given the early adoption stage of blogging diffusion, the current study includes people who participate in either reading or posting entries in existing informal social media (e.g., facebook.com, myspace.com).

Blogging motivations: Blogging motivations can be conceptualized as a galvanized state within an individual composed of drive wants and needs that lead to blogging behavior.

Blogging behaviors: Blogging behaviors are conceptualized as experiential behavior and e-shopping behavior in a blogging context.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter introduces the literature related to blogging phenomenon, blogging experience, blogging behavior, blogging motivations, concepts of flow, constructs of flow, and the flow state in blogging along with the research model.

Blogging

Rising Blogging Phenomenon

Blogs, or Weblogs, refer to personal journals on the Web arranged in reverse chronological sequence that facilitate interactive computer-mediated communication (Blood, 2004). When Jorn Barger, editor of one of the original blogs, created the term “Weblog” in 1997, he defined it as “a Web page where a Web logger ‘logs’ all the other Web pages he finds interesting.” In late 1999, several companies (e.g., Blogger and Pitas) released software designed to automate blog publication, and they epitomized the dot-com era. Although the earliest blog dates back to the late 1990s, blogs have become a popular tool for communication, information, and entertainment during the past few years (Dearstyne, 2005).

Blogs are diaries and soapboxes where Internet users can post everything from daily minutiae to manifestoes to sophisticated political and cultural commentary and reporting (Palser, 2002; Seipp, 2002; Welch, 2003). Blogs include stream-of-consciousness entries by a single author or group of authors (Nelson, 2006). Unique personalization is used in the context of chronicling, storing, and receiving information that is transformed by an individual into a personalized form and delivered to a larger group of the population that has an interest in the information, person, or the group.

Blogs are distinct from the Web journals or online magazines in terms of the length of entries that they are short and usually contain links to the larger Web and appear together on one long page. Whereas traditional journals were reserved for private use, blogs are shared by nature, regardless of being released to the public as a whole or only to exclusive parties (Kluth, 2006). Blogs comprise links to news sites, other blogs, email, online advertisements, video and audio files, or other online content (Nelson, 2006). It forms the basis of the development of very unique and personal information portals, databases (Baker & Green, 2005).

Owing to the emergence of various free, easy-to-use blogging services by the e-service providers, it is reported that the number of blogs has increased 100 times between 2003 and 2006 (Sifry, 2006). Although not all Internet users know what a blog is, nor do a majority of them participate, the phenomenon is growing rapidly (Rickman, & Cosenza, 2006) increasing from an estimated 30,000 in 1998 to at least three million by the beginning of 2004 (Johnson & Kaye, 2004). While the number of blog users is small, their influence may exceed their readership (Johnson & Kaye, 2004). More than half of the blog users are under the age of 30, whereas 84 percent of blog users keep their blogs as a hobby or pastime. The same survey also reveals that most blog users are both heavy users of the Internet and highly engaged with technology-based social interaction (Lenhart & Fox, 2006).

Blog users themselves are experimenting with ways to leverage the existing elements of blogs into more formal social networks (Blood, 2004). Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, and Wright (2004) insist that rather than “external-content-focused, densely interconnected journalistic or knowledge-sharing blogs” that have seen quite a few

discussions in the early days, most blog users actually use blogs for individualistic expression and communication (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007). A blog for all practical purposes looks inward at the blog author's thoughts, experiences, and opinions (Ozawa, 2001; Rickman & Cosenza, 2006).

Blogging Experiences

A set of postmodern conditions has converged into blogs, by which blog users engage in multiple consumption experiences relating to various types of information seeking behavior and are actually active creators, owners, and managers of symbols and signs of consumption (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Other than pursuing pieces of information online either rationally or to the extent where self-consciousness disappears, blog users also play the roles of communicator, explorer, collector, and player in terms of their consumption of information.

An informal retrieval of blogs via Google or MySpace by brand names and adjectives (e.g., "Chanel" or "Paris" and "luxury" or "uncomfortable") yields a range of blog entries of seemingly ordinary testimonies of purchasing and experiencing a Chanel purse or a trip to Paris (Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008). This illustrates a typical use of blogs: how a group of individuals can engage in product information search in blogospheres created through the transmission of compounded messages developed predominantly by blog users (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). It appears to be a revolutionary way of communication acting as a "consumer-to-consumer platform" (Zhao, Fang, & Whinston, 2006) whereby individuals provide commentary on their lives and the lives of others (Woodside et al., 2008). Many propose that blogs are significantly contributing to the pool of human intelligence (Nelson, 2006) and turning

the Web into a many-to-many communication channel in which the consumer is an active participant in an interactive exercise of multiple feedback loops and highly immediate communication (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Steuer, 1992).

E-consumers may find blogs more credible because blogs are independent rather than controlled by corporate interests. Blogs rely on peer review of other blog users to point out mistakes that can be easily and prominently corrected. Moreover, blog users may discuss issues that traditional media shy away from because they might hurt corporations. Blogs also run stories from around the world that were unavailable or ignored by traditional media (Johnson & Kaye, 2004). At its core, the blog incorporates three distinct, key concepts to clarify how the blog compares with other approaches as follows: (1) enabling blog users to publish information in small, discrete notes, as opposed to large, carefully organized websites (Karger & Quan, 2004); (2) decentralized, per-user publication entries taking the form of annotations to pages or critiques of products based on common authorship; and (3) control over the structure of individual blog entries that does not force blog users to conform to preset rating schemes or other attributes sets (Karger & Quan, 2004).

Various attempts to integrate blogs into marketing communication are certainly observed, such as commissioning new blogs for specific campaigns (Ives, 2004), buying advertising space on niche blogs with the view of target marketing (Mintz, 2005), inserting advertisements in really simple syndication (RSS) feeds from some blogs to other blogs that subscribe to them (Nikkei Report, 2005), and morphing the print tradition of advertorials to the blogosphere (Ives, 2004). Continually monitoring online blog sources allows trends and changes to be identified because blog postings are

typically time-stamped and hence can be searched retrospectively for date-specific information (Thelwall & Hasler, 2006). E-consumers' blogging experiences can be utilized in (1) the design of new products, (2) the development of products and marketing strategies, and (3) the innovation of content (Hoffman & Novak, 1996) in marketing perspectives.

Blogging Behaviors

Researchers have demonstrated the value in consideration of both experiential as well as goal-directed behavior when evaluating consumer experience in emerging online settings (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001). Indeed, it underlies the entire purchase process, beginning with the consumer constructs of extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation (Bloch & Richins, 1983; Celsi & Olson, 1988; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992) and situational versus enduring involvement (Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986; Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001). The consumer search process can be either directed or nondirected (Biehal & Chakravarti, 1982; Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986) and the choice process can be oriented to navigational-choices or goal-directed (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hoffman & Novak, 1996).

As all blogging activities evolve around information created and consumed by blog users, the behaviors e-consumers manifest from blogging can be broadly categorized into (1) experiential behavior induced when blogging is used for the enjoyment of the online experience itself (Deighton & Grayson, 1995), and (2) goal-directed behavior resulting from consciously achieving a specific task (i.e., shopping) through blogging (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007; Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000).

Hoffman and Novak (1996) summarize the distinction between these two categories of behavior (i.e., experiential and goal-directed) for the World Wide Web, a specific example of what they term a “computer-mediated environment”. The differences are far-reaching, incorporating significant consumer behavior issues such as involvement, search, decision making, consumer benefits, and motivation (Novak, Hoffman, & Duhachek, 2003).

Experiential behaviors are based on the enjoyment and playfulness. Experiential behaviors are defined by the hedonic view, which argues that e-consumers seek fun, amusement, and sensory stimulation in return for expending resources such as time and money; this view considers blogging in terms of the experience itself rather than the object of blogging activity (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Indeed, it has been shown that pleasure-driven consumers typically enjoy interacting with the Web just for the sake of the interaction itself (Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson, 2001). This may be the case especially in Web-based games, or to a lesser extent, with email or chat (Cotte, Tilottama, Chowdhury, Ratneshwar, & Ricci, 2006). Blog interactions thereby become a variety of e-consumer play (Deighton & Grayson, 1995).

Similar to Sherry’s (1990) discussion of flea market activities, other than utilitarian activities alone, blogging also relates to social embeddedness in the sense that the creation and consumption of content are embedded in social interaction. Many scholars and business experts conceptualize blogs as “possessing socially-transformative, democratizing potential (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004)” that enables a “global village” (Dwek, 2005). The social aspect of blogging thus relates to

online communities consisting of a number of blogs. In a digitally mediated social space, member-generated content is emphasized and integrated through transmission of messages (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997). The experiential use of the blog implies leisure activities such as leaving comments on entries, watching embedded video clips, and browsing blogs to explore information conveniently.

Second, blogging is not limited to behaviors that can be satisfactorily explained by experiential aspects but also includes utilitarian rationales. Unlike the experiential view of blogging behavior, goal-directed e-consumer behavior is thought to be rational and task-focused, with ultimate satisfaction coming from task achievement rather than the nature of the experience itself (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). Interestingly, following information economics as pioneered by Stigler (1961) and Nelson (1970), it can be assumed that blog users are logical, adaptive, and calculating agents who maximize their shopping utilities by searching for information in the blogosphere through links, RSS feeds, and blog search engines, etc. In this goal-directed sense, blog users are likely to act like independent agents, who take advantage of every available design on their own blogs as well as on other blogs that can be reached from their own blogs to obtain content in order to enhance the quality of the online shopping experience. Likewise, consumers rendering e-shopping behaviors would tend to blog for what they perceive as objective usefulness, and would often have preconceived expectations of what they wish to accomplish when they go e-shopping (Cotte et al., 2006).

Most research studies have emphasized the significance of blogs. In the meantime, some researchers are beginning to recognize the role of individual-difference variables in Web usage behaviors (e.g., Burke, 1997). For example, Novak, Hoffman,

and Yung (2000) consider the individual-level issues of skill, control, and challenge in using the Web while Mathwick and Rigdon (2004) investigate constructs such as flow and perceived play. Bloch (1995) suggests that there likely are two segments of e-consumers who blog in a computer-mediated environment: (1) those who exhibit enduring involvement with an interest area and (2) those who blog because they exhibit enduring involvement with blog systems. The latter segment is engaged in nondirected search for recreational purposes (Bloch et al., 1986; Csikszentmihalyi, 1983). Moreover, holding individual-level variables in great account, Rickman and Cosenza (2007) classify blog users into four categories according to their interests: political, gossip, mom and music interest blogs.

In an attempt to better conceptualize the remarkable phenomenon with practical application solutions in the e-commerce realm, the categorizations of blogs are new, and descriptions are just beginning to make their way into the literature. A multitude of specialized, non-geographically bound blog networks based upon social relationships include political blogs, food blogs, shopping blogs, and movie blogs (Dwek, 2005). Blood (2004) distinguishes three types of blogs by their functions (i.e., filters, personal journals, and notebooks). The content of filters is external to the blog user (world events, online happenings, etc.), while the content of personal journals is about the blog user (the blog user's activities and internal states); notebooks may contain either external or personal content, and are distinguished by longer, focused essays. Meanwhile, Krishnamurthy (2002) proposes to classify blogs into four types by two dimensions of a blog's orientation: personal versus topical and community versus individual. Herring et al. (2004) modify Krishnamurthy's categorization and ascribe blogs

into five categories by adding the k-log (i.e., personal journal type in which authors report on their lives and inner thoughts and feelings).

Besides, Dearstyne (2005) classifies five types of blogs by their uses: (1) individuals' personal news and views: These are personal journals set up by individuals to share news about their lives, families, and personal developments and for personal expression. They are particularly popular with teenagers. (2) News/commentary/journalism: These blogs report the news, provide interpretation and commentary, and in some cases confront and upstage mainstream media. (3) Advertising/promotion/marketing/customer service: Some blogs promote products and services or communicate with potential customers. (4) Business/professional issue commentary and insight: They may include commentary by chief executive officers (CEOs), views of professionals and other employees, trial balloon ideas, results of research projects, and interpretations of the events and trends in the field. (5) Internal information sharing/knowledge management applications: They are being used as inexpensive content management and knowledge management systems. The advantages include versatility, the ability to make information instantly available, ease of retrieval, and continuous updates for various groups of stakeholders.

Cotte et al. (2006) further provide four prevalent Web usage behaviors: exploratory behavior, entertainment, e-shopping, and information search. These categories can be applied in e-consumers' blogging behaviors positing that Web usage behaviors embraces blogging activities. Exploratory behavior can be categorized as curiosity-based, variety-seeking, or risk-taking (Raju, 1980). E-consumers who engage in exploratory behavior enthusiastically seek out new blogs to explore and readily click

on links to check out unfamiliar areas in the computer-mediated space (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Novak et al., 2000). Entertainment behavior is positively associated with the pursuit of hedonic benefits. When a blog user blogs, it is to entertain oneself while blogging. The use of the blog for e-shopping refers to the one-time purchase of a product in a specific category as well as repeated commercial transactions with a company. Finally, e-information search behavior refers to the use of the blog to find precise information (e.g., to help make an offline purchase decision, to catch up on the latest news, etc.). The blog reduces search costs for both price and quality information, and can make comparisons of choice alternatives easier and more transparent (Alba, Lynch, Weitz, Janiszewski, Lutz, & Sawyer, 1997; Lynch & Ariely, 2000; Varadarajan & Yadav, 2002). Assorted blog categorizations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Blog Types

	Categorization criterion	Types
Blood (2002)	Blog functions	Filters, personal journals, notebooks
Dwek (2005)	Social relationships	Political blogs, food, shopping, movie
Krishnamurthy (2002)	Blog orientations	Personal, topical, community, individual
Herring et al. (2004)	Blog orientations	Added k-blog to Krishnamurthy's findings
Dearstyne (2005)	Blog uses	-Individual's personal news and views -News/commentary/journalism -Advertising/promotion/marketing/customer service -Business/professional issue commentary and insight -Internal information sharing/knowledge management applications
Cotte et al. (2006)	Blog usage	Exploratory, entertainment, e-shopping, information search

Blogging Motivations

Obtaining knowledge of why e-consumers behave as they do and how to successfully induce intended Web behavior has been a challenging expedition for many researchers. Many researchers assert that this apparent lack of translation from predictions to reality may be a consequence of the deficient understanding of e-consumer Web behavior (Bellman, Johnson, Lohse, & Mandel, 2006; Jepsen, 2007). Consumer motivations remain a primary predictor of e-consumer behavior and, deservedly, e-consumer motivations in Web involvements are beginning to gain significant attention from researchers (Leder, Maupin, Sena, & Zhuang, 2000; Moon & Kim, 2001; Shih, 2004). Childers, Carr, Peck, and Carson (2001) recognize that e-consumer shopping motivations include both utilitarian and hedonic aspects. They conclude that hedonic dimensions of the new media are particularly immersive and play an equal to utilitarian role in motivating e-consumers.

Motivation refers to an activated state within a person consisting of drive urges, wishes, and desires that lead to goal-directed behavior (Caro & García, 2007; Mowen & Minor, 1998). Motivation is the major antecedent leading to actual behavior that has attracted many research efforts in psychology. Early theories in psychology such as that of Maslow (1943) and the more recent Durgee, O'Connor, and Veryzer (1996) theory view motivations as originating from unfulfilled needs, wants, and desires. These unfulfilled needs produce psychological tension and drive that need to be reduced. The tension and drive in turn lead to visible, goal-directed behavior that satisfies the unfulfilled needs and achieves individual goals (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007).

Consumer motivation is the drive to satisfy both physiological and psychological needs through product purchase and consumption (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2006).

Motivation is hardly a unitary phenomenon. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated towards an end is considered motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). People have not only different amounts, but also different varieties of motivation. That is, they differ not only in level of motivation, but also in the orientation of that motivation. There is a consensus that the quality of experience and performance can vary when one acts for intrinsic versus extrinsic reasons (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is defined as the conducting of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than to attain instrumental value. This natural motivational tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development because it is through acting on one's innate interests that one grows in knowledge and skills (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation is a construct that pertains to whenever an activity is performed because it is instrumental in producing a visible consequence. Extrinsically motivated pursuits vary widely in the degree to which they are autonomous.

E-consumers are motivated to blog in order to satisfy their distinct needs and wants. E-marketers that better comprehend e-consumers' desires stand a greater chance of drawing and retaining e-consumers by segmenting their markets according to their demands (Blackwell et al., 2006). Yet, more recently, as blogs and similar websites have increased in popularity and as online advertising models and resources have evolved, the motivation of blog users has grown more complex (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). What motivates e-consumers to participate in blogging? There are a few studies across

multiple disciplines that offer descriptions of blog users rather than blogs and venture to provide taxonomy schemes. According to Nelson (2006), e-consumers create many types of blogs that serve many purposes. Viegas (2005) reveals that blog users are motivated by a desire to express themselves, communicate their ideas, and connect with others for nonfinancial reasons. Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz (2004) propose five motivations of blog users: documenting one's life, providing commentary and opinions, expressing deeply felt emotions, articulating ideas through writing, and forming and maintaining community forums. Some blog users are just keenly interested in a topic and want to talk about it. Many people start blogs to position themselves as experts in their field, to network, or to increase the visibility of their businesses. Success in the blogosphere can earn a blog user media attention, benefit a blog user's professional reputation, or improve the blog user's business. However, most successful blog users do not write only for monetary or promotional purposes—they actually enjoy the process and the activity.

Drawn from the storytelling theory (Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008), three rationales elucidate implicit motivation to report on blogs about e-consumers' lived experiences involving the purchase and usage of products or services. First, telling stories is inherently gratifying to the blog creator which results in what Aristotle (Hiltunen, 2002) refers to as "proper pleasure" (i.e., a catharsis). Second, to some extent consciously, but mostly unconsciously, storytelling enables the blog creator to experience fulfillment by allowing them to take on an archetypal form in the plot. Third, blogging reassesses and reinforces sense making of the connotation of events in the blog entries and what the complete story implies about oneself and others. Storytelling

of using products and services as props or anthropomorphic identities to enact story productions that reflect archetypal myths includes conversations between e-consumers and brands on both unconscious and conscious levels of thinking (cf. Wang, Baker, Wagner, & Wakefield, 2007; Zaltman, 2003).

Approaching blogging motivation from an electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) perspective enables researchers to acquire a greater understanding of e-consumer behavior since one of the main functions of blogging activity serves is e-WOM dissemination by means of product reviews posted on different blogs (Bickart & Schindler, 2002; Jepsen, 2004) along with the fact that blogospheres are built around commercialized products or services shared by community members (Muniz & O'Guin, 2001). Recognizing the significant value of e-consumer product reviews as a source of information in the pre-purchase phase and thus e-loyalty for potential consumers, Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler (2004) have developed a typology to determine why e-consumers articulate themselves on the Web through e-reviews. They propose 11 possible motivations for engaging in e-WOM. They find that desire for social interaction, desire for economic incentives, concern for other consumers, and the potential to enhance self-worth are the primary factors leading to e-WOM behavior. Replenishing Balasubramanian and Mahajan's (2001) research, Henning-Thurau et al. (2004) also present a framework of five types of social-interaction utility: focus-related utility, consumption utility, approval utility, moderator-related utility, and homeostase utility. All of these five utilities come into play in motivating blog users to post e-reviews (Ambless & Bui, 2008).

Developing a model that defines and organizes blogging motivation, then, becomes incrementally important to Web designers who wish to launch a new blog-oriented enterprise or evolve an existing one (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004; Shin & Kim, 2008). Based on an exhaustive literature review and outcomes from two preliminary tests, the critical variables captivating blogging motivations relative to blogging behaviors are as follows:

Information seeking: Blogging exercises a powerful influence in shaping e-consumer behavioral patterns, especially on consumers' information search, evaluation, and subsequent decision making processes as blogging is equipped with WOM utility (Brown & Reigen, 1987; Mooney, Gilly, & Graham, 1998; G. Silverman, 2001). Blogs offer product performance related information and social and psychological support in both specialized and broadly based relationships, and are becoming an important supplement to social and consumption behavior (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007; Wellman, Salaff, Dimitrova, & Garton, 1996). In a consumption-related blogosphere, blog users communicate with one another with an interest in a product category for purchase advice, for affiliating with other like-minded individuals, or for participating in complaint or compliment interactions (Cothrel, 2000; Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Kozinets, 1999). With the explosion of Web 2.0 platforms like blogs, which continue to proliferate across the Web at lightning speed, e-consumers now have at their disposal a highly effective soapbox from which to share their shopping experiences and opinions regarding any product or service (Hollfelder, 2008). This "informativeness", as a competitive advantage over other sources of information, allures the e-consumers to blogs (Newman, Stem, & Sprott, 2004; Wu & Chang, 2005).

Enjoyment seeking: In order for blog users to be encouraged to frequently participate in blogging, blog users must perceive blogging as entertaining and fun. Website evaluation studies have considered dimensions like entertainment as predictors of understanding e-consumer behavior and interactivity with a website (Newman et al., 2004; Wu & Chang, 2005).

Loyalty seeking: Based on research by Ilsever, Cyr, and Parent (2007), the loyalty-seeking motivation is perceived as intention to revisit the blogs within the sphere or to make a contribution to the blog community in the future. This concept of e-loyalty extends traditional brand loyalty to e-consumer experience where online participation is technology-mediated (Corstjens & Lal, 2000; Schultz, 2000; Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000). Developing loyal members is important to a company's strategy and survival (Gremler & Brown, 1998; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Taylor & Baker, 1994), and has the potential to increase revenues and profitability (Aaker, 1997; Heskett, 2001; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Srinivasan, Anderson, & Ponnnavolu, 2002).

Efficiency seeking: Cotte et al. (2006) argue that people seek utilitarian benefits, such as saving time and effort, resulting from consciously achieving a specific task via interaction with the Web. Rohm and Swaminathan's (2004) finding that convenience is a significant motivating factor in online shopping is consistent with research findings by Morganosky and Cude (2000), Ramus and Nielsen (2005) and Verhoef and Langerak (2001) in the specific context of online grocery shopping. In addition, convenience is a particularly relevant motivation when there are situational constraints (Morganosky & Cude, 2000; Robinson, Riley, Rettie, & Rolls-Wilson, 2007).

Flow

Concepts of Flow

In his initial investigation, Csikszentmihalyi (1975) defines the state of flow as “the state in which people are so intensely involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter, the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at a great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.” Researchers describe flow as a state of consciousness experienced by individuals who are deeply involved in an enjoyable activity (Pace, 2004); and the state of mind arising as a result is extremely gratifying (Mathwick & Rigdon, 2004).

Creating compelling experiences in online environments depends on facilitating a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1977, 1990; Novak, Hoffman, & Duhachek, 2003), which leads to a perception of a creative, communicative and interactive environment (Chen & Well, 1999; Ghani & Deshpande, 1994). Many researchers have studied flow (Agarwal & Venkatesh, 2000; Chen & Wigand, & Nilan, 2000; Huang, 2003) in a number of varied contexts including sports (Jackson, 1996), reading (McQuillan & Conde, 1996) or in work environments (Allison & Duncan, 1988). Common to all these settings are notions of peak experience and peak performance (Ilsever, Cyr, & Parent, 2007; Novak & Hoffman, 1997; Pace, 2004). Research on this topic has ascribed flow to be a useful construct in explaining human-computer interactions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Ghani, Supnick, & Rooney, 1991; Trevino & Webster, 1992). Therefore, flow construct has become increasingly pertinent to exploring the e-information searching behavior, particularly blogging, in a computer-mediated environment.

Focusing on information search behavior, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) conceptualizes “flow” as an optimal experience that stems from e-consumers’ perceptions of challenges and skills in given situations. Situations in which challenges and skills are perceived to be equivalent are thought to facilitate the emergence of such indicators of flow as positive affect and high levels of arousal, intrinsic motivation, and perceived freedom (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Ellis, Voelkl, & Morris, 1994). An e-consumer who experiences flow should likely develop higher levels of enduring involvement because of the propensity to reengage in the activity and to develop higher levels of competency and skill, which directly affect enduring involvement (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; McGinnis, Gentry, & Gao, 2008). When challenges encountered in an environment are matched above some critical threshold, to an individual’s ability, that individual “feels more active, alert, concentrated, happy, satisfied and creative, regardless of the task being performed” (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). If skill and challenge fail to combine in this optimal manner, however, the quality of the experience begins to deteriorate, and the associated value erodes.

Flow experiences have captivated marketing scholars for the past several years (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). While other researchers have focused on contextual factors (Alba, Weitz, Janiszewski, Lutz, & Sawyer, 1997; Ghose & Dou, 1998), Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) stress the need for research focused on the individual-difference variables that influence Web usage outcomes. Hoffman and Novak (1996; 1997; Novak et al., 2003) are the first researchers to apply the flow construct to Web users in an examination of e-marketing activities. Hoffman and Novak (1996) delineate flow in an online context as the state

occurring during network navigation which is characterized by a seamless sequence of responses expedited by machine interactivity, intrinsic enjoyment, accompanied by a loss of self-consciousness, and self-reinforcement. It can be inferred that there is an increased likelihood of definition and measurement of flow in a computer-mediated environment as flow leads to positive and excited engagement with blogging activity (Novak et al., 2003). To experience flow, they claim, e-consumers must perceive a balance between intrinsically enjoyable tasks and self-reinforcement. Flow is fostered by the perception of a balance between an e-consumer's skills and challenges involved in an online interaction; further, both skills and challenges must be above a certain level (Novak et al., 2003). They propose that "centering of attention" and "seamless properties" are prerequisite conditions.

However, lacking a meticulous definition or specified structural relations among the constructs, it has been difficult to measure flow empirically, let alone apply the concept in practice (Ilsever et al., 2007; McLennan, 2000; Mithas, Ramsubbu, Krishan, & Fornell, 2003). Particularly, the concepts of flow, enduring involvement, and situational involvement have been studied and measured in different disciplines. The findings of these studies suggest that the phenomena are interwoven. Following Privette (1983), Huang (2006) clarifies three quasi-dimensions of flow in the Web environment by unique, varying, and common qualities. Figure 1 illustrates the common and unique qualities of the three concepts.

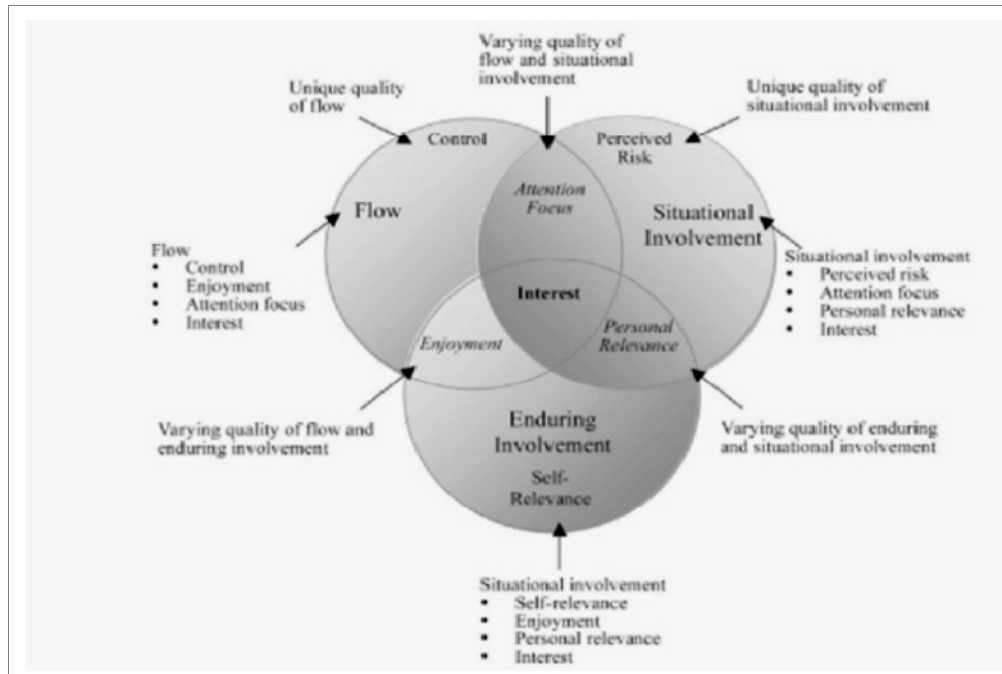


Figure 1. Theoretical tripartite relationship of flow, enduring and situational involvement.

Constructs of Flow

Recent studies (Straub, Hoffman, Weber, & Steinfield, 2002; Palmer, 2002; Koufaris, 2002) about the user experience in computer-mediated environments have focused on Web navigation behavior. Flow is a central construct for the study of the navigation of websites (Hoffman & Novak, 1996) and for describing human-computer interactions (Ghani, Supnick, & Rooney, 1991; Trevino & Webster, 1992; Richard & Chandra, 2005). The constructs examined in these studies have been wide-ranging, spanning both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions (Ilsever, Cyr, & Parent, 2007). Applying the concept of optimal flow to a computer-mediated environment, flow contains both affective (hedonic) and cognitive (utilitarian) aspects. Hedonic flow elements are telepresence, time distortion, arousal, and challenge, which represent escaping from real life into the online environment where the users perceive themselves as more socially adept than in reality. Telepresence, defined as the extent to which a user feels

present in a computer-mediated environment (Steuer, 1992), is typically operationalized as the perception “that the online environment is more real than the actual physical environment” (Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000; Mathwick & Rigdon, 2004).

Telepresence indicates a sense of being in a “different world” and time distortion suggests that time goes by quickly and without notice while on the Web (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008).

Chen, Wigand, and Nilan (1999) use the concept of flow to refer to a Web user’s overall subjective feelings of high involvement, concentration, enjoyment, and intrinsic interest. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) affirms that when flow occurs, individuals invest all their psychic energy into an interaction; they in effect become part of a system of action greater than what themselves had been before. Adopting this perspective, the concept of flow has been investigated as a key determinant of e-consumers’ subjective experiential use of a website (Ilsever et al., 2007; Koufaris, 2002; Wu & Chang, 2005). For example, the four-channel flow model extends the flow concept to identify four states of mind: flow, boredom, apathy, and anxiety. Each state is associated with different levels of skill and challenge (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Mathwick & Rigdon, 2004). Siekpe (2005) recognizes challenges, concentration, curiosity, and control as important constructs resulting in flow in an online setting and ultimately e-loyalty.

Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) find that creating compelling online experiences positively correlates with fun and participatory experiences and negatively correlates with work-related activities. This implies that flow in an online context is more likely to be associated with play activities than task-oriented activities (Novak, Hoffman,

& Duhachek, 2003). Even though it has been noted that flow can be extrinsically motivated (Hoffman & Novak, 1996), it appears to be more intrinsically motivated, as flow taps into the autotelic dimension (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997; Holt, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). The autotelic dimension is closely associated with the concept of intrinsic motivation, doing something for its own sake and not its consequences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), or the “inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and experience one’s capacities, to explore and to learn” (McGinnis, Gentry, & Gao, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The addictive experience of flow is proposed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) that if individuals attain pleasure from an activity, then they will want to self-replicate or reexperience the state (Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993), thus providing the basis for establishing enduring involvement (McGinnis et al., 2008).

Although previous research (e.g., Novak et al., 2003) suggests that flow would be more likely to take place during recreational activities than task-oriented activities, there are some evidence of flow for task-oriented than experiential verbatim in both types of activities. In cognitive aspects, Novak et al. (2000) conceptualize flow in a computer-mediated environment as a cognitive state experienced during navigation that is determined by (1) high levels of skill and control, (2) high levels of challenge and arousal, and (3) focused attention. A recent work has also examined flow as a function of either use attitudes or cognitive site (Ilsever et al., 2007). Flow may occur when cognitive domains and emotions are aroused, curiosity is piqued, and when the technical facilities of a website are seamless (Ilsever et al., 2007). Thus, it has been questioned to scrutinize in more detail at the level of the actual flow experience to find

that flow manifests itself during both goal-directed as well as experiential types of activities (Novak et al., 2003).

Flow has been extensively applied in studies of a broad range of contexts, such as sports, shopping, gaming and others (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Recently, as presented in Table 2, flow has also been studied in the context of information technologies and has been recommended as useful in understanding e-consumer behavior. Ghani et al. (1991) argue that enjoyment and concentration are two characteristics of flow, and find that perceived control and challenges can predict flow. In subsequent research, Ghani and Deshpande (1994) also propose that skill and challenge directly influence flow.

Hoffman & Novak (1996) conceptualize flow on the Web as a cognitive state during online navigation involves (1) high levels of skill and control; (2) high levels of challenge and arousal; and (3) focused attention. It is enhanced by interactivity and distortion in time and space. In the following research, Novak et al. (2000) develop a structural model based on their previous conceptual model for measuring flow empirically. They confirm the relationship between these antecedents and flow. Trevino and Webster (1992) use a different operational definition of flow experience that comprises four dimensions: control, attention focus, curiosity, and intrinsic interest. They model computer skill, technology type, and ease-of-use as antecedents of their definition. Webster, Trevino, and Ryan (1993) also employ this definition but insist that specific characteristics of the software and Internet technology (IT) use behaviors will lead to flow.

Agarwal and Karahanna (2000) note that cognitive absorption (CA), the state of flow, is important in studying IT-use behavior. Specifically, they describe five dimensions of CA in the context of software (i.e., temporal dissociation, focused immersion, enjoyment, control, and curiosity) and contended that personal innovations and playfulness can predict CA. In summary, flow is treated as a multi-dimensional construct as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Flow Constructs

Authors	Applications	Construct	Characteristics
Ghani et al. (1991)	Human-computer interactions	Flow	Concentration, enjoyment
Trevino & Webster (1992)	Human-computer interactions	Flow	Control, attention focus, curiosity, intrinsic interest
Webster et al. (1993)	Human-computer interactions	Flow	Control, attention focus, curiosity, intrinsic interest
Ghani & Deshpande (1994)	Human-computer interactions	Flow	Concentration, enjoyment
Hoffman & Novak (1996)	Websites	Flow	Skill/control, challenge/arousal, focused attention, interactivity, telepresence
Novak et al. (2000)	Websites	Flow	Skill/control, challenge/arousal, focused attention, interactivity, telepresence
Agarwal & Karahanna (2000)	Software	Cognitive absorption	Control, attention focus, curiosity, intrinsic interest

Flow in Blogging

Flow is an intrinsically enjoyable experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), and enduring involvement offers pleasure to consumers (Higie & Feick, 1989). When individuals experience flow, they are totally immersed in the object of interest (Ghani & Deshpande, 1994). The state of mind that results from achieving flow is extremely gratifying (Novak et al., 2000) and self-motivating (Trevino & Webster, 1992). The individuals are involved in the activity for its inherent pleasure and enjoyment rather than for some utilitarian purpose (Webster et al., 1993). Flow is most often experienced in activities that reward the participants (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). For example, the immediate feedback provided by blog software imparts enjoyment to blog users (Webster, Trevino, & Ryan, 1993). In blogging experience, flow is likely to be more autonomous because it occurs mostly in environments and situations that are of one's own choice, as the heart, mind, and will must be on the same page for it to occur (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; McGinnis, Gentry, & Gao, 2008). Experiential behaviors, such as reading blog entries and exploring corporate-sponsored blogs for a topic with which the e-consumer exhibits enduring involvement, would be more likely to lead to flow and thus stimulate adoption among new users (Hoffman & Novak, 1996).

Telepresence: It describes a mental state where the user feels immersed in a virtual environment (Turkle, 1984); real world stimuli are blocked out, and the virtual environment captivates the senses (Kim, Fiore, & Park, 2007). Kim and Biocca (1997) similarly indicate that telepresence includes both departure from a physical environment where a Web user is present, and arrival at the virtual environment defined by the website. Thus, telepresence may facilitate escapism that contributes to greater flow.

Blog users may escape from the mundane real world and enter an arousing, pleasurable mental state offered by the virtual blogging experience.

Indulgence: Researchers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Ilsever, Cyr, & Parent, 2007) suggest that flow occurs when Internet users engage in high levels of enjoyment, satisfaction, playfulness and absorption in an e-commerce setting. If blog users are intensely involved in blogging, they feel more active, alert, concentrated, happy, satisfied and creative regardless of the task being performed (Csikszentmihaly & LeFevre, 1989). Therefore, this distinct aspect can be specified as the indulgence dimension of flow.

Time distortion: Time distortion suggests that time goes by quickly and without notice when engaged in an online activity (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008; Csikszentmihalyi, 1977). Previous research suggests a connection between pathological Internet usage and certain experiential elements of flow reflecting a desire for escape, including perceptions of time distortion, to the point of feeling outside of present time (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008).

Research Model

The conceptualization and measurement of the blogging experience through employment of a relevant theoretical platform have become important issues in both assessing e-information searching behavior and implementing e-commerce strategies. Upon recognition of these necessities, interest in flow has been generated by recent investigations into this concept in Web environments (Chen, Wigand, & Nilan, 1999; Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000), human-computer interactions (Ghani & Deshpande, 1994; Webster, Trevino, & Ryan, 1993) and computer-mediated communications

(Huang, 2006; Trevino & Webster, 1992). To delineate the influence of e-consumers' blogging motivations on blogging behaviors, and thus develop a better theoretical basis that incorporates the flow construct into e-marketing, a research framework is developed. Conceptualization of the research constructs is demonstrated in Figure 2.

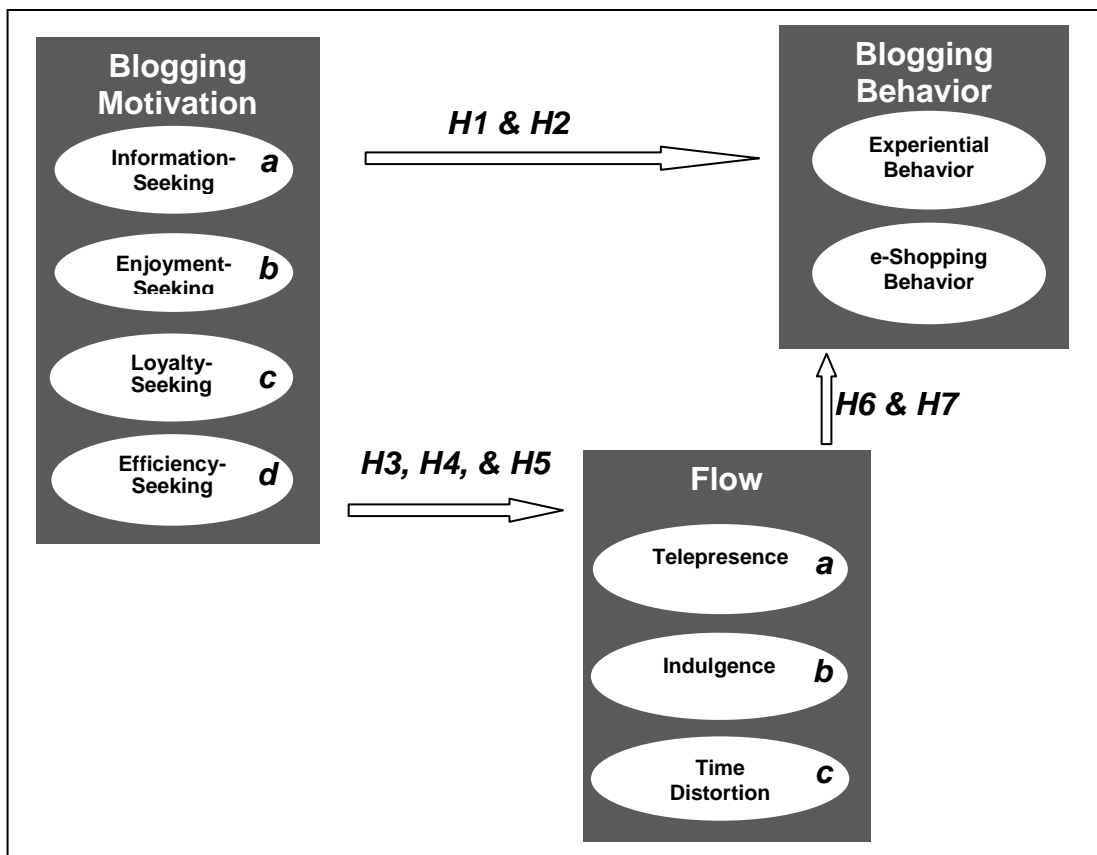


Figure 2. The impact of blogging motivations on blogging behaviors with the effect of flow.

The research model conceptualizes four blogging motivations (i.e., enjoyment-seeking, benefit-seeking, information-seeking, and loyalty-seeking) and three factors of flow (i.e., telepresence, time distortion, and indulgence) as the antecedents to predict two blogging behaviors (i.e., experiential behavior and e-shopping) based on previous studies (Cotte, Tilottama, Chowdhury, Ratneshwar, & Ricci, 2006; Ellison, Steinfield, &

Lampe, 2007; Huang, 2006; Koufaris, 2002; Nambisan & Baron, 2007; Novak et al., 2000) and two preliminary tests.

Problem Statement and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to explicate blog experience examining blogging motivations and behaviors highlighting the effects of flow. Two specific objectives are identified: (1) to identify determinant dimensions of blogging motivations and flow; and (2) to investigate the hypothesized relationships among blogging motivations, blogging behaviors, and flow. The relationships between e-consumer blogging motivations, blogging behaviors and flow were hypothesized as follows:

H1: Blogging motivations have significant relationships with experiential behavior.

H1(a): Information-seeking motivation has a positive impact on experiential behavior.

H1(b): Enjoyment-seeking motivation has a positive impact on experiential behavior.

H1(c): Loyalty-seeking motivation has a positive impact on experiential behavior.

H1(d): Efficiency-seeking motivation has a positive impact on experiential behavior.

H2: Blogging motivations significant relationships with e-shopping behavior.

H2(a): Information-seeking motivation has a positive impact on e-shopping behavior.

H2(b): Enjoyment-seeking motivation has a positive impact on e-shopping behavior.

H2(c): Loyalty-seeking motivation has a positive impact on e-shopping behavior.

H2(d): Efficiency-seeking motivation has a positive impact on e-shopping behavior.

H3: Blogging motivations have significant relationships with telepresence in flow.

H3(a): Information-seeking motivation has a positive impact on telepresence.

H3(b): Enjoyment-seeking motivation has a positive impact on telepresence.

H3(c): Loyalty-seeking motivation has a positive impact on telepresence.

H3(d): Efficiency-seeking motivation has a positive impact on telepresence.

H4: Blogging motivations have significant relationships with indulgence in flow.

H4(a): Information-seeking motivation has a positive impact on indulgence.

H4(b): Enjoyment-seeking motivation has a positive impact on indulgence.

H4(c): Loyalty-seeking motivation has a positive impact on indulgence.

H4(d): Efficiency-seeking motivation has a positive impact on indulgence.

H5: Blogging motivations have significant relationships with time distortion in flow.

H5(a): Information-seeking motivation has a positive impact on time distortion.

H5(b): Enjoyment-seeking motivation has a positive impact on time distortion.

H5(c): Loyalty-seeking motivation has a positive impact on time distortion.

H5(d): Efficiency-seeking motivation has a positive impact on time distortion.

H6: Flow has significant relationships with experiential behavior.

H6(a): Telepresence has a positive impact on experiential behavior.

H6(b): Indulgence has a positive impact on experiential behavior.

H6(c): Time distortion has a positive impact on experiential behavior.

H7: Flow has significant relationships with e-shopping behavior.

H7(a): Telepresence has a positive impact on e-shopping behavior.

H7(b): Indulgence has a positive impact on e-shopping behavior.

H7(c): Time distortion has a positive impact on e-shopping behavior.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology in terms of sample characteristics and data collection procedures followed by the problem statement, hypotheses, instrument development, preliminary tests results, and assumptions in methodology.

Sample and Data Collection

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the protection of human subjects was attained prior to data collection and analyses. The data was collected from students enrolled at a public southwestern university. Questionnaires ($n = 432$) were distributed to students during regularly scheduled courses. Students were selected from a broad range of courses (e.g., business, merchandising, music, engineering, and visual arts). To be included in the study, students had to be at least 18 years of age. Qualifications for completing the questionnaires were self-determined. Participants were informed in writing that completing the questionnaire was anonymous, voluntary, and that there were neither penalties nor credit for not participating.

Instrument Development

A self-administered questionnaire was developed based on existing scales selected from the literature. Based on the literature review, the research constructs included blogging motivations (information-seeking, enjoyment-seeking, loyalty-seeking, and efficiency-seeking), flow (telepresence, indulgence, and time distortion), blogging behaviors (experiential behavior and e-shopping behavior), and demographic information (see Table 3).

The following scales were used to measure blogging motivations: 18-item (Cotte, Tilottama, Chowdhury, Ratneshwar, & Ricci, 2006) and 3-item (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) for blogging motivation. An 11-item scale of blogging behavior was adapted from previous research based on Web usage behaviors (Cotte et al., 2006; Ellison et al., 2007; Koufaris, 2002; Nambisan, & Baron, 2007). Flow was measured with 20 items including control, interest, attention focus, enjoyment, time distortion, and telepresence (Huang, 2006; Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000). Minor changes were made to accommodate the context. Refer to Table 3 for research constructs.

Table 3

Research Constructs

Construct	Scale	Source
Blogging motivation	18 items	Cotte, Chowdhury, Ratneshwar, & Ricci (2006)
	3 items	Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2007)
Blogging behavior	4 items	Nambisan, & Baron (2007)
	4 items	Koufaris (2002)
	3 items	Cotte, Chowdhury, Ratneshwar, & Ricci (2006)
Flow	11 items	Huang (2006)
	9 items	Novak, Hoffman, & Yung (2000)
Demographic information	14 items	Gender, age, ethnicity, employment status, classification, major, and blog experience

The questionnaire consisted of a cover page asking e-consumers to participate in a study about blogging experience. Prior to answering any questions, definitions related to blogging and the flow concept were provided. Seven screening questions

regarding general blogging experience (e.g., usage frequency and blog types) determined whether participants owned a blog and their level of blogging involvement. Respondents' demographic information including gender, age, ethnicity and employment status were measured for descriptive purposes in the final questionnaire.

All items were measured using a Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6) as the lower and upper anchors respectively. The Likert scale was selected by virtue of its advantage in allowing intercultural questioning without systematic errors (Lee & Turban, 2001). A 6-point scale was adopted in this study to have respondents commit to either the positive or negative end of the scale without giving the respondent a neutral or ambivalent answer choice (Gwinner, 2009).

Content Validity

To test variables' internal validity and construct reliability in blogging contexts, two preliminary tests were conducted using a group of 103 undergraduate students taking the consumer behavior course at a public southwestern university. Scale reliabilities for blogging motivations ranged from 0.80 to 0.92. Flow scale reliabilities were also acceptable with scores ranging from 0.59 to 0.92. The scales were proven to be internally consistent, able to discriminate among constructs, and are adequate indicators of the theoretical constructs. Slight modifications were made to the questionnaire based on the student feedback to improve readability and adaptability.

Underlying Assumption and Limitation of Methodology

The information provided by the respondents on the questionnaire is assumed to be accurate and not impacted by social desirability (Dillman, 2000). It is possible that the respondents could report the experience that they believe should have been

accomplished. The respondents could be embarrassed at their lack of experience and as a result inflate the results. One limitation is that the study includes only college students of the chosen university. This excludes blog users who maintain their credentials, but do not possess the membership of the institution.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The data for this study consisted of 432 respondents from a public southwestern university. The demographic information is described in the first section, which is followed by data analysis. Factor analysis and multiple regression analyses are described in the following section. The chapter concludes with a section on hypotheses testing.

Sample Characteristics

Of the 451 questionnaires distributed to students, there were 432 usable surveys returned (95.8% of response rate). With an average age of 23.1, the majority of the sample was female ($n = 225$, 55.1%), Caucasian ($n = 245$, 60.3%), part-time worker ($n = 232$, 57%), junior level ($n = 189$, 46.3%), and majoring in business ($n = 172$, 38.1%). The most common blog categories used were hobby ($n = 149$, 34.5 %) followed by personal musings ($n = 101$, 23.4 %), and gossip ($n = 87$, 20.1 %). See Table 4.

For the further analysis, only blog users who owned personal blogs ($n = 197$, 45.6%) were selected among the total sample in order to extract their specific blogging behavior. They were primarily females ($n = 125$, 67.6%), 22.6 years old, Caucasians ($n = 111$, 60.3%), and part-time workers ($n = 108$, 58.7%). They were juniors ($n = 85$, 45.9%) and majoring in business ($n = 50$, 30.5%). The majority of blog users have been blogging for 1 to 3 years ($n = 81$, 41.1%) followed by more than 4 years ($n = 48$, 24.4%), less than a year ($n = 35$, 17.7%), and 3 to 4 years ($n = 33$, 16.8%). Demonstrating the identical propensities of the sample to the whole population, the most popular blog categories published by blog users were hobby ($n = 122$, 61.9%) followed by personal

musings ($n = 84$, 42.6%), and gossip ($n = 73$, 37.1%). See Table 4. These findings regarding blog user characteristics were consistent with Pew Internet & American Life Project's (2006) findings that most blog users actually used blogs for individualistic expression and communication.

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (N = 432)

Variables	Total sample		Blog user	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender				
Male	180	44.1	60	32.4
Female	225	55.1	125	67.6
Other	3	.7	0	0
Age				
18-25	345	85.1	134	71.4
25-30	34	8.4	16	8.7
31-40	23	5.4	9	4.8
40-54	4	.8		
Major				
Business	172	38.1	50	30.5
Merchandising & hospitality management	76	16.9	60	25.4
Arts & sciences	64	14.2	25	12.7

(table continues)

Table 4 (continued.)

Variables	Total sample		Blog user	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Engineering	33	9.5	17	8.6
Visual arts	32	7.1	15	7.6
Music	8	1.8	8	4.1
Others	8	1.8	5	2.5
Undecided	5	1.1	5	2.5
Level of education				
Freshman	9	2.2	6	3.2
Sophomore	41	10.0	24	13.0
Junior	189	46.3	85	45.9
Senior	133	32.6	51	27.6
Master's	30	7.4	15	8.1
Ph. D	6	1.5	4	2.2
Employment status				
Employed full-time	56	57.0	16	8.7
Employed part-time	232	13.8	108	58.7
Unemployed	104	25.6	51	27.7
Other	15	3.7	9	4.9
Ethnicity				
African-American	47	11.6	24	13.0
Caucasian/non-Hispanic	245	60.3	111	60.3

(table continues)

Table 4 (continued.)

Variables	Total sample		Blog user	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Hispanic	42	10.3	16	8.7
Asian	57	14.0	27	14.7
Native American	2	.5	1	.5
Other	13	3.2	5	2.5
Blog ownership				
Yes	197	45.6	197	100
No	235	54.4	0	0
Popular types of blogs				
Hobby	149	34.5	122	61.9
Personal musings	101	23.4	84	42.6
Gossip	87	20.1	73	37.1
Academic brainstorm	78	18.1	56	28.4
e-Shopping	68	15.7	52	26.4
Political opinions	57	13.2	42	21.3
Professional brainstorm	40	9.3	26	13.2

Employing a series of independent *t*-tests, blogging behavioral differences between blog users and non-blog users were identified. The independent *t*-test compares the statistical significance of a possible difference between the means of two groups on some independent variable when the two groups are independent of one another. The usual interpretation of blog usage implies that the user is also a participant

in blogging activity (Copeland, 2006; Rickman & Cosenza, 2007). This means that a blog user not only reads blogs but also often posts entries. On the other hand, a non-blog user does not own a blog, but has the option to read blogs whenever desired.

Blog users and non-blog users indicated a considerable disparity between themselves in answering the question, "How long have you been blogging?" Blog users generally have been blogging for 1 to 3 years, and non-blog users indicated less than 6 months of blogging experience ($M = 3.39/1.55$, $t = 13.03$, $p < .001$). Blog users spent more time on blogging per day ($M = 2.13/1.18$, $t = 5.40$, $p < .001$). On average, blog users spent more than 10-30 minutes on blogging while non-blog users spent less than 10 minutes daily.

The frequency of visiting other blogs was another distinction. Blog users regularly read other blogs more than non-blog users ($M = 4.14/2.59$, $t = 10.25$, $p < .001$). Blog users were more interested in creating a blog than non-blog users ($M = 3.86/2.20$, $t = 11.87$, $p < .001$) and were more willing to identify themselves with real names than non-blog users ($M = 4.38/1.64$, $t = 18.36$, $p < .001$). Blog users occasionally used their real names on blogs; whereas, non-blog users almost never revealed their real names, but opted for alternative nicknames instead while blogging. The comparison between blog users and non-blog users is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

 Blogging Behavior Comparison between Blog User and Non-blog User

	Non-blog user	Blog user	
	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>
Started blogging	1.55	3.39	13.03***
Time spent on blogging/day	1.18	2.13	5.40***
Regular reading of other blogs	2.59	4.14	10.25***
Interest in creating a blog	2.20	3.86	11.87***
Identification of oneself	1.64	4.38	18.36***

Note: *M* = mean; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001; n/s: not significant

Statistical Analysis

A varied number of tests were employed, including frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, factor analyses, and multiple regression analyses using Statistical Package for Social Science® (SPSS) (SPSS Inc., Chicago, <http://www.spss.com/>) for Windows® operating system (Microsoft Corporation, Redman, WA, <http://www.microsoft.com>), Rel. 15.0, 2007. The multi-item scales were subjected to a series of exploratory factor analyses with equamax and quartimax rotations to identify the underlying dimensions of blogging motivations, blogging behaviors, and flow. Because of low loadings (below 0.50) or cross-loadings, 2 items were excluded from flow scale. The results clearly demonstrate a 4-factor structure for the motivation, a 2-factor structure for the blogging behavior, and a 3-factor structure for flow.

Reliability is about collecting consistent and stable data (Nieswiadomy, 1998). Coefficient alpha is “a measure of internal reliability” (Vogt, 1999). Cronbach’s alpha (α) was calculated to confirm the construct reliability and internal validity of the scales for blogging motivations and flow experience. Validity is a critical part of any research. It can be defined as ensuring the quality of the interpretations drawn from the data that have been collected (Vogt, 1999). A rigorous process was used to ensure validity including using the literature to determine what questions should be on the questionnaire. Validity was built into the questionnaire through the identification of traceable sources to justify each item on the questionnaire. The literature was also used to identify the available options for selection for motivations and flow experience related behavior. In summary, the scales were internally consistent, able to discriminate among constructs, and were adequate indicators of the theoretical constructs.

To examine the hypothesized relationships of H1 through H7, multiple regression analysis was conducted using the step-wise method that determined the contribution of each independent variable to the regression models. The purpose of multiple regression is to confirm the relationship between several independent variables and a dependent variable. Blogging motivations and flow are multidimensional concepts; therefore, multiple regression enables this study to prospect the causal relationships among them. The coefficients for any particular independent variable are estimates of the effect that the variable has on the dependent variable while holding constant the effects of other dependent variables.

One potential limitation to using multiple regression is overfitting errors. The more variables there are in a construct, the higher the amount of variance multiple

regression can explain. Even if each variable does not explain much of a phenomenon, adding a number of variables can result in very high values of R^2 . To prevent overfitting in multiple regression, this study provides "Adjusted R^2 ," which allows comparing regressions with different numbers of variables.

Another limitation to employing multiple regression is multicollinearity among variables. The variance inflation factor (VIF) which was a measure of the effect of the other independent variables on a regression coefficient was calculated to check the multicollinearity. A common cutoff threshold is a tolerance value of 0.10, which corresponds to a VIF value of above 10 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Neter, Wasserman, & Kunter, 1985). All VIF values were within an acceptable range.

Data Analysis

Identification of Underlying Dimensions: Factor Analysis

A series of principal component factor analyses revealed the underlying dimensions of blogging motivations as information-seeking, enjoyment-seeking, loyalty-seeking, and efficiency-seeking. Flow was identified with telepresence, indulgence, and time distortion dimensions. Blogging behaviors consisted of experiential behavior and e-shopping behavior. Results of the factor analysis together with the calculated Cronbach's alpha scores are proposed in Table 6, 7, and 8.

Blogging motivation: Consistent with the literature (Cotte, Tilottama, Chowdhury, Ratneshwar, & Ricci, 2006) on motivation measure and based on item meanings, the factor analysis for blogging motivations revealed dimensions labeled as, information-seeking, enjoyment-seeking, loyalty-seeking, and efficiency-seeking. Scale reliabilities were acceptable with scores ranging from 0.52 to 0.90.

The first factor, named as *information-seeking* ($\alpha = .90$, explained 21.99% of variance), contained 8 items related to e-consumers' information-oriented motivations to blog. This factor included items such as "seek information across blogs," "great deal of information search before purchase," "browse for the latest information," and "look for unique products."

The second factor, identified as *enjoyment-seeking* ($\alpha = .88$, explained 20.63% of variance), contained 6 items related to e-consumers' entertainment-driven motivations to blog. This factor included items such as "truly a joy," "for entertainment," and "for its own sake."

Loyalty-seeking ($\alpha = .87$, explained 14.89% of variance) was identified as the third factor containing 4 items related to e-consumers' loyalty to blogging communities. This factor included items such as "interested in what goes on in the blog community," "I feel I am part of the blog community," and "blog to support local communities."

As the fourth factor, *efficiency-seeking* ($\alpha = .52$, explained 8.58% of variance) contained three items related to e-consumers' benefit sought motivations to blog. This factor included items such as "find in the least amount of time," "expend little effort on blogging," and "log off right after accomplishing goals." The reliability coefficient for the blog user ($n = 197$) was relatively weak ($\alpha = .52$) than the total sample ($n = 432$) of .71 because of the small sample size. The generally agreed upon lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is .70, although it may decrease to .60 in exploratory research (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991). Robinson, Shaver, and Wrightsman (1991) suggest that the lower limit for Cronbach's alpha may be less than .60 for the items that are on the same factor when significant correlation exists with

one related measure in convergent validity. The respondents regarded “enjoyment-seeking” ($M = 3.77$) as the most important factor, followed by “efficiency-seeking” ($M = 3.69$), “information-seeking” ($M = 3.23$), and “loyalty-seeking” ($M = 3.11$). See Table 6.

Table 6

Factor Analysis of Blogging Motivations

Factor	Scale items	F.L. ^a	E.V. (%) ^b	α ^c
Information-seeking	Seek information across blogs about products and brands	.820	21.99	.90
	Have a great deal of information from blogs before making a purchase	.793		
	Find out about the latest information on products	.779		
	Search for the latest/specific information	.735		
	Look for unique products to purchase on blogs	.724		
	Compare product prices on blogs to get the lowest price	.720		
	Have access to many sources of product related information on blogs	.590		
	Enjoy visiting unfamiliar blogs just for the sake of variety	.533		
Enjoyment-seeking	My time spent blogging is truly enjoyable.	.745	20.63	.88
	Blogging is truly a joy.	.737		
	When I am blogging, it is for entertainment or to have fun	.733		
	I enjoy interacting with others on blogs.	.728		
	I enjoy blogging for its own sake.	.712		
Blogging truly feels like an escape.	.675			

(table continues)

Table 6 (continued.)

Factor	Scale items	F.L. ^a	E.V. (%) ^b	α ^c
	I am interested in what goes on in the blog	.707		
Loyalty-seeking	I blog locally to support local communities.	.681	14.89	.87
	I feel I am part of the blog community.	.679		
	It makes me feel like a part of a larger	.651		
Efficiency-seeking	I want to find what I'm looking for from blogs in the least amount of time.	.771	8.58	.52
	I want to expend little effort on blogging.	.692		
	I accomplish just what I want to do, then I log off	.642		

n = 197; Scale range: 1 = *Strongly disagree*; 6 = *Strongly agree*; ^a Factor loading; ^b Explained variance; ^c Cronbach's α

Flow: The factor analysis for flow experience revealed three dimensions classified as telepresence, indulgence, and time distortion in agreement with the previous flow literature (Huang, 2006). Cronbach's alphas were acceptable with ranges from .85 to .94 suggesting the internal consistency of items within each factor. All factor items and their factor loadings are summarized in Table 7.

The first factor, named as *telepresence* ($\alpha = .94$, explained 38.32% of variance), contained 9 items including "blogging creates a new world for me," "My body is in the room, but my mind is inside the blog-created world," and "blogging makes me forget where I am." The second factor, identified as *indulgence* ($\alpha = .85$, explained 21.35% of variance), contained 6 items. It included items such as "blogging is fun and exciting," "I felt in control," "I was aware of distractions (reverse question)," and "blogging is appealing and fascinating." *Time distortion* ($\alpha = .89$, explained 10.79% of variance) was

identified as the third factor, including items such as “time goes by quickly” and “lose track of time.” Data indicated that the respondents regarded “indulgence” ($M = 4.00$) as the most commonly experienced aspect in flow, followed by “time distortion” ($M = 3.81$), and “telepresence” ($M = 2.97$).

Table 7

Factor Analysis of Flow

Factor	Scale items	F.L. ^a	E.V. (%) ^b	α ^c
Telepresence	Blogging creates a new world for me.	.931	38.32	.94
	After blogging, I feel like I come back to the "real world" after a journey.	.893		
	I am in a world created by the websites I visit.	.887		
	My body is in the room, but my mind is inside the world created by blogs.	.878		
	Blogging often makes me forget where I am.	.849		
	I forget about my immediate surroundings when I blog.	.769		
	I attach great importance to blogging.	.716		
	One can say blogging interests me a lot.	.661		
	I was totally absorbed in what I was doing.	.569		
	I thought about other things. ^(R)	.780		
Indulgence	Blogging is fun and exciting.	.751	21.35	.85
	I was aware of distractions. ^(R)	.726		
	I felt in control.	.715		
	I felt as if it is appealing, and fascinating.	.674		
	The blog system allowed me to control the computer interaction.	.670		
Time distortion	Time seems to go by very quickly when I blog.	.757	10.79	.89
	I tend to lose track of time.	.711		

$n = 197$; Scale range: 1 = Strongly disagree; 6 = Strongly agree; ^(R) Data was recoded; ^a Factor loading; ^b Explained variance; ^c Cronbach's α

Blogging behavior. As shown in Table 8, a principal component factor analysis of blogging behavior resulted in 2 wo dimensions: experiential behavior and e-shopping behavior. Scale reliabilities for the 2 factors with eigenvalues above 1.0 were acceptable with scores of .93 and .98.

As the first factor, *experiential behavior* ($\alpha = .93$, explained 43.61% of variance) embraced 7 items. It included items such as “entertain and stimulate my mind,” “explore more information,” and “explore the latest news” pertaining to exploratory, information search, and entertaining aspects. The goal-oriented *e-shopping behavior* ($\alpha = .98$, explained 36.64% of variance) was classified as the second factor. Items included “enhance e-shopping productivity,” “enhance e-shopping performance,” and “enhance e-shopping effectiveness.” The respondents regarded “experiential behavior” ($M = 3.77$) as a more important dimension than “e-shopping” behavior ($M = 3.26$).

Table 8

Factor Analysis of Blogging Behaviors

Factor	Scale items	F.L ^a	E.V.	α^c
Experiential behavior	Blogging enables me to entertain and stimulate my mind.	.857	43.61	.93
	Blogging enables me to generate idea and problem-solving.	.855		
	Blogging helps me extract information behind events that interest me.	.839		
	I browse blogs to explore the latest news.	.836		
	Blogging enables me to spend some relaxing time.	.830		
	Blogging helps me conveniently search for information.	.749		
	Blogging helps me explore more information about product and/or services.	.618		

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued.)

Factor	Scale items	F.L. ^a	E.V.	α ^c
e-Shopping behavior	Blogging can enhance my online shopping productivity.	.937	36.64	.98
	Blogging can enhance my online shopping performance.	.922		
	Blogging can enhance my online shopping effectiveness.	.914		
	Blogging enables me to accomplish the purpose of online shopping quickly.	.901		

n = 197; Scale range: 1 = *Strongly disagree*; 6 = *Strongly agree*; ^a Factor loading; ^b Explained variance; ^c Cronbach's α

Testing Hypotheses: Multiple Regression

To examine the hypothesized relationships of H1 through H7, multiple regression analyses were conducted using the step-wise method that determined the contribution of each independent variable to the regression models. In total, 14 out of the 26 proposed relationships were significant (see Figures 3 to 9).

To test hypothesis 1, the 4 blogging motivation dimensions were employed as independent variables and the experiential behavior as the dependent variable. The model significantly explained blog users' experiential behavior [$F_{(3,159)} = 68.54, p < .001, R^2 = .570$]. Enjoyment-seeking ($\beta = .60, p < .001$), loyalty-seeking ($\beta = .33, p < .001$), and information-seeking ($\beta = .32, p < .001$) had a positive impact on experiential blogging behavior. Thus, H1a, H1b, H1c were supported (see Figure 3 and Table 9).

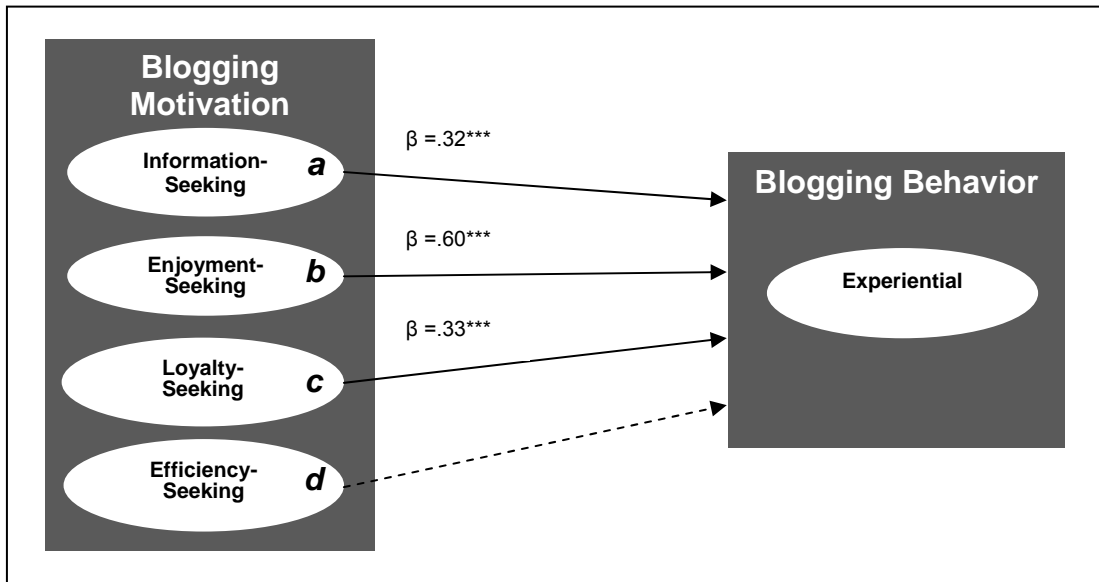


Figure 3. Blogging motivation and blogging behavior: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant; ———> hypothesis accepted; - - - - -> hypothesis rejected

Hypothesis 2 examined whether 4 blogging motivations significantly affected e-shopping behavior. Four blogging motivation dimensions were the predictor variables, and the e-shopping behavior was the criterion variable. The model significantly explained blog users' e-shopping behavior [$F_{(1,159)} = 53.50, p < .001, R^2 = .254$]. Information-seeking ($\beta = .50, p < .001$) was positively related to e-shopping behavior. Thus, H2a was accepted (see Figure 4 and Table 9).

Hypothesis 3 predicted a significant effect of blogging motivations on telepresence [$F_{(3,152)} = 24.41, p < .001, R^2 = .331$]. Loyalty-seeking ($\beta = .48, p < .001$), information-seeking ($\beta = .27, p < .00$), and enjoyment-seeking ($\beta = .18, p < .00$) were positively related to telepresence. Hence, H3a, H3b, and H3c were supported (see Figure 5 and Table 9).

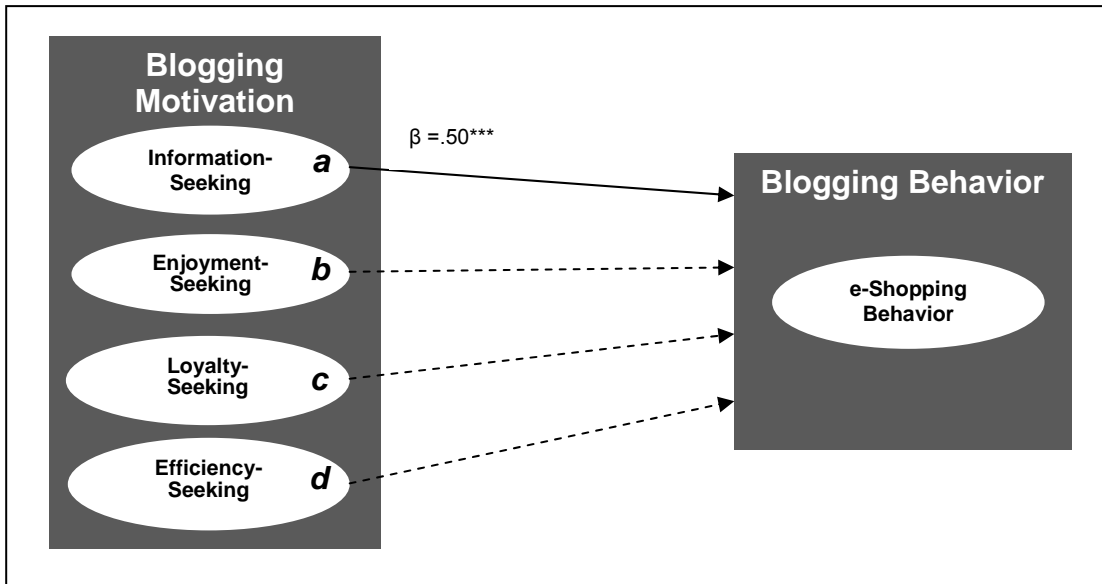


Figure 4. Blogging motivation and blogging behavior: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant; —→ hypothesis accepted; - - - - -→ hypothesis rejected.

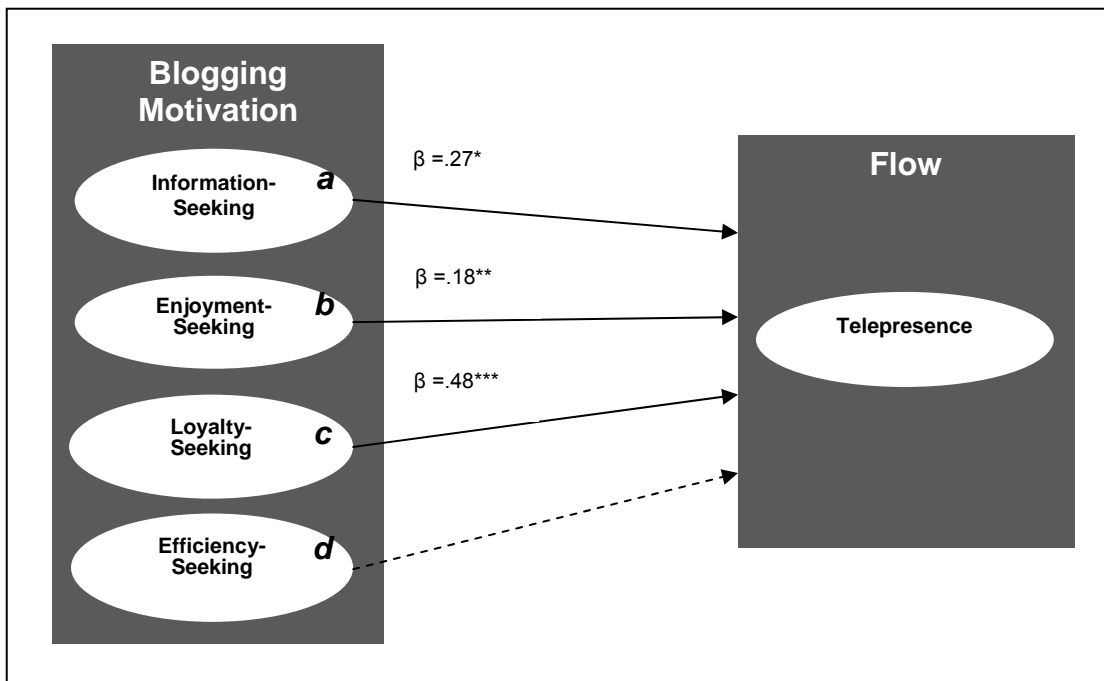


Figure 5. Blogging motivation and flow: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant; —→ hypothesis accepted; - - - - -→ hypothesis rejected.

Hypothesis 4 specified the significant effect of blogging motivations on indulgence. The proposed relationship between blogging motivations and indulgence was supported [$F_{(2,152)} = 28.54, p < .001, R^2 = .277$]. Enjoyment-seeking ($\beta = .44, p < .001$) and efficiency-seeking ($\beta = .27, p < .001$) were positively related to indulgence. Thus, H4b and H4d were supported (see Figure 6 and Table 9).

Hypothesis 5, proposing significant relationships between blogging motivations and time distortion, was supported [$F_{(1,152)} = 34.25, p < .001, R^2 = .186$]. Enjoyment-seeking ($\beta = .43, p < .001$) was positively related to time distortion. Hypothesis H5b was supported (see Figure 7 and Table 9).

In Hypothesis 6, three flow dimensions were identified to predict the experiential behavior [$F_{(3,169)} = 63.27, p < .001; R^2 = .535$]. Indulgence ($\beta = .48, p < .001$) was the strongest predictor followed by telepresence ($\beta = .43, p < .01$) and time distortion ($\beta = .33, p < .001$). H6a, H6b, and H6c were supported (see Figure 8 and Table 9).

Hypothesis 7 tested the significant relationships between flow and e-shopping behavior [$F_{(2,169)} = 16.85, p < .001; R^2 = .169$]. Telepresence ($\beta = .38, p < .001$) was positively related to e-shopping while time distortion ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$) was negatively related to e-shopping blogging behavior. Therefore, only H7a was supported (see Figure 9 and Table 9).

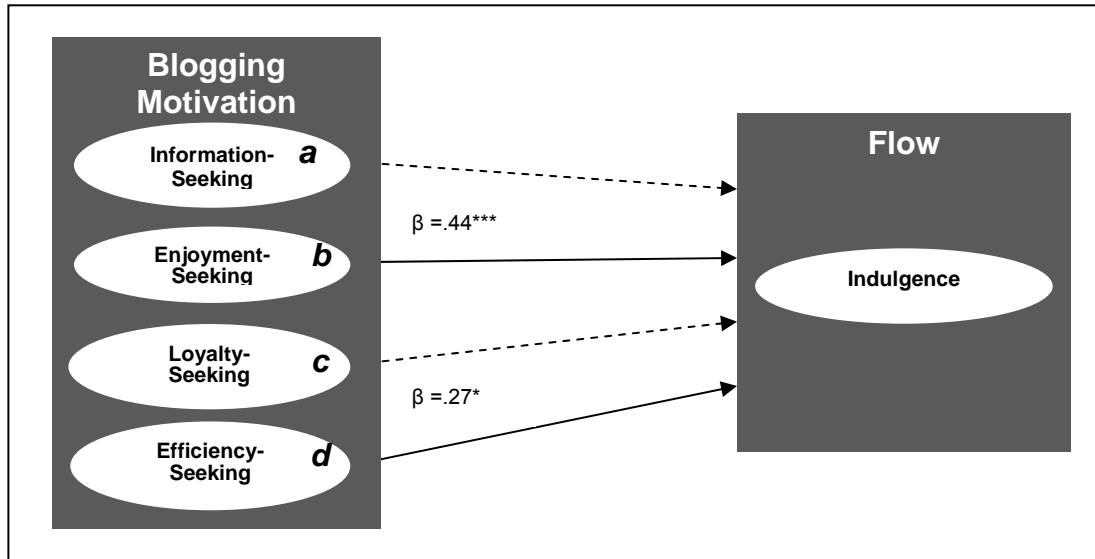


Figure 6. Blogging motivation and flow: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant; —→ hypothesis accepted; - - - - -→ hypothesis rejected.

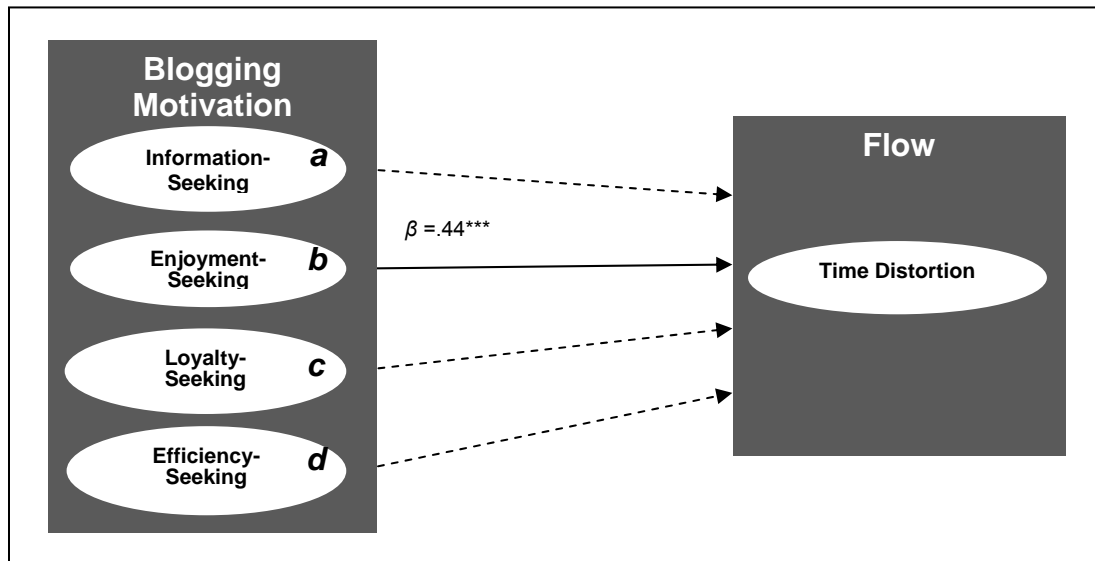


Figure 7. Blogging motivation and flow: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant; —→ hypothesis accepted; - - - - -→ hypothesis rejected.

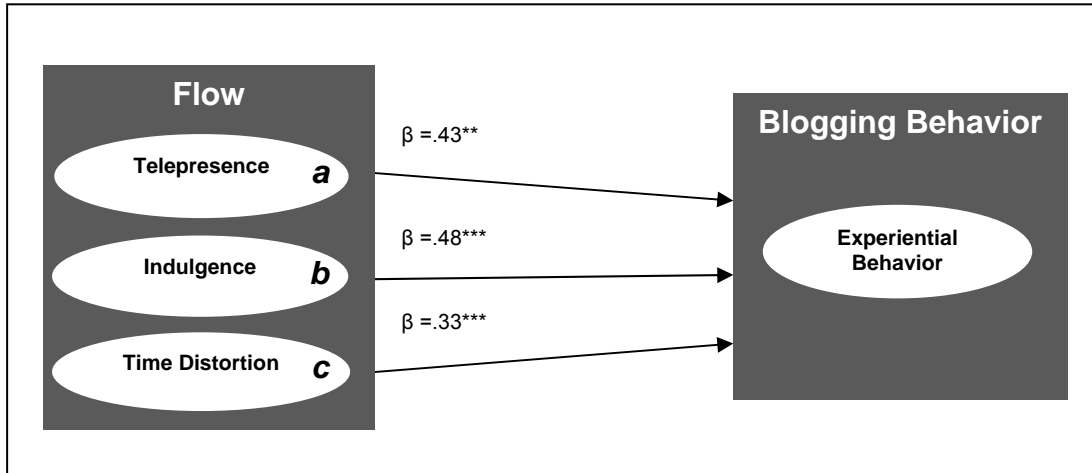


Figure 8. Flow and blogging behavior: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant; —→ hypothesis accepted; - - - - -→ hypothesis rejected.

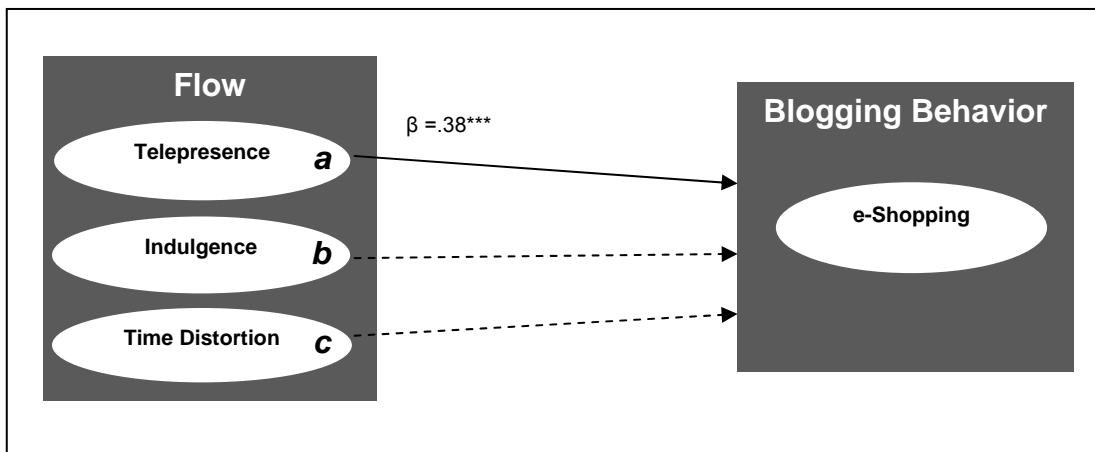


Figure 9. Flow and blogging behavior: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant; —→ hypothesis accepted; - - - - -→ hypothesis rejected.

Table 9

Multiple Regression between Blogging Motivations, Flow, and Blogging Behaviors

Predictor variables	Dependent variables (Standardized beta coefficient)					
	Flow	Blogging behavior				
	Telepresence	Indulgence	Time distortion	Experiential	e-shopping	
Blogging motivation	Information	.27*	n/s	n/s	.32***	.50***
	Enjoyment	.18**	.44***	.44***	.60***	n/s
	Loyalty	.48***	n/s	n/s	.33***	n/s
	Efficiency	n/s	.27*	n/s	n/s	n/s
	R^2	.331	.277	.186	.570	.254
	Adjusted R^2	.317	.267	.180	.562	.249
	F	24.41***	28.54***	34.25***	68.54***	53.50***
	Telepresence				.43**	.38***
	Indulgence				.48***	n/s
	Time				.33***	-.16*
Flow	R^2				.535	.169
	Adjusted R^2				.527	.159
	F				63.27***	16.85***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n/s: not significant

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examines the motivational blogging behaviors incorporating flow. The desires for information, enjoyment, loyalty, and efficiency are determinant motives in blogging. Blogging behaviors consist of experiential behavior as well as e-shopping behavior. In addition, flow occurs when blog users experience telepresence, indulgence, and time distortion while blogging.

Upon extending Hoffman and Novak's (1996) conceptual model of flow, 14 out of 26 hypotheses corroborate the significant impacts of blogging motivations and flow on blogging behaviors. The present study empirically supports that blogging motivations encourage both experiential behavior and e-shopping behavior directly or indirectly. Interestingly, information-seeking is the decisive motive that urges both experiential and e-shopping behavior concurrently. The findings exhibit that the desire for information, enjoyment, and loyalty are the primary drivers for experiential blogging behavior. Most prominently, this study speculates that the telepresence and time distortion of flow may play pivotal roles to promote the goal-oriented e-shopping behavior by stirring the information, enjoyment, and loyalty-seeking motivations. New marketing strategies should explore the four blogging motivations examined in the study to better reach e-consumers with new product and service offerings.

First, the results manifest that various blogging motivations have significant direct effects on blogging behavior. The information, enjoyment, and loyalty-seeking motivations are critical antecedents to prospect blog users' experiential behavior. While the majority of the blogging motivations can exercise direct influence on experiential

behavior, it should be noted that only the information-seeking motivation has direct influence on e-shopping behavior. This illustrates that the pursuit of information is the most vital driver in blogging and implies potential opportunities for e-marketers.

The direct effect of the information-seeking motivation on e-shopping behavior might be due to the ability to acquire product information needed from blogs for rational decision making. Bridges and Florsheim (2008) suggest that providing blog attributes that serve utilitarian values rather than stimulating hedonic motivation may increase online purchase. This is consistent with Wolfinbarger and Gilly's (2001) observation that e-consumers are more likely to buy when "they can find the selection they want." This suggests that investing in updated technologies that stimulate the information-seeking motivation may entice blog users to eventually make online purchases. Marketing plans for information-seeking blog users should provide rich information and easy-to-find paths (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007). A blog may be designed to provide maximum possible information, while still offering easy ways to locate the desired links. Reducing the number of levels in the hierarchy as far as possible will also reduce the number of click-throughs necessary to reach a desired location (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008).

Second, blog users experience flow in different ways according to their diverse motivations: motivations for information, enjoyment, and loyalty-seeking driving the telepresence state; the enjoyment and efficiency-seeking motivations leading to indulgence; and enjoyment-seeking resulting in time distortion. Information-seeking, enjoyment-seeking, and loyalty-seeking motivations have direct influence on telepresence. Blogging systems that provide higher quality and quantity of product information and enjoyment-oriented content as well as better ability to interact with

members within the blogosphere may lead to a higher telepresence level (Fiore, Jin, & Kim, 2005; Fiore, Yan, & Yoh, 2005; Shih, 1998; Steuer, 1992), which in turn might result in more elaborate e-consumer blogging experience. Likewise, the enjoyment-seeking blogging motivation elicits an indulgence state, where a blog user is pulled towards total involvement, gratification, control and intrinsic interest (Hsu & Lu, 2004). This concept has been extensively applied in studies in a broad range of contexts, such as sports, shopping, dancing and gaming (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989).

Third, flow leads to experiential behavior as well as e-shopping behavior. Experiential behavior, which taps hedonic value from the blogging experience, is positively affected by telepresence, indulgence, and time distortion in flow. According to Ghani and Deshpande (1994), one of the effects of flow is that the user might “work for the joy of the process, not the product” (Turkle, 1984). For computer users, this activity takes the form of greater experimentation, browsing, and exploratory behaviors (Carroll & Rosson, 1987; Ghani, 1991; Katz, 1987). Beatty and Ferrell (1998) discovered that positive feelings aroused by marketing stimuli during a shopping experience encourage impulse purchases. These findings are supported by studies (Fiore, Jin, & Kim, 2005; Fiore, Kim, & Lee, 2005) that suggest the direct influence of telepresence on experiential behavior. These researchers found that telepresence facilitates experiential pleasure.

Experiential value can be derived from the creative cognitive processes activated in telepresence. This corroborates that e-marketers should use blog features that stimulate telepresence to create experiential value for e-consumers. Enhancing the interactivity of a blog is seen as a means of giving the blog an experiential competitive

edge. To attract and keep customers, e-marketers could incorporate more interactivity, including image interactivity and experiential information about the product as well as enjoyable entertainment. Engaging e-consumers on blogs will arise in part from providing them with excitement.

Additionally, from an e-marketer's perspective which aims to utilize the burgeoning blogging phenomenon to its fullest potential, focusing on how to induce e-shopping behavior becomes crucial. This study found that the flow elements of telepresence and time distortion, lead blog users to e-shopping behavior. The outcome of this study suggests that the incorporation of these flow components into e-marketing strategies is critical to lure blog users to prompt online purchases because providing for these flow opportunities can encourage e-shopping behavior. Once a blog user experiences flow in a blogging context, it appears that the blog user would be willing to make online purchases.

Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) argue that flow can draw consumers, mitigate price sensitivity, and positively influence subsequent attitudes and behaviors. A higher level of telepresence, which provides enhanced similarity to direct product experience would result in stronger product beliefs and attitudes and consequently lead to greater willingness to purchase. Klein's (2003) research empirically supports that telepresence created by retail websites influences persuasion due to stronger beliefs about product attributes and attitudes towards the product. Fiore et al. (2005 a, b) affirm that the level of telepresence positively affects attitudes towards, willingness to purchase from, and willingness to patronize a retail website.

Lastly, based on the hypothesized causal relationships in this study, the mediating role of flow can be surmised to prospect the blogging behavioral patterns.

Results of the current study prove that blogging motivations positively affect consciousness in the form of flow. Flow, in turn, exerts an influence on blogging behaviors. This study speculated that blogging behavior, e-shopping behavior in particular, can be stimulated when a blog user is in flow as a result of the developmental cognition process. The study explores which flow factors might mediate motives and behaviors as well. The dichotomy of blogging behavioral dimensions and the drivers behind each dimension expounded by this study are relevant for e-marketers. As flow directs experiential and goal-oriented behaviors, the flow constructs can be used for an initial evaluation of blog attributes in terms of the extent to which they deliver these two types of behavior.

For instance, this study did not show a significant direct impact of the enjoyment-seeking or loyalty-seeking motivation on e-shopping behavior. Nonetheless, enjoyment-seeking and loyalty-seeking motivations might affect e-shopping behavior indirectly through an enhanced telepresence experience in flow. Therefore, the enjoyment-seeking and loyalty-seeking motivations might augment the e-shopping value in flow rather than assist rational decision-making. More specifically, the enjoyment-seeking motivation does not have direct influence on e-shopping behavior. However, the enjoyment-seeking motivation could have a significant yet indirect effect on e-shopping behavior, implying the mediating effects of telepresence and time distortion. E-shopping behavior elicited by the enjoyment-seeking motivation may arise

from telepresence and time distortion where one may simulate a sense of personal involvement, active emotional processes, and enjoyment lost in time.

Correspondingly, the loyalty-seeking motive has a significant direct effect on experiential behavior as well as a possible indirect effect on e-shopping via telepresence. Integration of the telepresence-oriented constituents into blogs can differentiate a firm from other competitors in terms of approaching and persuading blog users. Strategy development and execution for loyalty-seeking blogging activities may best attempt to attract individuals by nurturing empathy and encouraging self-expression in blog users, which will enhance their belongingness with the blogging community. A blog user's scope of online interaction and the frequency of their blogging may be determined by the degree of the blog user's loyalty-seeking motivation, and not by the blog user's information-seeking motivation (Huang, 2007). The intensity of the blog users' loyalty-seeking motivation is found to positively influence their scope of online interaction driven by hedonic values. Hence, as a practical application, if e-marketers aim to diffuse a simple message quickly, they can logically target blog users who mainly blog to support the blog communities. On the other hand, if the marketing strategy has more information to communicate in the long-term, then more emphasis should be placed on information-seeking blog users to maximize the marketing effectiveness (Huang, 2007).

Given the vacuum in the current literature that outlines why and how e-consumers engage in blogging, these findings provide a theoretical and empirical foundation that serves as a catalyst for a practical approach to understanding the blogging experience.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

With the empirical validation, the current study provides a comprehensive platform for further analysis of the blogging experience. However, given the exploratory nature of this approach, there are some limitations in generalizing these findings. First, the convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the research by restricting the number of blogging variants incorporated in the study. The disadvantage of convenience sampling is that the units that are easiest to obtain may not be representative of the population because some members of the population have no chance of being sampled, the extent to which a convenience sample actually represents the entire population cannot be known. Convenience sampling is often used in exploratory research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth. This nonprobability method is often used during preliminary research efforts to get a gross estimate of the results, without incurring the cost or time required to select a random sample. Considering that the exploration of the newly emerged blogging phenomenon with the flow concept is almost the first attempt in academia, convenience sampling deemed acceptable.

While the blog user sample is too small to include all existing blogging variants in depth, this study claims that it represents some dominant tendencies and that it corresponds to Pew Research Center's (2006) findings of blog users still being a minority of Internet users. Although the sample in this study is largely made up of college students in their twenties, this probably is an accurate reflection of the age of the mainstream of blogging community users. Pew Research Center (2006) identifies

that more than half (54%) of blog users are under the age of 30. This sample also matches Pew Research Center's (2006) findings, which portray blog users' higher level of proficiency and familiarity with blogging technologies than the general public.

Second, a dichotomy of behavioral orientations (i.e., experiential and e-shopping) is adopted in this study. However, more elaborate behavioral dimensions may better capture the multifaceted behaviors of blogging. In order to scrutinize the diverse blogging behavioral dimensions, future research can delve into the individual cognitive and affectionate factors such as blog users' involvement and attachment and into social and cultural factors such as social capitalism and acculturation.

Third, considering the newness of the blogging phenomenon, the study did not adequately control participated blog types or intensity level of blogging participation that can considerably influence the extent of the blogging behavior. Future research can explore how those control variables function to better understand the blogging phenomenon in a global context.

Fourth, the conceptual and operational ambiguity surrounding the idea of flow creates difficulties in integrating the concept of flow into e-consumer blogging behavior analysis. Several researchers have proposed different constructs for flow in recent years (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Huang, 2006), yet the validity of those constructs is not strong enough to provide theoretical clarity and strengthen practical application in delineating the relationships among blogging motivations, behaviors and flow. Future theoretical and empirical research on flow can endeavor to develop a solid flow framework to be applied in blogging studies.

Beyond these limitations, given the research model presented here as the foundation, there are various directions for future research. First, the current study looks at blog users rather than blogs. Future studies that link up the blog users (their motivations and behaviors as addressed in this study) and their blogs (e.g., content, direction of outbound hyperlinks in the blogs, etc.) may provide valuable insights into blogging activities. Lastly, an intriguing and potentially important question has remained unanswered as to why the majority of Internet users do not participate in blogging even with easy and free accessibility to blogs. Future studies that provide explanations for these types of issues will benefit e-marketers by helping them gain more realistic insights into the magnetism of the blogosphere.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPACT OF BLOGGING MOTIVATIONS ON BLOGGING BEHAVIORS

Dear Survey Participant,

This research study is being conducted by Boram Park, a graduate student in the School of Merchandising and Hospitality Management at the University of North Texas. This research study attempts to recognize the relationship between blogging motivations and blogging behaviors in the presence of state of flow. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.

The survey asks your opinions and perceptions about blogging experience. It will take you approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete this survey. It also asks a few questions about you to obtain demographic information relevant and important to the study. However, the survey collects no personally identifiable data. The researcher will keep your identity and individual responses absolutely confidential and anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to decline to participate or to withdraw during the course of the study. Your decision whether to participate or withdraw will have no effect on your grade in this course. Your participation in this study is important. Please answer all questions completely as incomplete surveys cannot be used. Your response and those of other participants should provide a valuable insight into blogging behavior that can help to enhance your blogging experience. Please contact the researcher if you have any question and comments about this project. You may keep this letter for your records. This project has been approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Contact the UNT IRB at 940-565-3941 with any questions about your rights as a research subject. For any questions about this study contact:

Boram Park, Graduate Student
(940) 594-1460
borampark@hotmail.com

*School of Merchandising &
Hospitality Management*

Supervisor: HaeJung Kim, Ph.D
(940) 565-4109
hjkim@unt.edu

Blogs are regularly updated Web entries like a personal diary or a specialized information resource. 'Blogging' includes either writing or reading of postings. If you use 'notes' function on

➤ ***Do you have a personal blog?***

1. () Yes 2. () No

➤ ***On average I update my blog every _____ days.***

➤ ***How long have you been blogging?***

1. () Less than 6 months 2. () Less than a year 3. () 1-3 years 4. () 3-4 years 5. () More than 4

➤ ***How much time do you spend on blogging per day?***

1. () Less than 10 minutes 2. () 10-30 minutes 3. () 31-60 minutes 4. () 1-3 hours 5. () More than 3

➤ ***I regularly read and visit others' blogs.***

1. () Strongly disagree 2. () Disagree 3. () Somewhat disagree 4. () Somewhat agree 5. () Agree 6. () Strongly agree

➤ ***I am interested in creating a blog.***

1. () Strongly disagree 2. () Disagree 3. () Somewhat disagree 4. () Somewhat agree 5. () Agree 6. () Strongly agree

➤ ***Do you identify yourself on your blog (i.e. is your real name, not a nickname, clear on the site?)***

1. () Never 2. () Very rarely 3. () Rarely 4. () Occasionally 5. () Very frequently 6. () Always

Section 1 YOUR BLOG MOTIVATION Why do you blog? <i>Please mark the number that best describes your reason to blog.</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
Blogging is truly a joy.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
Compared to the other things I can do, my time spent blogging is truly enjoyable.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
Blogging truly feels like an escape.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I enjoy blogging for its own sake, not just for the information I share with others.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
When I am blogging, it is for entertainment or to have fun (e.g., make new friends, participate in online chatting, or express about myself.).	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I enjoy visiting unfamiliar blogs just for the sake of variety.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I accomplish just what I want to (e.g., writing journals) when I blog, and then I log off without engaging in other activities (posting pictures, browsing other blog postings).	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I want to find what I'm looking for from blogs in the least amount of time.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I like having access to many sources of product related information on blogs.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I want to expend little effort on blogging.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I enjoy interacting with others on blogs.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I usually find myself looking for unique products to purchase on blogs.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I often seek out information across blogs about products and brands.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]
I like to have a great deal of information from blogs before making a purchase.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4] [5]

I often compare product prices on blogs to get the lowest price.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I use blogs to search for the latest/specific information.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I like to browse blogs and find out about the latest information on products I might purchase.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I blog locally to support local communities.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I feel I am part of the blog community.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I am interested in what goes on in the blog community.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Interacting with people in the blog community makes me feel like a part of a larger community.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

Section 2 YOUR BLOG BEHAVIOR <i>When I blog...</i>	Strongly	Somewhat		Somewhat		
	Strongly Disagre Agree [1] [6]	Disagree [1] [6]	Disagre [2]	Agree [3]	Agree [4]	[
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Blogging helps me clarify my thinking about a topic.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging helps me clarify my feelings.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging gives me reassurance.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging gives me approval.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging gives me support for my ideas.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging helps me come to terms with traumatic life experiences.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging helps put my life in perspective.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging helps me with my work or studies.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging widens the audience for my intellectual work.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging widens the audience for my creative work.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
I feel satisfaction from exercising my talents in blogging.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
I feel satisfaction from obtaining recognition of my talents in blogging.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
I feel satisfaction from sharing my expertise in blogging.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
I feel satisfaction from participating in a democratic movement in blogging.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
I feel satisfaction from helping to redress the distortions and inaccuracies of the mainstream news media in blogging.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
It is worth to blog.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
I will frequently blog in the future.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

I browse blogs to explore the latest news.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Blogging enables me to spend some relaxing time.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

Section 2 YOUR BLOG BEHAVIOR <i>When I blog...</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Blogging enables me to entertain and stimulate my mind.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging enables me to generate idea and problem-solving.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging helps me extract information behind events that	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging helps me explore more information about products	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging helps me conveniently search for information.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging enables me to accomplish the purpose of online	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging can enhance my online shopping performance.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging can enhance my online shopping productivity.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging can enhance my online shopping effectiveness.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging can enhance my affiliation with the customer	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging can enhance my belongingness with the blogging	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

“Flow” is a state of mind experienced when you become so focused on blogging that you lose track of time and temporarily forget about the surroundings and usual concerns.

Section 3 YOUR FLOW STATE <i>When I am blogging,</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
I felt in control.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I felt that I had no control over my interaction with the blog system.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog system allowed me to control the computer interaction.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I am fun and exciting	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I felt as it is appealing, and fascinating.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

I thought about other things.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I was aware of distractions.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I was totally absorbed in what I was doing.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I attach great importance to blogging.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
One can say blogging interests me a lot.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging is a topic which leaves me totally indifferent.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Time seems to go by very quickly when I blog.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I tend to lose track of time.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I forget about my immediate surroundings when I blog.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging often makes me forget where I am.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
After blogging, I feel like I come back to the "real world" after a journey.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Blogging creates a new world for me, and this world suddenly disappears when I stop blogging.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
I feel I am in a world created by the websites I visit.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
My body is in the room, but my mind is inside the world created by the blogs I visit.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The world generated by the blogs I visit is more real for me than the "real world."	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

➤ **How would you characterize the kinds of entries you publish on your blog(s)? Please check in the gray box all that apply:**

1. Personal musings (e.g. sharing recipes)		5. Political opinions (e.g. engaging in political debate)	
2. Academic brainstorm (e.g. sharing academic knowledge)		6. Hobby (e.g. journaling, chatting)	
3. Professional brainstorm (e.g. sharing business information)		7. Gossip (e.g. talking about celebrities)	
4. e-Shopping (e.g. product related information, review)		8. Other : _____ (Please specify.)	

How important is the following aspect to you when you are blogging?	Very		Somewhat	Somewhat	
	Very		Unimportant	Important	
	Unimportant	Unimportant	Unimportant	Important	
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

	[6] ▼ ▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
There are meaningful hyperlinks on the blog.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The description of the links on the blog is clear.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The arrangement of the different links is easy to understand.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog is entertaining. (It is fun to use.)	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog is exciting and interesting.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog is easy to write and/or read.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The use of multimedia is effective for my tasks on the blog.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog has an attractive layout.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The speed at which the information is displayed is fast.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog has an information policy. (e.g. Privacy protection, reproduction regulation)	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog has provisions for use authentication. (Registration/membership required)	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
It is easy to understand the content of the blog.	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog is well-maintained so that the information is easy to acquire (no dead links, for example).	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
The blog is available. (That is, it is up.)	[1] [6]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

Section 4 ABOUT YOU

*The following questions will help the researcher interpret your responses in relation to other questions. Please be assured that your responses here and throughout the questionnaire will be held strictly **confidential**.*

➤ **What is your age?** years old

➤ **What is your gender?**

1. () Female

2. () Male

3. () Other

➤ **What is your grade level?**

1. () Freshman 2. () Sophomore 3. () Junior 4. () Senior 5. () Master's 6. () Ph. D

➤ **What is your major?**

1. () Merchandising & Hospitality Management 2. () Business 3. () Arts & Science 4. () Music
5. () Visual Arts 6. () Undecided 7. () Others (please specify)

➤ **What is your ethnicity?**

1. () African-American 2. () Caucasian/Non-Hispanic 3. () Hispanic
4. () Asian 5. () Native American 6. () Other

➤ **Which statement best describes your current job status?**

1. () Part-time job 2. () Full-time job 3. () Not currently working 4. () Other

➤ **What is the average number of hours per week you work/ed?**

1. () Fewer than 20 hours 2. () 20-29 hours 3. () 30-39 hours 4. () 40 or more

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (940) 565-3940.

**I appreciate your
cooperation.**

APPENDIX B
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

UNT
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH TEXAS

Discover the power of ideas.

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Office of Research Services

March 5, 2009

Boram Park
Department of Merchandising
University of North Texas

RE: Human Subjects Application No. 09068

Dear Ms. Park:

In accordance with 45 CFR Part 46 Section 46.101, your study titled "The Impact of Blogging Motivation on Blogging Behaviors with the Mediating Effect of Flow Experience" has been determined to qualify for an exemption from further review by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB).

No changes may be made to your study's procedures or forms without prior written approval from the UNT IRB. Please contact Shelia Burns, Research Compliance Administrator, ext. 3940, if you wish to make any such changes.

Sincerely,



Patricia L. Kaminski, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Chair, Institutional Review Board

PK:so

cc: Dr. HaeJung Kim

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