IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON THE GROWTH OF THE ONLINE COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Online communities have been regarded as good sources of information and knowledge. To understand the value and impact of online communities, social capital theory has been extensively used. However, the previous research on social capital of online communities has not fully examined the interaction in them and behavior or traits of community members. This paper suggests that peculiarities of online communities such as system interaction ties, menu structure and voluntarism should be considered respectively for three dimensions of social capital: structural, cognitive and relational. This paper also argues that higher social capital will increase the level of commitment of members to online communities, and the path will be mediated by perceived information quality and involvement.