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DO I DESERVE TO SPEND? SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SPENDING PLEASURE

A Dissertation Presented

by

KAWON KIM

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in the partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2017

Isenberg School of Management

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DO I DESERVE TO SPEND? SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SPENDING PLEASURE

A Dissertation Presented

By

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Sung Ha Lim, and my father, Jung Ho Kim, who gave me endless support for my whole life. There is no doubt in my mind that without their continued support and counsel, I could not have completed this process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Looking back on PhD journey, it was definitely not an easy process. However, I am really proud of myself that I did not give up and keep up my hard work to finish my dissertation (and write this acknowledgment!). I feel so lucky that I have so many great people around me including my family, my advisors, committee members, HTM faculties, and friends who have provided endless support and guidance throughout my 4-years of PhD program.

First and foremost, my utmost gratitude to my parents who gave me endless love, trust, and support throughout my life. I know how much they love me and I am really blessed to be their daughter. As they always said, I will live my life with helping others and being a good influencer to others. I will give the love that I received from my parents back to others to make a better world. Again, I love you so much and thank you for your great guidance, support, trust, and encouragement.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and assistance given me by my committee chair, Dr. Melissa Baker who is an exceptional advisor. She has always provided excellent guidance to me by showing both informational and emotional support and encouragement through my doctoral program. Without her constant mentoring and support, I could not have reach my goals. She is definitely a great role model that I want to follow. Her sincerity and encouragement I will never forget.

In addition, a thank you to Professor Dr. Linda Shea, co-chair of my dissertation committee. Without her guidance and persistent help, this dissertation would not have been possible. I also appreciate her sincere advice during my job search. They were amazingly supportive and encouraging. I would like to thank my committee members, Professor Dr. David Piercey and Professor Lisa Keller for their time and efforts on my dissertation.

Finally, I would also like to express my appreciation to my friends (special thanks to Kauen, Kyungyeon, Soyoung, and Mabel Sanchez) and PhD family at UMass, who,

because of their affection and support, have allowed my experience at University of Massachusetts to be an exciting and memorable moments.

ABSTRACT

DO I DESERVE TO SPEND? SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SPENDING PLEASURE

MAY 2017

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Despite evidence of people posting their consumption experience on online social networks to fulfill the needs of social support, a systemic understanding of how social support obtained via online social networks affects post-consumption behaviors related to spending remains elusive. This dissertation aims to answer the question of how social support via online social networks affects consumer's post-consumption behavior by investigating in what form and from whom consumers obtain online social support. To do so, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine how online social support from others influences perceptions of deservingness which then influences spending pleasure. This dissertation focuses on two types of social support sources, social support from friends and social support from the firm. In addition, this dissertation examines the role of relational factors (e.g., tie-strength with Facebook friends and relationship strength with firm) and a situational factor (e.g., social support aimed at others) that may influence the impact of social support on spending pleasure.

This dissertation consists of two studies. In Study 1, a 2 (Social support; low vs. high) x 2 (Tie strength: strong vs. weak) x 2 (Self-construal: independent vs.

interdependent) quasi-experimental between-subjects design is utilized, self-construal serving as a measured factor. A 2 (Social support; present vs. absent) x 2 (Relationship strength: strong vs. weak) x 2 (Social support aimed at others: present vs. absent) between-subjects factorial experiment is used for study 2.

Across two studies, this research provides evidence that social support gained through online social networks influences consumers' spending pleasure through perceptions of their own deservingness. More specifically, when people obtain social support from others on their consumption related post, they feel more deserving which then enhances their spending pleasure from that consumption. Notably, this study reveals that people obtain social support in online social networks through receiving 'Likes' and 'Comments' on their post. Furthermore, this result advances our knowledge of online social networks by demonstrating that not only the social networks friends but also firms can be social support sources by actively responding to customers' post. In addition, this study also explores boundary conditions for when online social support is more effective on spending pleasure.

The findings from two studies address the benefit to the service industry by understanding how social support can enhance spending pleasure. In addition, this dissertation may broaden the social support literature by highlighting the function of like and Comments, a new form of social support that are provided in the context of online social networks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Purpose of the Study	5
1.3 Contributions of the Study	6
1.4 Study Overview	9
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Social Support and Online Social Networks	12
2.2.1 Social Support and Communication Function in Facebook	15
2.2.2 Social Support and Consumer Behavior	17
2.2.2.1 Social Support and Spending Pleasure	18
2.2.3 Deservingness	21
2.2.3.1 Social Support and Deservingness	21
2.2.3.2 Deservingness and Spending Pleasure	23
2.2.4 Sources of Social Support in Facebook	25
2.2.4.1 Social Support from Facebook Friends	25

2.2.4.1.1	Impact of Relational Factor: Tie Strength	26
2.2.4.1.2	Impact of Personality Traits: Self-construal	31
2.2.4.2	Social Support from Firm	35
2.2.4.2.1	Relationship Strength with Firm	38
2.2.4.2.2	Social Support Aimed at Other Customers	41
2.3	Conceptual Framework	42
3.	METHODOLOGY	44
3.1	Chapter Overview	44
3.2	Justification of the Research Approach	45
3.3	Context of the Study	45
3.4	Pretest	46
3.5	Study 1	47
3.5.1	Study Design, Sample and Procedure	47
3.5.2	Experimental Stimuli and Measures	48
3.5.3	Data Analysis	50
3.6	Study 2	52
3.6.1	Study Design, Sample and Procedure	52
3.6.2	Experimental Stimuli and Measures	53
3.6.3	Data Analysis	55
4.	RESULTS	57
4.1	Study 1	57
4.1.1	Sample Profile	57
4.1.2	Manipulation Check	58

4.1.3 Reliability and Validity of Measurements	59
4.1.4 Spending Pleasure.....	60
4.1.5 Deservingness	61
4.1.6 Mediation Analysis	62
4.1.7 Discussion for Study 1	63
4.2 Study 2.....	65
4.2.1 Sample Profile	65
4.2.2 Manipulation Check.....	65
4.2.3 Reliability and Validity.....	67
4.2.4 Spending Pleasure.....	67
4.2.5 Deservingness	69
4.2.6 Mediation Analysis	69
4.1.7 Discussion for Study 2.....	70
5. CONCLUSIONS	90
5.1 General Discussions	90
5.2 Theoretical Contributions	94
5.2.1 Social Support Literature	94
5.2.2 Deservingness	96
5.3 Managerial Contributions	97
5.3.1 Management Responses Strategies in Online Social Networks	97
5.3.2 Understanding the Mechanism of Social Support in Online Social Networks.....	98
5.3.3 Implication to High-end Service Industry	99

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research.....	101
APPENDICES	
A. SCENARIO	103
B. SURVEY	110
C. IRB APPROVAL.....	115
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	116

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
Table 1.1	Demographic information of respondents for Study 1	74
Table 1.2	Manipulation check for Study 1	75
Table 1.3	Psychometric Properties of Scale Items for Study 1	76
Table 1.4	Correlation Matrix for Study 1	78
Table 1.5	ANCOVA results of Study 2.....	79
Table 1.6	Treatment Means and Standard Deviations of Study 1	80
Table 2.1	Demographic information of respondents for Study 2.....	82
Table 2.2	Manipulation check for Study 2	83
Table 2.3	Psychometric Properties of Scale Items for Study 2.....	84
Table 2.4	Correlation Matrix for Study 2.....	86
Table 2.5	ANCOVA results of Study 2.....	87
Table 2.6	Treatment Means and Standard Deviations of Study 2	88

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1.1 Conceptual Model	43
Figure 2.1 Interaction Effect of Social Support and Tie-strength.....	81
Figure 3.1 Interaction Effect of Social Support and Social Support Aimed at Other Customers	89

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

People often share their experience, opinions and information with others through both direct interaction and increasingly, online channels. Specifically, with the increased use of the Internet, online communication has become an essential part of people's everyday lives (Deters et al., 2016). This is especially prevalent in online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which have rapidly gained prominence as venues of communication (Winter et al., 2014). For instance, over 1.71 billion people use Facebook, and two thirds of them are daily active users (Zephoria, 2016). This growing popularity and increasingly frequent usage of online social networks has altered the nature of social communication dramatically (Doster, 2013). Especially, Social network sites enable users to communicate with other users through various functions such as profile construction or status updates.

Compared to traditional face-to-face interactions, online social networks allow individuals to more easily reproduce their self-image (Walther, 2007). Users can easily craft their ideal self-image by selectively displaying positive and appealing aspects of self, and consequently, online social networks provide an appropriate environment for implementing a self-presentation strategy (Schau & Gilly, 2003; Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Such self-presentation strategies are manifested through consumption behavior (Schau & Gilly, 2003; Howe & Strauss, 2009). This is because consumption is an effective way to communicate one's desired identity through conveying the image and symbol of one's

possessions (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995). For example, people are more likely to engage in conspicuous consumption as a mean of symbols or self-expression of their desired lifestyle (Phau and Cheong, 2009; O’Cass and Siahtiri, 2013). Consequently, people use online social networks to show-off their status reflecting their ideal self-concept in regards to consumption behavior. Examples may include uploading photos or Comments from a fine dining restaurant or upscale resort. In addition, social network functions such as check-in or tagging also help users to easily update their recent consumption of specific brands and locations (Burke, 2011). In other words, online social networks work as an effective medium to implement self-presentation strategies in regards to their consumption behavior.

This then leads to research questions as to why consumers engage in self-presentation of their consumption behavior to others online? How does it relate to basic human needs? According to Socioanalytic theory, success in self-presentation is critical for establishing and maintaining one's social identity to satisfy the basic needs of belongingness and acceptance from others (Hogan, 1982). In other words, the underlying motivation for people to upload their consumption experiences to online social networks is to fulfill their needs of obtaining attention and support from others. Previous research establishes the notion that online social networks provide an ideal outlet to receive relational benefits such as social support (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). For instance, in Facebook, people can easily obtain support from others through various communication tools such as Likes and Comments on their posting. Although online social networks is a great communication channel to receive social support from a wide range of interactions ranging from close friends to acquaintances (Ellison, Steinfield, &

Lampe, 2007; Frison & Eggermont, 2015), and consumers in fact use such channel to fulfill their needs of obtaining attention and support from others by posting their consumption behavior, no study to date has examined how such online social support influence consumer consumption behavior.

Mukhopadhyay and Johar (2007) argue that consumers feel guilt from spending money, which reduces the pleasure associated with consumption (Alba & Williams, 2013). Consumers use a variety of methods to reduce feelings of guilt and to enhance their spending pleasure. One way is to justify their spending (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002). As a way to justify their reasonableness or acceptability of a behavior, customers pursue information that enables them to behave in the way they intended. As a part of such information, social support from other people plays an important role (Simonson, 1989). When people feel they are valued by others, it increases their feeling of self-worthiness of particular treatment that is highly related to the perceptions of one's own deservingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Wood et al., 2009). The increased confidence in one's self-concept may increase one's spending pleasure as it helps to justify their consumption. Therefore, obtaining social support from others may have a positive effect on spending pleasure by justifying their consumption behavior.

According to Mendonca and De Farias Junior (2015), social support from different sources exerts different influences on people. Online social networks serve as an environment providing social support from various sources (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). The immediacy of interactivity and connection with distant relations in the digital medium offer users of online social networks the possibility to obtain a wide range of diverse support from a broader audience in their relational networks (Frison &

Eggermont, 2015). Moreover, an important source of social support is not only restricted to the boundary of online relational networks, but can also be from the service firm where the consumption has taken place. Firms are increasingly taking an active role in interacting with consumers in online social networks as they recognize the importance of managing online social networks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Many firms make efforts to respond to consumers' posts about the service experience or products (Gu & Ye, 2014). These interactions between customer posting and firm responses can also provide social support to consumers. Despite the increase in customer-firm online interactions and customer-to-customer online interactions, relatively little is known about how social support provided by other customers and the firm influences consumption behavior.

In summary, despite evidence of people posting their consumption experience on online social networks to fulfill the needs of obtaining attention and support from others, a systemic understanding of how social support obtained via online social networks affects post-consumption behaviors related to spending remains elusive. In addition, the impact of social support is contingent on the nature of the communication exchanged and the relational elements between the communicators (Burke & Krant, 2013). Therefore, this research examines the role of relational and situational factors that may influence the impact of social support on spending pleasure. Also, previous research argued that individual differences exist in the process of giving and receiving social support as some individuals are more susceptible to influence than others based on one's personality traits (Aral & Walker, 2014). Accordingly, this research attempts to understand the effect of online social support on spending pleasure and the moderating effects of relational, situational factors and personality traits.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

People exhibit self-presentation by sharing their consumption behavior in online social networks to obtain support and approval from others. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question of how social support via online social network affects consumer's post-consumption behavior, and in what form and from whom consumers obtain social support in online social networks. To do so, the main purpose of the study is to examine how online social support from others influences spending pleasure. In addition, this study also attempt to reveal the underlying mechanism that explains the link between online social support and spending pleasure by examining the mediating role of perceptions of deservingness. Given that the sources of social support through online social networks can be from both online social network friends as well as the firm, we focus on two types of social support sources: social support from friends and social support from the firm. Specifically, we incorporate relational, personality and situational factors as moderators that may influence the influence of social support on perceived deservingness. First, we investigate the role of a relational factor by examining the impact of strength of the relationship between social support giver and receiver on perceived deservingness. In addition, as a personality trait, we examine the role of self-construal which is also highly related to one's relationship with others. Finally, the impact of observing social support aimed at other customers is investigated as a situational factor. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Does social support from friends via online social networks influence consumer's spending pleasure?

2. Does social support from the firm via online social networks influence consumer's spending pleasure?
3. Does perceived deservingness mediate the relationship between social support and spending pleasure?
4. How does the relational factor, namely, tie-strength with the social support source, influences the relationship between social support and spending pleasure?
5. How personal traits, namely, self-construal, influence the relationship between social support and spending pleasure?
6. How situational factor, namely, observing social support aimed at other customers, influence the relationship between social support and spending pleasure?

1.3 Contributions of the Study

As an original work to examine the impact of social support on spending pleasure and its underlying mechanism in the context of online social networks, this study provides both theoretical and managerial implications. First, although online social networks provide a new and critical venue for individuals to obtain social support by conveniently communicating with their social relationships online (Rui & Stefanone, 2013), there are a lack of studies that examine how social support can be provided to individuals in the context of online social networks (Frison & Eggermont, 2015). This

study is valuable as it incorporates user-generated content in the form of Likes and Comments as mechanisms of a social support tool. Furthermore, previous work examining motives for using social network sites (e.g. Facebook) suggests additional research is needed on the role of feedback functions such as Likes or Comments (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Smock et al., 2011). Some of the studies that examine the role of Likes and Comments were limited to explaining their function on health-related goals (de la Pena & Quintanilla, 2015) by using qualitative data or secondary data. Similarly, this study broadens the social support literature by highlighting the function of like and Comments, a new form of social support that is provided in the context of online social networks.

Second, while social support literature consistently supports the notion that social support provided by others positively influences psychological or physical health, there are a lack of studies that examine its role in marketing consumption settings. Given that people use online social networks to fulfill self-presentation needs and seek social support and approval for their consumption behavior, it is important for marketers to understand how social support can increase consumer spending pleasure so that they can more effectively manage online social networks to enhance consumers' post-consumption behavior. It is especially important as spending pleasure is highly related to future consumption behavior such as revisit intention and willingness to pay (Prelec & Simester, 2001). This study will address the benefit to the service industry by understanding how social support can enhance spending pleasure. As such, this research seeks to provide value to upscale establishments as their high price may cause increased feelings of spending pain and guilt.

Third, this study examines the psychological mechanism that underlies the relationship between social support and spending pleasure, by examining the role of deservingness. Although deservingness plays a particularly prominent role related to spending behavior, relatively little is known about what shapes consumers' perceptions of their own deservingness and how deservingness might influence consumer's behavior (Cavanaugh, 2014). Therefore, this study may identify a novel factor, perceived deservingness, which may mediate the relationship between social support and consumers spending pleasure.

Finally, although academic research examines the influence of management responses on negative consumer reviews as a service recovery effort and its influence on consumer behavior (Xie, Zhang, & Zhang, 2014; Liu, Schuckert, & Law, 2015), little research examines how management can provide social support to customers through responding to positive posts in online social networks. Given that many customers upload their consumption experience on online social networks and firms are increasingly taking an active role in interacting with consumers in online social networks, there is a need to understand how providing social support to customers through management responses influences consumers post-consumption behavior, especially spending pleasure. In addition, given the profitability of strong relationship customers (Hogan, Lemon, & Rust, 2002), firms need to know whether the relationship strength moderates the effect of social support on spending pleasure.

1.4 Study Overview

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Chapter 2 presents the literature pertaining to social support and deservingness as a theoretical background for this study. Building upon existing theories and previous literature, this study provides a conceptual framework, along with proposed hypotheses. In Chapter 3, the methodology is described, including study design, sample, procedures, measurement and data analysis in Study 1 and Study 2. Further, results from both Study 1 and Study 2 are presented in Chapter 4. This study concludes by discussing theoretical contributions and managerial implications as well as limitations of this study and provides suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

As Online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have experienced tremendous growth in recent years (Buechel, 2012), the use of online social networks has become the number one online activity across all internet users (Buechel & Berger, 2012). By 2016, social networking sites reached 2.3 billion active users worldwide, which accounts for 82% of the world's online population (Smartinsights, 2016). These numbers reveal that online social networks have become a part of our everyday lives, altering the way we communicate and the way we uphold relationships. Research on social interaction examines what motivates people to communicate and finds various motivations such as information acquisition, social bonding, impression management, emotion regulation, and persuading others (Berger, 2014). Among those, one of the main motivations of using online social networks is to fulfill the needs of self-presentation through impression management (Back et al., 2010). As online social networks users can easily control information presented by selectively choosing what they want others to see such as a flattering selfie or luxury brand product to present a positive self-view to others. As such, people tend to share generally positive information about themselves to others on social networks (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011).

The underlying motivation for self-presentation is related to social acceptance (Slama & Wolfe, 1999). People have a strong motivation to form and maintain positive social relationships as it is one of the most vital and universal human needs (Baumeister

& Leary, 1995). As individuals want to obtain social acceptance within their social relationships, many of their communication functions and activities are directed toward promoting the goal of seeking social support (Baumeister, 1998; Leary et al., 1995; Heaney & Israel, 2008). According to Socioanalytic theory, people seek to establish and maintain a social identity to satisfy basic needs for getting along with others in certain ways, and an important part of achieving these meanings is obtaining recognition from others through implementing self-presentation (Hogan, 1982). Such effective self-presentation takes many forms but one of the most powerful is when it is related to consumption behavior (Slama & Wolfe, 1999). This is because the act of consumption serves as a symbol, and people use such symbolic materials to convey identity messages to others (Belk, 1988; Howe & Strauss, 2009). Therefore, people show off their consumption experience in online social networks to convey their self-identity with the expectation that other's view and react to their posts. In other words, obtaining attention and support from others in regards to the post explains why people engage in self-presentation of their consumption behavior.

Along with the tendency of craving attention and support from others to maintain their self-identity, online social networks serve as an environment to seek out external sources of attention (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Supporting that, a recent national survey showed that obtaining feedback from others on the post is a major reason for using Facebook (Pew Internet Report, 2014). Since it does not take much time and effort to become friends with other users in online social networks, it facilitates connections with varied degrees of closeness ranging from close friends to essential strangers, and consequently, serves as a channel for gaining attention and social support from different

levels of relationship tie-strength (Kim & Lee, 2011). Accordingly, in the following section, we discuss how social support is manifested through online social networks and the mechanisms through which social support might influence consumer spending pleasure.

2.2 Social Support and Online Social Networks

Researchers' interest in social support started with studies investigating how it impacts physical and mental health (Gottlieb, 1981). Since then, social support has been defined in many different ways, each trying to explain what it is about social relationships that take into account its positive effect on physical and mental well-being. However, there is a general consensus that social support refers to "the perception or experience that one is loved and cared for, esteemed, and valued through social interaction" (Wills, 1991). People can receive social support from various sources including partners, relatives, friends, coworkers, and community (Allen, Blascovich, & Mendes, 2002). Social support not only involves actual supportive transactions whereby one person explicitly receives benefits from another, but also involves the perception that such resources are potentially available through either verbal or non-verbal messages or information (Taylor, 2011). Research suggests that merely thinking about one's supportive ties, whether or not they are actually utilized, can enhance one's well-being (Smith, Ruiz, & Uchino, 2004).

As the Internet has become a prevalent part of everyday life, the role of the Internet has become an imperative channel for facilitating social support (Liang et al.,

2011). Early work on social support in an online setting primarily focused on coping with major life events, such as suffering from disease, through participation in specific online support groups (Beaudoin & Tao, 2007; Wright & Bell, 2003). Social support is found to be a major social value that Internet users can gain within an online community as individuals can support each other by posting their problems and chatting on the website (Obst & Stafurik, 2010). More recently, as web-based online social networks continues to increase, researchers attempt at to understand the process and impact of social support through online social networks.

Given that online social networks have the potential for a wide range of interactions ranging from close friends to acquaintances, they have become an important tool for providing and receiving a wide range of social support (Frison & Eggermont, 2015; de la Pena & Quintanilla, 2015). Previous research shows evidence that people use online social networks to obtain social support and indeed, people receive social support through online social networks (Kim et al., 2011; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Frison & Eggermont, 2015). For instance, Pew Internet Report (2014) reveal that two thirds of Facebook users experience higher levels of social support such as companionship and emotional support compared with other Internet users. Similarly, Ellison et al. (2007) show that more intense Facebook use is related to higher perceptions of emotional support. In addition, some researchers add that using Facebook, one of the biggest online social networks, enhances the perception of social support based on the number of Facebook friends (Manago, Taylor, & Greenfield, 2012; Oh, Ozkaya, & LaRose, 2014). This tendency is especially prominent among adolescence and college

students who rely on their friends where online social networks are an important medium to gain social support from friends (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011).

In summary, despite previous research showing that individuals perceive social support from their online social network, most of those studies focus on the social psychological perspective by investigating how social support enhances one's psychological well-being such life satisfaction or stress reduction (Ellison et al., 2007; Obst et al., 2010; Hampton et al., 2011). In addition, less research investigates social support in relation to consumption experience within purchasing contexts. Given that people use online social networks to fulfill self-presentation needs and seek social support and approval for their consumption behavior, it is important for the marketers to understand how social support can increase consumer spending pleasure so that they could effectively manage online social networks to enhance consumers' post consumption behavior. In addition, questions regarding how, in what form, and from whom individuals receive social support in online social networks is unanswered. Therefore, this research discusses the potential sources of social support and the unique communication function of online social networks and how it enhances users' perceived social support, and consequently, spending pleasure.

Facebook was chosen as the research context for multiple reasons. First, Facebook is the largest online social network that boasts more than 1.13 billion daily active users and accounts for about 81 percent of the total U.S. digital population and nearly 230 billion minutes of user engagement (Comscore, 2015). Its large size and representative of current online social networks makes it worthy of study in its own right. Second, Facebook provides various communication functions such as one-click

"Likes." Manago et al. (2012) suggest that a different type of Facebook communication function matters for a sense of social support. Therefore, a variety of functions offered by Facebook allow us to test theoretical mechanisms on a wider range of communication tools. Finally, Facebook is well positioned to augment users' bridging social networks with diverse networks of friends (Vitak, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2011).

2.2.1 Social Support and Communication Function in Facebook

Communication is a fundamental part of people's experiences in online social networks (Scissors, Burke, & Wengrovitz, 2016). According to a Pew Internet report (2014), getting feedback from others on posted content is the main reason for using Facebook. Incoming and outgoing feedback designates investment in social relationships by maintaining interpersonal networks (Ellison et al., 2014). Facebook provides different kinds of communication tools that can be used by users to demonstrate social support: (1) broadcast communication such as status update, which is aimed at a wide audience, helps users more easily express their experience, thoughts and feelings, and it offers social support seekers the possibility to obtain a wide range of diverse feedback, (2) one-click communication "Like" that requires low effort, and (3) personalized communication via the "Comment" which allows Facebook users to write Comments in response to others' posts. (Burke & Kraut, 2013; de la Pene & Quintanilla, 2015; Frison & Eggermont, 2015). Deter et al. (2016) find that the number of "Likes" and "Comments" received on a status update serve as objective measures of social support (Deters et al., 2016).

"Like" is a simple and easy way to give positive feedback as it takes only one click to produce without requiring a lot of effort (Scissors et al., 2016). Approximately

half (44%) of Facebook users like content posted by their friends at least once a day, generating around 4.5 billion Likes daily (Pew Internet Report, 2014). Receiving a “like” signals that the friend wants to express a positive response to the status update (Deters et al., 2016). The presence of Likes boosts the feeling of being listened to and supported by their friends. In addition, the meaning of Likes has similar meaning to non-verbal communication cues during face-to-face interaction such as smiles and nods (Deters et al., 2016), which indicate friendliness, agreement, and involvement (Siegman et al, 1987). In common with the meaning of those non-verbal cues, a 'Like' can serve as a virtual empathy tool that delivers emotional support by indirectly saying, 'I saw your post and I support you. Consequently, I acknowledge your post by clicking Like on it' (Scissors et al., 2016). Therefore, it serves as a social cue of social acceptance and emotional support.

A more comprehensive form of emotional support can be shown in the form of a comment that offers a reward or positive reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). A “Comment” signifies that the user not only saw the post, but also put efforts to make a comment, symbolizing that the post was seen and deserved a response providing positive feedback (Burke & Kraut, 2013). Furthermore, as Comments are written format based on text, they usually provide richer feedback. Previous research shows that most Comments are positive (88% of all Comments), and well-liked by the receivers (Forest & Wood, 2012; Greitemeyer, Mügge, & Bollermann, 2014). Therefore, they can be perceived as equally positive but more valuable than Likes. In fact, Burke (2011) shows that receiving Comments from friends on their posting is related to improvements in relationship strength and perceived social support. It displays a higher level of engagement.

In summary, receiving Likes and Comments in Facebook serve as information that leads the subject to believe that he/she is cared for and loved by others. Consequently, the numbers of Likes and Comments capture the amount of direct positive social support received. According to Manago et al. (2012), people who have larger networks and have higher estimates of an audience size for their status updates, are more likely to feel social support on Facebook as they perceive they have more possibility of obtaining attention. That said, the more people who feel that they are receiving attention for their self-presentation, the more likely they are to feel that they are acquiring social support from their networks. Applying this logic to Facebook feedback tools, we assume that the degree to which one feels perceived support depends on the number of Likes and Comments they obtain from others on their posting. More specifically, if a lot of people click like and leave Comments on the post, the poster may perceive a higher level of social support, while if there are none or few Likes and Comments on the post, the poster may perceive a low level of social support.

2.2.2 Social Support and Consumer Behavior

Much research regarding online social support rests on the assumption that social support positively influences physical and psychological well-being such as happiness, mental health, and physical health (Adelman & Ahuvia, 1995). Although no study to date examines the influence of online social support on consumer consumption behavior, previous studies within the service encounter context demonstrate that social support positively affects customer behavior with relevant things in numerous contexts (Zhu, Sun, & Chang, 2016). For example, Rosenbaum and Massiah (2007) show that customers

who receive social support from other customers in a service establishment, which provides them with feelings of concern and love, reciprocate by exhibiting customer voluntary performance behavior toward both the service establishment and other customers. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2016) reveal that social support from other customers and service firms positively influence customer satisfaction that leads to customer citizenship behavior.

Related to spending behavior, Xu et al. (2015) demonstrated that perceived social support reduces the pain of spending money by lessening the perceived importance of money as a protection mechanism. When people's social support is salient, people feel protected enough not to attach too much importance to money, which reduces the pain of losing money. Although it explains the relationship between perceived social support and spending pain by focusing on the protective mechanism of social support, it does not explain the impact of social support on spending pleasure. Given that pain and pleasure are not essentially negatively correlated with each other, there is a need to unfold the knowledge about the influence mechanism of social support on spending pleasure. Therefore, in the following section, we will discuss how social support influences spending pleasure.

2.2.2.1 Social Support and Spending Pleasure

To buy a product or service, consumers need to pay money. While the degree to which the feeling of guilt caused by spending may vary depending on the amount of money and occasion, consumers usually feel guilt when they spend money, especially when it is not necessity (Prelec & Loewenstein, 1998). Research indicates that feeling

guilt may reduce the pleasure that is associated with consumption as individuals who feel guilt blame themselves and accept to be punished for their behavior (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Those feelings of pain and guilt are important for marketers to examine as they reduce the pleasure associated with consumption (Alba & Williams, 2013). Therefore, it is important to understand how to reduce the feeling of guilt associated with spending money to increase the pleasure of spending and experience. Previous research reveals that consumers use various methods to reduce feeling of guilt, and a significant way to do is justifying their consumption behavior (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002).

As a way to justify their reasonableness or acceptability of a behavior (Simonson, 1989), customers pursue information that enables them to behave in the way they intended. As a part of such information, social proof from other people plays an important role. According to the principle of social proof (Goethals & Darley, 1977), one way that individuals determine appropriate behavior for themselves is to examine the behavior or responses of others existing in the same circumstance. The important source of information within the principle of social proof is therefore, the responses of referent others (Cialdini et al., 1999). For instance, Poor et al. (2013) show that seeing images in which other customers are shown indulging in unhealthy food can serve to mitigate conflict by providing social proof that such indulgence is appropriate and acceptable and that this reduction in conflict can lead to increased taste perception. In addition, social influence theory (Fromkin, 1970) purports that people build their own opinion on the basis of the group's consensus. Consequently, obtaining social support from others may have a powerful effect that individuals use to justify their behaviors and mitigate the

inner conflict of oneself (Xu & Schwarz, 2009). For instance, Raghunathan and Corfman (2006) reveal that enjoyment from sharing hedonic stimuli is boosted when other people provide positive judgments about the shared stimuli. In other words, if a person perceives that they are gaining social approval from others for a given situation, their enjoyment increases. Applying this logic, we assume that when consumers obtain social support from others on their post in regards to their consumption behavior, social support may play as a justification tool which ultimately increases their spending pleasure.

Another piece of evidence that perceived social support can enhance spending pleasure is supported by value theorists. Social psychologists insist that money is different from social support in terms of the goals and values they represent (Kasser et al., 2007). Grouzet et al. (2005) investigate the structure of goal contents from 15 different cultures and show that financial success is placed as a diametrically opposite goal to a community goal. Similarly, Schwartz (1992), through an extensive series of studies across more than 40 countries, identify 10 general values and developed a circumplex model of value by arranging these 10 values in a two-dimensional circular structure; self-enhancement versus self-transcendence. The first dimension focuses on the degree to which values are self-oriented such as hedonism, power, achievement, and the second one focuses on other-oriented values such as benevolence and universalism. He argues that values located 180 degrees from one another are competing natures of value. Because prior research suggests that materialism are highly self-oriented while social affiliation is considered as other-oriented (Belk, 1988), we expect that spending money and social support values are located on a competing position. Since increasing concern for one value can inhibit the other goal that is located at the opposite direction (Kasser et

al., 2007), enhancing perceived social support which satisfies other-oriented value can suppress people's pursuit of money which involves self-oriented value. Accordingly, perceived social support can increase pleasure of spending.

H1: Social support obtained through online social networks will positively influence spending pleasure

2.2.3 Deservingness

2.2.3.1 Social Support and Deservingness

Deservingness is “a judgment of whether a person is worthy of being treated in a particular way” (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). The seminal theoretical work developed by Feather (1999) treats deservingness as a judgment that relates to outcomes (e.g., reward or punishment, positive emotion or negative emotion, any specified treatment) that are earned because of a person's actions or quality. Simply put, deservingness is associated with a rationale for why someone is worthy of a particular treatment or outcome (Cavanaugh, 2014). In general, situations that highlight a valued quality or achievement that people hold make them feel deserving, while situations that make people aware of a quality or achievement they do not hold make them feel undeserving (Feather, 2006). Consequently, perceived deservingness is associated with targets’ perceived worthiness.

Central to the analysis of deservingness reasoning is the concept of justice. According to Social justice theory (Lerner et al., 1975), people's judgments of other people's deservingness are based on principles of merit or equity. The merits can be

behavior or attributes of the target. There is a tendency that people consider others as eligible for more desirable outcomes the more positive their characteristics, and the more likable they are (Hafer & Olson, 2003). In other words, people may judge a person who possesses positive attributes as more deserving of positive outcomes. The self can be the target of judgment of self-deservingness (Smith, 2002). Applying the logic of social justice theory to one's perception of own deservingness, the more people consider themselves as possessing positive traits, the more they should believe that they themselves deserve desirable outcomes.

Then, how does one recognize whether one has such positive characteristics? According to Sociometer theory (Leary et al, 1995), the perception about oneself is largely influenced by other's judgments. People decide their self-worthiness by how much they think they are valued by others (Wood et al., 2009). In other words, ones' self-worthiness serves a indicator of one's perceived past, present, and future relational value (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Social relationships are an important contributor to a person's feeling of self-worth (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) as human beings are social animals. Leary et a. (1995) showed that feelings of social acceptance covaried significantly and positively with self-worthiness. Being accepted by others reveals that others accept, respect, and value one as a person (Leary & Miller, 2012). Consequently, receiving support from others may heighten their perceived deservingness by focusing their thoughts on being valued by others. On the other hand, when consumers perceive that they lack socially desirable relationships, they are likely to feel undeserving of rewards (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Cavanaugh (2014) finds that reminding consumers of their valued social relationships affects their perceived deservingness.

In the context of online social network sites, interpersonal feedback is often publicly available to all friends and such public evaluations are particularly likely to affect ones' evaluation of their self-worth or satisfaction with themselves (Harter, 1999). Research suggests that people are evaluated by the Comments others make on their profiles (Walther et al., 2009). Facebook can enhance "social self-esteem" which is the perceptions of one's close relationships, physical appearance, and romantic appeal, especially when users received positive feedback from Facebook friends (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). Valkenburg et al. (2006) reveal that the number of relationships formed, the frequency and tone of reactions received from friends via online social networks positively influence self-worthiness and well-being. Therefore, we propose that:

H2: Social support obtained through online social networks will positively influence perceived deservingness

2.2.3.2 Deservingness and Spending Pleasure

Customers normally seek justification for their consumption behavior (Okada, 2005). The underlying motivation for customers to justify their consumption behavior is to enable them to indulge themselves in ways that mitigate any guilt or conflict generated by consumption (Xu & Schwarz, 2009). Feelings of guilt derive from the notion that spending extra money is wasteful (Lascu, 1991). As consumers often try to justify their decisions, indulgence consumption can be at a disadvantage because they are often more difficult to justify than necessities (Okada, 2005) since indulgence consumption evokes more guilt (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002). Levav and McGraw (2009) argue that when

choices do not seem justifiable, consumers demonstrate more guilt after their indulgence, which negatively influences their pleasure of spending. However, people are more likely to enjoy their indulgence when the decision context allows them the flexibility to justify the consumption (Okada, 2005). For instance, bundling a hedonic purchase with a promised contribution to charity decreases the sense of guilt and enables hedonic purchases since it serves as a guilt-reducing mechanism (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998).

Licensing effect supports the guilt-reduction mechanism. Licensing effect refers to “phenomenon whereby increased confidence and security in one’s self-image or self-concept tends to make that individual worry less about the consequences of subsequent inadequate behavior” (Khan & Dhar, 2006). Khan and Dhar (2006) find that a prior virtuous act can temporarily increase one’s self-concept, which leads to more self-indulgence in the following unrelated decisions. It implies that the licensing effect is being activated by providing a boost in the relevant self-concept, which boosts the preference for a relative luxury by diminishing the negative self-attributions associated with indulgence behavior. Similarly, Kivetz and Zheng (2006) find that consumers who focus on their hard work in a previous task experience a sense of entitlement that justifies indulgence in unrelated decisions. Applying this logic, feeling deserving may license individuals to be indulgent without guilt. In other words, perceived deservingness coming from a sense of achievement may serve as a guilt-reduction agent to make it easier to justify their consumption behavior. Eventually, reduction of guilt will enhance one's spending pleasure.

Another explanation of deservingness increasing spending pleasure for indulgence consumption is related to self-regulatory behavior. Recent research reveals

that elevated feelings of self-worth could lead to more impulsive or indulgent behavior (Wilcox & Stephen, 2013; Xu et al., 2015). For instance, Wilcox, Kramer, and Sen (2011) show that increased feelings of pride lead to more indulgent choices in subsequent tasks that are unrelated to the source of pride. Similarly, Wilcox and Stephen (2013) show that enhanced self-concept activated by situational factors has a negative impact on self-control. They show that enhanced self-esteem from browsing a social network temporarily lower self-control, leading people to display less self-control after browsing a social network compared to those who did not browse a social network. On the basis of these related findings, receiving positive feedback from others on social network website can enhance the perception of social acceptance and self-worthiness which ultimately reduces self-regulatory behavior (Valkenburg et al., 2006; Dewall et al., 2008).

Therefore, we hypothesized that:

H3: Perceived deservingness will positively influence spending pleasure

2.2.4 Sources of Social Support in Facebook

2.2.4.1 Social Support from Facebook Friends

Facebook is mainly targeting the general population to establish and maintain a network of friends (Hampton et al., 2011). To do so, users articulate a list of "Friends" who are able to view each other's profiles and posts by building various social connections (Vitak et al., 2011). Since it does not take much effort to become friends with other users in online social networks (Kim & Lee, 2011), social connection can have varied degrees of closeness ranging from actual close friends to virtual strangers who they have only met through online platforms (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). As information is

shared to all users who are connected as "Friends," Facebook serves as a channel for social support from various degrees of tie strength.

The primary network on Facebook consists of an individual's actual friends in the real world who have a close attachment (Ellison et al., 2007). People use Facebook to continuously communicate with close relations and nurture friendship intimacy (Hampton et al., 2011). Vitak et al. (2011) argue that the reciprocal and direct communications with close friends on Facebook are associated with feelings of social support. In addition, as Facebook is especially advantageous for maintaining large networks of weak ties as the technology allows for cheap and efficient maintenance of these relationships (Donath & Boyd, 2004), people also maintain large networks with distant contacts (Kim & Lee, 2011). A recent study finds that the median number of friends is 370 and the mean is 440, and numbers sometimes reach into the thousands (Manago et al., 2012). Ellison et al. (2007) show that the accumulation of informational forms of social support from distant contacts is one of the main reason for intensively using Facebook. In summary, Facebook friends with various degrees of closeness may serve as a meaningful source of social support.

2.2.4.1.1 Impact of Relational Factor: Tie Strength

If Facebook friends with a degree of closeness are indeed the fundamental sources of social support, will this affect perception of social support on spending pleasure? Will spending pleasure be greater for a certain degree of closeness than for others? To answer these questions, we consider the concept of tie strength, which is defined as "a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy

(mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services" (Granovetter, 1973). It captures the degree to which one is more or less engaged in a given social relationship, feels close to that relationship, and values that relationship (Granovetter, 1973). Simply speaking, tie strength is the power of the bond between members of a network.

The majority of social influence studies use relatively simple proxies for the strength of ties such as the communication reciprocity (Friedkin, 1980), communication recency (Lin, Dayton, & Greenwald, 1978), and frequency of interaction (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009). For instance, recent work relating to social influence of political mobilization concludes that strong ties were associated with greater social influence, but defined tie strength purely in terms of the frequency of online interaction between peers (Bond et al., 2012). The assessment of tie strength by frequency of social contacts stands to reason that relationships characterized by high levels of contact are likely to be strong tie relationships. However, Gilbert and Karahalios (2009) support the skewed analysis of using frequency as a proxy. According to their analysis, frequency only showed 61% accuracy, while using 7 proxies showed 90% accuracy on the strong vs. weak classification task. Therefore, in this study, we expand this conceptualization of tie strength to capture several different dimensions of relationship that may be relevant to the strength of social influence in online social networks, suggested by Granovetter (1973); relationship length, frequency, and closeness.

Granovetter (1973) characterizes two types of ties, strong ties and weak ties. An individual's social relations with others usually embrace a spectrum of ties strength ranging from strong primary (e.g. a spouse) to weak secondary (e.g. a seldom-contacted acquaintance) (Wirtz & Chew, 2002). Strong ties are typically family and friends with

whom people share a personal connection. On the contrary, weak ties are merely acquaintances with whom people have a more distant relationship (Ryu & Feick, 2007). Consequently, strong ties are closer social relationships that are more emotionally close, reciprocal, and frequent than weak ties (Granovetter, 1973).

Social support can be provided by many types of people, both in one's close networks such as family, friends, and romantic partner, and distance networks (Taylor, 2011). As different network members are likely to provide differing types and amounts of social support, the effectiveness of the support provided depend on the source of the support (Agneessens, Waeye, & Lievens, 2006). Consequently, the influence of support from people within the social network sites may vary depending on the degree of tie strength. The question arises: how does the effectiveness of social support on one's perceived deservingness vary depending on the tie-strength with the source of social support?

Early work into social support predicts that strong relational ties are more effective at providing support than weak ties (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987). Given that strong ties are characterized by frequent interactions, high emotional closeness, and a heavy history of reciprocal services, they are typically more readily available (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Consequently, people are more highly involved with and more actively attend to strong ties (Brown & Reingen, 1987). People believe that strong ties convey greater trust and fine-grained information, as they perceive them as more credible sources than weak ties (Coleman, 1988). Also, they believe that a strong tie will know much more about them than do weak ties. Therefore, individuals tend to pay more attention to the feedback they get from strong ties. According to Wilcox and Stephen (2013), people pay

more attention presenting a positive self-view to strong ties than weak ties, and also, they feel better about themselves when this positive information is received by strong ties than weak ties. In addition, research demonstrates that people are more susceptible to attitude change when the information is provided by people with whom they identify (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). As suggested by social identity theory, research shows that individuals tend to become more extreme in their attitudes or change their attitudes to be consistent with valued or salient others (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). As strong ties are the people whose social circles closely overlap with one's own (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009) and often times who share similar values, tastes and interests (Granovetter, 1973), individuals would be more susceptible to social support coming from strong ties than weak ties. Also, Wellman and Wortley (1990) demonstrate that strong tie relationships are more likely to conduct greater influence over their network members because strong ties provide a significantly broader and deeper array of social support such as emotional support and companionship compared to weak ties. Bessiere et al. (2008) show that communicating online with strong ties increase one's well-being which is associated with emotional support, while communicating with strangers online does not carry this benefit. Accordingly, we assume that individuals who obtain social support from strong ties are more likely to feel deserving compared to individuals who obtain social support from weak ties.

Although the social support from weak ties may be less influential than strong ties regardless of the amount of social support provided, we cannot underestimate the impact of weak ties if social support provided from weak ties is high. A theory of "the strength of weak ties" proposed by Granovetter (1973) shows that weak ties can offer an

advantage over strong ties in obtaining useful information. He argues that while strong ties who interact frequently offer information that is familiar and expected, weak ties provide a unique and new informational value that strong ties cannot provide (Granovetter, 1973). Therefore, there is a possibility that information provided by strong ties is redundant (Constant, Sproull, & Kiesler, 1996), which has less impact on the information receiver. For example, while friends and family who usually give positive feedback to a person may take their compliment for granted, compliments from distant friends or strangers who are a unique information source would be more critical and influential. In online social networks setting, user-generated information such as Like or Comments have information value. Walther and Parks (2002) argue that people weigh information generated by others more strongly when making judgments about a person as other-generated information is less likely to be manipulated (Walther et al., 2009). The people who post may use the number of Likes and Comments they received as a criterion of their social acceptance (Scissors et al., 2016). Therefore, the information generated by others has strong informational value not only to the audience but also to the person him/herself. Given that the like/Comments serve as informational value, social support from weak ties may serve as a unique and new information source that gives more value to the person. For instance, when distant friends who do not interact often on Facebook click 'like' or leave positive Comments on the post, the poster may feel more deserving as they feel their posting is important enough to get social support from weak ties. Therefore, we assume that when social support is high, social support from weak ties may also evoke one's perceived deservingness as much as strong ties do:

H4: Online relationship tie strength will moderate the relationship between online social support and spending pleasure

2.2.4.1.2 Impact of Personality Traits: Self-construal

Prior research in social influence examines the dual notions of influence and susceptibility, and suggested that some individuals are more susceptible to influence than others (Aral & Walker, 2014). Hackett et al (1992) point out the importance of understanding the role of individual differences in the social support process. In other words, social support may be perceived differently or may function differently for different types of people. Given that communication tools providing social support such as 'like' or 'Comments' on Facebook are publicly displayed on one's online presence, people with certain traits may view and value those differently than others. As the role of individual traits in predicting the role of social support remains largely unexplored, this research focus on how individuals define and make meaning of the self can influence their susceptibility to social support by examining the role of self-construal.

Self-construal reflects the extent to which individuals view themselves either as an individuated entity or in relation to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Markus and Kitayama (1991) identify two self-construals, independent and interdependent. The independent self-construal consider themselves as unique and value characteristics that distinguish them from other group members (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005). They maintain a sense of autonomy from others and be true to one's own internal structures of preferences, goals, and rights (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). In contrast, the underlying principle that forms the interdependent self-construal is that the person is connected to

others, and therefore the self is defined by group memberships or relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). They define themselves with respect to other group members and see themselves as part of a group (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000). Consequently, for interdependent self-construal, positive feelings about the self are mainly derived from developing close relationships with others and continuing harmony with others (Cross et al., 2000).

Previous research reveals that variation in self-construal has distinct relevance to the self-related processes of how individuals think and behave in regard to the social relationship (Cross et al., 2000). This is because the respective self-construal makes available different semantic knowledge that is most likely to be applied when judging the self or others (Kuhnen, Hannover, & Schubert, 2001). As a consequence, self-construal provides different cognitive processes that lead to distinctive behavior within the social context (Hannover, 2000).

First, there is a difference in attention to the context or relationships between independent and interdependent self-construal. As persons with high interdependent self-construal are more likely to describe themselves in terms of their social contexts, they are more sensitive to situational or relational contexts (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Similarly, Kuhnen et al. (2001) show that participants described themselves as more context dependent in the interdependent self-construal priming condition than did participants in the independent self-construal priming condition. In addition, interdependent self-construal, individuals pay more attention to others within the relationship. Haberstroh et al. (2002) show that interdependent self-construal individuals are more likely to pay attention closely to what others are communicating than

independent self-construal individuals. Context-sensitive cognition of interpersonal self-construal even influences memory. Wang and Ross (2005) demonstrate that the independent self-construal primed participants tended to describe more individual-focused memories, whereas the interdependent self-construal primed participants tended to describe more group-focused and social interaction memories.

In addition, self-construal influences individual motivation, goals and decision-making processes (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). Verplanken et al. (2009) show that those who received the interdependent self-construal prime reported higher levels of motivation to be accepted, while independent self-construal primed people reported higher levels of motivation to be independent, different, and alone. As a result, people who are interdependent self-construal are more likely to consider others' views or one's social identities within social groups in their rationale for pursuing important goals and behaviors, while people who are independent self-construal tend to give more weight to their personal attitudes and individual level goals to direct their behavior (Trafimow, Triandis, H. & Goto, 1991). In addition, interpersonal self-construal tends to respect other's interests during the decision-making process as well (Cross, Hardin, & Gercek-Swing, 2010). For instance, Cross, Morris and Gore (2002) find that students with high relationship interdependent self-construal are more likely to consider the needs and wishes of friends and family members when making decisions about how to spend their summer.

Previous literature demonstrates that the distinction between independent and interdependent self-construal provides direct implications for how these two groups of individuals react to information or feedback from others (White, Argo, & Sengupta,

2012). Independent self-construal individuals behave in a way that is consistent with a self-enhancement motivation, showing the desire to maintain or enhance the positivity of one's self-worth and to protect the self from negative information (Sedikides, 1993). As such, they accept positive feedback while avoiding and discarding negative opinions or feedback from others (Cross et al., 2000). Consequently, paying less attention to information that threaten their self-worth should be observed for independent self-construal. In contrast, interdependent self-construal react quite differently in response to negative information from others. Individuals with interdependence self-construal are not as motivated to protect individual self-worth as their motivation is more related to acceptance from others (Heine & Lehman 1997). In particular, interdependent self-construals try to satisfy belongingness needs by accepting information from others although it may threaten their self-worth (White et al., 2012).

In summary, given that the different self-construal may evoke different motivation and cognitive processes within the relationship with others, this research suggests that this distinction contains direct implications for how individual self-construal moderates the relationship between social support and deservingness. As such, the influence of social support on perceived deservingness should be less pronounced for people with independent self-construal than people with interdependent self-construal. For interdependent self-construal individuals, social support from others which is closely linked to information about the self may function much like self-relevant information in cognitive processes that let them better remember and consider such information (Cross et al., 2000). As a result, individuals with interdependent self-construal may pay more attention to social support from others regardless of the amount of social support given

than individuals primed on independent self-construal. On the other hand, for independent self-construal, while gaining a lot of social support may enhance their perceived deservingness as it enhances their self-worth, low levels of social support may not influence that much as they would discard the information that threatens their self-worth. Following this logic, we assume that:

H5: Self-construal will moderate the relationship between social support through online social networks and spending pleasure

2.2.4.2 Social Support from Firm

The growing popularity of online social networks provides a public communication channel that allows a firm to listen to and engage with their customers. To take advantages of such opportunities, firms increasingly take an active role in interacting with consumers in online social networks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). One of the ways firms interact with consumers is through management responses. This two-way interaction is an effort firms take to interact with and respond to consumer Comments or posts on experience with the firm or its products and services (Gu & Ye, 2014). Managing responses is especially valuable for businesses in the service industry as service is intangible in nature and customers may use such responses from a firm as a cue for service quality, which significantly influences consumers' behavioral intentions (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). As customers are increasingly using online social networks to express their experience in a service firm, whether is it negative or positive, effectively managing those posts and/or comments has become a significant component of a firm's online social network strategy. Along with the increasing awareness of online customer

relationship management, managers are spending more time and effort on responding to customer reviews (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In addition, due to the public nature of posting and responding, service firms should not only consider the influence of responding to the customer who posted his or her experience but also the influence on other customers who observe such firms' management responses.

Online management responses are a new form of customer relationship management, which is a marketing process aimed at maintaining a positive relationship with customers to enhance customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and customer retention (Gu & Ye, 2014). In particular, management responses are utilized to address customer complaints in negative reviews to recover service failure. By responding to customer complaints through a variety of resources ranging from financial compensation to apology, firms can show their positive concern, caring and attention to the customer. Previous research shows that the management response with an action plan of service failure recovery could increase positive customer behavioral intentions (Mccoll-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003). For example, Pantelidis (2010) show that managers who respond successfully to customer comments could turn an unsatisfied customer into a loyal customer. Similarly, Ye et al. (2008) insist that proper managerial responses to bad customer review can generate more online bookings compared with hotels that have not adopted response management (Ye et al., 2008).

Although previous research shows strong evidence that showing concern and care to customers who have negative service experiences and sharing it through review websites helps enhance their customer satisfaction and revisit intention through increased perceived fairness, no study yet has examined the impact of management responses in

situations in which customers post their general service experience without any intention of spreading negative word-of-mouth. Given that customers who post positive reviews are more likely to revisit the property and spread positive word of mouth to other customers (Liu et al., 2015), understanding the consequences of response management to positive posts is critical for generating profits to the service firm. Furthermore, although major hospitality companies are responding to posts on online social networks through tagging or checked in functions, there is no empirical evidence supporting the benefit of such customer relationship strategies. To fill these gaps, in this study, similar to the situation where friends on Facebook provides social support to customer by clicking 'Likes' and leaving 'Comments', this research argues that firms can serve as social support sources to customers who post their consumption experience on their online social networks through online management responses. This is an important issue to examine as such management responses have a positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions (Dai & Jiang, 2016).

According to Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner (1998), the amount of customer-service provider interaction derives social benefits such as feelings of familiarity, personal recognitions, friendships, rapport and social support. Similarly, Adelman and Ahuvia (1995) conceptualize social support as a service provider's verbal or nonverbal communication to a customer that facilitates an exchange. In other words, receiving consistent attention and care from the service provider results in increased feelings of social support. In an online social networks setting, the interaction between the firm or service providers and the customers are available through communication functions provided by the online social networks. Such communication paths enable both

customers and firms to develop dialog easily (Gallaugher & Ransbotham, 2010). When a customer posts his/her consumption experience from a certain service firm online, it initiates a communication that enables the service firm to be involved by responding to the post. Making an immediate response to a customer post about the firm indicates that firms are monitoring their guest perceptions and care about their opinions (Wei, Miao, & Huang, 2013). Thus, consumers may interpret such management responses to their post as an appreciation for their customers (Wei et al., 2013). Xie et al. (2014) reveal that management responses in a positive consumer review signify that hotel managers are listening to their customers and expressing appreciation. Accordingly, responding to customers posts via Facebook communication tools such as 'like' or 'comment' may signal a good interaction between firm and customers leading customers to feel that they are being cared for and valued by the firm and derive social benefits such as feelings of social support.

2.2.4.2.1 Relationship Strength with Firm

The services marketing literature emphasizes the importance of having good long-term relationships with customers (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) as it directly leads to greater customer loyalty and retention (Gwinner et al., 1998), which ultimately results in a firm's profitability (Hogan et al., 2002). Relationship strength is a construct describes the characteristics of the customer relationship (Shi et al., 2009). Strength of the relationships refers to "the extent, degree, or magnitude of the association between a customer and service provider" (Shemwell & Cronin, 1995). It depends on the amount of input of the relationship investment including time, effort, and resources that

an individual invests in building a stronger relationship to another. In other words, strong customer relationships do not just happen overnight but it progresses over time and repeated encounters (Cooil et al., 2007).

Accordingly, previous literature supports that there are two objective variables associated with relationship quantity: contact frequency (i.e., the number of customer contacts per period of time) and relationship duration (the length of time the relationship has existed), which are the basic component of strength of relationship (Dagger, Danaher & Gibbs, 2009). For example, Dagger et al. (2009) finds that the effects of customer contact frequency and relationship duration have a positive effect on customer-reported relationship strength. Similarly, De Canniere, De Pelsmacker and Geuens (2010) reveals that the strength of the relationship, which is computed by combination of length and the regularity of relationship with the retailer, has a positive impact on customer buying behavior. Customers who have a strong relationship with a firm show that they spend more time, interaction and money with the firm than those with weak relationships. This research posits that the role of relationship strength between the customer and the firm that is built upon past experience with the firm can add great value explaining the impact of social support provided by the firm on spending pleasure, as these exchange characteristics have been found to be influential in predicting consumer behavior (Mittal & Kartichis, 2000).

The norm of reciprocity establishes a promising framework to explain the negative responses of strong relationship customers compared with weak relationship customers when they experience a disutility. According to reciprocity theory, reciprocity, which is defined as the giving of benefits to another in return for benefits received, is one

of the defining features of social exchange (Molm, 2010). Customers with strong relationship strength believe that they put more investment in terms of time and money to build a relationship with the firm. As such, they are more likely to adhere to reciprocity norms that regulate their relationships compared to weaker relationship strengths (Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, & Iacobucci, 2001). Accordingly, customers with a strong relationship to a firm generate higher expectations about the service they think they deserve (Gregoire & Fisher, 2006) and expect reciprocity from the firm in the form of favorable treatment (Ganesan, 1994). Strong relationship customers may think that they have always been there for the firm but the firm let them down when they needed help. In other words, these customers may believe that firms are more obligated to them than weak relationship customers. In addition, previous research finds that when a service interaction is perceived as a transgression of their relational norms, then strong relationship customers are more likely to respond more negatively to the firm (Gregoire, Tripp, & Legoux, 2009). This is explained by the "love becomes hate" effect, which suggests that customers who possess a strong relationship tend to have a more unfavorable reaction to the firm than those with a weak relationship when firms do wrong (Brockner, 1992). In other words, as strong relationship customers have built a strong trust with a firm, such situation may be viewed as an act of betrayal (Robinson, 1996). As a consequence, absent of social support from the firm may results in feeling of violation of customer's expectation of reciprocity. As strong relationship customers have higher expectation and confidence in a firm that they will provide favorable responses, we assume that greater relationship strength customers are more likely than customers with

weaker relationships feel less deserved when there is an absent of social support which may lead to decrease in spending pleasure. Therefore, we propose that:

H6: Firm relationship strength will moderate the relationship between online social support and spending pleasure

2.2.4.2.2 Social Support Aimed at Other Customers

As management responses to a customer's online social network post can be seen by a circle of online social network friends of that person, management responses to customers' posts are not only influential to the poster him/herself but also to other people who read the management response (Rancourt, 2013). From a similar perspective, this means that the poster may be able to see management responses to other customers' postings. This public nature of online management responses raises an important question of how viewing the social support aimed at other customers may influence the focal customers' perception of spending pleasure.

Individuals often look to others as a reference to evaluate their own payoffs (Ho & Su, 2009). Ho and Su (2009) suggested "Peer-induced fairness," which posits that "economic agents experience a disutility when they receive a different material payoff compared to another reference agent or group". In a consumption setting, customer behavior is influenced by the treatment to other customers. For instance, Del Rio-Lanza et al. (2009) show that customer satisfaction declines when individuals perceive themselves being treated worse than others. In the context of online management responses, customer behavior may be determined not only by whether they receive

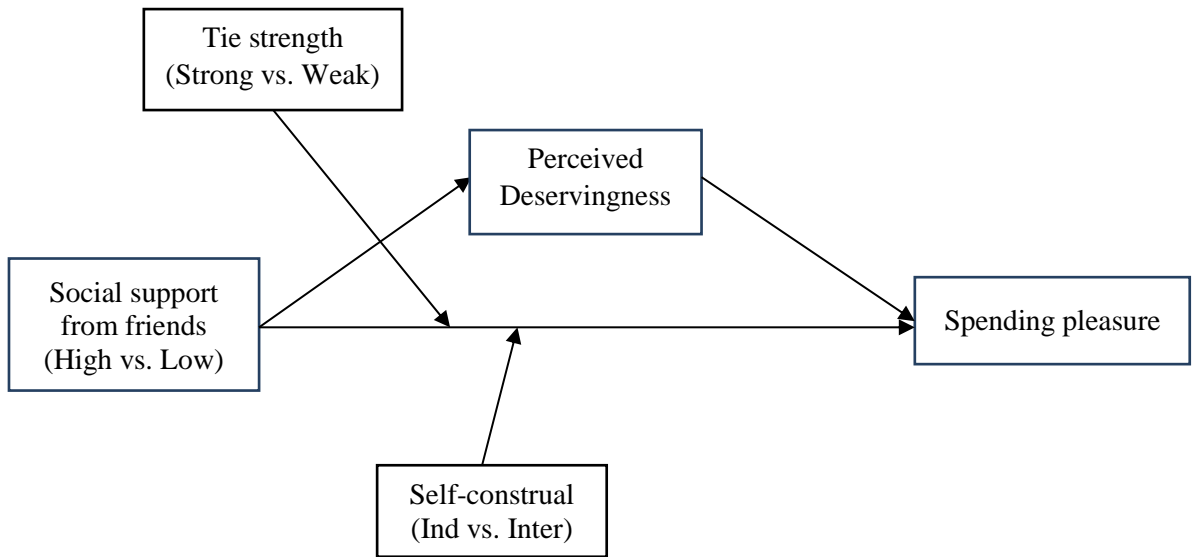
responses from the service provider but also by the comparison to the responses received by other customers (Gu & Ye, 2013). Therefore, concerns for others receiving better treatment from the firm may negatively influence customers' spending pleasure as they feel less deserving by the fact that while other customers are being cared and loved by the firm, they are not. Therefore, we assume that:

H7: Social support aimed at other customers will moderate the relationship between social support through online social networks and spending pleasure

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based upon the relevant previous studies and the gap identified in the current literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework, depicted in Figure 1.1, which focuses on the relationships between social support and spending pleasure, and the psychological mechanism underlying the relationship by examining the mediating role of perceived deservingness. In addition, relational factor (e.g., tie-strength with Facebook friends and relationship strength with firm) and situational factor (e.g., primed self-construal, social support aimed at others) are also incorporated that influence the impact of social support on deservingness and spending pleasure.

Study 1



Study 2

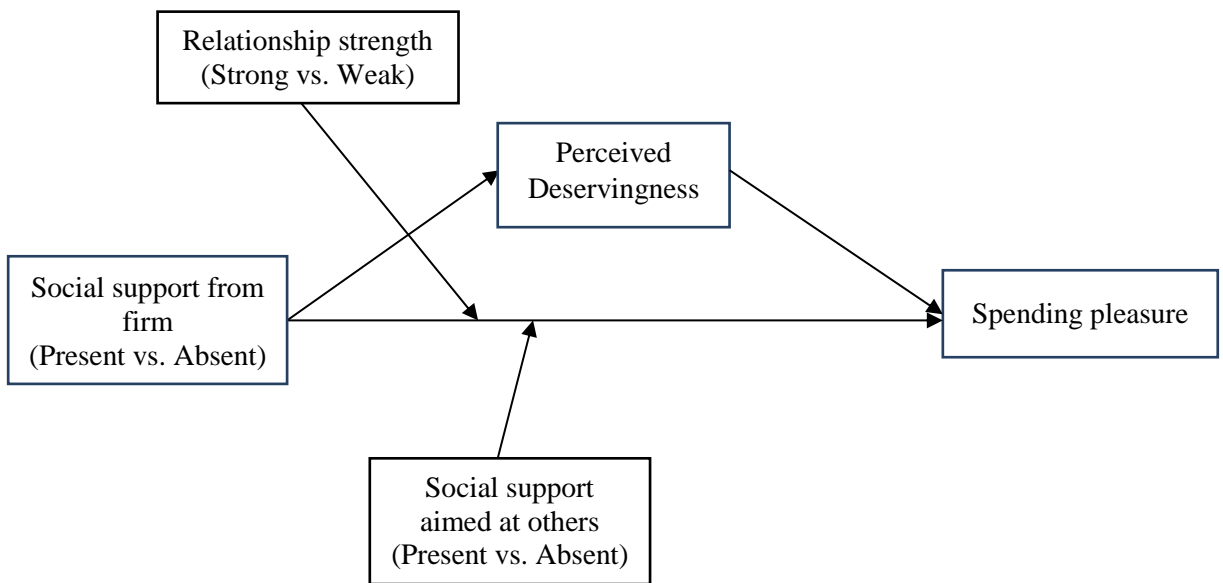


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Model

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

The objective of this chapter is to examine the influence of online social support on spending pleasure and the mediating role of perceived deservingness. The present research attempts to test two sources of online social support, one from online social network friends (Study 1) and the other one from the firm (Study 2). In addition, the moderating role of relational factor (e.g., relationship tie-strength with social support source), personality factor (e.g., self-construal) and situational factor (e.g., social support aimed at other customers) on the relationship are examined. Self-esteem is included as a control variable as previous researcher supports the notion that self-esteem, where one comes to view oneself as represented in the evaluative reactions of others (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995), affects one's reactions to social influences such as self-relevant feedback or information from others (Jones, 1973). In addition, average number of Likes/Comments per post are controlled as depending on the average number of Likes/Comments participants obtain on their post may influence on their perceived social support in our experiment. To test the hypothesis, this research conducts two studies using a between-subjects experimental design. This research uses a scenario-based experiment with written text to manipulate the independent variables. In the following section, we describe the context of the study, study's design, study procedures, experimental stimuli and measures, and statistical techniques used for the data analysis for Study 1 and Study 2.

3.2 Justification of the Research Approach

To test the hypothesis, this study uses a between-subjects experimental design. Experimental design offers a high level of control and the ability to manipulate variables individually, and uncover the causal effects (Wang & Mattila, 2015). Furthermore, written scenarios allow for a higher amount of internal validity by isolating variables and determining whether the experiment treatment was the sole cause of the changes in the dependent variables (Zikmund et al., 2010). As this study aims to examine the causal relationship between social support from online social network friends and spending pleasure, experimental design is an appropriate methodological approach to answer the research questions.

3.3 Context of the Study

The basic assumption of the current study is that consumers may feel guilt when spending money, and social support from others help consumers to reduce such guilt by utilizing it as a justification tool for their purchase. Previous research finds that the extent to which people feel satisfied after a purchase depend on the indulgence of purchase, but too much indulgence lead them to exhibit greater guilt (Kugler & Jones, 1992). Guilt arises when individuals think they have violated an internal moral, societal or ethical standard (Kugler & Jones, 1992). As such, indulgence consumption triggers more guilt feelings and make people more difficult to justify their purchase (Okada, 2005). Indulgence in the context of consumer choice is allowing oneself to select and enjoy the pleasure from an option that is considered a treat compared with the alternative option (Xu et al., 2015). Although people can make indulgent choices across a range of

consumption domains, dining out at a luxury restaurant is a common way to indulge oneself. Accordingly, to maximize the feeling of guilt, an expensive luxury restaurant is chosen as a research context for Study 1 and Study 2.

We utilize Facebook as the online social support medium for several reasons. First, Facebook is the largest online social network that boasts more than 1.13 billion daily active users and accounts for about 81 percent of the total U.S. digital population and nearly 230 billion minutes of user engagement (Comscore, 2015). Its large size and representative current online social networks make it worthy of study in its own right. Second, Facebook provides various communication functions such as one-click "Likes." Manago et al. (2012) suggests that a different type of Facebook communication function matters for a sense of social support. Therefore, a variety of functions offered by Facebook allow us to test theoretical mechanisms on a wider range of communication tools. Finally, Facebook is well positioned to enhance users' bridging social networks with diverse networks of friends (Vitak et al., 2011).

3.4 Pretest

Two pretests, one pretest for each study, were conducted to assess the effectiveness of the content and strength of manipulation stimuli (e.g., manipulation of social support, relationship tie-strength) differently as intended. Using a convenience sampling method, students enrolled at a University in the Northeast region of the United States and Mturk users were recruited to conduct a series of pretests, resulting in 101 participants in Study 1 and 97 participants in Study 2. Extra credit points were given to University students to increase their participation under cooperation with their

instructors. For those who did not want to participate in this study, there were alternative ways (i.e., summarize articles of journal article) to earn the equivalent extra credit points. For Mturk users, a monetary compensation was provided to invite users to participate in the pretests. Results from pretests confirmed the effectiveness of all manipulations of experimental stimuli. Based on the successful pretest results, we continued to use the same experimental stimuli and items to measure the research construct in the main study.

3.5 Study 1

3.5.1 Study Design, Sample and Procedure

A 2 (Social support; low vs. high) x 2 (Tie strength: strong vs. weak) x 2 (Self-construal: independent vs. interdependent) quasi-experimental between-subjects design was used. Self-construal serves as a measured factor. A total of 450 respondents were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), the largest online labor marketplace where registered members conduct human-related tasks for a small compensation (Wu, 2013). Prior hospitality research utilizing experimental design utilizes MTurk to collect data (see Kim & Baker, 2017; Liu & Mattila, 2016; Wu et al., 2017) as it features a diverse nationwide pool of consumers and provides high quality data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). A small compensation (\$0.50) was given to the subjects for participation. Participants were randomly assigned a scenario and instructed to put themselves into the scenario. Then, they were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire by only referring to the written text based scenario. Participants were given a situation whereby they visit an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant for dinner and decide to post their experience on their Facebook wall. The survey consists of seven parts — (1)

screening questions, (2) control variables (e.g., self-esteem, average number of Comments/like received), (3) personality trait variable (e.g., self-construal), (4) an experiment condition (e.g., social support and tie strength), (5) manipulation check questions (e.g., experimental stimuli and realism check), (6) dependent variables (perceived deservingness, spending pleasure), and (7) demographics. As our context of the study is Facebook, two screening questions were included in the beginning of the survey—1) Do you have an account on Facebook? 2) Have you ever posted a comment or picture on your Facebook wall at least once during last year? — to ensure respondents were qualified to participate in this study. Throughout the survey, seven different quality check questions (i.e., please click strongly agree to proceed with the survey) were included to ensure respondents were reading each survey item carefully before they answered the question. At the end of the survey, participants were asked for their overall feedback in regard to what the research is about, and experimental stimuli.

3.5.2 Experimental Stimuli and Measures

Social support was manipulated at two levels, low and high. In the high social support condition, when checking their post before leaving, the respondents were given a situation that a lot of their Facebook friends liked and left positive Comments on their post, and the post is one of their most liked and commented postings. While in a low social support condition, the respondents were given a situation that only a couple of their friends liked and left positive Comments on their post, and the post is one of their least liked and commented postings (See Appendix). Since it is not clear what the optimal

number differentiating low and high support is (Scissors et al., 2016), we manipulated the magnitude of social support by phrase, not by specific number.

The tie strength manipulation was designed to capture the relevant dimensions of strength suggested by Granovetter (1973): frequency, duration, and closeness. The description of the tie strength with Facebook friends emphasized closeness, frequent conversations, and knowing the contact for a long time. In a strong tie condition, Facebook friends who liked and left positive Comments were described as their closest Facebook friends who have been Facebook friends for a long time, and communicate frequently on Facebook relative to other friends. In a weak tie condition, Facebook friends who liked and left positive Comments were described as their distant Facebook friends who have become Facebook friends recently, and communicate occasionally on Facebook relative to other friends (See Appendix). To control potential variables that may affect our dependent variable, the service quality (e.g., good and attentive service, enjoyable meal) was consistently provided in all conditions.

All measurement items were adopted from previous studies to ensure validity and reliability issues, measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale. That being said, the original scales were modified to reflect the specific setting of this study. For instance, wording “in this luxury restaurant”, “on Facebook”, or “Facebook friends” was added on the original scale. To test the effect of the experimental manipulation on perceived social support, participants were asked to rate "How much do you feel that you are cared for and supported by your Facebook friends based on the given scenario?" (1=no social support at all; 7=an abundance of social support) adopted from Xu et al. (2015). The manipulation check pertaining to evaluating the tie strength of the social support source

was measured using a six-item scale modified from Perry-Smith (2014). An item reads "Facebook friends who like and leave positive Comments on my post are my close friends" (1=very strongly agree, 7=very strongly agree).

To measure self-construal, five items were adopted from Aaker & Lee (2006). Items include "My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me." In addition to measure perceived deservingness, five items from Cavanaugh (2014) were utilized. Items include "How deserving of treating yourself did you feel?" (1= not deserving at all, 7= extremely deserving). Three items were adopted from Tsiros, Mittal, and Ross (2004) to measure spending pleasure such as "I feel pleased with my spending at this luxury restaurant" (1=not pleased at all, 7=extremely pleased). As a control variable, self-esteem was measured with 10 items from Rosenberg's (1965) global self-esteem scale. For example, respondents are asked, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself." (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Furthermore, the average number of Comments and 'like' participants receive on their Facebook post were asked. Finally, respondents' demographics are collected at the end of the survey. Full items of each construct are provided in Appendix 2.

3.5.3 Data Analysis

To address research questions and hypotheses, different statistical techniques were utilized including descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, reliability and validity tests, three-way ANCOVA, regression analysis, and mediation test using SPSS statistical software. A series of independent sample t-tests were conducted to check

whether respondents perceived the stimuli as the researchers intended (i.e., manipulation checks).

To test the moderating role of self-construal, two statistical analysis have been utilized. First, the sample was divided into two groups based on a median value of the self-construal scale, categorized as interdependent self-construal for those who score above the median and independent self-construal for those who score below the median. Previous literature supports dichotomization of a continuous variable at the median as a more reliable measure to indicate whether an individual is high or low on the attribute of interest (MacCallum et al., 2002; Iacobucci et al., 2015). In other words, it is the most popular method of categorizing an attribute of interest like level of self-construal. Then, a three-way ANCOVA was performed to test the interaction effects among social support, tie-strength and self-construal on spending pleasure by controlling self-esteem and the average number of Likes/Comments per post. However, since dichotomizing a continuous variable by median split has been criticized for many problems such as reducing the statistical power (Irwin & McClelland, 2003), as an alternative way to test the moderating effect of self-construal, we ran a regression analysis with spending pleasure as dependent variable, and social support (0= low social support, 1=high social support), mean-centered self-construal, and their interaction term as independent variables.

Finally, to examine whether perceived deservingness mediates the effect of social support, tie-strength and self-construal on spending pleasure, bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 sample was conducted to test the indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

3.6 Study 2

3.6.1 Study Design, Sample and Procedure

A 2 (Social support; present vs. absent) x 2 (Relationship strength: strong vs. weak) x 2 (Social support aimed at others: present vs. absent) between-subjects factorial experiment was used. A total of 450 participants are recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). A small compensation (\$0.50) was given to the subjects for participation. Participants were randomly assigned a scenario and instructed to put themselves into the scenario. Then, they were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire by only referring to the written text based scenario. Participants were given a situation whereby they visit an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant for dinner and decide to post their experience on their Facebook wall. The survey consists of six parts — (1) a screening question, (2) control variables (e.g., Self-esteem, average number of Comments/like received), (3) an experiment condition (e.g., social support, relationship strength with firm and social support aimed at other customers), (4) manipulation check questions (e.g., experimental stimuli and realism check), (5) dependent variables (e.g., perceived deservingness, spending pleasure), and (6) demographics. As our context of the study is Facebook, two screening questions were included in the beginning of the survey—1) Do you have an account on Facebook? 2) Have you ever posted a comment or picture on your Facebook wall at least once during last year? — to ensure respondents were qualified to participate in this study. Throughout the survey, seven different quality check questions (i.e., please click strongly agree to proceed with the survey) were included to ensure respondents were reading each survey item carefully before they answered the question. At the end of

the survey, participants were asked for their overall feedback in regard to what the research is about, and experimental stimuli.

3.6.2 Experimental Stimuli and Measures

Social support from the firm was manipulated at two levels, present and absent. In the social support present condition, when checking their post before leaving the restaurant, the respondents were given a situation that the official restaurant Facebook account liked their post and left a comment saying "Thank you for visiting our restaurant. It was a great pleasure serving you. We look forward to seeing you in your future visit." On the other hand, in a social support absent condition, the respondents were given a situation that they receive no Likes or Comments from the restaurant (See Appendix). Since it is out of our boundary and the specific research objectives to differentiate the magnitude of the level of social support from firm, this study differentiated social support (1) present versus (2) absent condition, rather than manipulating intensity or strength of the social support from the firm.

The relationship strength manipulation was designed to capture the relevant dimensions of strength suggested by Dagger et al. (2009); contact frequency and relationship duration. In the strong relationship condition, the restaurant was described as a one that respondents frequently visit and have been a customer for a long time, which led them to have a strong and close relationship with the restaurant. In a weak relationship condition, the restaurant was described as a restaurant that respondents visit for the first time so they do not have any relationship with the restaurant (See Appendix). Previous literature shows empirical evidence that service quality during the service

encounter directly influence on consumers' satisfaction as well as future behavioral intention (Taylor & Baker, 1994). Since pleasure of spending is part of customer overall satisfaction with the service (van Rompay et al., 2011), it is important to control the potential impact of service quality on spending pleasure. Therefore, to control potential variables that may affect the dependent variable (spending pleasure), the service quality (e.g., good and attentive service, enjoyable meal) was consistently provided in all conditions.

Social support aimed at others was manipulated at two levels, present and absent. In a social support aimed at other customer present condition, respondents found that the restaurant also liked and left a comment on a post of your dining companion who uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall. In a social support aimed at other customer absent condition, respondents found that the restaurant neither liked nor left a comment on a post of your dining companion who uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall.

All measurement items were adopted from previous studies to ensure validity and reliability and were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale. That being said, the original scales were modified to reflect the specific setting of this study. For instance, wording "in the restaurant" or "on Facebook", "Facebook friends" was added on the original scale. First, to test the effect of the experimental manipulation on perceived social support, participants were asked to rate "How much do you feel that you are cared for and supported by your Facebook friends based on the given scenario?" (1=no social support at all; 7=an abundance of social support) adopted from Xu et al. (2015). The manipulation check pertaining to evaluating the relationship strength of social support

with the firm was measured using the three-items scale modified from Dagger et al. (2009). An item reads "Based on the given scenario, what is the extent of the strength of your relationship with this restaurant? (1=weak relationship, 7=strong relationship)". To test the effect of the experimental manipulation on social support aimed at others, respondents were asked to rate, "Based on the given scenario, how much do you feel that your dinner companion is cared for and supported by the restaurant?" (1=no social support at all; 7=an abundance of social support).

In addition, to measure perceived deservingness, five items from Cavanaugh (2014) were utilized. Items include "How deserving of treating yourself did you feel?" (1= not deserving at all, 7= extremely deserving). Three items were adopted from Tsiros et al. (2004) to measure spending pleasure such as, "I feel pleased with my spending at this luxury restaurant" (1=not pleased at all, 7=extremely pleased). As a control variable, self-esteem was measured with 10 items from Rosenberg (1965)'s global self-esteem scale. For example, respondents were asked, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Furthermore, the average number of 'Comments' and 'Likes' participants receive on their Facebook post were asked as an open-ended question. Finally, respondents' demographics are collected at the end of the survey. Full items of each construct are provided in Appendix 2.

3.6.3 Data Analysis

To address research questions and hypotheses, different statistical techniques were utilized including descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, reliability and validity tests, and three-way ANCOVA using SPSS statistical software. A series of

independent sample t-tests were conducted to check whether respondents perceived the stimuli as the researchers intended (i.e., manipulation checks). A three-way ANCOVA was performed to test the interaction effects among social support, relationship-strength and social support aimed at others on spending pleasure by controlling self-esteem and average number of Likes/Comments per post. To examine whether perceived deservingness mediates the effect of social support, tie-strength and self-construal on spending pleasure, the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples to test the indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This section presents results of Study 1 and Study 2. The present research investigates the impact of online social support, one from online social network friends (Study 1) and the other one from the firm (Study 2). In addition, the moderating role of relational factor (e.g., relationship tie-strength with social support source), personality factor (e.g., self-construal) and situational factor (e.g., social support aimed at other customers) on the relationship are examined. Results of hypotheses tests along with manipulation check, main effects, interaction effects, and mediation effects are presented.

4.1 Study 1

4.1.1 Sample Profile

A total of 450 respondents participated in the survey. Of 450 responses, 343 responses were used for further analysis due to their appropriate qualification for the study and valid responses to quality check questions—49 respondents were deleted from further analysis because they did not meet qualifications or quality control questions. More specifically, respondents either did not have a Facebook account, did not post in the previous 12 months, or did not correctly answer quality control questions throughout the survey. In addition, as our experimental setting is a luxury restaurant, we further eliminated 58 participants who have never visited either restaurant or luxury restaurant in the past year. Of the 343 respondents, slightly more than half of them were male (54.5%), 66.2% of them were Caucasian, and about 70% had a Bachelor's degree. Average age

was 35.35 years old and 90% were currently employed. In terms of restaurant visiting behavior, about 71% visit restaurants more than 10 times a year and in terms of luxury restaurants, 80% visit luxury restaurants 1 to 6 times a year. A detailed description of the sample profile for Study 1 is described in Table 1.1.

4.1.2 Manipulation Check

There was a significant main effect of the experimental manipulation of online social support on perceived social support ($t=20.02$, $p<.001$). As expected, participants who received a significant amount of number of Likes and Comments on their post from online social network friends perceived more social support ($M=5.36$, $SD=1.06$, $N= 153$) compared with the participants who received barely any Likes or Comments on their post ($M=2.98$, $SD=1.12$, $N= 189$), confirming the validity of the social support manipulation.

To confirm that the manipulation for tie-strength was successful, averages for participant's ratings on six questionnaires of how close they felt with the people who liked and left Comments to create a single index of tie-strength ($\alpha=.939$). The main effect of tie-strength manipulation on tie-strength was significant ($t=22.86$, $p<.001$). The participants who received Likes and Comments from close friends who communicate frequently and has been friends for a long time feel strong tie-strength ($M=5.73$, $SD=1.26$, $N=159$) while participants who received Likes and Comments from distance friends who communicate rarely and has been friends recently feel weak tie-strength ($M=2.69$, $SD=1.18$, $N=178$). In addition, realism check question (i.e., "The scenario is realistic") was asked to determine if respondents perceived the situation was realistic. Respondents perceived the given scenario ($M=5.43$, $SD=1.01$) realistic. Taken together,

these results indicate that the manipulation cues were successful. See Table 1.2 for summary of the tests and descriptive statistics.

4.1.3 Reliability and Validity of Measurements

We checked reliability and validity of latent variables to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables to the underlying constructs. Checking inter-item reliability, values of Cronbach's α ranged from 0.84 to 0.95, showing an acceptable internal consistency for all constructs. Construct validity was examined with convergent validity and discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To assess both convergent and discriminant validities, we examined the composite reliability, average amount of variance extracted (AVE), construct correlations, and squared correlations. The values for composite reliability were greater than 0.7 (ranging from .89 to .97) and the values for AVE were greater than 0.5 (ranging from .61 to .91) representing acceptable ranges (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The items loaded significantly on the designated latent variables with the loadings ranging from .75 to .95, which supported the convergent validity of the constructs. In addition, all AVE values in the matrix exceeded the squared correlations, providing general evidence for discriminant validity among the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1.3 and 1.4 represent psychometric properties of scale items and correlation matrix, respectively. Taken together, although our scales were slightly modified from the original scales by adding specific context of our study, these results appear to suggest convergent and discriminant validity of scales that we used.

4.1.4 Spending Pleasure

A three-way ANCOVA with social support, tie-strength and self-construal as independent variables, and spending pleasure as a dependent variable, controlling for self-esteem (continuous variable) and average number of Likes/Comments per post (continuous variable) was performed. There was a significant main effect of online social support ($F(1, 330)=6.94, p=.009$) on spending pleasure, supporting H1. Receiving high amount of online social support ($M=5.134, SE=.112$) induced more spending pleasure than receiving low amount of online social support ($M=4.737, SE=.101$). The interaction between the online social support and tie-strength of the social support source on spending pleasure was significant ($F(1, 330)=7.565, p=.006$) supporting H4. Simple effects showed that when receiving a high level of social support, the participants experienced more spending pleasure when it comes from strong ties ($M=5.476, SE=.163$) than weak ties ($M=4.791, SE=.153$). However, the pattern was reversed when receiving a low level of social support. In this case, the participants experienced more spending pleasure when it comes from weak ties ($M=4.809, SE=.138$) than strong ties ($M=4.666, SE=.147$) (Table 1.5). Figure 2.1 illustrates the results of interaction effects between social support and tie-strength on spending pleasure. However, there was no significant interaction effect between social support and self-construal on spending pleasure ($F(1, 330) = .138, p=.711$), failing to support H5.

Since dichotomizing a continuous variable by median split has been criticized for many problems such as reducing the statistical power (Irwin & McClelland, 2003), alternatively, we ran a multiple regression analysis with spending pleasure as dependent variable, and social support (0= low social support, 1=high social support), mean-

centered self-construal, and their interaction terms as independent variables. Supporting the result of three-way ANCOVA, regression analysis revealed a significant effect of social support on spending pleasure ($\beta=.375$, $t=2.599$, $p=.10$), but there was no significant interaction effect of social support x self-construal ($\beta=.092$, $t=.781$, $p=.435$).

In regard to covariates, self-esteem ($F=4.742$, $p=.030$) was significant while average number of Likes/Comments per post ($F=.341$, $p=.560$; $F=.654$, $p=.419$) were not significant. We controlled for self-esteem as previous research acknowledged that self-esteem affects one's reactions to social influences such as self-relevant feedback or information from others (Jones, 1973). Although self-esteem is not further discussed in this dissertation as it is not our main research interest, future studies are needed to examine the impact of self-esteem on spending pleasure. Since controlling for the average number of Likes/Comments per post did not affect our results, the average number of Likes/Comments per post are not discussed further. Table 1.5 presents the results of three-way ANCOVA of Study 1 and cell means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.6.

4.1.5 Deservingness

To test the effect of online social support on deservingness, an ANCOVA was tested by controlling self-esteem and average number of Likes/Comments. There was a significant main effect of online social support on perceived deservingness ($F(1, 330)=6.014$, $p=.015$). The participants who received high level of social support perceived more deservingness ($M=4.796$, $SE=.09$) compared with the participants who received low level of social support ($M=4.50$, $SE=.08$). Therefore, H2 was supported. In

addition, the effect of deservingness on spending pleasure was tested through linear regression with spending pleasure as dependent variable and perceived deservingness as independent variable. The results showed that deservingness has a significant impact on spending pleasure, supporting H3 ($\beta=.619$, $p<.001$). That being said, participants experienced for spending pleasure when they feel they deserve.

4.1.6 Mediation Analysis

To further examine the underlying process, we examined whether perceived deservingness mediates the effect of online social support on spending pleasure. Results from the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples (95% confidence interval (CI)) supported a significant indirect effect of online social support on spending pleasure through perceived deservingness, as the mean indirect effect excluded zero (95% CI=[.0266, .3676]) (direct effect $p>.1$). This analysis suggests that deservingness fully mediates the effect of online social support on spending pleasure.

In addition, given the significant interaction effect of social support and tie-strength on spending pleasure, we tested whether perceived deservingness mediates the relationship between the online social support and tie-strength interaction and spending pleasure. Bootstrap tests of moderated mediation (model 8; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007) were conducted to examine tie-strength as a moderator of the relationship between social support and perceived deservingness as well as spending pleasure. The results showed that perceived deservingness did mediate the online social support \times tie-strength interaction (95% CI=[.2404, .9566]). Perceived deservingness was a significant mediator in the strong ties condition ($b=.51$, $SE=.13$, 95% CI=[.26, .77]), but not in the weak ties

condition ($b=-.07$, $SE=.12$, 95% CI=[-.29, .15]). In other words, consistent with H4, participants experienced greater spending pleasure when they receive social support from strong ties because they perceived deservingness.

4.1.7 Discussion for Study 1

Study 1 was designed to assess the effects of social support from online social network friends and the moderating effects of the relationship factor (tie-strength) and personality trait (self-construal) on spending pleasure through perceived deservingness. Results from Study 1 show a significant main effect of social support on spending pleasure. More specifically, when people obtain social support from their online social network friends on their posting regarding to their consumption, they feel more pleasure of spending on that consumption. This study answered the possible mechanisms behind these finding as well. The results showed that perceived deservingness mediates the relationship between social support and spending pleasure. That being said, consumers feel more spending pleasure when they obtain social support from others as they perceive they deserve that consumption. This is consistent with the theory that people use social information such as responses or feedback from others to justify acceptability of their behavior and such social information serves as a barometer of determining their self-worthiness by how much they think they are valued and supported by others. When people gain support from others on their consumption, it heightens their perceived deservingness by focusing their thoughts on their self-worthiness, which ultimately enhance their spending pleasure.

In addition, this study identifies a significant moderating effect of tie-strength of

the social support sources. The results support that when people receive a high amount of social support from strong ties, who are characterized by frequent interaction, high emotional closeness and long duration of relationship, they are more likely to feel deserving which ultimately increase spending pleasure, compared to when people receive social support from weak ties. On the other hand, when people received a low amount of social support from strong ties, they feel less deservingness and subsequently less spending pleasure than from weak ties. Consistent with the previous literature, our study results support that people are more susceptible to social support from strong ties than weak ties (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987). There is a tendency that people believe strong ties convey greater trust and fine-grained information and consequently, weigh information generated by strong ties greater than weak ties. Therefore, obtaining a lot of Likes and Comments on their post from strong ties make people feel more deserving and spending pleasure than weak ties. Also, people have higher expectations toward strong ties as they usually interact more frequently and receive feedback often from strong ties (Granovetter, 1973). Our results also support that people feel less spending pleasure when there is only a couple of Likes and Comments from strong ties compared to weak ties, as a low amount of social support from strong ties may result in feelings of violation of expectation that make them feel less deserving.

On the other hand, the results of this study did not support the moderating effect of the self-construal personality trait. Contrary to our expectation that the influence of social support on spending pleasure through deservingness should be less pronounced for independent self-construal than interdependent self-construal, there was no significant differences between interdependent self-construal and independent self-construal in terms

of the susceptibility toward social support.

4.2 Study 2

4.2.1 Sample Profile

A total of 450 respondents participated in the survey. Of 450 responses, 337 responses were used for further analysis due to their appropriate qualification for the study and valid responses to quality check questions—39 respondents were deleted because respondents either did not have a Facebook account, did not post in the previous 12 months, or did not correctly answer quality control questions throughout the survey. In addition, as our experimental setting is a luxury restaurant, we further eliminated 74 participants who have never visited either a restaurant or luxury restaurant in the past year. Of the 337 respondents, slightly more than half of them were male (55.8%), about 62% of them were Caucasian, and 70% had a Bachelor's degree. Average age was 36.09 years old and about 90% were currently employed. In terms of restaurant visiting behavior, about 70% visit restaurant more than 10 times a year and 81% visit luxury restaurant 1 to 6 times a year. A detailed description of the sample profile for Study 1 is described in Table 2.1.

4.2.2 Manipulation Check

There was a significant main effect of the experimental manipulation of online social support on perceived social support ($t=21.709$, $p<.001$). As expected, participants who received Likes and Comments from the restaurant on their post perceived more social support ($M=5.90$, $SD=1.09$, $N= 172$) compared with the participants who did not

receive like or comment on their post ($M=2.62$, $SD=1.63$, $N=165$), confirming the validity of the social support manipulation. To confirm that our manipulation for relationship strength was successful, we averaged participant's ratings on three questionnaires of how close they felt with the restaurant ($\alpha=.945$). The main effect of relationship-strength manipulation on relationship-strength was significant ($t=15.170$, $p<.001$). The participants who were given a scenario that they have a strong and close relationship with the restaurant as a frequent diner and regular customers feel strong relationship-strength ($M=5.16$, $SD=1.66$, $N=165$) while participants who were given a scenario that they are visiting this restaurant for the first time and don't have any relationship with the restaurant feel weak relationship-strength ($M=2.36$, $SD=1.71$, $N=169$). Finally, there was a significant main effect of the experimental manipulation of online social support aimed at other customers on perceived social support toward others ($t=15.002$, $p<.001$). As expected, participants who observed their friends receiving Likes and Comments from the restaurant on their post perceived more social support toward them ($M=5.43$, $SD=1.26$, $N=170$) compared with the participants who observed their friends not receiving any like or comment on their post ($M=3.02$, $SD=1.66$, $N=167$), confirming the validity of the social support aimed at others manipulation. In addition, the realism check question (i.e., "The scenario is realistic") was asked to determine if respondents perceived the situation as realistic. Respondents perceived the given scenario ($M=5.15$, $SD=.98$) as realistic. Taken together, these results indicate that the manipulation cues were successful. See Table 2.2 for summary of the tests and descriptive statistics.

4.2.3 Reliability and Validity

We checked reliability and validity of latent variables to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables to the underlying constructs. Checking inter-item reliability, values of Cronbach's α ranged from 0.92 to 0.96, showing an acceptable internal consistency for all constructs. Construct validity was examined with convergent validity and discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To assess both convergent and discriminant validities, we examined the composite reliability, average amount of variance extracted (AVE), construct correlations, and squared correlations (Table 2.3). The values for composite reliability were greater than 0.7 (ranging from .94 to .98) and the values for AVE were greater than 0.5 (ranging from .62 to .93) representing acceptable ranges (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The items loaded significantly on the designated latent variables with the loadings ranging from .64 to .97, which supported the convergent validity of the constructs. In addition, all AVE values in the matrix exceeded the squared correlations, providing general evidence for discriminant validity among the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 2.3 and 2.4 represent psychometric properties of scale items and correlation matrix, respectively. Taken together, although our scales were slightly modified from the original scales by adding specific context of our study, these results appear to generally suggest convergent and discriminant validity of scales that we used.

4.2.4 Spending Pleasure

A three-way ANCOVA with online social support, relationship-strength with the

firm, and online social support aimed at other customers as independent variables, and spending pleasure as a dependent variable, controlling for self-esteem and average number of Likes/Comments per post was performed. There was a significant main effect of online social support ($F(1, 318)=48.912, p=.000$) on spending pleasure, supporting H1. Receiving online social support ($M=5.141, SE=.115$) induced more spending pleasure than not receiving online social support ($M=3.987, SE=.118$). The interaction between the online social support and online social support aimed at other customers was significant ($F(1, 318)=4.171, p=.042$) supporting H7. Simple effects showed that when receiving social support from the restaurant, the participants experienced more spending pleasure when they observe other customer also obtain social support from the restaurant ($M=5.306, SE=.142$) than when they observe other customer who do not obtain social support from the restaurant ($M=4.846, SD=.155$). However, when there is no social support from the restaurant, participants experience more spending pleasure when observing other customers not receiving social support ($M=4.017, SE=.147$) than observing other customers receiving social support ($M=3.834, SE=.154$). Figure 3.1 illustrates the results of interaction effects between social support and social support aimed at others on spending pleasure. However, there was no significant interaction effect between social support and relationship-strength with the company ($F(1, 318)=.099, p=.754$), failing to support both H6.

In regard to covariates, self-esteem ($F=5.525, p=.019$) as well as average number of Likes/Comments per post ($F=.5.910, p=.016$; $F=4.335, p=.038$) were significant. We controlled for self-esteem as previous research acknowledged that self-esteem affect one's reactions to social influences such as self-relevant feedback or information from others

(Jones, 1973). Although self-esteem and average number of Likes/Comments per post are not discussed further in this dissertation as it is not our main research interest, future studies are needed to examine the impact of self-esteem on spending pleasure. Table 2.5 represent the results of three-way ANCOVA of Study 2 and cell means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.6.

4.2.5 Deservingness

To test the effect of online social support on deservingness, an ANCOVA was tested by including self-esteem as a covariate. There was a significant main effect of online social support on perceived deservingness ($F(1, 318)=8.673, p=.003$). The participants who received social support from the firm perceived more deservingness ($M=4.345, SE=.097$) compared with the participants who did not receive social support ($M=3.932, SE=.101$). Therefore, H2 was supported. In addition, the effect of deservingness on spending pleasure was tested through linear regression with spending pleasure as dependent variable and perceived deservingness as independent variable. The results showed that perceived deservingness has a significant impact on customer satisfaction, supporting H3 ($\beta=.611, p<.001$). That being said, participants experienced more spending pleasure when they felt higher levels of deservingness.

4.2.6 Mediation Analysis

To further examine the underlying process, we tested whether perceived deservingness mediates the effect of online social support on spending pleasure. Results from the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples (95% confidence interval (CI))

supports a significant indirect effect of online social support on spending pleasure through perceived deservingness, as the mean indirect effect excluded zero (95% CI=[.0912, .4533]) (direct effect $p < .01$). This analysis suggests that deservingness partially mediates the effect of online social support on spending pleasure.

In addition, given the significant interaction effect of online social support and online social support aimed at other customer on spending pleasure, we tested whether perceived deservingness mediates the relationship between the online social support and online social support aimed at other customer's interaction and spending pleasure. Bootstrap tests of moderated mediation (model 8; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007) were conducted to examine online social support aimed at other customer as a moderator of the relationship between social support and perceived deservingness as well as spending pleasure. The results showed that perceived deservingness did mediate the online social support \times online social support aimed at other customer (95% CI=[.0879, .8956]). Perceived deservingness was a significant mediator when social support aimed at other customer is present ($b=.47$, $SE=.13$, 95% CI=[.2331, .7436]), but not when social support aimed at other customer is absent ($b=.05$, $SE=.12$, 95% CI=[-.1806, .2936]).

4.1.7 Discussion for Study 2

The objective of Study 2 was to assess the effects of social support from the firm through online social networks and moderating effects of the relationship factor (relationship-strength) and situational factor (observing social support aimed at other customers) on spending pleasure through perceived deservingness. Consistent with Study 1, findings from Study 2 also support a significant main effect of social support from firm

on spending pleasure. People feel more pleasure of spending on their consumption when they obtain social support from the firm on their post with regard to their consumption at that firm.

In addition, results for Study 2 shows the mediation effect of perceived deservingness on the relationship between social support from firm and spending pleasure. That being said, consumers feel more spending pleasure when they obtain social support from the firm as they perceive they deserve that consumption. Similar to Study 1, which reveals that social support from online social network friends influences spending pleasure, obtaining social support from the firm also intrigues one's own deservingness which subsequently positively influences spending pleasure. In other words, receiving attention and care from the firm via online social networks is also an important predictor of spending pleasure. Responding to a customer post signals that the firm is monitoring and paying attention to their customer's opinions and behavior (Wei et al., 2013). Thus, customers interpret such endeavors toward them as a feeling of social support, and consequently, gaining social support increases their spending pleasure.

In addition, this study reveals that situational factor, namely, observing social support aimed at other customers, moderates the relationship. The results find that when social support from the firm is absent, people are less likely to feel deserving and spending pleasure when they observe social support aimed at other customers compared to observing no social support aimed at other customers. The results of this study support that "Peer-induced fairness" occurs in an online setting as well as posits that people experience a disutility when they receive a different material payoff compared to another reference agent (Ho & Su, 2009). In other words, people's perception of the experience is

determined not only by whether they receive responses from the service provider but also by the comparison to the responses received by other customers (Gu & Ye, 2013). Accordingly, concerns for others receiving social support negatively influences customer's spending pleasure as they feel less deserving by the fact that other customers are being cared for and loved by firm, they are not. But still, when social support from the firm is present, people are more likely to feel deserving and spending pleasure when they also observe social support aimed at other customers compared to observing no social support aimed at other customers. Since this study used dining companions as an experimental stimulus to test the social support aimed at other customers, rather than a third party, participants may feel more spending pleasure when both themselves and their dining companion receive social support from the firm as opposed to only receiving social support themselves but not their companion.

However, the results of this study did not support the moderating effect of the relational factor, namely, relationship-strength with the firm. Contrary to the expectation that the influence of social support on spending pleasure through deservingness should be less pronounced for people who have weak relationship strength with the firm than strong relationship strength, there was no significant difference between weak and strong relationship strength. In other words, having a strong relationship with the firm through frequent visits over a long period of time was not enough for customers to feel less deserving due to lack of social support. This is inconsistent with the norm of reciprocity, which suggests that strong relationship customers may feel less deserving than weak relationship customers when there is an absence of social support, as they have higher expectation and confidence in a firm such that they will provide favorable responses

based on their investment toward the firm. A possible explanation for this result may lie in the fact that customers may not expect the reciprocity norm in the online social networks context. Previous research supporting the reciprocity theory between service provider and customer were mostly applicable in a service encounter setting where the actual service is being held. Even if strong relationship customers may believe that firms owe more than they owe weak relationship customers, customers may not expect firms to respond to their posts as they may believe it is additional services beyond the core services that is provided during the service encounter. Therefore, we assume that the reciprocity norm does not take actions in our research context.

Table 1.1
Demographic Information of Respondents for Study 1

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	156	45.5
Male	187	54.5
Race		
African American/Black	22	6.4
Asian or Pacific Islander	66	19.2
Hispanic	22	6.4
Native American or Alaskan Native	3	.9
White/Caucasian	227	66.2
Others	3	.9
Education level		
High school degree	27	7.9
Some college	78	22.7
College degree	170	49.6
Graduate school	68	19.8
Frequency of visiting restaurant per year		
1-3 times	19	5.6
4-6 times	48	14.0
7-9 times	33	9.6
10-12 times	50	14.6
13-15 times	34	9.9
More than 15 times per year	158	46.2
Frequency of visiting luxury restaurant per year		
1-3 times	208	60.6
4-6 times	67	19.5
7-9 times	40	11.7
10-12 times	14	4.1
13-15 times	5	1.5
More than 15 times per year	9	2.6
Employment status		
Employed	306	90
Unemployed	34	10

Table 1.2
Manipulation Check for Study 1

	Social support high (N=153)		Social support low (N=189)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Perceived social support from online friends	5.36	1.06	2.98	1.12	20.02***
	Strong tie (N=159)		Weak tie (N=178)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Perceived tie-strength with the social support sources	5.73	1.26	2.69	1.18	22.86***

Table 1.3
Psychometric Properties of Scale Items for Study 1

Constructs and Scale items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Deservingness						
To what extent did you feel you deserve to reward yourself	4.42	1.23		.932		
To what extent did you feel you deserve to treat yourself to nice things	4.51	1.25		.932		
To what extent did you feel you deserve to indulge yourself a little	4.47	1.25	.943	.913	.96	.86
To what extent did you feel you deserve to buy something special for yourself	4.40	1.26		.930		
Spending pleasure						
I would feel satisfied with my spending at this luxury restaurant based on this experience.	4.9	1.50		.951		
I would be happy with my spending at this luxury restaurant	4.85	1.49	.948	.948	.97	.91
I would be pleased with my spending at this luxury restaurant	4.92	1.53		.957		
Self-construal						
My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me	4.08	1.77		.725		
It is important for me to maintain harmony with my group	4.90	1.47	.835	.814	.89	.61

I will sacrifice my self- interest for the benefit of the group I am in	4.46	1.60		.841		
I often have the feeling that my relationships with other are more important than my own accomplishments	4.10	1.73		.746		
It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group	4.91	1.35		.779		
<hr/>						
Self-esteem						
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	5.47	1.42		.815		
At times, I think I am no good at all	5.17	1.83		.850		
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	5.64	1.27		.780		
I am able to do things as well as most other people	5.59	1.28		.747		
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	5.29	1.79		.839		
I certainly feel useless at times	5.14	1.86	.932	.856	.95	.64
I feel that I'm a person of worth	5.52	1.39		.828		
I wish I could have more respect for myself	4.35	1.96		.570		
All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure	5.42	1.85		.834		
I take a positive attitude toward myself	5.45	1.56		.842		

Table 1.4
Correlation Matrix for Study 1

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Deservingness	(.86)	.37	.00	.01
2. Spending pleasure	.61	(.91)	.01	.00
3. Self-construal	.01	.09	(.61)	.00
4. Self-esteem	.11	.04	-.03	(.64)

Note. The diagonal (bold numbers) elements are the average variance extracted for each construct. Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlations between all pairs of constructs; entries below the diagonal are correlations between all construct.

Table 1.5
ANCOVA Results of Study 1

Variables	F value	
	Spending pleasure	Deservingness
Main effect		
Social support	6.940**	6.014*
Interaction effects		
Social support × Tie-strength	7.565**	8.549**
Social support × Self-construal	.138	.008
Social support × Tie-strength × Self-construal	6.513*	4.501*
Covariate		
Self-esteem	4.742*	5.634*
Average number of Likes	.341	.037
Average number of Comments	.654	1.20

Note. * <.05, ***<.001

Table 1. 6**Treatment Means and Standard Deviations for Study 1**

Manipulated factors		N	Spending pleasure	
Social support	Tie-strength		Mean	SE
Low	Weak	99	4.81	.138
	Strong	90	4.67	.147
High	Weak	82	4.79	.153
	Strong	71	5.48	.163

Manipulated factors		N	Spending pleasure	
Social support	Self-construal		Mean	SE
Low	Low	95	4.58	.141
	High	94	4.89	.145
High	Low	86	4.92	.157
	High	95	5.35	.159

Figure 2.1
Interaction Effect of Social Support and Tie-strength

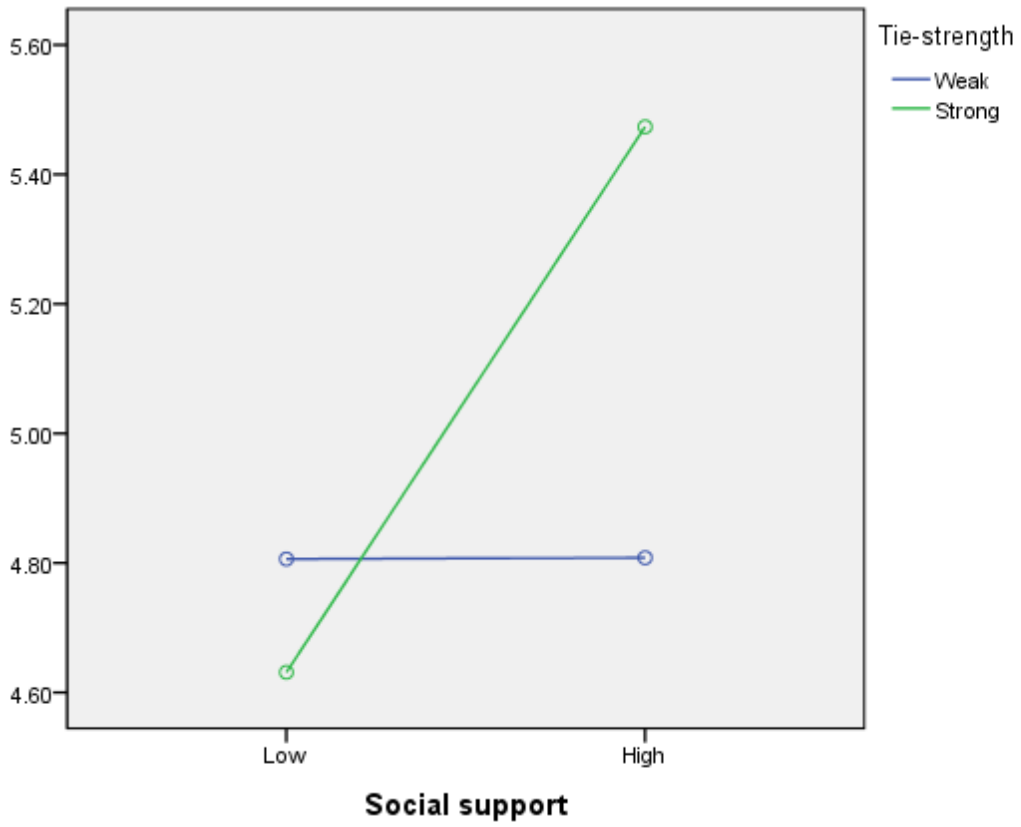


Table 2.1
Demographic Information of Respondents for study 2

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	149	44.2
Male	188	55.8
Race		
African American/Black	12	3.6
Asian or Pacific Islander	80	23.8
Hispanic	29	8.6
Native American or Alaskan Native	4	1.2
White/Caucasian	207	61.6
Others	4	1.2
Education level		
High school degree	21	6.2
Some college	78	23.1
College degree	152	45.1
Graduate school	86	25.5
Frequency of visiting restaurant per year		
1-3 times	29	8.6
4-6 times	36	10.7
7-9 times	37	11.0
10-12 times	58	17.2
13-15 times	37	11.0
More than 15 times per year	140	41.5
Frequency of visiting luxury restaurant per year		
1-3 times	198	58.8
4-6 times	78	23.1
7-9 times	26	7.7
10-12 times	20	5.9
13-15 times	7	2.1
More than 15 times per year	8	2.4
Employment status		
Employed	298	89.2
Unemployed	36	10.8

Table 2.2
Manipulation Check for Study 2

	Social support present (N=172)		Social support absent (N=165)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Perceived social support from the restaurant	5.90	1.09	2.62	1.63	21.709***
	Strong tie (N=165)		Weak tie (N=169)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Perceived tie-strength with the restaurant	5.16	1.66	2.36	1.71	15.170***
	Social support present at others (N=170)		Social support absent at others (N=167)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Perceived social support from the restaurant toward others	5.43	1.26	3.02	1.66	15.002***

Table 2.3
Psychometric Properties of Scale Items for Study 2

Constructs and Scale items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Deservingness						
To what extent did you feel you deserve to reward yourself	4.00	1.44		.950		
To what extent did you feel you deserve to treat yourself to nice things	4.06	1.44		.948		
To what extent did you feel you deserve to indulge yourself a little	4.03	1.44	.960	.931	.97	.89
To what extent did you feel you deserve to buy something special for yourself	3.97	1.44		.952		
Spending pleasure						
I would feel satisfied with my spending at this luxury restaurant based on this experience.	4.64	1.66		.963		
I would be happy with my spending at this luxury restaurant	4.60	1.68	.92	.966	.98	.93
I would be pleased with my spending at this luxury restaurant	4.55	1.69		.962		
Self-esteem						
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	5.30	1.39		.797		
At times, I think I am no good at all	5.06	1.94	.925	.801	.94	.62
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	5.64	1.31		.807		

I am able to do things as well as most other people	5.66	1.26	.815
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	5.23	1.87	.772
I certainly feel useless at times	5.16	1.87	.804
I feel that I'm a person of worth	5.52	1.42	.735
I wish I could have more respect for myself	4.31	1.94	.636
All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure	5.45	1.78	.834
I take a positive attitude toward myself	5.36	1.45	.824

Table 2.4
Correlation Matrix for Study 2

Variable	1	2	3
1. Deservingness	(.89)	.38	.01
2. Spending pleasure	.62	(.93)	.01
3. Self-esteem	.12	.12	(.62)

Note. The diagonal (bold numbers) elements are the average variance extracted for each construct. Entries above the diagonal are the squared correlations between all pairs of constructs; entries below the diagonal are correlations between all construct.

Table 2.5
ANCOVA Results of Study 2

Variables	F value	
	Spending pleasure	Deservingness
Main effect		
Social support	48.912***	8.673**
Interaction effects		
Social support × Relationship-strength	.099	1.055
Social support × Social support aimed at others	4.171*	6.904**
Social support × Relationship-strength × Social support aimed at others	.259	2.72
Covariate		
Self-esteem	5.525*	6.524*
Average number of Likes	5.910*	4.617*
Average number of Comments	4.335*	2.094

Note. * <.05, ***<.001

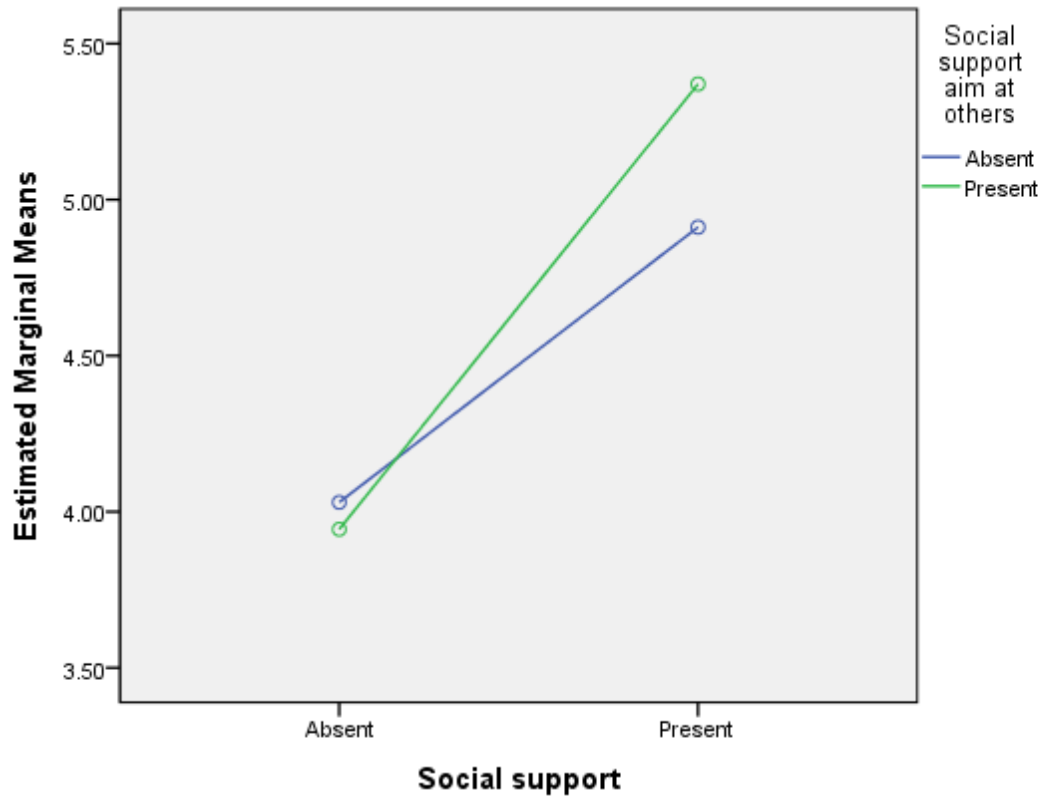
Table 2.6**Treatment Means and Standard Deviations of Study 2**

Manipulated factors		N	Spending pleasure	
Social support	Relationship-strength		Mean	SE
Low	Weak	87	3.82	.162
	Strong	73	4.16	.173
High	Weak	78	5.02	.169
	Strong	91	5.26	.155

Manipulated factors		N	Mean	SE
Social support	Social support aim at other customers			
Low	Absent	86	4.02	.147
	Present	74	3.83	.154
High	Absent	78	4.85	.155
	Present	91	5.31	.142

Figure 3.1

Interaction Effect of Social Support and Social Support Aimed at Other Customers



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This section includes a general discussion of the results for Study1 and Study 2, focusing on theoretical and managerial implication. Suggestions for future research and limitations of current research are also discussed.

5.1 General Discussions

Previous literature supports the notion that people use online social networks to fulfill their self-presentation needs and needs of obtaining attention and support from others (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Valenzuela et al., 2009). This is especially important given that people use online social networks to show-off their ideal self-concept by uploading their consumption behavior. In addition, this research aimed to answer when such basic needs for social support are fulfilled through online social networks and how does it influences their post-consumption behavior?

Across two studies, this research provides evidence that social support gained through online social networks influences consumers' spending pleasure through perceptions of their own deservingness. More specifically, when people obtain social support from others on their post regarding to their consumption, they feel more deserving which then enhances their pleasure of spending on that consumption. This is consistent with the theory that people use social information such as responses or feedback from others to justify acceptability of their behavior. Furthermore, such social information serves as a barometer of determining their self-worthiness by how much they

think they are valued and supported by others. When people gain support from others on their consumption, it heightens their perceived deservingness by focusing their thoughts on their self-worthiness, which ultimately enhance their spending pleasure.

In addition, this study examines in what form and from whom people obtain social support in online social networks. Despite online social networks serving as a perfect medium where users to obtain social support through various communication tools, no study yet to date has examined the role of online social support in related to communication functions. This study reveals that people obtain social support in online social networks through receiving 'Likes' and 'Comments' on their posts. Receiving Likes and Comments in Facebook serves as information that leads people to believe that they are being cared and loved by others. Accordingly, the amount of Likes and Comments received capture the amount of positive social support received. In fact, when people acquire Likes and Comments on their post about their consumption, they perceived more social support which then leads to a higher level of spending pleasure.

Furthermore, this study also shows that social support from both online social network friends as well as the firm positively affects spending pleasure. Although previous research demonstrates that online social network friends can have a positive effect on how people feel about themselves and consequently behavioral changes (Valkenburg et al., 2006; Ellison et al., 2007; Wilcox & Stephen, 2013), no study to date has examined the reaction from the firm in online social networks. These results advance our knowledge of online social networks by demonstrating that not only the social networks friends but also the firm can be social support sources by actively responding to customers' post. Given that many service firms are spending more time and effort by

responding to customer's responses in online social networks through the tracking the tag or check-in function, this study supports that receiving like and Comments from the firm derives social support as much as it is coming from online social networks friends.

This study also explores boundary conditions for when online social support is more effective on spending pleasure. First, given that Facebook serves as a channel for communication with various degrees of tie strength, ranging from close friends to distance contacts, this study tests the moderating impact of tie-strength with the social support source. Consistent with the previous literature, the results of this study support that people are more susceptible to social support from strong ties than weak ties (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987). That being said, obtaining a lot of Likes and Comments on the post from strong ties makes people feel more deserving and spending pleasure than weak ties, while people feel less spending pleasure when there is only a couple of Likes and Comments from strong ties compared to weak ties, as low amount of social support from strong ties may results in feeling of violation of expectation which make them feel less deserving.

However, relationship strength with the firm did not influence the effectiveness of social support on spending pleasure. Reciprocity theory argues that strong relationship customers may feel less deserving than weak relationship customers when there is an absent of social support as they have higher expectation and confidence in the firm that they will provide favorable responses based on their investment toward the firm, Contrary to our expectation based on reciprocity theory, having a strong relationship with the firm was not enough for customers to feel less deserving due to the lack of social support on them. The possible explanation for this result might be that customer may not

expect reciprocity norm in the online social networks context. Even if strong relationship customers may believe that the firm owes more than they owe weak relationship customers, customers may not expect firms to respond to their posts as they believe it is additional services beyond the core services that is provided during the service encounter. Therefore, we assume that reciprocity norm does not take action in our research context or that a strong relationship tie is based on more than frequency of visits.

Finally, due to the public nature of online social networks where responses from others to one's post can be seen by a circle of online social network friends of that person, the influence of viewing social support aimed at other customers from the firm on the effectiveness of social support on the focal customers' spending pleasure is tested. This study finds support for "peer-induced fairness" in an online social network setting, confirming that people's perception of the service is determined not only by whether they receive responses from the service provider but also by comparing the responses received by other customers. Accordingly, concerns for others receiving social support negatively influences customer's spending pleasure as they feel less deserving by the fact that while other customers are being cared for and loved by firm, they are not. Nevertheless, when social support from the firm is present, people are more likely to feel deserving and greater spending pleasure when they also observe social support aimed at other customers compared to observing no social support aimed at other customers. Since this study uses a dining companion as experimental stimuli to test the social support aimed at other customers, rather than a third party, participants might feel more spending pleasure when both themselves and their dinner companion receive social support from the firm than only themselves receiving social support but not their companion.

In summary, the results of these two studies contribute evidence to a growing body of literature that suggests that social support increase spending pleasure through increase in the perceived deservingness as a underlying mechanism. Importantly, the current research illustrates that social support can be found in the online social networks context, specifically in the popular social network site Facebook, as well in a consumption setting.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

Despite the fact that human beings are highly affected by social influence, social support has been a neglected research topic in consumer research (Wilcox & Stephen, 2013). Thus, it is important to focus on this long-neglected but important domain in consumer research. Accordingly, this dissertation extends the social support literature in consumer research, exploring its impact on consumer behavior and the underlying mechanism that explains the process in many ways.

5.2.1 Social Support Literature

The results of this research contribute evidence to a growing body of social support literature by identifying social support as having an important and understudied influence on consumption behavior. This study expands the social support literature in two ways. First, while earlier studies in public health literature indicate the benefit of social support, they mainly focus on physical and psychological health such as life satisfaction, reduction of stress, or physical health (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011). The results of this research are important as they illustrate that the effect of social support

extends beyond reducing physical and psychological pain by suggesting that social support also influences customer consumption behavior. Only limited previous research in consumer behavior literature exists that illustrates the important role of social influence on consumer behavior (Argo, Dahl, & Manchanda, 2005). The present research broadens our understanding of perceived social support by investigating its relevance on the pleasure of spending. Given that people use online social networks to fulfil self-presentation needs and seek social support and approval on their consumption behavior by uploading their consumption in online social networks, it is critical to understand the mechanism how social support increase consumer spending pleasure. Although this study did not directly test whether social support leads to more consumption, it shows that social support triggers positive consumption behavioral intentions by increasing their spending pleasure. In short, this study contributes to the importance of social support within the context of consumption.

Second, although the use of online social networks has radically increased and altered the way people communicate with each other, no study to date has examined in what form and from whom social support is obtained via online social networks. Most of the previous research regarding online social support is limited to social support afforded by discussion forums (Walther & Boyd, 2002) and blogs (Rains & Keating, 2011). Given that online social networks allow users to concurrently interact with individuals from various relational and social contexts (Marwick & Boyd, 2011), this study suggests that individuals obtain effective and helpful social support from both online social networks friends and the firm when communicating online. Especially, understanding the influence of social support from firm is important as many service firms are increasingly taking an

active role in interacting with customers in online social networks. Furthermore, in terms of operationalization of the forms of social support in online social networks, this study reveals that two communication functions of Facebook namely, Likes and Comments are effective tools to show social support in the online social networks setting.

5.2.2 Deservingness

Despite the notion that one's own perceived own deservingness is widely utilized by marketers to promote consumption as it is effective in promoting indulgent consumption, surprisingly little is known about what induces consumers' judgments of their own deservingness, and how it influences their post-consumption behavior. The majority of prior work on deservingness focuses on understanding when others are perceived to be deserving of negative or positive outcomes (Feather, 1999; Appelbaum, 2001). However, understanding people's judgments of their own deservingness is critical as it directly influences choices consumers make for themselves. For instance, previous research reveals that consumers indulge when they feel deserving while feeling undeserving lead consumers to restrict their consumption (Cavanaugh, 2014). Adding on to the previous findings, this research highlights one's own perceived deservingness as an important mechanism that links the relationship between social support and spending pleasure. That being said, perceived deservingness plays a key role explaining why people are more likely to enjoy their consumption behavior when they obtain social support from others. The results of this study also show consistent support for the principle of social proof (Goethals & Darley, 1977) which argues that positive responses and feedbacks from others serve as a critical source of information to justify one's

acceptability of behavior (Simonson, 1989). Online social support from consumption posts serves as an important source of justification of their consumption as it can be viewed as an achievement that people possess or have done which make them feel worthy of rewards and allow them to achieve greater enjoyment from their spending. This finding sheds light on the fact that social influence is an external source that can influence one's internal thinking process, how they feel about themselves, which then leads to their behavior. Accordingly, this research identifies a novel factor, perceived self-deservingness that can be triggered by social support from others, and highlights how feeling deserving leads to consumers' spending pleasure.

5.3 Managerial Contributions

5.3.1 Management Responses Strategies in Online Social Networks

With the growing usage of the Internet, firms are increasingly taking an active role in interacting with customers online. As a part of customer relationship management, firms are aggressively interacting with and responding to consumer's Comments or posts on various online channels including online review sites, online social networks, and their own website (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). While previous research reveals that responding to negative customer reviews is effective in improving customer satisfaction (Gu & Ye, 2013), little is known about how responding to positive customer posts regarding consumption with its firm as a way of showing social support can influence customer behavior. This study shows that social support offered by the firm through clicking 'Like' and leaving Comments positively influences customers spending pleasure. In fact, online social networks provide a public communication channel that allows firms to

communicate with customers and provide social support on their spending with the firm.

Given that social support directly impacts and enhances consumers spending pleasure on their consumption at the firm, the findings encourage firms who have not adopted response management in online social networks to improve their awareness of a response strategy. Firms should actively monitor online social networks through checking posts including those that checked in or tagged their operation or brand, and respond to it. This is not only important to enhance consumers' pleasure of their consumption but more importantly influence their future behavioral intentions. In addition, the result of this study also reveal that observing responses to other customers but not receiving responses themselves has a significant and negative impact on spending pleasure. Given the public nature of online social networks, firms need to be careful in providing social support through management responses to ensure that all customer posts are managed equitably.

5.3.2 Understanding the Mechanism of Social Support in Online Social Networks

By illustrating the significant impact of social support in online social networks on peoples' feeling toward spending, our finding contributes new insights for consumers and marketers. This study suggests that gaining social support in online social networks through the form of Likes and Comments enhances one's spending pleasure on the consumption that they posted. Although it is impossible for marketers to predict how many Likes and Comments consumers may obtain on their post, it is worthwhile for marketers to understand the mechanism of the influence of social support on spending pleasure. This is especially important as spending pleasure is highly related to future consumption behavior (Prelec & Simester, 2001). Given that consumers usually feel pain

when spending money, feeling pleasure of spending plays an important role to justify their spending as well as behavioral intention in the future.

In addition, this study shows that customer's own perceived deservingness explains the mechanism that links the impact of social support on spending pleasure. Since perceived own deservingness plays a critical role in increasing one's spending pleasure, marketers should consider the importance of one's own deservingness. For instance, Cavanaugh (2014) reveals that reminding consumers of relationships they lack reduces their perceptions of deservingness. In a similar vein, when developing marketing strategies, marketers should be aware that the feeling of deservingness is a key to enhance one's spending pleasure.

In addition, by shedding light on the mechanism behind these relationships, our research can help the key economic agent, the consumer, make more informed decisions. Consumers would benefit from being aware of the mechanism that social support from others can increase their spending pleasure which then influence on their behavioral intention. Once they know that receiving Likes and Comments from others may enhance their deservingness that allows them to spend more money or revisit the company in the future, regardless of their actual experience in the firm, they may be able to more rationally think about the services the firm provided and make more effective decision in the future.

5.3.3 Implication to High-end Service Industry

The main assumption of this research is that consumers feel pain when spending money. This is especially vulnerable to high-end service firm such as 5-star hotels or

gourmet restaurants where the average check amount is high. The issue of the extent to which spending money may lead consumers to feel guilt or pain is important for marketers providing luxury services, as a dilemma lies in their goal to increase consumers pleasure of spending in their operation and at the same time, reducing the pain and guilt associated with spending a great deal of money. As such, many high-end service firm are putting great efforts toward providing customer oriented services in their business model such as unique communication styles to build positive relationship quality with their customers (Kim, Lee, & Yoo, 2006; Walker, 2007). However, most of the managerial implications from the previous luxury marketing literature are limited to the exceptional services provided during the service encounter but no study has yet to suggested implications related beyond the service encounter (Lee & Hwang, 2011; Kang & Hyun, 2012). As our research findings suggest that online social support provided by the service firm increase spending pleasure, high-end service firms should more pay attention to monitoring online social networks of their customers and actively interact and respond to their post if they post something related to their experience at their operation. In addition, this research shows that perceived deservingness increase one's spending pleasure and social support from others enhance one's deservingness. Accordingly, high-end service firms should pay more attention to increase consumers' perceived deservingness which serves as a justification tool for their expensive consumption. Even though our study is limited to the online social networks setting, high-end service firm should develop a marketing strategy that trigger customers' deservingness during service encounters that would ultimately increase customer spending pleasure. For instance, high-end service can provide marketing messaging saying "You are special. You deserve it" or develop script

for customer contact employees that emphasize deservingness.

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Notwithstanding its theoretical and managerial contributions, the current research has limitations as well as several other opportunities for further research that could encourage theory building across theoretical perspectives.

First, the main assumption of this study is that feelings of guilt are triggered by spending money. To maximize the likelihood of guilt of spending, we utilized a luxury restaurant as a study context. However, by examining only one context, this limits the generalization of the study results. Future research should incorporate different industry types to fully understand the influence of social support in online social networks on spending pleasure across different contexts, brands, and quality levels. In addition, social support may have differing effects on spending pleasure depending on the purchase context. Future research could explore the moderating effect of spending occasion as well as the amount of money spent on the relationship between social support and spending pleasure.

Second, in terms of the operationalization of the forms of social support in online social networks, this study focused on two communication functions of Facebook, namely, Likes and Comments. However, recently, Facebook's iconic light blue thumb 'Like' button has been expanded in a way that provide more emotional reaction to other's post including a red heart ("love"), a laughing face ("haha"), a surprised face ("wow"), a tearing face ("sad"), and an angry face ("angry"). While the 'Like' button has been interpreted as positive signals for Facebook's users, the new reactions could bring more

valence of nuance. Along with that, although the current study tested the positive interaction in terms of social influence, future research should incorporate new reaction functions of Facebook, especially, the impact of negative reactions. Furthermore, in terms of the function of Comments as a social support tool, the magnitude of perceived social support may vary depending the length or words being used in the Comments. Future research should investigate how varying Comments are perceived as either more or less socially supportive as a result of the language used. Codifying specific words and accessing how such words may elicit different levels or types of social support would be possible.

Furthermore, given that this study is the first attempt to test the impact of online social support on consumption behavior focusing on the feeling related to spending, future research may add more value to the social support literature by investigating other potential post-consumption behavior. For instance, self-control behavior such as indulgence behavior could be tested. In general, the extent to which we feel satisfied after a purchase depends on the indulgence of the purchase, but too much indulgence may lead us to exhibit guilt, especially the self-conscious guilt feeling arises when individuals think they have violated an internal moral, societal or ethical standard (Kugler & Jones, 1992). Given that many marketers trigger consumers to indulge more, an important topic for further research is to consider how social support can influence consumer indulgence behavior.

APPENDIX A

SCENARIO

Study 1

Scenario 1 (Social support high; Strong tie strength)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant, which is well above your average check for dining out. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You find that a significant number of your Facebook friends liked your post and there were many positive Comments. This was one of your most liked and commented postings.

You recognized that the friends who liked and commented on your status were your closest Facebook friends who have been Facebook friends for a long time, and you communicate with them frequently on Facebook relative to your other Facebook friends.

Scenario 2 (Social support high; Weak tie strength)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant, which is well above your average check for dining out. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You find that a significant number of your Facebook friends liked your post and left positive Comments. This posting was one of your most liked and commented postings.

You recognized that the friends who liked and commented are your distant Facebook friends that you are not especially close to, who you have only been Facebook friends with recently and you only communicate with them occasionally on Facebook relative to your other Facebook friends.

Scenario 3 (Social support low; Strong tie strength)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant that is well above your average check for dining out. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. There were barely any Comments or Likes on your posting. Only a couple of your friends liked and left positive Comments. This posting was one of your least liked and commented postings.

However, you recognized that the friends who liked and commented are your closest Facebook friends who have been Facebook friends for a long time, and you communicate with them frequently on Facebook relative to your other Facebook friends.

Scenario 4 (Social support low; Weak tie strength)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant, which is well above your average check for dining out. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. There were barely any Comments or

Likes on your posting. Only a couple of your friends liked and left positive Comments. This posting was one of your least liked and commented postings.

You recognized that the friends who liked and commented are your distant Facebook friends that you are not especially close to, who you have not been Facebook friends with until recently, and you only communicate with them occasionally on Facebook relative to your other Facebook friends.

Study 2

Scenario 1 (Social support present; Strong relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer present)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. You have a strong and close relationship with the restaurant as a frequent diner and regular customer. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You find that the official restaurant Facebook account liked your post and left a comment saying "Thank you for visiting our restaurant. It looks like your experience was incredible! We look forward to seeing you in your future visit."

At the same time, you find that the restaurant also liked and left a comment on a post of your friend who uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall as well.

Scenario 2 (Social support present; Weak relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer present)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. As this is your first time visit, you don't have any relationship with the restaurant. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You find that the official restaurant Facebook account liked your post and left a comment saying "Thank you for visiting our restaurant. It looks like your experience was incredible! We look forward to seeing you in your future visit".

At the same time, you find that the restaurant also liked and left a comment on a post of your friend who uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall as well.

Scenario 3 (Social support absent; Strong relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer present)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. You have a strong and close relationship with the restaurant as a frequent dinner and regular customer. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You found no Likes or Comments from the restaurant on your post.

However, you find that the restaurant liked and left a comment on a post of your friend who uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall as well.

Scenario 4 (Social support absent; Weak relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer present)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. As this is your first time visit, you don't have any relationship with the restaurant. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You found no Likes or Comments from the restaurant on your post.

However, you find that the restaurant liked and left a comment on a post of your friend who uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall as well.

Scenario 5 (Social support present; Strong relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer absent)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. You have a strong and close relationship with the restaurant as a frequent dinner and regular customer. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You find that the official restaurant facebook account liked your post and left a comment saying "Thank you for visiting our restaurant. It looks like your experience was incredible! We look forward to seeing you in your future visit."

However, you find that the restaurant did not like nor left a comment on the post of your friend who also uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall.

Scenario 6 (Social support present; Weak relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer absent)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. As this is your first time visit, you don't have any relationship with the restaurant. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You find that the official restaurant Facebook account liked your post and left a comment saying "Thank you for visiting our restaurant. It looks like your experience was incredible! We look forward to seeing you in your future visit".

However, you find that the restaurant did not like nor left a comment on a post of your friend who also uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall.

Scenario 7 (Social support absent; Strong relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer absent)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. You have a strong and close relationship with the restaurant as a frequent dinner and regular customer. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your

Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You found no Likes or Comments from the restaurant on your post.

At the same time, you find that the restaurant did not like nor left a comment on the post of your friend who also uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall.

Scenario 8 (Social support absent; Weak relationship strength; Social support aimed at other customer absent)

You are having dinner at an expensive luxury gourmet restaurant with your friend, which is well above your average check for dining out. As this is your first time visit, you don't have any relationship with the restaurant. You decide to post about your luxury dining experience on Facebook. You take a picture that shows the luxury atmosphere, expensive dinnerware and great food, and upload to your Facebook wall.

Throughout your stay, you receive good and attentive service from the restaurant and enjoyed your meal. Toward the end of your meal, before paying, you open up your Facebook app and check your post on Facebook. You found no Likes or Comments from the restaurant on your post.

At the same time, you find that the restaurant did not like nor left a comment on a post of your friend who also uploaded his/her experience of the restaurant on their Facebook wall.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

(1) Screening question

1. Do you have an account on Facebook?
2. Have you ever posted a comment or picture on your Facebook wall at least once during the last year?

(2) Control variable

1. On average, how many Comments do you receive when you post on your wall?
2. On average, how many Likes do you receive when you post on your wall?
3. What is the least number of Comments/Likes you have ever received?
4. What is the most number of Comments/Likes you have ever received?
5. Self-esteem (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)
 - (1) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
 - (2) At times, I think I am no good at all.
 - (3) I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
 - (4) I am able to do things as well as most other people.
 - (5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
 - (6) I certainly feel useless at times.
 - (7) I feel that I'm a person of worth.
 - (8) I wish I could have more respect for myself.
 - (9) All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.
 - (10) I take a positive attitude toward myself.

(3) Personality trait variables (Self-construal)

1. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony with my group
3. I will sacrifice my self- interest for the benefit of the group I am in
4. I often have the feeling that my relationships with other are more important than my own accomplishments
5. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group

(4) Experimental condition

See Appendix 1

(5) Manipulation check questions

1. Social support from online social networks friends

(1) How much do you feel that you are cared about and supported by your Facebook friends based on the given scenario? (1=no social support at all; 7=an abundance of social support)

2. Social support from the firm

(1) How much do you feel that you are cared about and supported by the restaurant on the given scenario? (1=no social support at all; 7=an abundance of social support)

3. Tie strength (1=very strongly disagree, 7=very strongly agree)

(1) In this scenario, Facebook friends who liked and left positive Comments on my post were my close friends

(2) In this scenario, I did not know Facebook friends who liked and left positive Comments on my post very well (R)

(3) In this scenario, I communicate frequently with the Facebook friends who liked and left positive Comments on my post

(4) In this scenario, I rarely communicate with the Facebook friends who liked and left positive Comments on my post (R)

(5) In this scenario, I have been Facebook friends with those who liked and left positive Comments on my post for a short time

(6) In this scenario, I have been Facebook Friends with those who liked and left positive Comments on my post for a long time (R)

4. Relationship Strength

- (1) Based on the given scenario, how frequently have you been coming to this restaurant? (1=very rarely, 7=very frequently)
- (2) Based on the given scenario, how long have you been coming to this restaurant? (1=very recently, 7=very long time)
- (3) Based on the given scenario, how strong is the strength of your relationship with this restaurant? (1=weak relationship, 7=strong relationship)

5. Social support aimed at others

- (1) Based on the given scenario, how much do you feel that your dinner companion is cared about and supported by the restaurant? (1=no social support at all; 7=an abundance of social support)

6. Realism check

- (1) This situation is realistic (1= very strongly disagree, 7=very strongly agree)

(6) Dependent variables

1. Perceived deservingness (1=not at all, 7=extremely)

How deserving did you feel in treating yourself with this meal/dinner?

To what extent did you feel you deserve to

- (1) reward yourself
- (2) treat yourself to nice things
- (3) indulge yourself a little
- (4) buy something special for yourself

2. Spending pleasure (1= not satisfied/happy/pleased at all; 7=extremely satisfied/happy/pleased)

- (1) I would feel satisfied with my spending at this luxury restaurant based on this experience.
- (2) I would be happy with my spending at this luxury restaurant
- (3) I would be pleased with my spending at this luxury restaurant

(7) Demographics

1. How old are you? (please write.)
2. Sex
 - Male (1)
 - Female (2)
3. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic background?
 - African American/Black (1)
 - Asian or Pacific Islander (2)
 - Hispanic (3)
 - Native American or Alaskan Native (4)
 - White/Caucasian (5)
 - Other (please indicate) (6) _____
4. What is your highest level of education?
 - Less than high School diploma (1)
 - High school degree (2)
 - Some college (3)
 - College degree (4)
 - Graduate degree (5)
- How frequently do you dine out at restaurants per year?
 - Never (1)
 - 1 - 3 times (2)
 - 4 - 6 times (3)
 - 7 - 9 times (4)
 - 10 - 12 times (5)
 - 13 - 15 times (6)
 - More than 15 times per year (7)
7. How frequently do you dine out at luxury gourmet restaurant per year?
 - Never (1)
 - 1 - 3 times (2)
 - 4 - 6 times (3)
 - 7 - 9 times (4)

- 10 - 12 times (5)
 - 13 - 15 times (6)
 - More than 15 times per year (7)
8. Are you currently employed?
- Yes (1)
 - No (2)

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL



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**Research Compliance
Human Research Protection Office (HRPO)**
Telephone : (413) 545-3428
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Certification of Human Subjects Approval

Date: December 12, 2016
To: Kawon Kim, Hospitality & Tourism Mgmt.
Other Investigator: Melissa Baker, Hospitality & Tourism Mgmt.
From: Lynette Leidy Sivert, Chair, UMASS IRB

Protocol Title: DO I DESERVE TO SPEND ? SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SPENDING PLEASURE
Protocol ID: 2016-3488
Review Type: EXPEDITED - NEW
Paragraph ID: 7
Approval Date: 12/12/2016
Expiration Date: 12/11/2017
OGCA #:

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Massachusetts Amherst IRB, Federal Wide Assurance #00003909. Approval is granted with the understanding that investigator(s) are responsible for:

Modifications - All changes to the study (e.g. protocol, recruitment materials, consent form, additional key personnel), must be submitted for approval in e-protocol before instituting the changes. New personnel must have completed CITI training.

Consent forms - A copy of the approved, validated, consent form (with the IRB stamp) must be used to consent each subject. Investigators must retain copies of signed consent documents for six (6) years after close of the grant, or three (3) years if unfunded.

Adverse Event Reporting - Adverse events occurring in the course of the protocol must be reported in e-protocol as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) working days.

Continuing Review - Studies that received Full Board or Expedited approval must be reviewed three weeks prior to expiration, or six weeks for Full Board. Renewal Reports are submitted through e-protocol.

Completion Reports - Notify the IRB when your study is complete by submitting a Final Report Form in e-protocol.

Consent form (when applicable) will be stamped and sent in a separate e-mail. Use only IRB approved copies of the consent forms, questionnaires, letters, advertisements etc. in your research.

Please contact the Human Research Protection Office if you have any further questions. Best wishes for a successful project.

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